



Invest in Housing in Budget 2015

What is needed? Right to Housing and Make Poverty History Manitoba are calling on the Province of Manitoba to make the following investments in Budget 2015:

- 1. Increase the housing budget by \$30 million to adequately fund existing commitments to increase supply without reducing other important housing initiatives including the existing social housing stock.**
- 2. Increase the maximum Rent Assist benefit level to equal 75% of median market rent.**

Background

Access to safe, quality, and affordable housing continues to be a serious challenge for Manitobans living with low incomes. Low vacancy rates combined with a growing population and increased demands for affordable housing have contributed to rising housing costs. Rental rates across Manitoba have increased by 60 to 65 percent since 2000. As housing costs become more unaffordable in the private market, the demand for social housing has gone up. The solution requires both increasing the supply of social housing and increasing financial assistance to help low-income Manitobans pay for housing costs.

New Social and Affordable Housing – addressing the supply side of the equation

The Province has taken significant steps to increase the supply of social and affordable housing across Manitoba. However, much more needs to be done to address the need. The Province's most recent commitment is to build 500 new units each of social and affordable housing by 2016. However, the department responsible for housing did not receive a funding increase in Budget 2014. Community groups are concerned that without an increase to the housing budget, commitments will be met at the expense of other important existing housing initiatives.

Rent Assist – addressing the demand side of the equation

In 2013, more than 145 organizations across Manitoba endorsed Make Poverty History Manitoba's call to increase the rental allowance to 75% of median market rent (MMR). The Province responded in 2014 with Rent Assist - a new financial benefit to help low-income Manitobans (on and off EIA) with housing costs. The government has committed to increase the maximum Rent Assist benefit level to 75% of MMR within four years. Last year's budget raised benefits by between \$50 and \$70. However, further increases of between \$150 and \$350 depending on family type are needed. Manitobans need improved access to affordable housing now and are calling for the target benefit to be reached in Budget 2015 without reducing other important income benefits.

Target Rent Assist benefit by EIA family type			
EIA family type	Current Rent Assist Benefit	Target Rent Assist Benefit*	Requested increase in Budget 2015
Single: General Assistance	\$435.00	\$586.50	\$151.50
Single: Person with a Disability	\$435.00	\$586.50	\$151.50
Lone Parent, 1 child	\$437.00	\$736.50	\$299.50
Couple, 2 Children	\$521.00	\$871.50	\$350.50

* Target rent benefit is 75 percent of median market rent using: one bedroom for a one person household; two bedrooms for a two person household; and three bedroom for a three or more person household.

For more information contact Clark Brownlee at coordinator@righttohousing.ca

Right to Housing is a Winnipeg-based coalition consisting of 50 organizations working together to promote affordable and social housing. **Make Poverty History Manitoba (MPHM)** is a multi-sectoral coalition committed to changing public policy to achieve a Manitoba without poverty.