



## Media Release

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### **National Housing Strategy a Step in the Right Direction**

Edmonton – On National Housing Day, the federal government released details of Canada’s National Housing Strategy that sees more than \$40 billion invested into affordable housing and homelessness over 10 years. The Strategy sets ambitious goals including reducing chronic homelessness in Canada by 50%.

The National Housing Strategy includes a commitment to repair 300,000 units of social housing, a commitment to build 100,000 units of new affordable housing, and removing 530,000 households from core housing need. The Strategy also recognizes housing as a fundamental right. “The Right to Housing is a big shift and changes the playing field. Edmonton’s efforts to prevent and end homelessness are grounded in the idea that everyone deserves a home” says Susan McGee, CEO of Homeward Trust Edmonton. “Affordable and social housing not only helps people to exit homeless, but it can also prevent it from happening in the first place.”

Introduced in the National Housing Strategy is a Canada Housing Benefit program. “This benefit will help people in our community experiencing homelessness and those living on a low-income to access rental housing,” adds Susan McGee. “One of the biggest barriers for someone resolving their homelessness is often the affordability of rental units.”

“The National Housing Strategy and the introduction of a Canada Housing Benefit will help us with our work to eliminate poverty in our community,” says Gary St. Amand, CEO of Bissell Centre. “We see daily how the lack of affordable housing affects the community we serve. We look forward to seeing how this benefit will assist people who are living on a low-income or are moving out of homelessness find stable housing.”

The National Housing Strategy also commits to a distinct Indigenous housing strategy with additional funding to address the disproportionately high levels of poverty and homelessness experienced both on and off reserve. Forty-eight percent of people experiencing homelessness identified in Edmonton’s 2016 Point-in-Time Homeless Count identified as Indigenous, compared with only 5% of Edmonton’s general population.

“We look forward to hearing more details about this funding and when it will be available to assist with the work in our community to prevent and end homelessness,” adds Susan McGee.

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