



# THE TIME IS NOW TO FIX CANADA'S HOMELESSNESS CRISIS

Tell your MP

## HOMELESSNESS IS SOLVABLE... BUT WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Canada has a homelessness crisis. Tonight 35,000 Canadians will sleep in shelter, on the street or in unsuitable housing. Over 235,000 people will experience homelessness at some point during the year. In Toronto, 500 people will sleep on the street tonight, with another 5000 in shelter.

This has not always been the case.

\*Note – all links ([in red on this factsheet](#)) and other information available at [caeh.ca](http://caeh.ca).

# The rise of homelessness in Canada

Homelessness on the scale we see it today has not always existed. The rise of modern mass homelessness in Canada began in the 1980's and is the direct result of federal withdrawal from affordable housing investment and cuts to social services.

In the last 20 years, as Canada's population grew over 30%, federal funding for affordable housing has dropped more than 46%. This has meant at least 100,000 units of affordable housing were not built. Today over 1.5 million Canadian households live in housing need, over 750,000 households live in extreme housing need (living in poverty and spending over 50% of their income on housing). And the crisis may get worse as federal operating agreements for older social housing expire and over 300,000 more households may lose their housing.

## A matter of life and death for too many

We believe all Canadians deserve safe, decent and affordable housing, but for some, the lack of housing is a matter of life and death. The longer people are homeless, the worse their health becomes. Not having a home can be lethal. Homelessness causes premature death, poor health and is a significant burden on our health-care system. **A recent report** from British Columbia suggests life expectancy for people experiencing homelessness in that province is half that of other British Columbians.

## Cheaper to fix than ignore

Fixing homelessness will be much cheaper than ignoring it. Homelessness costs Canadians over \$7 billion a year. According to the **State of Homelessness in Canada: 2016**, it would take an additional \$50 per Canadian per year – less than \$1 per Canadian per week – in new affordable housing investment to end homelessness.

## Homelessness is solvable

A number of Canadian cities including Calgary, Edmonton, Lethbridge, Red Deer and Medicine Hat are showing that with a focused effort homelessness can be reduced. Hamilton, Ontario – a part of our 20,000 Homes Campaign – has reduced chronic homelessness 35% in just one year. There's every reason to believe that success like this is achievable on a national scale.

What's needed is the Government of Canada to take urgent and immediate action on housing with a focused effort on ending homelessness.

## We need your help!

The government is currently finalizing its National Housing Strategy. Solving all of Canada's housing problems at once, from homelessness to the rising cost of home ownership, would be wonderful. It is absolutely the right objective, but the sheer scale of the challenge requires us to prioritize. It's important to tell your MP that you think ending homelessness should be a top priority in the new National Housing Strategy. Go to [caeh.ca](http://caeh.ca) to write your MP today!