NATIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY ACTION PLAN 2022-25



Housing

Introduction

In 2018-19, a significant collaborative effort between the provincial and the federal governments resulted in the signing of a 9-year, \$270 million cost-shared Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Bilateral Agreement under the 2017 National Housing Strategy (NHS). Since 2019, through additional federal and provincial commitments, investment in the bilateral has grown to **\$360 million**. Investments under this agreement focus on preserving, renewing, and expanding social and community housing and responding to the diverse housing needs throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

Under the Bilateral Agreement, action plans are required to be developed, outlining how the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation (NLHC) will invest cost-shared provincial and federal funding, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), to achieve the targets and expected outcomes outlined in the Bilateral Agreement.

This Action Plan covers the period from April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2025 and is inclusive of the one-year plan that was previously released for 2022-23. Through the Bilateral Agreement, over the three years, **\$116 million** of federal and provincial funding will be invested to address housing and homelessness needs throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

Newfoundland and Labrador Context and Priorities

Access to safe, stable and affordable housing is a key social determinant of health and underpins social and economic inclusion. Health Accord NL (2022) - Our province. Our health. Our Future - highlights the importance of secure housing that is safe, stable, and comfortable on determining positive health outcomes. It further identifies that, within the social safety net system, programs such as social housing protect people and negate the impacts of poor housing on health.

Housing programs and services are most effective when they facilitate forward movement along the housing continuum, while recognizing that the appropriate housing option for each household is influenced by geographic, economic and social factors, with more extensive supports required for individuals with more complex needs to remain housed.

This Action Plan is consistent with the overarching principles and targets set forth in the NHS and the Bilateral Agreement with respect to preservation, expansion and repair targets and initiatives to address core housing need and direct affordability benefits.

The Province remains committed in advancing targeted initiatives that will further build on this Action Plan with the goal of reducing core housing need, addressing the systemic barriers related to homelessness to address poverty and supporting the needs of the most vulnerable in our province. Key initiatives include: a new provincial <u>Affordable Rental Housing Program</u>; a provincial <u>Five-Point action plan</u> to improve availability of housing that is affordable; and increased provincial and federal investments to repair and revitalize NLHC homes.

Current Programs and Services

NLHC clients are individuals and families with low-to-moderate incomes who require assistance in accessing or maintaining safe, adequate and affordable housing. The programs delivered serve both renters and homeowners, and distinct populations whose housing needs are particularly acute, including women and children, Indigenous persons, seniors, youth, persons with disabilities, and persons experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

NLHC offers a wide range of programs across the full housing continuum to meet the diverse needs of clients, including:

- Operation and maintenance of over 5,500 public social housing units throughout the Province that are home to over 11,900 low-income individuals.
- Rental Supplement and Canada-NL Housing Benefit programs that provides rental assistance to low-income households in the private rental market, assisting over 2,200 low-income households secure affordable housing.
- Additional Partner Managed units are operated in partnership with non-profit, municipal, health sector and cooperative housing groups throughout the province which offer subsidized housing options to over 1,300 individuals with low to moderate incomes.
- Home Repair programs that provide financial assistance to over 1,500 low-income homeowners annually to complete much needed repairs to their homes, improve accessibility or to make energy efficiency improvements. These programs support accessibility requirements for seniors and persons with disabilities thereby enabling individuals and families to exercise choice and self-determination and remain in their own homes.

- Supportive Living Program that provides operating grants to non-profit organizations province-wide to prevent and end homelessness, foster long-term housing stability and develop support services space to provide on-site and outreach services. This program houses over 1,000 individuals and provides additional supports to over 10,000 individuals annually.
- Emergency Shelter Program which manages a 24/7 toll free number to support individuals experiencing homelessness. NLHC engages a range of non-profit and private shelter operators to respond to required emergency shelter placement for individuals experiencing homelessness and connect them to supports to secure permanent housing as quickly as possible. In 2022-23, over 1,100 unique individuals accessed services of this program.
- Transition Housing Program that provides funding to the Province's 10 transition houses to provide safe short-term accommodations, services and resources to support women and their children who are vulnerable for, at risk of, or have been subjected to intimate partner violence. In 2022-23, over 1,200 individuals accessed services of this program.

Overall in 2022-23, excluding salaries and general operating, investments in these programs totalled \$113 million and served over 31,000 clients.

The programs delivered by NLHC and its community partners help to ensure safe, stable and affordable housing options are available in communities throughout our province. It is also important to acknowledge that many other government programs (e.g. income and employment supports, rent subsidies provided by NL Health Services for complex needs, Seniors' Benefit, etc.) also support stable and affordable housing. Addressing the wide range of housing needs across the housing continuum requires a collaborative and coordinated approach across government and strong partnerships between federal, provincial, municipal and Indigenous governments as well as community partners and the private sector.

Who We Serve

NLHC Rental Programs

NLHC is the largest landlord in the province and also provides rental subsidies to clients in the private rental market. The 2022-23 profile of the over 7,300 households or 14,500 individuals supported through these rental programs is diverse:

- 71 per cent of households reside in NLHC's owned units; 30 per cent of these households receive income support, 48 per cent earn employment income and 22 per cent receive pensions.
- 29 per cent of households receive NLHC rental subsidies in the private market; 30 per cent receive income support, 26 per cent earn employment income and 44 per cent receive pensions.
- 65 per cent of households are female head of household compared to males at 21 per cent, and 14 per cent are dual head of household.
- Households' average annual net income is \$15,167 and monthly rental payments are \$389.

In this Province, households with an annual net income under \$32,500 are eligible for NLHC's social housing (\$65,000 for Labrador West and northern coastal communities). Rental programs are rent-geared-to-income with rent calculated at 25 per cent of net household income.

Rental programs also prioritize housing occupancy to the most vulnerable. Women fleeing violence, and those experiencing or at risk of homelessness, are prioritized for housing placement. This is reflective of the 2022-23 tenant selection data which reports 36 per cent of applicants placed in housing were women fleeing violence, or individuals who experienced or were at risk of homelessness.

