

## BUILDING WITH MISSION

### Our Contribution to Canada's National Housing Strategy

#### Background Information

The federal government is re-engaging in affordable housing through Canada's National Housing Strategy (<https://www.placetocallhome.ca/>). The strategy provides a platform for the public, private and non-profit sectors to come together. Their collaborative efforts will provide more Canadians with a place to call home.

The goal of this historic strategy is to make sure Canadians across the country can access housing that meets their needs and that they can afford. Over the next 10 years, the Strategy will:

- cut chronic homelessness in half
- remove 530,000 families from housing need
- invest in the construction of up to 125,000 new affordable homes

To achieve the goal, the strategy will first focus on the **most vulnerable Canadians**. In this respect, the language of Catholic social teaching and the work of the federal government are aligned in a desire to take action to identify and respond to needs in local communities.

Multiple research projects are pointing that to the fact that adequate housing are social determinants of health and wellbeing leading to positive influence of people's health.

#### **Society of Saint Vincent de Paul & Catholic Health Alliance of Canada**

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul (SSVP) and the Catholic Health Alliance of Canada (CHAC) are two Catholic organizations that are national in scope, each having identified as a priority the need to improve the availability of safe, secure and affordable housing.

SSVP, a member of Famvin, the Vincentian Family, is a large provider of affordable housing and shelters in North America and has several active housing projects in communities across Canada. SSVP's strategic initiatives include a national action campaign entitled *Safe, Secure and Affordable Housing is a Human Right*.

Improving the supply and affordability of housing is consistent with the "Serve" pillar of CHAC's strategic plan:

*"Leveraging our legacy through collaboration and innovation, we will work together and with others to forge new paths for greater service, advocate for change and work to transform the health care system for those most vulnerable in society."*

CHAC has received funding from Canada Mortgage and Housing (CMHC) for a project called *Building With Mission*, and has several active housing projects in communities across Canada. Recognizing that no single organization has the skills, expertise and resources to create housing for seniors, *Building With Mission* has created a playbook to engage any mission driven health care organization wanting to enter the housing arena. Tools have been developed, which can be reviewed at [www.buildingwithmission.ca](http://www.buildingwithmission.ca).

### The Work of the Church

- ✓ This work of SSVP and CHAC closely links with the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops' 2019 paper, *Poverty in Canada – Ensuring Safe, Secure and Affordable Housing*, and provides definitive action steps in response to the bishops' encouragement for collaboration between charitable organizations, local governments, parishes and individuals.
- ✓ SSVP and CHAC demonstrate the broader Catholic community in action to improve our communities!
- ✓ We want to better understand how we can better mobilize our organizations to play a community leadership role, working together and with secular partners, in helping to implement Canada's National Housing Strategy:
  - Over 800 local SSVP chapters
  - 129 health organizations with Catholic identity from coast-to-coast

**With a solid national vision and momentum established, SSVP and CHAC now want to work collaboratively to inspire local initiatives in communities across Canada.**

### Potential Future Actions

- Engagement with Catholic Women's League
- Engagement with Knights of Columbus
- Meeting with Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion
- Update to Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops
- Other

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