

Manitoba Housing & Community Development

Strong Communities *An Action Plan*



HOUSING First
Community Places Program
HOMEWorks!
Homebuyer Down Payment Assistance
ALLAboard
Homeless Outreach Teams
Homeless
Neighbourhoods Alive!
Emergency Repair Program (ERP)
Neighbourhoods Alive!
HOMEWorks! Ownership Program
Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative (WHHI)





A Message from the Minister of Housing and Community Development

Manitoba Housing and Community Development, together with our community partners, is working to create strong, healthy and sustainable communities across our province. We are building for the future through innovative thinking and a renewed commitment to housing and community development as a provincial priority.

Created in consultation with the stakeholders, *Strong Communities: An Action Plan* recognizes that affordability, suitability and quality are the essential building blocks of healthy homes. We also acknowledge that housing exists within the community, not separate from it, and is central to the development of our neighbourhoods, towns and cities and the people who live in them. We know that housing plays a stabilizing and facilitating role in strengthening economic growth and providing a foundation for healthy outcomes. Our plan introduces new goals to support community and economic development, including training and employment initiatives, capturing local purchasing opportunities, and stewardship of the environment while reaffirming past priorities to sustain and improve existing social housing and develop new housing options for Manitobans.

The well-being of individuals and communities depends on meeting basic needs, poverty reduction, functioning housing markets and support for community building. Broad and strategic public policy moves us towards these goals. Our community consultations reveal that

an inclusive, collaborative approach that encourages engagement, co-operation and enhanced relationships with individuals and stakeholders is necessary for continued social and economic development in Manitoba. Our guiding principles reflect the shared values expressed by stakeholders, including individual independence and self-reliance, community development and self-determination, partnerships, and shared responsibility for housing markets and solutions.

The Department is committed to responsive housing and community development programs that are delivered respectfully to individuals, families and the many community partners who help us improve the housing circumstances of Manitobans. Service to our stakeholders and clients is a leading priority as we move forward.

Supporting individuals and neighbourhoods improves quality of life and creates vibrant and successful communities. I would like to thank all of our community partners, many of which are volunteer organizations, for their ongoing work, commitment and vision. It is only with their help that we can continue our efforts to reduce poverty, grow opportunities, and build strong, healthy, and sustainable Manitoba communities where individuals and families thrive.

Original signed by
Kerri Irvin-Ross, Minister
**Manitoba Housing & Community
Development**





Construction worker upgrading exterior of units at Lord Selkirk Park

Introduction

Manitoba Housing and Community Development is a department with a broad mandate that includes a range of housing and community development programs and activities.

Our role is to promote community development and create opportunities for people to engage in activities that promote well-being and social inclusion where they live. Housing is integral to this process and we strive to safeguard an adequate supply of safe and affordable housing in communities across Manitoba, particularly for those of low and moderate income or those with specialized needs. It is also our role to sustain and improve the condition of existing social housing and stimulate and influence the activities of the housing market to the benefit of Manitobans as a whole.

This Action Plan establishes a new Vision and Mission for Manitoba Housing and Community Development and outlines our principles and goals with identified actions that serve as a roadmap to guide the department's daily operations and future plans.

We have consulted with leaders, practitioners, advocates, and other housing and community development stakeholders to identify current gaps in departmental programs and activities and to determine where enhancements would be most helpful to achieve our mutual goals. Community stakeholders provided ideas and suggestions for stronger partnerships with the department as we move forward with our Action Plan.



Community Garden



Housing new Canadians

Manitoba Housing and Community Development Vision and Mission

Manitoba is building for the future with innovative thinking, renewed commitment, strong partnerships and a clear vision that recognizes housing and community development as a provincial priority. By working together with community partners, we are building communities and revitalizing neighbourhoods while engaging residents in the process. By embracing a service-oriented approach, Manitoba Housing and Community Development is working toward more positive relationships with our tenants, community residents and stakeholders.