Home Repair Programs

The provincial homeownership rate for low-income households under \$30,000 is 50.6 per cent, well above the Canadian average of 36.5 per cent. NLHC home repair and accessibility modification programs are important housing affordability measures to support low-income homeowners, particularly seniors in rural areas, to remain in their homes. The average income of home repair clients in 2022-23 was approximately \$22,983. Home repair clients are also predominately seniors or nearing senior age, as 92 per cent of clients are over 55 years of age, and 77 per cent are above 65. The average applicant age was 71, and the average home age was 55 years.

Housing Needs in Newfoundland and Labrador

Core Housing Need

Affordability is the primary issue facing households who are in core housing need in the province. A household is considered to be in core housing need if it does not meet at least one of the standards of adequacy, affordability or suitability and it would have to spend 30 per cent

or more of its before-tax income to rent in the community in which they live. A household is considered in severe core housing need when this increases to 50 per cent.

The 2021 Census includes the most recently available data on the core housing need in Newfoundland and Labrador:

- In 2021, 8.0 per cent of households in the province (17,525 households) were deemed to be in core housing need.
- The vast majority (87.8 per cent) of households in core housing need were paying more than 30 per cent of gross income towards housing costs.
- Of those in severe core housing need, 62 per cent are renters and 38 per cent are homeowners.

Social Inclusion and Vulnerable Sub-Populations

Serving vulnerable populations is a key housing policy objective of the Province, recognizing that housing need is a particularly impactful aspect of the life challenges faced by some populations. The COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the critical importance of having a safe and affordable place to call home. It is also recognized that certain subgroups of the population are more likely to experience more pronounced housing needs, including: women and women with children, Indigenous persons, seniors, youth, and persons with disabilities. Newfoundland and Labrador strives to serve the housing needs of all vulnerable populations targeted by the NHS.

Women and Women with Children

Newfoundland and Labrador supports the NHS target that a minimum of 25 per cent of investments under the NHS target women and women with children. While the overall provincial core housing need in the province is 8.0 per cent, the rates among vulnerable populations, including women are often much higher. Census 2021 data noted that of the 17,525 households in the province that were in core housing need, 56 per cent of those were female-led.

Within the senior population, female-led households accounted for 67 per cent of those in core housing need. Almost 43 per cent of lone-parent-female-head of households experienced core housing need. The gendered experience of core housing need continues for single female renters living alone as 39.5 per cent experience core housing need. Severe core housing need means not being able to access adequate, affordable, and suitable housing without spending 50 per cent or more of before-tax household income on housing.

NLHC rental programs will continue to provide affordable housing options to women and women and children. In 2022-23, 65 per cent of households living in NLHC's housing units were female-led (single parents, single females, including those senior aged). The Canada-NL Housing benefit will further support this subpopulation. Additionally, a significant portion of the new affordable housing construction during this action plan will prioritize women and women and children.

Indigenous Persons

The National Housing Strategy recognizes the Government of Canada's commitment to a nation-to-nation, Inuit-to-Crown, government-to-government relationship with Indigenous peoples and committed to develop distinctions-based Indigenous housing strategies.

Indigenous people are more likely to be in core housing need than non-Indigenous people According to Census 2021 data, Indigenous households were more likely to report living in homes that are inadequate or unsuitable to their needs; and of the Indigenous households that rent, 24 per cent report core housing need. While the Census, and measures of core housing need are important indicators of need, it is important to acknowledge that they do not capture the deeper and more profound instances of homelessness. The experience of the homeless in the Happy Valley-Goose Bay (HVGB) area of Labrador is an example of the disproportional impacts on the Indigenous population. While HVGB has a population of 8,040 or about 1.6 per cent of the province's population, HVGB represents over 10 per cent of the province's shelter users. Further, front line service delivery organizations in HVGB report over 90 per cent of shelter users self-identify as Indigenous.

NLHC is strengthening processes to work in greater alignment with Indigenous and community partners to ensure social housing applications and critical social and support measures are mobilized to the most vulnerable and at risk. Community partners such as the Nunatsiavut Government, operator of the Out of the Cold shelter; Mokami Status of Women, operator of eight supportive housing units; Libra House women's shelter and second stage housing operator; and the Labrador Friendship Center, are key partners in these initiatives. Additionally, access to the Canada-NL Housing Benefit, repairs to NLHC units as well as new affordable housing construction during this action plan will include prioritization of Indigenous persons.

Seniors

The population of Newfoundland and Labrador is aging rapidly. The 2021 census showed that 23 per cent of the provincial population is 65 years of age or older. The province's median age has gone from five years lower than Canada's in 1971 to nearly seven years higher than Canada's in 2021. Rapid aging of the population is a key demographic challenge confronting the province because of its significant implications for the delivery of programs and services. As the number of seniors grows, how government supports low income seniors will evolve, with a continued focus on assisting them to remain healthy and independent. The 2021 Census data reports that of the 73,165 senior-led households in Newfoundland and Labrador, 8.4 per cent are in core housing need.

Seniors represent a significant client group accessing NLHC programs and services including our rental properties (23 per cent), partner-managed community housing (77 per cent), rent supplement program (55 per cent), Canada Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Benefit (23 per cent), and home repair and modification programs (over 75 per cent).

It is expected that as the number of seniors in this province increases, so too will the need for affordable and accessible housing options. Options to better serve seniors who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless will also be a key focus of Newfoundland and Labrador's overall approach to addressing homelessness. NLHC's social housing expansion efforts will increase the number of accessible and energy efficient units, as well as focus on the creation of units in better proximity to health facilities, public transit, and other key services and amenities of importance to seniors. Expansion of the Canada-NL Housing Benefit over this plan will provide additional access to affordable housing options for seniors.

Housing affordability challenges for seniors who own their own homes is also a major focus for the Province. With limited or no rental market in many rural communities, NLHC home repair and accessibility modification programs are important housing affordability measures to support low-income seniors' age-in-place in their homes. Continued investment in these important programs during this plan will enable repairs and modifications on upwards of 1,500 homes annually.

