

**For immediate release
Media Advisory**

It's Time for Action in Budget 2019

Community Organizations Unite with Proposed Solutions to Ottawa's Housing Crisis

January 28, 2019 (Ottawa) — Every person deserves a safe, stable, long-term and deeply affordable place to live. With more than 45,000 low-income Ottawa households paying more than 30 percent of their income on rent (2016 Census) and a pressing emergency in family homelessness, the crisis in our city has only deepened.

With a newly elected city council and a draft budget to be tabled in early February, city councillors have an opportunity to work with organizations and local residents to ensure that tenants living on low income and Ottawa's most vulnerable residents get the support they need.

So that people can access and maintain housing that is affordable for their income, 64 organizations, networks and coalitions from across Ottawa have joined together to make four asks of Ottawa City Council to address our city's affordable housing crisis. A petition has been signed by more than 1600 people who also support the asks:

1. Invest at least \$12 million, over and above federal and provincial grants, in the 2019 City Budget. This could double the number of new affordable homes supported by the City and leverage at least \$12 million more from other sources.
2. Pass a strong citywide inclusionary zoning by-law that ensures 25% of new development is dedicated to affordable housing and places a special emphasis on deeply affordable housing within 1 km of rapid transit stations
3. Ensure that all available government-owned land within 1 km of current & future rapid transit stations is used for non-profit and co-op housing
4. Create a 2019-2022 Term of Council Priority that integrates transit and planning, with clear, affordable housing targets.

With these four asks, 64 organizations are collectively calling on the City to seriously commit to tackling our affordable housing crisis. The organizations, coalitions and networks include the Ottawa Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), Alliance to End Homelessness Ottawa, City for All Women Initiative (CAWI), Centretown Citizens Ottawa Corporation (CCOC), Healthy Transportation Coalition, Coalition of Community Health and Resource Centres (CCHRC), Making Voices Count (MVC) along with 57 others (See the complete list below). A petition has been signed by 1,600 people.

QUOTES

Elizabeth Aguilar, an Ottawa ACORN member and recently single mother of two, describes her story trying to find housing, "After a family dynamic that was in survival mode for 3 years became toxic, I ended up in a women's shelter. I was there for 9 months. While I was lucky they accepted my call for help, the social worker explained to me I had limited housing options and I should accept anything no matter what it was given the situation I was in. I have worked 2 jobs to sustain my children and it has been so challenging. When you understand that someone can make quick decisions to move you or kick you out you feel a knot in your throat, a pain in your

chest and think, Oh my God, I'm going to be homeless with my kids. I think the City is viewing the housing problem from a business perspective when we need to think of it as a moral responsibility as well.”

“My name is Appolinaire; I have a family of 11 individuals: myself, my wife, our two daughters and seven boys aged from 18 and 1 year. In July 2014, due to lack of housing, my family lived in a shelter where physical conditions were really bad and unhealthy. After a couple of months we were moved into a motel and piled up in 3 very small rooms. Not only was the space small, but it was also full of bugs (bed bugs, cockroaches, etc.). It is unthinkable to see 11 individuals live in a 3 small room space and in such conditions! But because of unemployment and lack of affordable housing we had to stay and endure living in an unhealthy and unsafe place with no dignity! For me, the lack of healthy and safe affordable housing is a huge issue and a concern in our communities. Many families live without dignity in shelters/motels for many, many months! I hope that our elected council will consider adding the healthy and safe affordable housing in the City budget.”