Our Vision:

Strong, healthy and sustainable communities where individuals and families thrive.

Our Mission:

In partnership with Manitobans, we support the positive growth of communities across the Province by providing quality housing and supporting community development.

Manitoba Housing and Community Development:

A Complementary and Integrated Approach

Housing is central to the lives and well-being of individuals and families. Homes do not exist in isolation from their communities. Together, housing and other community characteristics influence the social, economic and general quality of life for residents. The three dimensions of housing and community: neighbourhoods, housing, and homes all play a critical role in providing stability for individuals, families and the community as a whole.

Manitoba Housing and Community Development links housing with related social, economic and community development programs and policies. This integration reflects the important connection between community and housing and increases opportunities for positive change in Manitoba's neighbourhoods. By integrating community development initiatives with quality, affordable housing options we are leading with a holistic approach that is unique to Manitoba. We are building on existing programs and resources in both the housing and community development areas, expanding our goals, and aligning with larger provincial social and economic strategies to strengthen communities throughout Manitoba.



Brandon Block Party hosted by Neighbourhoods Alive!

To achieve our vision for strong, healthy and sustainable communities, the public and private sectors, the social economy, and individuals must work together. A co-ordinated approach promotes self-sufficient communities, provides more affordable housing options, enhances services to Manitobans and boosts economic development in areas that need it most.

Manitoba has a rich history of community development. A diverse range of individuals and non-profit organizations have traditionally come together to address community needs and they represent our richest resource. We are making it easier for communities to work together with government and engage in project ownership and management activities. This Action Plan recognizes existing community and economic development priorities and builds on important housing initiatives that contribute to healthy communities where local people work together to meet local needs.

The Three Dimensions of Housing and Community



Neighbourhood:

support networks, social characteristics, local services, employment opportunities

House:

physical structure, design characteristics

Home:

social and psychological characteristics

What We Heard

Through a series of consultations across the province, our community partners identified their local needs and issues as well as their ideas on how to improve the quality of life for individuals, families and communities.

Feedback indicated communities with growing economies should be an important priority for housing and community development, as the demand for skilled labour attracts workers from different regions of the province and different parts of the world. The Province will support local development to help communities strengthen their capacities to address their own housing, social and economic issues. Communities have expressed that they want to determine their own solutions to address areas of concern.

Stakeholders said that community development in areas with social and economic disadvantages must remain a priority for investment. Community renewal and revitalization can be achieved by fostering community economic development and by growing co-operative and social enterprises. These activities provide unique opportunities for skills development, steady employment and a path out of poverty for households with low incomes. Housing is also among the many effective tools to foster economic and social development. Quality, affordable housing is the foundation of our communities and provides stability so people can succeed in their lives.

*Winnipeg Central Park
Women's Resource Centre*



Gilbert Park Community Garden event

Consultations also confirmed there is a range of population groups with unique and pressing housing requirements. To provide housing solutions for new Canadians, First Nations and Métis, seniors, and those at high risk of homelessness who may require support services, we require creative thinking, partnerships and community leadership. We heard a broad spectrum of fresh ideas, and commitments from our community partners to work with us to address these housing challenges.

Finally, stakeholders strongly advocated for a greater focus on youth in housing and community development activities. Investment in our young people must begin at an earlier age to achieve the best health, educational and social outcomes for our children. The community has asked us to work with other government and community partners to address the needs of children and youth.



Housing and Community are the Centre of Well-Being

A neighbourhood is the place with which we identify. Communities are defined by our social relationships. Community is strong to the extent that individuals identify with and support one another and work together for the common good.

- J. Diers, "From the Ground Up: Communities Role in Addressing Street Level Social Issues", 2008.



Housing fits in the middle of everything. It is physical design; it is community economic development; it is social development; it is important to health and education; it can be a poverty reduction tool and it is investment, a wealth creator and a generator of economic development. It is both an individual and public good.

