



Edmonton

CITY OF EDMONTON

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

2013/2014 UPDATE

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MESSAGE FROM MAYOR DON IVESON

During 2013 and 2014 we saw unprecedented economic growth in our city, but unfortunately not all Edmontonians have been able to share in the prosperity that so many of us enjoy. For some of us, precarious and unsafe housing can be a daily reality: it's a reality that an increasing number of families face as rents rise and housing choices diminish. Our job is to ensure that all Edmontonians have access to safe and affordable housing options that meet each family's needs. I am proud of the work reflected in this 2014 Housing Update.

We have made progress towards ending homelessness and providing safe affordable housing, working collaboratively with our community partners. Programs like Cornerstones and First Place have made a tangible difference in hundreds of Edmontonians' quality of life and contributed to the vitality of our communities. Hundreds more Edmontonians have received homes and the supports they need to stay successfully housed through Housing First. Other Edmontonians can stay in their homes as the City helps them with costly, but essential repairs. These and other programs ultimately contribute to Edmonton's livability and help transform Edmonton's urban form, building vibrant and healthy communities.

Significant and complex housing challenges remain. For some families, it is an economic issue: a single parent working for minimum wage can't always pay the rent. For some youth,

it is a question of safety: they have no choice but to leave an unsafe home. For someone living with a disability it is a problem of access: finding an affordable, accessible apartment proves impossible.

Whatever the situation, housing is a basic right and a pillar in our city's goal of ending poverty. Housing is a key determinant of health. Without a safe roof over your head you can't find or retain a job; you can't provide the structure of nurture and nutrition that each family needs for success. How can a child get homework done when she's couch-surfing with relatives? How can a parent read to his baby when the living room is the back of the van? Those children then begin life at a disadvantage, becoming part of the cycle of poverty.

As a municipality, there is much we can do to address the housing needs of our citizens—but we can't do it alone. We need other orders of government, business and community leaders to help fund, plan and build housing solutions to ensure everyone has access to safe, secure and affordable housing.





EDMONTON'S HOUSING CONTEXT

Edmonton's economy in 2014 outperformed Alberta and Canada in job creation and labour force growth, attracting near record levels of in-migration. The numbers of people flocking to our city for work created a housing demand that is hard to keep up with. As a result, rents rose while vacancy rates continued to stay low. That, compounded by the relative low wages that many are paid as the income gap widens, increased demand for affordable rental housing.

Consider this: in 2014

- Alberta's minimum wage is \$9.95 per hour
- The average rent for a two bedroom apartment was \$1,180
- A single parent earning minimum wage would spend about 74% of his or her income on rent

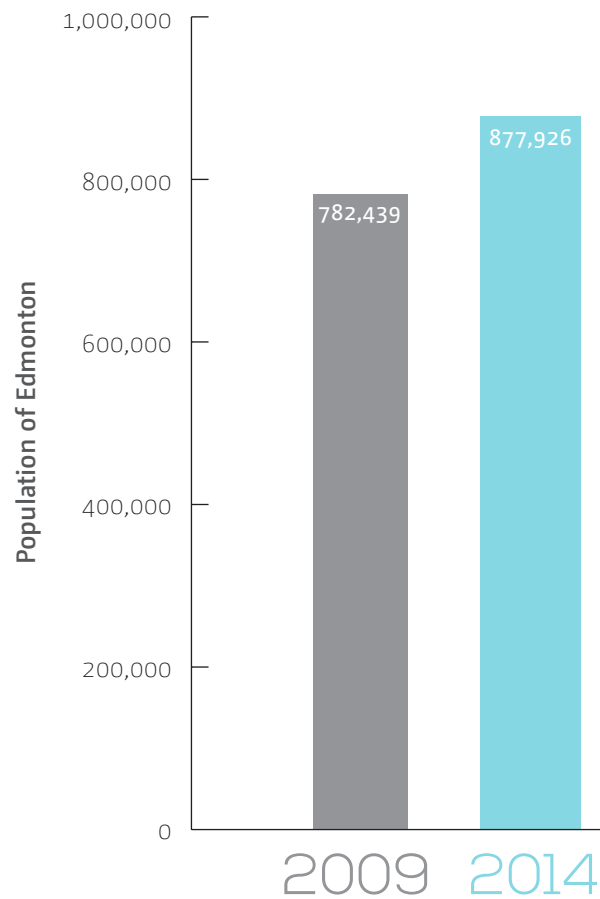
The City's priorities in 2014 included increasing the supply of housing across the entire non-market continuum to address the rental housing supply shortfall.