Youth

Age matters when considering homelessness. The needs of young people, particularly young people with lived and living experiences of homelessness, are distinct from adults. The Canadian Observatory on Homeless Youth defines homelessness as the situation and experience of young people between the ages of 13 and 24 who live independently of parents and/or caregivers, but do not have the means or ability to acquire a stable, safe, or consistent residence. NLHC's shelter data for 2023-24 year to date, reported that 46 of the 1,100 individuals accessing the emergency shelter system were 17 and under, representing just over 4 per cent of shelter users.

Youth homelessness is a complex social issue. In addition to experiencing economic limitations and a lack of secure housing, many who are homeless lack the personal experience of living independently and may be in the throes of significant social, physical, emotional, and cognitive development. The commonalities that frame the experience of youth experiencing homelessness and adults is the lack of affordable housing and system failures, however, unlike most homeless adults, young people leave homes defined by relationships (both social and economic) in which they are typically dependent upon adult caregivers. For these reasons and others, youth-based strategies and interventions that address the needs of young people between the ages of 13-24 need to be distinct from those developed for adults who experience homelessness.

The Provincial Government recognizes the need to support creative and innovative solutions to address youth homelessness, including access to safe and stable long-term housing. Community-based partnerships, co-habitation models, constructing affordable housing and providing access to the Canada-NL Housing Benefit will help create affordable housing options for low-income youth and young adults.

Persons with Disabilities

Accessibility is a key factor in the development of safe, suitable and affordable housing. The 2022 Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD) highlighted that some 8.0 million Canadians, or nearly 27 per cent of Canadians aged 15 years and older, had one or more disabilities that limited their daily activities.

According to the 2017 CSD, 15.9% of Canadians with disabilities were living in households in core housing need, compared to 10.1% of the total population living in core housing need. This is consistent with the trend reported in Census 2016 which noted over 25 per cent of households in core housing need in Newfoundland and Labrador included a resident with a disability.

The 2018 Research Insight publication by CMHC, which examined housing conditions of persons with disabilities, noted the proportion of persons with disabilities in core housing need and living in subsidized housing was higher at 50.9 per cent than those in core housing need not living in subsidized housing at 43.8 per cent. Income disparities are further pronounced when comparing the experiences of disability and income. Persons with disabilities are one of the population groups most at risk of living in poverty. The 2017 Canada Survey on Disabilities highlights the correlation of poverty and severity of disability, noting that income levels for persons with disabilities are half that of persons without disabilities.

NLHC will continue to prioritize investments that address the growing demand and range of accessibility requirements in Newfoundland and Labrador. Investments in the Home Modification program will continue to support the accessibility needs of low-income homeowners. The Canada-NL Housing Benefit will expand affordable and accessible housing options for persons with disabilities. New construction of affordable housing under this Action Plan will exceed accessibility standards and repairs to social housing units will include accessibility and universal design features that will better meet the needs of tenants today and into the future.

Social Housing Waitlist

Another indicator of housing need in the province is NLHC's social housing waitlist. The waitlist across the province has continued to steadily grow year over year, with a marked increase from 1,523 in March 2021 to 2,390 in March 2023, representing a growth rate of 56.9 per cent.

The waitlist also reflects the changing demographics of the province. Most NLHC units were built 40-60 years ago and are comprised of 3-4 bedrooms to accommodate traditionally larger families. However, today, 90 per cent of applicants are seeking 1-2 bedrooms; whereas only 20 per cent of our social housing stock consists of 1-2 bedrooms. NLHC's expansion plans under this Action Plan will be designed to address this challenge through building new units with 1-2 bedrooms.

Transition Houses and Emergency Shelters

The lack of affordable and appropriate housing is most acute among those experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Homelessness is often the result of systemic or societal barriers including an individual's financial capacity, physical or mental challenges, racism, intimate partner violence, and/or discrimination. For some, the experience of intergenerational trauma further compounds this issue.

Increasingly, provincial and national data speaks to the prevalence of homelessness among vulnerable populations such as persons with disabilities, Indigenous populations and those experiencing complex mental health and addictions issues. Housing options available to those experiencing or at risk of homelessness include transition homes, shelters, supportive living programs as well as NLHC's rental housing and rental assistance programs.

Program data on individuals accessing transition homes when fleeing intimate partner violence, shows 1,220 admissions to the ten homes throughout the province in 2022-23. Emergency shelters also provide immediate housing to individuals experiencing homelessness. In 2022-23, 1,148 unique clients were served by shelters province-wide, with the majority in the St. John's area. Point in time data reports that the number of individuals in shelters increased by over 200 per cent from 81 in July 2020 to 244 in March 2023.

Homelessness can be prevented where we can ensure housing stability and access to a permanent home that is appropriate (affordable, safe, adequately maintained, accessible, and suitable size). This also includes the provision of required services and supports to enhance well-being and reduce the risk of future homelessness. These responses must be preventative and sustainable in order to end homelessness.

Provincial efforts to address housing and homelessness are most effective when guided by a Housing First philosophy. Housing First is a recovery-oriented approach to ending homelessness that centers on quickly moving people experiencing homelessness into permanent housing and then providing additional supports and services they require to remain housed. The basic principle of Housing First is that people are better able to move forward with their lives if they have somewhere safe and secure to live. This approach varies significantly from the traditional response to homelessness which moves individuals through a graduated, step-based approach whereby they have to prove they are 'ready' to have a permanent home.

Core principles of the Housing First philosophy are:

- Immediate access to housing with no housing readiness requirements;
- Choice and self-determination;
- Recovery orientation with a 'harm reduction' approach to substance abuse and addiction;
- Individualized and client driven supports; and
- Social and community integration

Homelessness is seldom caused by a single factor, suggesting that it cannot typically be ended by one program or approach. Preventing and ending homelessness requires a client-centered approach with coordinated and cross cutting actions that engage the mandate, expertise and resources of a wide range of community and government partners, as well as careful examination and responses to the underlying factors contributing to homelessness.