- Modified from Myers, D., (2008). Failed Urban Policy: Tear Down HUD. PLANET July 2008

Our Principles

These core principles guide our activities and influence our interaction with tenants, community stakeholders and our partners.

- **Housing and community development issues are interrelated with health, education and social and economic well-being.** Manitoba Housing and Community Development must work with other provincial departments and agencies to develop and deliver appropriate policies and programs.
- **Investment is maximized through efficient and effective use of resources.** Manitoba Housing and Community Development must make the most of its investment by co-ordinating housing and community development programs and services with other public policy areas.
- **Increase independence and self-reliance of people and their communities.** Provincial housing and community development initiatives help local people meet local needs, and support the development of individual and community capacity.



Congregate Meal Employee of Manitoba Housing



Resource Assistance for Youth (RaY) Event

- **Partnerships strengthen the housing environment and our communities.** Governments, community groups, Aboriginal organizations, the private sector and all citizens must work together to build communities and support the effective functioning of the housing market.
- **Housing and healthy communities are a shared responsibility.** Individuals, communities, the private and non-profit sectors and all levels of government are responsible for good housing outcomes and healthy communities.
- **Housing and community development activities strive to promote social inclusion.** Citizens must be encouraged to help address local issues that affect their lives. We must support them in their efforts to increase their economic and social independence, personal accountability, individual choice and the equitable development of Manitoba communities. Manitoba Housing and Community Development activities and operations are designed to promote well-being and human dignity, provide local employment, develop local skills and knowledge, and encourage local ownership and decision-making, whenever possible.
- **Strong communities have a range of housing options and community development activities that foster economic, social and environmental goals.** A variety of tools are needed to respond successfully to the changing circumstances of residents and communities.

Multi-Year Action Plan

GOAL 1: PROMOTE AND SUPPORT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

ACTIONS:

- create strong partnerships with communities and other levels of government to support community and economic development
- actively work with municipalities, and industry, to develop housing solutions that support economic development
- foster community and neighbourhood revitalization initiatives through locally-based housing solutions
- promote active involvement of communities in local decision-making
- support initiatives that will help prevent and reduce crime, provide programs for youth, encourage recreational activity, beautify neighbourhoods and promote environmental sustainability
- create and support mixed-use, well balanced, diverse communities and housing projects
- hire local labour and purchase local materials, whenever possible, for Manitoba Housing and Community Development projects and initiatives

New addition to Kekinan Centre funded by Manitoba Housing and Community Development



RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS:

- In the past two years, Neighbourhoods Alive! has funded:
 - 153 neighbourhood renewal projects (\$4.8 million)
 - eight Community Initiatives (\$221,000)
 - 23 Community Youth Recreation projects (\$268,000)
 - eight arts projects (\$138,000)
 - 17 safety projects (\$724,000)
 - 11 training projects (\$269,000)
- introduced the \$1.8-million Localized Improvement Fund For Tomorrow (LIFT) program to rejuvenate five communities for the next four years: Elwick (Southeast Maples), Weston, Osborne Mayfair (Stradbrook), Alpine (Lavallee) and South Pembina
- provided \$9 million in the past two years to fund 625 Community Places Program projects across Manitoba for recreational and community infrastructure support
- introduced the First Sports Program, providing \$1 million in funding to create stronger communities and enhance the lives of Manitobans through investment in sport and recreational facilities
- provided employment opportunities for over 100 low-income tenants and community members during the completion of Manitoba Housing renovations and retrofits, through partnerships with Building Urban Industries through Local Development (BUILD), Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation and the North End Renewal Corporation
- reinvested \$4.3 million of profits from land development into Winnipeg's inner-city

IN THE WORKS:

- more interaction with the Association of Manitoba Municipalities
- proposed legislation to support community revitalization
- encourage mixed-income opportunities in new rental housing and in Manitoba Housing properties
- research on alternative building technologies that can be produced and procured locally



Natural Cycle Worker Co-op Limited

GOAL 2: BUILD GREATER COMMUNITY CAPACITY

ACTIONS:

- support co-operatives and enterprises that provide social, economic and environmental benefits to the community
- enhance individual capacities by promoting training and employment opportunities, financial literacy, homeownership / tenancy education
- provide information, advice and planning assistance to individuals, municipalities, and community groups across Manitoba, and establish a mutual knowledge-sharing relationship with all partners
- improve program delivery and client services by creating partnerships with, and building the capacity of, communities and non-profit housing groups and co-operatives

RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS:

- developed a group of programs, incentives and services for co-operative development, including a co-operative development tax credit, co-op development grants and loan guarantees
- granted 18 bursaries for tenants seeking post-secondary education under the BUILDING *Foundations* Bursary Fund over the past two years
- developed a new Tenant Information and Resource Handbook
- established Citizens on Patrol groups in Gilbert Park, Elwick Village, Brandon, Portage La Prairie, The Pas and Thompson
- worked with 68 community stakeholders to develop the Departmental Action Plan
- supported community development activities in 16 resource centres to improve tenant self-reliance and build community capacity
- established 15 tenant advisory committees in Winnipeg, and 40 tenant associations across the province to increase tenant involvement in their communities
- provided leadership in the development of the Provincial Bed Bug Management Strategy
- transferred the property management of two Manitoba Housing properties in Winnipeg to Sagkeeng Housing Authority to provide housing options to First Nations people who choose to live off-reserve
- created a communication and self-analysis handbook for sponsor managers to help the transition after the expiration of funding agreements

IN THE WORKS:

- reducing red tape for non-profit organizations and helping non-profits explore shared services
- delivery of a self-help manual for community groups and organizations looking to increase community housing options
- new multi-stakeholder co-operative legislation
- housing co-operative conversion in Gilbert Park
- homeownership program
- partnership with neighbourhood renewal corporations to plan and deliver future community-led infill housing initiatives in Winnipeg
- plan to establish a community liaison to assist municipalities in accessing housing programs

GOAL 3: SUSTAIN EXISTING SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING STOCK

ACTIONS:

- increase quality, functionality and financial viability of the existing social housing portfolio
- redirect surplus social housing through alternate uses, sales, relocation or demolition
- invest in green components, energy efficiency and water conservation upgrades
- assist non-profits and co-operatives to continue to provide affordable housing in their communities over the long term

Tenants relax outside newly renovated Manitoba Housing units at Gilbert Park



RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS:

- unprecedented investment to sustain existing social housing
- invested \$196 million in social housing renovations to improve the quality of housing for many Manitobans, maintain our buildings, and contribute to community revitalization efforts, including:
 - upgrading common areas and exteriors of Manitoba Housing buildings to protect the buildings and improve their general condition
 - renovating and expanding amenity areas to enhance supportive living and group meal experiences
 - converting bachelor suites to two and three-bedroom units to better serve populations with large families, particularly Aboriginal and new Canadian households
 - modifying 75 units to improve accessibility
- partnered with agencies to convert and manage housing projects to meet the needs of their client populations (eg: Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba, which provides housing for newcomers)
- upgraded energy efficiency and water conservation in new and existing social housing (includes new windows in 5,600 public housing units; 100 new roofs; 47 new heating and ventilation projects; and water saving retrofits to 1,700 housing units)
- new environmental considerations in purchasing

IN THE WORKS:

- additional \$85-million in social housing renovations in 2011/2012
- ongoing enhancements in Manitoba Housing security measures (ex: card access, camera systems)
- a Residential Green Building Policy to improve performance of new and renovated buildings
- funding for geothermal feasibility studies on new housing construction projects
- supporting non-profit and co-operative housing organizations with expiring operating agreements



Newly built homes for newcomers - Welcome Place

GOAL 4: ADDRESS AFFORDABILITY AND INCREASE SUPPLY OF QUALITY AFFORDABLE HOUSING

ACTIONS:

- improve housing affordability for families and individuals by supporting households with rent-geared-to-income (RGI) assistance
- increase the supply of affordable rental housing through: partnerships with private, non-profit and co-operative sectors; direct delivery of housing projects and programs; and better use of the province's social housing portfolio
- improve the quality of private homeowner and rental housing
- revitalize communities by developing homeownership opportunities
- encourage accessibility, and environmentally sustainable improvements, in the new supply of affordable housing

RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS:

- historic commitment and investment to increase affordable housing supply in Manitoba
- committed \$129 million for the construction of over 700 new affordable rental units as part of a commitment to build 1,500 new affordable rental housing units over a five year period (April 2009-March 2014)
 - to date, 327 units are accessible and 380 are built to interior visitable design standards
- committed 628 rent supplements as part of a commitment to provide 1500 households with rent-geared-to income over a five year period (April 2009-March, 2014)
- committed to \$4.3 million in homeownership initiatives, including community infill housing projects, in partnership with neighbourhood renewal corporations and Habitat for Humanity in Winnipeg and rural Manitoba
- committed to grants to 861 households for renovations (\$12.43 million)
- committed 600 portable housing benefits to help individuals with mental health needs
- established the Downtown Winnipeg Residential Development Grant program, providing \$10 million in grant assistance to developers of new residential accommodations

IN THE WORKS:

- delivery of 793 units of affordable rental housing and support 872 households with rent-geared-to-income (RGI) assistance in the remaining three years of the 1,500-unit commitment (\$234 million)
- comprehensive assessment of the RGI scale
- caps on rent to support existing tenancies in Manitoba Housing
- planned rental housing initiatives across Manitoba:
 - new seniors' housing strategy and request for proposal to develop 150 additional seniors' housing units
 - additional new family housing projects
- co-ordinating with regional health authorities (RHAs) and sponsor groups to provide assisted living and housing with support options
- a Rental Housing Roundtable to seek solutions to increase supply of affordable housing in Winnipeg
- easier and more inclusive access to renovation programs
- Downtown Winnipeg Residential Development Grant – Phase II

GOAL 5: ENHANCE CLIENT OPPORTUNITIES AND SERVICES

ACTIONS:

- improve access to social housing for low-income households working toward independence
- link development, renovation and maintenance of Manitoba Housing with training and employment initiatives to help build the capacity of social housing tenants
- provide housing options to support seniors, people with mental illnesses, the homeless and other vulnerable populations
- provide services that improve the health and well-being of social housing tenants
- improve the co-ordination of housing program delivery with other human services and community development programs
- utilize the “housing first” model where appropriate (a client centered approach which views housing as a first step in achieving stability and improvement in all other areas of homeless people’s lives)



Bell Hotel undergoing renovations funded by Manitoba Housing

RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS:

- increased case-management services to support successful tenancies
- supported delivery of homelessness programs, including the provision of permanent housing with supports, the Outreach Mentorship Program and Project Breakaway
- committed to housing projects with support services including MYTEAM; Salvation Army Placement Project; Mental Health Commission of Canada; and Supportive Housing
- provided transitional housing options for victims of violence and youth at risk through RaY
- Bell Hotel “housing first” model for homeless people or those at risk of becoming homeless (with 24-hour access to onsite support services)

IN THE WORKS:

- streamlining the Manitoba Housing application process to improve access
- better access to tenant service co-ordinators and expansion of services in rural areas
- initiative to assist vulnerable Manitoba Housing tenants prepare for bed bug treatment
- management of service integration and delivery, and liaisons with agencies that provide human services to area tenants
- support of the Aging in Place Principles through the development of assisted living models and housing projects with supports
- River Point Centre (addictions treatment and transitional housing)

The centre will:

- co-ordinate a continuous range of service providers to create and maintain a five-step treatment facility, including transitional housing
- provide transitional housing to individuals and families receiving medical care and treatment in Winnipeg