The Housing gap: Edmonton is short approximately

- 7,000 emergency, transitional and long-term housing units
- 20,000 affordable housing units


Housing is not just a fundamental human right. It's also an economic necessity. As our economy grows, businesses want to recruit and retain new employees, enticing them with a reasonable standard of living. A wide range of housing options is integral to that.

BY THE NUMBERS



2013  123,000 Edmontonians living with a low income

2011  38,500 Edmonton households living with a low income spent more than 30% of their annual income on housing

2014  1.4% Edmonton rental apartment vacancy rate

THE CITY OF EDMONTON'S ROLES IN HOUSING

1. Increasing the supply of affordable housing

Housing providers can receive grant money under Cornerstones II to build or upgrade affordable housing units. With those grants they are required to rent units to tenants who meet the qualifying income levels at rates below market.

2. Addressing homelessness

Edmonton's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness was launched in 2009. In 2014, the role of the Homeless Commission, the champion of the Plan, was amalgamated into the City of Edmonton's Housing section.

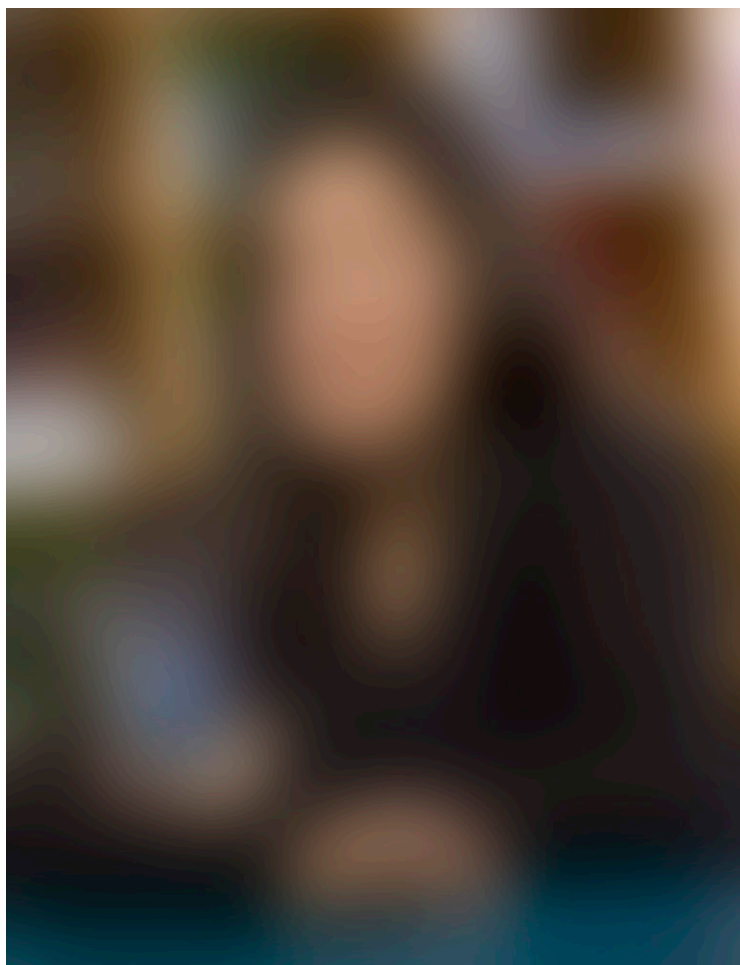
3. Housing policy and planning

The City, with its partners, conducts research, engagement, and planning for housing needs and policy options.

4. Community connections

Through the Landlord Tenant Advisory Board, the City provides housing information and issue resolution as well as promoting safe and secure housing in partnership with other orders of government, regulatory bodies and social agencies.





TRUE STORY: SARAH

Sarah (not her real name) is a single mom with nine children. Affordable homes that sleep nine children aren't readily available; so when the worst happened and Sarah couldn't pay the rent, she found her family homeless. Their next home was to be a hotel room—a temporary, emergency solution that ended up lasting a year.

The hotel had three queen beds, a small fridge freezer, microwave and a hot plate. With 10 family members crammed into one hotel room, stress, sibling rivalry and fights were inevitable.