Supply of Affordable Rental Housing

Social Housing Stock

NLHC remains the province's largest landlord, providing rent-geared-to-income housing options as the operator of the province's social housing stock, as well as through rent subsidies for low income households in the private rental market. Additional Partner Managed units are operated in partnership with non-profit, municipal, health sector and cooperative housing groups throughout the province, which offer subsidized housing options to individuals and families with low to moderate incomes.

Between 2003 and 2019, in partnership with the private and non-profit sectors, approximately 1,700 new affordable units were created in the province through the Federal-Provincial Affordable Housing Program. The signing of the new bilateral agreement for the National Housing Strategy has shifted the focus of Federal-Provincial investments towards the preservation, repair and expansion of rent-geared-to-income housing. In June 2023, NLHC

launched a new provincially funded Affordable Rental Housing Program which will provide onetime capital funding, in the form of a forgivable loan, to assist in the creation of affordable rental housing units throughout the province. The project funding amount is based on the project stream (i.e. private or community housing), location and distance to healthcare, as well as incentivized commitments for longer rental affordability periods and improved efficiency and accessibility. To date, 91 projects have been conditionally approved, for a total provincial investment of over \$80 million, which will see construction of approximately 900 new affordable rental housing homes throughout the province over the next three years. When the projects are advanced further, NLHC will explore with CMHC whether any of the 900 units under this initiative can be considered as expansion. NLHC acknowledges that uptake of this program by the community housing sector has been limited which is indicative of the capacity challenges experienced by the sector and highlighting the need for NLHC to support capacity building initiatives through investment in project feasibility and predevelopment costs.

Social housing investments and targets through this Action Plan are established based on the number of social housing units that remain supported through the Social Housing Agreement between CMHC and NLHC as of April 1, 2019. As of that date, 5,957 of the units within the Public Rental Housing and Partner Managed Housing programs were in receipt of operating subsidies and therefore are within the "baseline" of social housing units. "Urban Native Housing" is limited within Newfoundland and Labrador's social housing " program and are currently operated in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador through the Melville Native Housing Association.

Through investments under this plan, NLHC intends to add to the number of units in the social housing baseline, in part, through major renovations to units that are no longer supported by subsidies, bringing them back to a condition that provides adequate and affordable housing options for households in need. Investments will also support new construction, expanding the supply of affordable housing throughout the province. Additionally, the Canada-NL Housing Benefit will expand support to low-income households that face affordability challenges in accessing private market rentals.

In many rural communities in Newfoundland and Labrador, the supply of affordable and social rental housing is extremely limited. In these communities, under this plan, the Province's primary approach to address core housing need is providing financial assistance through repair programs for low-income homeowners. Supporting low income seniors to age in place is an effective way to meet their housing needs and support the sustainability of rural communities.

Community Housing Sector

Unlike many provinces and territories, Newfoundland and Labrador's community housing sector has less direct involvement in the operation of social housing. NLHC directly operates most of the rent-geared-to-income housing in the province through its regional offices, with municipalities (other than the City of St. John's) or local housing authorities having limited or no role in offering social housing. Non-profit groups in the province are largely focused on the provision of emergency or transitional housing and supports rather than providing permanent accommodations. It is recognized that the long-term sustainability of social housing in the province would benefit from a strengthened community housing sector, forged through an enhanced role for the private and non-profit sectors in the operation of long-term housing options for both market and non-market rentals. In support of increasing capacity, seven Community Sector affordable housing projects were successful proponents under the recent call for proposals to create new affordable rental housing in the province. Proposals under the Community Housing Sector stream continues to be accepted. NLHC will also support capacity building initiatives in this sector through investments in feasibility and pre-development costs.

Market Vacancy Rates

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's October 2023 Rental Market Survey highlighted a tightening market throughout the province. The overall provincial vacancy rate decreased significantly from 7.2 per cent in October 2020 to 1.5 per cent in October 2023, with the average rent across all bedroom types increasing from \$851 to 1,009 over this same period.,

Vacancy rate decreases were experienced in each of the four main urban centres throughout the province between October 2020 and October 2023 as follows:

- St. John's 7.5 per cent to 1.5 per cent, with an average rent of \$1,077
- Gander 8.4 per cent to 3.0 per cent (in 2022), with an average rent of \$931 (in Oct 2023)
- Grand Falls-Winsor 9.9 per cent to 0.8 per cent, with an average rent of \$760
- Corner Brook 2.8 per cent to 1.2 per cent, with an average rent of \$841

CMHC does not provide rental market data for communities in Labrador.

Even with rental subsidies available, the overall tightening rental market has compounded the challenges of accessing affordable housing options, even more so when trying to secure housing for clients with complex needs.

Consultations

NLHC works closely with and engages departments and the community sector on an on-going basis to understand and address the housing needs throughout the province. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on marginalized persons, including low-income individuals and families, individuals experiencing mental health and addiction issues, and those experiencing or at risk of homelessness or who are precariously housed. The pandemic has further highlighted the importance and need for more safe affordable housing, including appropriate responses along the full housing continuum. On-going dialogue with departments, health authorities, and community partners throughout the pandemic have proven insightful in the development of this Action Plan and included, for example:

- During the summer of 2020, NLHC, in partnership with the Department of Health and Community Services (HCS) and Eastern Health, conducted a series of dialogue sessions with organizations engaged in the housing and homeless serving sector to better understand current experiences with harm reduction and the growing need for low barrier shelter services. These sessions greatly informed the design and programming of a new low-barrier permanent shelter scheduled to be constructed during the period of this Action Plan. These sessions also highlighted the importance of wrap around supports to secure and maintain housing and the need for more transitional and supportive housing. Investments under this Action Plan will see an expanded response for transitional and supportive housing.
- Throughout 2020-21, NLHC conducted a series of one-on-one stakeholder engagement sessions with community agencies to explore priorities, future directions, and opportunities for partnership. Many of these organizations highlighted their goals for the expansion of affordable housing and the need for funding partnerships with the provincial and federal governments to achieve this goal.
- Planning sessions and on-going engagement with End Homelessness St. John's (EHSJ), the designated entity for the federal Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy Urban funding stream in the province.
- Ongoing partnerships and engagement with community agencies to support better coordination of services and supports for those experiencing homelessness. Throughout the pandemic, NLHC has worked in close partnership with End Homelessness St. John's (EHSJ), Health and Community Services (HCS), NL Health Services Eastern Zone (formerly Eastern Health) and a wide range of community organizations under the auspices of the COVID-19 Housing and Homelessness Working Group (Vulnerable Persons Task Group).