Tenants enjoying entertainment in Central Park

GOAL 6: BUILD CAPACITY OF MANITOBA HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

ACTIONS:

- promote a service-oriented environment by simplifying administration
- provide a person-centered approach to tenant relations, and a service-oriented framework to foster relations with key stakeholders
- implement a community-based Northern Housing Strategy
- provide leadership and outreach to groups/communities to strengthen local capacities and resources for community development
- work together with other departments to align strategies and programs
- strengthen the Department's leadership role by developing its capacity for research, information and education

RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS:

- established a Northern Region Branch to bring together administrative and reporting responsibilities for northern housing units, the Rural & Native Housing program and northern Neighbourhoods Alive!
- formed partnership with Manitoba Centre for Health Policy to further research in housing
- departmental co-chair of ALL Aboard Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategy
- identified housing and community development policies that link with Manitoba's Action Strategy for Economic Growth
- identified industry's best practices to help Manitoba Housing modernize and reduce costs
- developed staff capacity in Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)
- implemented a regional service delivery model for the department's social housing portfolio
- increased diversity in departmental recruitment strategies

IN THE WORKS:

- service excellence framework for tenants, employees, and stakeholders
- new tenant relations strategy based on a person-centered approach
- building of internal human resource expertise and capacity to reduce using outside contractors
- cultural training for staff
- work with the Canadian Centre on Disability Studies (CCDS) on research about liveable and inclusive communities for seniors with disabilities
- customer service-tenant relations training plan that will enhance program and service delivery to clients
- one-stop-shop at regional offices for applicants and tenants
- pilot project for onsite community resident managers

Definitions

Adequate housing: This term relates to the physical condition of a dwelling unit. Adequate housing means the basic physical facilities are not in need of major repair and are in safe condition.

Affordable housing: This term refers to a benchmark in housing analysis to determine if there is sufficient income to spend on shelter. A household paying 30 percent or more of its pre-tax income for housing is considered to have affordability problems.

Community capacity building: Community capacity building involves people working together, learning, planning, and developing programs, services and networks that develop communities. It is an ongoing process that involves community education and awareness, organizational and strategic development.

Community development: This is the process of developing active, sustainable communities, based on social justice and mutual respect. This process involves removing barriers that prevent people from participating in the issues that affect their lives. It also means improving the social, political and economic well-being of people and the structures that support them.

Community economic development (CED): CED is a process that helps communities help themselves through a coordinated approach to community revitalization, involving social, economic, cultural and environmental goals. As an alternative to traditional economic development that typically brings development from the outside, the CED approach is based on the belief that community problems must be addressed in a holistic, participatory way from the inside.

Environmental sustainability: This refers to the process of developing land, cities, businesses and communities to meet current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It recognizes that social, economic and environmental issues are interconnected.

Household: The concept of household applies to a person or group of persons who occupy the same dwelling. The household may consist of a family, of two or more families sharing a dwelling, of a group of unrelated persons or of a person living alone.

Housing First: This is a client-centred centered model which views housing as a first step in achieving stability and improvement in all other areas of homeless people's lives.

Rent geared to income: The amount of rent charged is based on a percentage of pre-tax household income.

Social housing: This is rental housing which may be owned and/or operated by a provincial or municipal agency, not-for-profit organizations, or by a combination of the two, usually with the aim of providing affordable housing for low-moderate income individuals or families.

Social economy: The social economy, also known as the third sector, is different from the private and public sectors. It includes components of the economy that work to address social issues that negatively affect specific population groups, communities or economic sectors. It is an enterprise development approach that emphasizes the creation of new, collective enterprises and social entrepreneurship. The social economy includes the activities of groups and individuals working in community and social development, cooperatives and the voluntary sector.

Suitable housing: This term refers to a dwelling that is not overcrowded, meaning that it has sufficient bedrooms for the size and make-up of the occupying household.

Well-being: Refers to the physical, mental, social, spiritual and economic health of an individual or group.

Cette information existe également en français.