



ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY  
ORGANIZATIONS FOR REFORM NOW

**ACORN**  
**CANADA**

**Toronto, ON. Sep 15, 2025**— ACORN welcomes the federal government's launch of Build Canada Homes (BCH), a new federal agency tasked with building affordable housing at scale. We look forward to more details to better understand the scale of new non-market affordable housing, as well as the ownership models and affordability terms of the plan to “build affordable homes for the Canadian middle class”. We also seek clarification with a concern in the mandate that states: “Help create the conditions for a high-capacity, growth oriented non-market housing sector that can scale, built on new and **innovative partnerships with reduced reliance on ongoing government subsidies**”

ACORN finds the “primary focus” on non-market housing encouraging. The first projects will be on federal land, focused on “affordable mixed-income communities”. However, the affordability terms and criteria need to be transparent and public. The strength of this project will be determined by how much is truly affordable at less than 30% of income for those in core housing need.

ACORN also congratulates Ana Bailão on her appointment as Chief Executive Officer of BCH and looks forward to sharing community input and policy recommendations from tenants.

As the federal government itself has acknowledged, building is only part of addressing the affordable housing crisis. Data shows we are losing affordable homes faster than we can build them. 322,600 low-rent units were lost between 2011–2016, meaning 15 affordable homes disappeared for every one built.<sup>1</sup> On top of this, over 180,000 non-profit homes have been lost since 2015 as operating agreements expired.<sup>2</sup>

ACORN is pleased that protecting existing affordable housing was mentioned. The announcement included that the \$1.5-billion Rental Protection Fund will be moved under the BCH. This is an important program; however, there appears to be no new money allocated for this program since its initial \$1.5 billion allocation in Budget 2024.

1. Pomeroy, S. (2020). *Augmenting the National Housing Strategy with an Affordable Housing Acquisition Program*. Focus Consulting Inc. <https://www.focus-consult.com/wp-content/uploads/Augmenting-the-NHS-with-an-Acquisition-Strategy-June-2020.pdf>
2. Daniels, C., & August, M. (2024). *Acquisition for affordable housing: Creating non-market supply and preserving affordability*. UBC Housing Assessment Resource Tools (HART). <https://hart.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/HART-Acquisition-Report.pdf>
3. Pomeroy, S. (2024, February 26). *Filling the hole in the bucket: Loss of existing affordable rentals massively undermining new affordable supply*. Canadian Housing Evidence Collaborative (CHEC). <https://chec-ccri.ca/filling-the-hole/>



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What was missing from this announcement is the federal government leveraging federal funding and incentives to protect existing affordable housing. Data shows that building is only part of the solution, and the government needs to add conditionality to all new agreements with provinces to close rent-control loopholes. The federal government needs to structure agreements to include protections, such as closing rent control loopholes and ending fixed-term leases that are eroding existing affordable housing.

For example:

- NS: Halifax saw a reduction of over 20% in affordable units from 2011 to 2021<sup>3</sup>. Fixed-term leases have led to massive rent hikes across Halifax.
- ON: If new developments are structured like Toronto's Housing Now, any market-rate new builds will not be subject to rent control!

ACORN is calling on the federal government to not only build, but also protect homes. We look forward to seeing the outcomes of the BCH, and hope that next steps in this process will include the voices of tenants and tenant unions.

In solidarity,

Alejandra Ruiz-Vargas

ACORN Canada, President

1. Pomeroy, S. (2020). *Augmenting the National Housing Strategy with an Affordable Housing Acquisition Program*. Focus Consulting Inc. <https://www.focus-consult.com/wp-content/uploads/Augmenting-the-NHS-with-an-Acquisition-Strategy-June-2020.pdf>

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