Finally through Housing First, Sarah was found a six-bedroom house—the landlord was happy to welcome the family. The relationship between the Housing First team and landlord is key to success.

Sarah has received the help she needed to get back on her feet. Housing First team members have connected Sarah and her kids to the right community resources. She knows if she runs into problems again, she can reach out for help before the crisis hits.



1. INCREASING THE SUPPLY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING



TRUE STORY: SAMEH YASSIN

Sameh Yassin and his wife needed a three-bedroom apartment for their family—and affordability was key as Sameh balanced work and school. His professional experience as a banker in Dubai wasn't recognized here, so Sameh had to requalify as an accountant.

Just over a year ago, Sameh heard about Baranow Estates and applied for an apartment. The family was thrilled to hear they qualified and watched with growing excitement as the building went up. Now that they've moved in, they're finding the extra room makes all the difference—Sameh's wife's asthma is under control because the building is so clean. They're making friends with other families in the building, who come from all over the world. The kids all catch the school bus together. It feels like home.

The rent at Baranow is affordable, so Sameh has started putting money aside—he knows one day another family will benefit from the same opportunities he's had.



Cornerstones

20% of Edmontonians need help finding affordable or social housing. The City of Edmonton is working to meet that demand.

Cornerstones I (2006 -2012)

This program focused on the development of new units with a goal of creating 2,500 units over the five-year period.

Cornerstones II (2012 -2016)

Building on the success of Cornerstones I, the renewed plan provides funding support to housing providers and agencies to achieve the City's housing goals. Housing staff ensure that citizens have safe, affordable housing through a variety of initiatives. A dedicated fund is needed to take full advantage of this program and build a portfolio of affordable housing.

Secondary Suites Grant Program

Municipalities across Canada are recognizing secondary suites as a viable source of new affordable rental housing. The Secondary Suites Program encourages home owners to upgrade and create suites.

Eligible homeowners are given a grant of up to \$20,000 on a 50/50 cost sharing basis for upgrades to existing suites, and for construction of new suites and garage suites.

TOTAL CITY OF EDMONTON INVESTMENT: \$46 MILLION

New units developed by affordable housing investment programs:

2013        141

2014     80

Units funded by Secondary Suites to complement those developed without City funding:

2013  49  \$17,000/unit

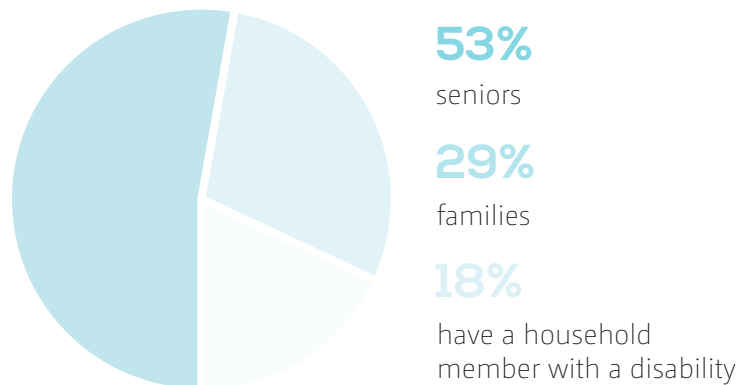
2014  49  \$17,000/unit

Housing Opportunities Program for Edmonton (HOPE)

Program applicants may receive grants of up to \$20,000 to bring their homes to a minimum standard of health and safety. Money can be used for improvements to plumbing, heating, electrical, structural, fire safety, disability modifications and energy efficiency. Applicants may also receive an additional \$2,000 for energy-efficient modifications.

Homeowners helped to rehabilitate their homes through HOPE

- 128 households since March 2013
- Average grant amount: \$18,000/unit



Curb Appeal

Curb Appeal is a new exterior home repair program for homeowners. It offers matching grants up to \$1,000 on a 50/50 cost-sharing basis to improve the exterior of a home, garages and landscaping. Curb Appeal is being piloted in six central-area neighbourhoods.

Affordable housing strategic outcomes:

- Housing availability and choice
- Urban form and transportation mode
- Inclusive projects and neighbourhoods
- Program efficiency and effectiveness



TRUE STORY: MARGARET MOONEY

I moved into my home in 1980. The house is similar to hundreds of others built in Edmonton around 1913; but because a series of low-income people like me have lived here, it hasn't been renovated. Everything in the home is original.