NLHC also built upon many existing partnerships including, for example, with Connections for Seniors, John Howard Society, Homestead, and Stella's Circle to further support improved housing stability for those experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Outside the St. John's area, NLHC strengthened partnerships with Reaching Home designated entities, which mobilize federal funding to prioritize community responses to homelessness. NLHC will continue to work closely with the Town of Grand Falls Windsor (Rural and Remote Stream) and the Labrador Friendship Centre (Indigenous off reserve Stream) to support greater alignment and shared priority setting across Reaching Home projects.

- Through participation on the Community Action Team in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, there
 is regular and ongoing engagement with other provincial government departments,
 Indigenous governments and organizations, the municipality, Regional Health Authority,
 RCMP and other community partners to identify and support the needs of individuals
 experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
- In partnership with Choices for Youth, an Innovative Housing Solutions Lab was held in December 2022 where community and government came together to share ideas on existing gaps and to identify tangible actions that could be explored in addressing housing and homelessness needs throughout the province.
- The provincial government department of Children, Seniors and Social Development carried out extensive consultations with stakeholders during 2022-23 around well-being. One of the engagement focus areas used to guide the conversation was Housing and thus, NLHC was provided with stakeholder input from the related consultations.

Use of Funding

Under the Bilateral Agreement, cost-shared provincial and federal CMHC funding of **\$360 million** is focused on the following three initiatives which support provincial priorities and the broader outcomes of the National Housing Strategy:

Initiative 1: <u>Canada Community Housing Initiative</u> Initiative 2: <u>Newfoundland and Labrador Priorities Initiative</u> Initiative 3: <u>Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Benefit</u>

Canada Community Housing Initiative

The Canada Community Housing Initiative (CCHI) is intended to help address the funding decline for housing units under operating agreements that would have expired under the Social Housing Agreement. Through the NHS, reinvestment in this critical housing infrastructure will ensure low-income families continue to have access to this existing safe and affordable housing.

The NHS has set targets for social housing in Canada that would see 100 per cent of the number of units under the Social Housing Agreement as of March 31, 2019 preserved to March 31, 2028, while also targeting repairs to 20 per cent of existing units and a 15 per cent expansion of social housing. Newfoundland and Labrador's Bilateral Agreement establishes the following targets to be achieved through CCHI by March 31, 2028:

- 5,957 social housing units continue to be available for low-income tenant households (100 per cent of baseline preserved);
- 1,192 social housing units repaired (20 per cent repair target); and
- 894 units to be added to the baseline number of housing units (15 per cent expansion target).

NLHC is the largest landlord in the province and, along with various non-profit and cooperative housing providers, provides affordable housing options to those in greatest need. As the existing housing stock was built 40-60 years ago, on-going capital investment is required to repair and prevent deterioration of this important public asset and ensure its long-term sustainability. NLHC also recognizes that investments in energy efficiency improvements, as well as accessibility modifications to better serve the province's aging population, are key elements in the long-term sustainability of its housing stock.

During the Action Plan covering 2022-25, through initiatives funded by CCHI, the federal and provincial governments will allocate a combined **\$62.89 million** for the preservation, repair, and expansion of social housing. Additional details on these initiatives are outlined in this section:

Initiative	2022-25 Spending
Social Housing Preservation	\$32,462,000
Social Housing Repairs	\$12,800,000
Social Housing Expansion	\$17,630,000
Total	\$62,892,000

Table 1: Canada Community Housing Initiative

Social Housing Preservation

Without federal reinvestment through the NHS, over the period 2019-2028, 1,986 of social housing units in Newfoundland and Labrador would have expired as federal support for the operation and maintenance of these units declined under the Social Housing Agreement (SHA). During the timeframe of Action Plans 1 and 2 ending in 2025, SHA funding would have declined by \$8.39 million, negatively affecting the operations of 1,168 units.

The contributions to the operations and maintenance of this social housing stock baseline of 5,957 units over the three-year Action Plan is forecasted to be **\$32.5 million**. This cost-shared investment in the baseline ensures no units scheduled for expiration during the next three years under the Social Housing Agreement, including those of our provincial partner-managed housing providers, will be removed from the rent-geared to income housing stock.

Social Housing Repairs

NLHC is committed to continued investment in repairs to prevent the deterioration of existing affordable housing stock. During this Action Plan, federal and provincial funding of **\$13.0 million** is allocated for repairs under CCHI. These investments will allow NLHC to complete exterior and/or interior upgrades to nearly 400 existing units.

Investments are particularly important for units that have been vacant for an extended period due to the significant repairs required to make them once again available for occupancy. Such an example is the \$2.0 million contract awarded for the exterior renovations of 18 of NLHC's existing social housing units in Labrador West, which includes the interiors of eight long-term vacant units. These units have undergone major exterior renovations including replacement of doors, windows, vinyl siding, roofing, as well as new exterior lighting and exterior wooden stair entrance. Energy efficiency upgrades include exterior insulation, increased attic insulation, and new heat recovery ventilation systems in all units with installation of new interconnected smoke learning systems for exterior renovated doors and windows to enhance safety.

There are currently 75 Urban Native units within the province, all operated by Melville Native Housing in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. The operation and maintenance of these units are funded through the Social Housing Agreement until 2026. These units have been repaired in recent years and while NLHC is committed to utilize CCHI funding for needed repairs to preserve these 75 units as required during the life of the Bilateral Agreement, no funding for repairs has been allocated for 2022-25. In addition to these investments under the bilateral, NLHC also received \$8.6 million from CMHC as a 30 per cent cost match for the repair of 866 units under CMHC's Co-Investment program. A further \$3 million provincial investment will support the repair of an additional 143 units.

