

The federal budget offers little hope to tens of thousands of Edmontonians struggling with homelessness or living in bad shelter.

It could have been worse. Edmonton Coalition on Housing and Homelessness (ECOHH) welcomes renewal of the Homelessness Strategy, unfortunately with a cut of 10 percent, and the Affordable Housing Initiative, at the current level. This latter money depends on signing agreements with provinces, and Alberta has a poor record doing this in a timely way. It leaves decisions about how the money can be used to the province too. Alberta's share from the two programs will be less than \$40 million per year.

2013 federal funding of all housing programs is down to \$2 billion, from \$3 billion in 2010, and scheduled to go down further. This is at a time when there are 1.5 million households precariously housed in Canada. Edmonton alone is short 25,000 units of non-market housing now, with thousands more people moving here each year.

Without secure affordable decent housing where people can manage lives successfully, social costs for governments go up and people's possibilities to be successful (and pay taxes and spend money in the community!) go down. The overall economic cost of not investing in housing is great.

ECOHH will continue to call on all governments to recognize it is both fair and smart to increase the commitment to fund housing.

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