I'm a maintenance nut, so I've kept things up over the years; but last spring I ran into problems with the hot water tank and furnace. I discovered the HOPE program online, contacted them through email, and explained I was elderly and needed help. I discovered I was eligible for a grant up to \$20,000—not only did I receive a new furnace and hot water tank, my chimney was removed, and my attic was insulated.

I was worried I'd have to move out, and I desperately wanted to stay in my own home. Thanks to the Hope program, I can.



Surplus school sites

First Place Program

Approved by Council in 2006, the First Place Program turns surplus school sites into housing for first-time home buyers. The program offers deferred land payments for the first five years, reducing mortgage payments for program participants.

Program stipulations:

- Homes must be owner-occupied during the five years
- These townhome developments have condo-style management
- Applicants' personal net worth must be less than \$25,000
- Applicants must be employed and have combined household income of less than \$117,000
- The developer is guided by community input during the design of the First Place development in a formal design engagement process

Seniors housing

Responding to a growing need for seniors housing in the city as our population ages, Council approved eight surplus school sites in 2012 for seniors housing. Each development will include a mix of market and non-market units, and a range of levels of care from independent living through to supportive living.

In 2014, the Housing and Homelessness Section supported three public meetings conducted in the development of surplus school sites designated for seniors housing. Housing projects that supported mixed income and mixed uses were given priority for funding to support greater diversity and vibrancy within communities.

2014 Results

Of the six First Place sites under development:

- Two sites were sold out (Caernarvon: 74 homes; Tawa: 39 homes)
- Two are currently selling (Casselman: 49 homes; Kernohan: 62 homes)
- Seven First Place public open houses and design engagement meetings were completed for future sites
- Two seniors housing developments are planned for 2015



TRUE STORY: KAYLA CHORLEY

Just over a year ago, I decided it was time to think about buying my own home—a place close to my family. While researching online, I discovered First Place development.

The application process was easy. After disclosing my income and job, I qualified and got my mortgage right away. I watched over the next year as the building went up, and I began to plan for my new home.

Today, I am thrilled with my beautiful, spacious three-bedroom home. My neighbours are young professionals like me—some with families—so there's a nice dynamic in the building.

The five-year year deferral on land cost makes a huge difference for me too—it means I can pay down the principal much faster. I decided to pay my mortgage as if the land was included. Plus, my new space is so big and versatile that if I do get married and have children in the next five years, there's plenty of room to grow.



2. ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS



TRUE STORY: ALANNA

Today Alanna's life is bright—she has a two-year-old son, Joey, and another baby on the way. She lives with her partner in a house with a safe backyard for Joey to play, and she's upgrading to become a nurse. As a full-time student and expectant mother with a busy little boy, Alanna is exhausted but she's making her dreams come true.

A year and a half ago, life was not so rosy. Alanna and Joey were living in a hotel, and, unable to provide a home for her son, she felt inadequate. Fortunately, Alanna's social worker introduced her to the Housing First program. She and Joey moved into a small apartment, and her worker helped with finding furniture, dealing with bills and buying groceries. Alanna also joined the Foyer Program, which blends life coaching with career coaching and training, to help put her dream of becoming a nurse into action.

Housing First did more than house Alanna—she was supported in building new skills, confidence and resourcefulness. Alanna was determined to get her life together for Joey—and she's succeeded.

A stylized, light blue line drawing of various city buildings and houses, including some with multiple windows and gabled roofs, positioned along the left edge of the page.

Edmonton's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness

The City continued to invest in the 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness through funding and support for Homeward Trust Edmonton, the Greater Edmonton Foundation, homeEd and the Capital Region Housing Corporation.

The City's monetary investment in:

- 2013: \$5.54 million
- 2014: \$5.45 million

Homeward Trust is the management agency for the Plan to End Homelessness and the Housing First program, delivered through 12 agency teams. It is based on the principle that the only effective way to end homelessness is to provide housing and the supports needed to stay successfully housed. Programs offer four different levels of support, as shown in the Housing First Providers list.