Social Housing Expansion

To contribute to the NHS goal of expanding social and community housing stock by 15 per cent, NLHC will undertake a diverse and multi-faceted approach to delivering on its expansion target of 894 units by 2027-28. This includes new construction of social and community housing, as well as significant upgrades and investments in the renewal of units under operating funding agreements that had already expired prior to the NHS.

During the 2022-25 Action Plan, **\$17.6 million** will be invested for expansion of affordable housing under CCHI. Key initiatives include:

- Construction of 40 new NLHC units on existing vacant land in the Pleasantville area of St. John's. This initiative will assist in addressing the waitlist for those in core housing need. The design includes one and two-bedroom units with accessibility and energy efficiency features to address the changing demographics of NLHC clients. Construction of the 40 units will be supported through cost-shared provincial and federal investment under CCHI, in conjunction with federal funding under the second round of the Rapid Housing Initiative.
- Construction of 11 new NLHC homes in Central and Labrador Regions.
- Under the Federal Lands Initiative, NLHC, in partnership with the CMHC and Canada Lands Corporation, finalized agreements in March of 2022 for the transfer of surplus federal land for purposes of constructing affordable housing. This affordable housing project will include a 40-unit NLHC owned building in the Pleasantville area of St. John's. The building will exceed local accessibility and energy efficiency standards and will accommodate potential health and well-being retail space as well as multi use programming space to better serve residents. In 2022-23, further planning, design, and engineering was completed, with construction anticipated to commence in 2024. This work will be supported through costshared provincial and federal investment under CCHI.
- Funding to leverage and support partnerships with Indigenous partners, municipalities, and non-profit organizations in the housing and homelessness sector to expand community housing and address the diverse needs throughout the Province. An example of such an initiative includes working with Indigenous and municipal governments, along with community partners to plan for a purpose-built facility in Happy Valley- Goose Bay that integrates housing, health and supportive services to support individuals experiencing or at

risk of homelessness and other vulnerable populations. Additionally, funding will support Habitat for Humanity NL leverage cost-match funding under the National Co-Investment Fund to facilitate their build plan of 10 units over the next several years. NLHC will also support the construction of second stage housing in Labrador West, a new women's shelter in Marystown, as well as the creation of new transitional housing units by Stellas Circle in St. John's.

- Construction of a 40-bed low barrier emergency shelter in St. John's. The transfer of
 responsibility for emergency housing to NLHC in 2018 was intended to improve the
 integration and delivery of emergency housing services and facilitate movement to more
 permanent housing options. This was challenged by a lack of low-barrier dedicated shelter
 space with wrap-around supports. The Gathering Place, a non-profit organization that
 provides critical services to the most vulnerable, was the successful proponent in NLHC's
 public request for proposals for a new permanent low-barrier shelter. In addition to this
 investment under CCHI, a partnership between CMHC, NLHC, and The Gathering Place will
 also see the expansion of an estimated 56 transitional/supportive housing units.
 Construction of these 56 units, in tandem with the 40 shelter beds, will offer critical
 integrated health and social supports to those experiencing or at risk of homelessness, and
 will be funded through the second round of the federal government's Rapid Housing
 Initiative.
- NLHC's expansion target also includes projects to renew units for which Federal operating subsidies expired under the Social Housing Agreement and are not included in the baseline. In 2022-25, NLHC will complete 52 of these renewal projects.

As noted above, Affordable Rental Housing Program when the projects are advanced further, NLHC will explore with CMHC whether any of the 900 units under this initiative can be considered as expansion.

Any expansion of new affordable housing in 2022-25 will exceed the National Energy Code for Buildings 2015 (NECB) energy efficiency standards by 15 percent. NLHC will report on these GHG reductions in the ranges as noted on the Progress Report tables. In addition to on-site property improvements and equipment upgrades, NLHC will also dedicate resources to an analysis of energy use through energy modelling and consumption data information to optimize improvements and document actual reductions in energy use and green-house gas production. The energy savings realized through this work will be a key contributor to NLHC's efforts to support social housing sustainability and housing affordability for tenants who pay heat and light.

Newfoundland and Labrador Priorities Initiative

Investments through the Newfoundland and Labrador Priorities Initiative are intended to be responsive to local and emerging provincial housing priorities, while also supporting the broad outcomes and objectives of the National Housing Strategy. During the 2022-25 Action Plan, cost-shared federal and provincial funding of **\$19.6 million** will support a range of provincial priorities with the following allocations:

Table 2: NL	Priorities	Housing	Initiative
-------------	-------------------	---------	------------

Initiative	2022-25 Spending
Provincial Home Repair and Home Modification Programs	\$16,500,000
Provincial Housing and Homelessness Partnership Fund	\$3,066,400
Total	\$19,566,400

Provincial Home Repair and Home Modification Programs

There is a wide range of housing need throughout the province that includes both renters and homeowners. Of the 17,525 households in the province identifying as being in core housing need, 38 per cent are homeowners. To help address the affordability challenges of low-income homeowners, NLHC provides financial assistance to complete much needed repairs to their homes, make energy efficiency upgrades, or complete home modifications to improve accessibility. As clients of the home repair programs are predominantly seniors living in rural areas of the province, with the majority being female, these programs also support the benefit of aging in one's home and community, living close to family and friends.

Over this three-year Action Plan, federal and provincial cost-shared funding of **\$16.5 million** will be invested in these critical home repair programs. With this investment, NLHC will be able to assist approximately 3,200 households over the three-year period, including almost 650 households that will benefit from accessibility improvements.

Provincial Housing and Homelessness Partnership Fund

The Provincial Housing and Homelessness Partnership Fund is intended to leverage and support partnerships with the federal government, Indigenous partners, municipalities, and non-profit organizations in the housing and homelessness sector that support NHS outcomes and other provincial housing priorities. This may include capital investments to build, renovate or repair rent-geared to income housing, investments in homelessness supports and services, supports to other vulnerable populations as identified in the NHS, and emerging housing related needs. The first Action Plan included, for example, investments in: homeowner repair programs with Indigenous partners; housing support workers for Indigenous and community organizations to assist individuals experiencing homelessness secure stable housing and related supports; a pilot project for a congregate supportive housing model for seniors with complex needs experiencing homelessness; construction and acquisition of supportive housing units; and renovations and repairs for rent-geared to income housing.

