

**We believe everyone in Ontario has the right to live poverty-free and with dignity in housing that is stable, adequate, equitably accessible and affordable.**

The Government of Ontario has committed to developing a Long-term Affordable Housing Strategy.\* According to the 2006 Census, 1-in-5 tenant households spend more than 50% of their income on rent, a figure that has remained constant for the past 10 years. Over 260,000 households are currently forced to make incredibly difficult choices between housing, food, clothing and other basic items that most Ontarians view as necessities.

The government must establish a housing strategy with firm targets and timelines to reduce and eventually eliminate the number of Ontarians in this situation – a strategy which meaningfully addresses the disproportionate experience of housing insecurity between different groups and communities.

Ontario's Long-term Affordable Housing Strategy must address four priorities:

1. **The affordability of housing**, including measures to increase the supply of affordable housing and to make existing housing more affordable.
2. **The availability of affordable housing** that is stable, safe and in a state of good repair, and which effectively addresses the diversity of needs in communities across Ontario.
3. **Supports, programs and protections** that help all Ontarians equitably access and maintain adequate affordable housing and thrive in their communities.
4. **A clear way to measure progress**, with overall and population specific targets and timelines to ensure that housing insecurity and homelessness are being meaningfully reduced.

**Creating and maintaining stable, equitably accessible and adequate affordable housing is good social policy.** People with stable housing are healthier, more productive, do better in school, and become more engaged in their neighbourhoods. Communities become stronger, jobs are created, a more competitive economy emerges and poverty will be reduced.

**The time is now.** A comprehensive and integrated long-term affordable housing strategy will bring hope to all Ontarians, particularly those in our cities and rural communities who are most in need: including homeless people, those living in inadequate housing, Aboriginal peoples, members of racialized communities, newcomers, women, people in need of supportive housing who live with mental health issues, experience with institutionalization, criminal justice system involvement, addictions, HIV/AIDS or disabilities and others.

**We call on leadership from the Province, to recognize that affordable housing is a priority in the fight to reduce poverty.**

By working with all orders of government and co-operating across Ministries, and with the contributions of people living on low incomes, we know that homelessness and housing insecurity can be eliminated.

*\*Breaking the Cycle: Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy, December 2008*

The **Housing Network of Ontario** is a network of anti-poverty activists, homelessness and social housing advocates, equity and human rights groups, non-profit organizations, tenants with lived experience of poverty and others who are working to ensure the provincial government delivers the integrated and fully-funded affordable housing strategy our communities need. For more information and to endorse the Declaration please visit [www.stableandaffordable.com](http://www.stableandaffordable.com). The Housing Network of Ontario is linked to the 25 in 5 Network for Poverty Reduction. For regular updates on advocacy work to push for an effective Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy, go to [www.25in5.ca](http://www.25in5.ca).