Housing First providers:

Rapid re-Housing or intensive case management

- Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society
- Bill Rees YMCA
- Bissell Centre
- Boyle Street Community Services
- E4C
- George Spady Centre Society
- Hope Mission
- Jasper Place Health and Wellness

Assertive community treatment

- Alberta Health Services
- Boyle McCauley Health Centre

Permanent supportive housing

- George Spady Centre Society
- The Mustard Seed
- Schizophrenia Society of Alberta



Year 6 update

- A total of 3,525 previously homeless Edmontonians have now been housed, including 843 in 2014
- The Homeless Count was stable from 2012 and down 31% from 2008
- Of those housed in 2014 through Housing First, 77% were housed outside of the inner city
- 93% of people served through Housing First in 2014 have retained their housing
- In year 6, as in the previous two years, use of Edmonton's emergency shelters increased and exceeded funded capacity in all but the summer months. Shelter usage in January 2014 was higher than at the start of the 10 Year Plan
- Provincial funding for homeless supports increased in Year 6 by \$4,825,000, bringing the total to \$26,260,000 from the Government of Alberta
- The Capital Region Interfaith Housing Initiative renewed faith leaders' commitment to the 10 Year Plan
- Welcome Home continues to match community volunteers with newly housed Edmontonians to provide companionship and community supports: in year 5, 105 volunteers worked with 61 formerly homeless people

2014 client outcomes at nine months into the program:

- 21% reduction in court appearances
- 3% reduction in police interactions
- 41% reduction in EMS usage
- 39% reduction in days in hospital
- 79% reduction in clients with no income
- 10% of clients receiving income from employment (up from less than 1% at intake)





Year 6 successes

Sector collaboration

Part of the success behind the numbers of Edmontonians housed and receiving the supports they need to be successful is the way the sector works differently. While collaboration has been an ongoing hallmark of implementing the Plan, 2014 saw a number of different collaboratives emerge, which are having a direct impact on Edmontonians. The City of Edmonton Housing section provides leadership and support for many of these initiatives.

Heavy users of services

16 different agencies are now working together to develop coordinated case plans for 20 Edmontonians on a list of 75 heavy users of services. The goal is to provide intensive, holistic services to each person that enable him or her to overcome barriers in the journey to health and housing. For example, a person is released from the remand centre in the afternoon, but can't get into a detox facility until 9 the next morning. That means a night on the street, which could derail any good intentions. This is the kind of systemic gap the heavy users of service collaboration aims to address.

Inter-faith support

The Capital Region Interfaith Housing Initiative's support for the 10 Year Plan has resulted in action. The Welcome Home program, administered by Catholic Social Services, has matched community volunteers with newly-housed Edmontonians to provide companionship and connections to their new community. In 2014, faith leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the 10 Year Plan. Anglican Bishop Jane Alexander exhorted each faith community to continue to translate commitment to action, good intentions to deeds. Ending homelessness must involve all Edmontonians in order to be successful; and advocacy for the 10 Year Plan by the Housing Branch broadens community involvement.

Number of homeless Edmontonians stable despite population growth

Despite the influx of people into the city looking for work, and the corresponding pressure on housing, the 2014 Homeless Count, organized by Homeward Trust, found that the numbers of homeless Edmontonians remain stable from two years earlier. Housing First has been a "shock absorber" for what would otherwise have been increasing homeless numbers in Edmonton. Continued investment is essential to sustain and increase progress in a challenging economic and housing environment.





Year 6 challenges

Shelter use

While the number of people sleeping rough has declined dramatically, the 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness anticipated shelter use declining as well. That has not proven to be the case: for the third year in a row, shelter use has in fact increased, as shown in the 2014 Homeless Count.

Capital investment

Capital investment in affordable housing, and, in particular, permanent supportive housing, continues to fall behind. Appropriate supportive housing and continuing care spaces remain very limited for chronically homeless people with high cognitive and behavioural complexities.

Children and youth

Since 2012, the growing numbers of youth living on Edmonton's streets or couch surfing has been concerning. The 2014 Homeless Count reinforced the anecdotal evidence that front-line workers are seeing: the numbers of children and youth aged 24 or younger increased from 481 in 2012 to 562 in 2014. The Government of Alberta recognizes that youth homelessness is an urgent priority and has just released a plan to prevent and reduce youth homelessness, which aims to address the unique needs of youth. The focus is on family supports and reunification.

Families

Another disturbing trend corroborated in the 2014 Homeless Count is the growing number of families becoming homeless. Many end up in hotels sponsored by Human Services because emergency housing for families does not exist in our city. Each family's story is unique: a mom fleeing violence, a dad who couldn't pay the rent, a couple whose apartment was over-run by black mold and bedbugs. The result however is the same: 150 families in Edmonton living in hotels and motels in inappropriate, overcrowded conditions. Human Services and Homeward Trust have been working with the City of Edmonton, community agencies and landlords to move these families into safe housing with supports, but the need remains an urgent one.