During the period of this Action Plan, NLHC will allocate cost-shared funding of **\$3.07 million** to support varied initiatives under the Provincial Housing and Homelessness Partnership Fund.

Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Benefit

In the fall of 2021-22, in partnership with CMHC, NLHC launched the new Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Benefit (CNLHB). The CNLHB provides eligible households with a direct-to-tenant portable rental subsidy to support housing affordability within the private rental market. Assistance is structured to cover the gap between the rent a household can afford to pay (calculated as 25 per cent of net household income) and the average market rent in their communities based on CMHC published data. To further support tenants, NLHC provides a listing of landlords for consideration that has been generated through open invitation.

The CNLHB will expand the number of households receiving rental assistance in the private market from 1,800 in 2019, under the current Rent Supplement Program, to approximately 2,400 households by 2027-28, an increase of 33 per cent. As Rent Supplements expire under the Rent Supplement Program, they too will be converted to benefits under the CNLHB.

During the Bilateral Agreement, a total of \$91.49 million of federal and provincial cost-shared funding will be allocated to support approximately 3,200 renters (which considers anticipated turnover) in receiving assistance with rent. During this action plan, **\$34.17 million** of federal and provincial funding is being invested in the Canada Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Benefit Program to increase the number of new households receiving benefits by 2,179. This includes the launch a new stream of the CNLHB, in 2023-24, which will be targeted towards survivors of Gender-based violence (CNLHB-GBV).

Similar to the CNLHB, CNLHB-GBV will provide victims of gender based violence with a rental supplement option to help them with rent affordably within the private rental market. The CNLHB-GBV will be fully portable, with tenants having the option to select a unit of their choosing in the private rental market, provided it meets minimum health and safety requirements. Assistance will be structured to cover the gap between the rent a household can

afford to pay according to their income (RGI) and the average market rent in their respective communities. Where no market data is available, provincial averages will apply. Recipients will receive monthly support no greater than the difference between their RGI assessed rent and the actual monthly rent charged for their unit by a landlord. The CNLHB-GBV will be provided to tenants who will hold responsibility to ensure their rent is paid. This direct-to-household approach will also have the option on client consent to have funds paid directly to their landlord.

This will allow NLHC to reduce the wait times for households in severe housing need and positively impact target populations, including women who increasingly have caregiving responsibilities and earn lower incomes than men.

Targets and Outcomes

Over the nine-year Bilateral Agreement, total investments of \$360 million under the CCHI, the Newfoundland and Labrador Priorities Initiative, and the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Benefit will collectively support over 22,400 Newfoundland and Labrador households to access safe, affordable, and adequate housing.

Table 4 provides an overview of the expected number of households who will benefit from funding under each Initiative. Table 5 outlines the planned provincial cost-matched funding over the 2022-25 period for each Initiative.

		Та	arget (Housel	hold)	
Initiative	2022/23 Year 1	2023/24 Year 2	2024/25 Year 3	3 Year Cumulative Total	2019/20 - 2027/28 Target
Canada Community Housing Initiative	1,065	1,175	1,351	3,591	7,851
NL Priorities Housing Initiative	1,088	1,088	1,088	3,264	11,400
Canada Housing Benefit (Core and Survivors of gender-based violence)	468	1102	609	2,179	3,236

Table 3: Expected number of households for which Housing Need will be addressed by Initiative

Canada Housing Benefit Survivors of gender-based violence*	N/A	201	27	228	317
Total	2,621	3,365	3,048	9,034	22,487

*CHB SGBV target is a subset of the overall CHB target (includes Core and SGBV targets).

	Pla	nned Cost-Mato	ched Funding (M)
Initiative	2022-23 Year 1	2023-24 Year 2	2024-25 Year 3	Total
Canada Community Housing Initiative	\$ 10.10	\$10.40	\$12.60	\$33.10
NL Priorities Housing Initiative	\$2.75	\$2.75	\$2.75	\$8.25
Canada Housing Benefit (Core and Survivors of gender-based violence)*	\$4.24	\$5.91	\$6.93	\$17.08
Canada Housing Benefit Survivors of gender-based violence**	-	\$1.41	\$1.53	\$2.93
Total	\$17.09	\$19.06	\$22.28	\$58.43

Table 4: Planned Provincial Cost-Matched Funding per Initiative

* The cost-match for the CHB Regular stream includes the reprofiled amount of \$405,469 for year 2024-25.

** CHB SGBV cost matching is a subset of the overall CHB cost matching (includes Core and SGBV cost matching).

As outlined in Table 6, NLHC will achieve these targets through significant investments in the construction of new rental housing for low income households, as well as the maintenance of existing affordable housing through both repair and renewal of this existing stock, and ongoing operating subsidies to provincial non-profit housing providers. Table 7 outlines planned funding and indicators for accessible units during this plan.

Indicator:		Target (Households)									
Number of households for which Housing Need is	2022/23 Year 1 Target and Funding		2023/24 Year 2 Target and Funding		2024/25 Year 3 Target and Funding		3 Year Cumulative Target and Funding		2019/20 - 2027/28 Target		
addressed	#	\$ (M)	#	\$ (M)	#	\$ (M)	#	\$ (M)	# \$ (M)		
New Construction (15%)	270	\$4.87	10	\$5.37	46	\$7.36	326	\$17.60	894 \$88.31		

Table 5: Planned funding and indicators to achieve overall targets over the planning period

Repaired/Renew ed (20%)	133	\$4.84	133	\$3.98	133	\$3.98	399	\$12.80	1,192 \$24.60
<u>Affordability</u> <u>Assistance</u> Project Based Subsidy	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0 \$0
Affordability Assistance to the Household*	468	\$8.48	1,102	\$11.83	609	\$13.86	2,179	\$34.17	3,236 \$91.5 90.86
Total	871	\$18.19	1,245	\$21.18	788	\$25.20	2, 904	\$64.57	5,322 \$203.77

*Includes CNLHB and the SGBV streams.

