

Federal government to provide \$24.8M for housing projects in Edmonton

📅 Thursday, March 18, 2021

By [Jackson Spring](#)

The federal government has [pledged \\$24.8 million](#) to cover the capital costs of four housing projects in Edmonton, through the Canada Housing and Mortgage Corporation's (CHMC) [rapid housing initiative](#).

Ahmed Hussen, Canada's minister of families, children, and social development, said the projects will address the increased risk of homelessness in Edmonton due to the COVID-19 pandemic, especially among seniors and Indigenous people.

"This pandemic has underscored and made ... existing housing challenges (worse)," Hussen said in an announcement on March 17. "Those who are at increased risk of experiencing homelessness will soon have a new place to call home."

The projects include 130 units of supportive housing, spread out over three new buildings in Inglewood, Terrace Heights, and Westmount. The properties will be owned by the City of Edmonton, and operated by [Homeward Trust](#).

Mayor Don Iveson said the projects will aim to help Indigenous Edmontonians in particular, who he said are 10 times more likely to experience homelessness than non-Indigenous Edmontonians.

According to 2018 data collected by Homeward Trust, [62% of Edmontonians experiencing homelessness identified as Indigenous](#), compared to 6% of the general population.

Susan McGee, CEO of Homeward Trust, said the projects are "critical," in helping the organization meet its [goal of ending chronic homelessness](#) by 2022.



A rendering of the new building in Terrace Heights, which consists of 40 units of affordable housing. (City of Edmonton)

The fourth project is a 37-unit expansion of Lauderdale Homes, a low-income seniors home.

"With this funding ... we are tripling the amount of affordable housing we can offer to low-income seniors in this community," said Raymond Swonek, CEO of [GEF Seniors Housing](#), which owns Lauderdale Homes.

Iveson stressed the importance of federal funding for affordable housing projects. He said the city was looking into using funds from its housing reserve for the projects, but that was a "last resort."

"This leaves some dollars in our housing reserve that we'll be able to use for other housing priorities," he added.

The City of Edmonton asked the provincial government for another \$5.9 million to cover some of the projects' operating costs, but that request has not been approved to date. Iveson says the city is moving forward with construction regardless, and it will find a way to fill the funding gap at a later time.

"I'm not going to play the kind of hardball that says we're building them, and who knows if we'll turn the lights on," he said. "The need is too great to play those kinds of games."

Hussen also echoed the need for all orders of government to work together on housing issues.

"If we have any chance to eliminate chronic homelessness, we can't do it alone as the Government of Canada. Municipal governments can't do it alone, and the provinces and territories can't do it alone," he said.

"We all need to do our part."

Written by:



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