Aboriginal people

The extent of Aboriginal homelessness continues to be a high priority for Edmonton. Almost half of homeless people identify as Aboriginal.

Growth

The 2014 Homeless Count indicated 16% of those enumerated had been in Edmonton for less than a year. This is one indicator of the pressures on the housing and supports system due to immigration.



3. HOUSING POLICY AND PLANNING



TRUE STORY: MARILYN GLADUE

Thousands of Metis Edmontonians find affordable homes through Metis Urban Housing—a subsidized program where tenants pay rent that is 25% of their gross income. However, the federal government is gradually removing the rent subsidies, meaning Metis Capital Housing has no choice but to raise the rent.

Marilyn Gladue, Edmonton & Rural Housing Manager, Metis Capital Housing Corporation, is working hard to give families a year to prepare for rent increases. But for some families, the choices are bleak—they can't pay the new rent, and they can't find anywhere else to go, leaving them homeless.

Representatives from the Landlord and Tenancy Board have helped Marilyn meet with tenants to explain the subsidy loss and subsequent rent increases. Ultimately, the Landlord and Tenant Advisory Board has helped restore trust between landlord and tenant by providing the information families they need to plan for their future.



Advocating for affordable housing

Administration continued its role advocating for housing through member organizations such as Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Capital Region Board, and the Edmonton Coalition on Housing and Homelessness. Federal and provincial funds will be essential to continue to build affordable housing for Edmontonians.

The City also engaged in advocacy and education about housing issues as part of its ongoing efforts to support Homeward Trust, the Edmonton Area Community Plan on Housing and Supports: 2011-2015, and Edmonton's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness.

Engaging the public about housing

Realizing Housing Potential

This is a City initiative engaging residents and stakeholders in identifying actions that will improve housing conditions and build on existing community strengths in five inner city neighbourhoods.

In 2014, housing staff conducted 27 meetings, reaching 265 people, achieving a mix of large-scale and focused community consultation for Realizing Housing Potential.

Finding Common Ground

Finding Common Ground is a research project looking at how to bring together developers, funders, regulators and citizens effectively to develop a fair, transparent process for creating new non-market housing in communities throughout Edmonton. A report was commissioned to find ways to address the root causes of conflict in the development of non-market housing and to build community trust in approval decisions.

Fixing Canada's Housing Crunch

In April 2014, Mayor Don Iveson hosted a housing roundtable in support of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) "Fixing Canada's Housing Crunch" national advocacy campaign. The round table brought experts from the finance sector, for profit and not-for-profit housing sector and government to discuss emerging housing issues and potential partnerships to address the housing crunch.

Subsequently, the Social Housing Regeneration Advisory Group was formed to engage in a multi-sector dialogue around the upcoming expiry of federal and provincial social housing operating agreements. The group will make recommendations to the mayor's office in spring 2015 about actions that the City of Edmonton and partners can take to regenerate Edmonton's existing social housing stock.





4. COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

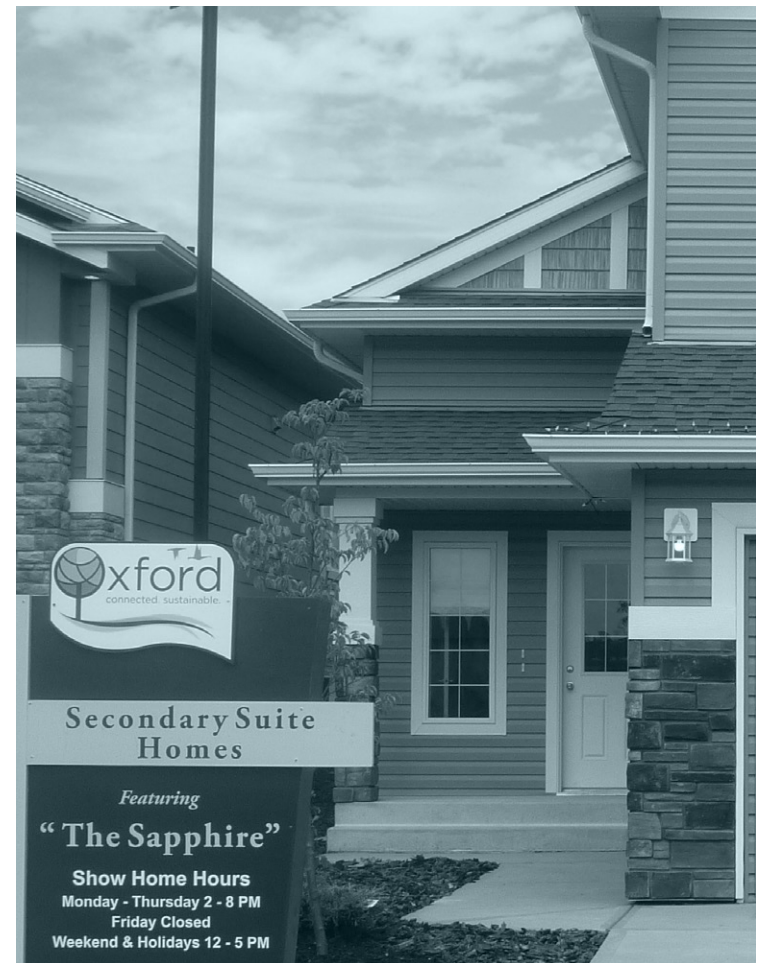
Landlord and Tenant Advisory Board

The Landlord and Tenant Advisory Board (LTAB) provides forms, advice, public education and mediation services to hundreds of landlords and tenants every day. The LTAB offers its popular Landlord Course and continues to promote the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program.

Housing staff support the Residential Compliance Team, and partner with the Edmonton Police Service (EPS) and housing agencies through training on landlord and tenant issues, Crime Free Multi-Housing, the Community Bridge Program and Project Watch. In 2014, due to the high number of EPS resources expended on landlord and tenant issues, the LTAB was added as a digital menu option in the EPS non-emergency interactive voice response system.

Community outreach

Administration participated in community outreach activities to promote housing programs at the Alberta Avenue Pop Up Market, Seniors Association of Greater Edmonton's Seniors Housing Forum, Canadian Bar Association Law Day, Financial Literacy Fair, Edmonton Connections, The Canadian Housing and Renewal Associations 2014 National Congress and the Edmonton Home and Garden Show.



2013-2014 RESULTS

Citizens served

2013  Over 28,500

2014  Over 27,000

Mediations and workshops

2013  263 with 765 participants  Exit survey score: 98% satisfied.

2014  214 with 1,287 participants  Exit survey score: 98% satisfied.

Properties upgraded by the Safe Housing and Derelict Housing teams

2013  315

Inspections conducted by the Safe Housing and Derelict Housing teams

2013  682+

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The City of Edmonton Housing Section acknowledges the support of the Government of Alberta, Government of Canada and Homeward Trust Edmonton, as well as the hard work of the many external and internal stakeholders in our city who help make housing initiatives happen. Housing needs could not be met without the ongoing support of all our partners, and the many other private and community-based housing provider agencies in Edmonton and the Capital Region.





Agencies involved in meeting housing and homeless needs in Edmonton

Government of Canada

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
780-423-8700 cmhc-schl.gc.ca

Employment and Service Development Canada
(Homelessness Partnering Strategy)
587-756-0715 esdc.gc.ca

Government of Alberta

Alberta Human Services
780-644-5135 seniors.alberta.ca

Alberta Seniors
780-644-9992 humanservices.alberta.ca

City of Edmonton

Housing & Homelessness Section, City of Edmonton
780-442-5311 edmonton.ca

homeEd
780-474-5706 myhomeed.ca

Landlord & Tenant Advisory Board
780-496-5959 edmonton.ca

Community Agencies

Boyle Street Community Services
780-424-4106 boylestreet.org

Capital Region Housing Corporation
780-420-6161 crhc.ca/contact-us.aspx

Capital Region Board
780-638-6000 capitalregionboard.ab.ca

Edmonton Coalition on Housing and Homelessness (ECOHH)
ecohh.ca

Greater Edmonton Foundation, Housing for Seniors
780-482-6561 gef.org

Habitat for Humanity Edmonton
780-479-3566 hfh.org

Homeward Trust Edmonton
780-496-2630 homewardtrust.ca

Metis Capital Housing Corporation
780-452-6440 Metiscapital.ca

Northern Alberta Co-operative Housing Association (NACHA)
780-482-6128 nacha.ca

Seniors Association of Greater Edmonton (SAGE)
780-423-5510 mysage.ca/about-us/contact-us