Available for an interview:

For more information and comment, please contact:

Organizations:

- ACORN: To speak with a low-income ACORN board member contact Ashley Reynolds, head organizer, at 613-447-4270 or ottawa@acorncanada.org (English and French)
- Alliance to End Homelessness: Kristen Holinsky (English), executive director, kholinsky@endhomelessnessottawa.ca, 613-700-7522.
- Centretown Citizens Ottawa Corporation: Ray Sullivan, 613-294-9840, ray.sullivan@ccochoosing.org
- City for All Women Initiative:
 - Suzanne Doerge (English), executive director, sdoerge@cawi-ivtf.org, 613-526-5240
- Coalition of Community Health and Resource Centres:
 - Emilie Hayes (English), ehayes@swchc.on.ca, 613-295-1291
 - Andrea Poncia (French), aponcia@swchc.on.ca, 613-325-2619.
 - Michel Gervais (English and French), executive director, Vanier Community Resource Centre, 613-794-6398
 - Naini Cloutier (English), executive director, Somerset West Community Health Centre, 613-324-7873
- Housing Help: Mayse Abu-Shaaban, Housing Caseworker, 613-563-4532 Ext: 233, Mayse@housinghelp.on.ca
- Making Voices Count: Tong Zhao-Ansari (English), tzhaoansari@cawi-ivtf.org, 613-408-6001

Residents:

- Lisa Quesnel (English), resident leader, lisaq246@hotmail.com, 613-261-5411
- Appolinaire Mushana (French), resident leader, aponet99net@yahoo.ca, 418-473-6950, or 819-329-5085
- To speak with an ACORN tenant leader, contact Ashley Reynolds, head organizer, at 613-447-4270 or ottawa@acorncanada.org (English and French)

List of organizations and groups who endorsed the affordable housing asks:

1. Action Logement
2. Alliance to End Homelessness Ottawa
3. Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN)

4. Amethyst Women's Addiction Centre
5. Anglican Diocese of Ottawa
6. Canadian Union of Postal Workers, Central Region
7. Canadian Union of Postal Workers, Local 580
8. Carlington Community Health Centre
9. Centretown Citizens Ottawa Corporation (CCOC)
10. Centretown Community Health Centre
11. City for All Women Initiative (CAWI)
12. Coalition of Community Health and Resource Centres
13. Commission de logement-Vanier
14. Community Ministries of Ottawa
15. Community Legal Services
16. Co-op Housing Association of Eastern Ontario
17. Cornerstone Housing for Women
18. Cumberland Housing Corporation
19. Dalhousie Food Cupboard
20. Eastern Ottawa Resource Centre
21. Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (Ottawa–Carleton)
22. Gignul Non-Profit Housing Corporation
23. Gloucester Emergency Food Cupboard
24. Gloucester Non-Profit Housing Corporation
25. Harmony House
26. Healthy Transportation Coalition
27. Housing Help
28. Immigrant Women's Services Ottawa (IWSO)
29. Interval House
30. Jewish Family Services of Ottawa
31. KIGONI
32. Lowertown Community Resource Centre
33. Maison d'amitié
34. Making Voices Count
35. Manordale-Woodvale Community Association
36. MAP Reintegration
37. Multifaith Housing Initiative
38. Nelson House
39. Nepean Housing Corporation
40. Nepean Rideau Osgoode Community Resource Centre
41. OMRA-Shelter Alternatives
42. Operation Come Home
43. Orleans-Cumberland Community Resource Centre
44. Ottawa Chinese Community Service Centre
45. Ottawa Coalition to End Violence Against Women (OCTEVAW)
46. Ottawa & District Labour Council
47. Ottawa Salus
48. Ottawa Supportive Housing Network
49. Parkdale Food Centre
50. Planned Parenthood Ottawa
51. Rideau Rockcliffe Community Resource Centre
52. Sandy Hill Community Health Centre
53. Sexual Assault Support Centre of Ottawa
54. Solidarité Mbondo Ottawa-Gatineau

55. Somali Women's Circle Network
56. Somerset West Community Health Centre
57. South East Ottawa Community Health Centre
58. St. Joe's Women's Centre
59. The Hurt Association
60. The Well
61. Vanier Community Service Centre
62. Ward 9 Older Adult and Persons with Disabilities Advisory Group
63. Women's Initiatives for Safer Environments (WISE)
64. Youth Services Bureau