Table 6: Planned funding and indicators for accessibility units over the three-year period

Indicator: Housing Units considered	2022/23 Year 1 Target and Funding		Year 1 Year 2 Year 3						2019/20 - 2027/28 Target
accessible ¹	#	\$ (M)	#	\$ (M)	#	\$ (M)	#	ding \$ (M)	# \$ (M)
New	14	\$4.2	0	\$0	8	\$2.4	22	\$6.6	50 \$15.0
Repaired/ Renewed ³	223	\$1.5	223	\$1.5	223	\$1.5	669	\$4.5	2,000 \$13.5
Total	237	\$5.7	223	\$1.5	231	\$3.9	691	\$11.1	2,050 \$28.5

CMHC and NLHC agree on the following Outcomes, Expected Results and Targets related to the provincial delivered funding under this Agreement for the next three years and for the overall nine-year targets across all initiatives as outlined in Table 8.

Through the initiatives and investments described, NLHC will maintain at least 5,957 units of social and community housing and 75 Urban Native social housing units, while expanding the housing supply to low-income households by 326 over the three years. Needed repairs will also be completed on an estimated 399 social housing units respectively. During this Action Plan, repairs and accessibility modifications will also be completed on over 3000 private homes of low-income households. Additionally, under the new Canada-NL Housing Benefit, rental

¹ Considered accessible in a building as per the local or national building code.

² These targets are included in Table 6.

³ Private households receiving required repairs.

assistance to support housing affordability in the private market will be provided to an estimated 2100additional low-income households.

						Target Un	its			
Outcome	Expected Results	2022/23 Year 1 Target and Funding		2023/24 Year 2 Target and Funding		2024/25 Year 3 Target and Funding		3 Year Cumulative Target and Funding		2019/20 - 2027/28 Target
		Units	\$ (M)	Units	\$ (M)	Unit	\$ (M)	Units	\$ (M)	Units/\$(M)
Maintain/	Units continue to be offered in Social Housing ⁴	662	\$9.09	1,032	\$10.31	1,172	\$13.06	2,866	\$32.46	5,957 units/ \$98.09
increase Social Housing	No net loss of Urban Native Social Housing Units ⁵	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	75° units /\$TBD
of r	15% expansion of rent assisted Units ⁷	270	\$4.90	10	\$5.37	46	\$7.36	326	\$17.63	894 units/ \$88.31
Repair	20% of existing Social Housing Units repaired	133	\$4.84	133	\$3.98	133	\$3.98	399	\$12.80	1,192 units/ \$24.60
existing stock	Urban Native units repaired to good condition	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	75 units/ \$0.70
Subtotal	ССНІ	\$18	3.83	\$19	9.66	\$24	\$24.40		\$62.89	
Provincial	Low-income homes repaired	1088	\$5.50	1,088	\$5.50	1,088	\$5.50	3,264	\$16.50	10,200/ \$49.84
Housing Priorities	Housing Partnership Fund ⁸	-	\$1.12	-	\$1.12	-	\$0.83	-	\$3.07	1200/ \$7.00
Subtotal	PT Priorities	\$6	.62	\$6	.62	\$6.	.33	\$19	9.57	
Canada Housing Benefit (Core and Survivors of gender- based violence)	Renters receiving assistance	468	\$8.48	1102	\$11.83	609	\$13.86	2,179	\$34.17	3,236/ \$91.5

⁴ 2,199 units expire after the Bilateral Agreement sunsets.

⁵ As of April 1, 2019, all Urban Native units were deemed to be in good condition and repairs will be performed as required. All units are currently supported under the Social Housing Agreement, and the funding represents the annual funding provided to subsidize mortgages on units.

⁶ 75 Units expire after the Bilateral Agreement sunsets

⁷ Rent assisted Units refers to PT-administered Units under Social Housing Agreements / Federal-Provincial Agreements provided to low-income households on a rent geared to income basis. Expansion funding and targets include renewal projects that bring decommissioned units back into the social housing stock under the Provincial Modernization and Improvement budget. A one-time flexibility has also been granted to count shelter beds in new Emergency Shelters as expansion of the social housing stock.

⁸ Number of households supported will be dependent on accepted projects under PHHF. NLHC will report annually on the number of households supported.

Canada Housing Benefit Survivors of gender-based violence*	Renters receiving assistance	-	-	201	\$2.81	27	\$3.06	228	\$5.87	617/ \$8.57	
Subtotal	CNLHB	\$8	.48	\$1:	L.83	\$13	8.86	\$34	1.17		
Total		2022-23 \$ 33.93			2023-24 \$ 38.11		2024-25 \$44.59		(2022-25) \$116.63		

*CHB SGBV target is a subset of the overall CHB target (includes Core and SGBV targets).

Local Employment/Economic Impact

It is also important to acknowledge that there are positive economic impacts for Newfoundland and Labrador as a result of entering into the Bi-Lateral Agreement, including construction jobs for the repair and construction of homes. Over the term of the Agreement, federal and provincial cost-shared investments total \$360 million.

Statistics Canada's Input-Output (I/O) multipliers for Repair Construction were used to capture the economic and revenue impacts. With a yearly average investment of \$30 million between both governments, the yearly average contribution associated with this investment is estimated at \$22.23 million in total (direct and indirect) Gross Domestic Product (GDP), along with 221 full-time jobs and \$15.18 million in labour income.

Economic Impact								
Direct Impact			Indirect Impact			Total Impact		
GDP	Labour Impact	Jobs	GDP	Labour Impact	Jobs	GDP	Labour Impact	Jobs
\$11.49M	\$8.40M	93	\$10.92M	\$6.81M	124	\$22.41M	\$15.21M	277

Table 9: Economic Impact

Stats Canada: Input-Output multipliers, provincial and territorial, detail level. https://doi.org/10.25318/3610059501-eng

Additional economic spinoffs may occur as renters and homeowners benefitting from these programs stabilize their housing situation, access services required to eliminate barriers to employment, and become better positioned to develop skills to participate in the labour force and/or grow their income.