Review Panel on the Lack of Accessible Housing in Canada – Information Flyer

Introduction

Housing is a fundamental human right in Canada—which means that everyone should have access to safe, accessible housing where they can live their lives with dignity.

But many people with disabilities in Canada cannot find housing that meets their needs.

27% of Canada's population (that's around 11 million people) live with a disability,[1] yet our current housing system often leaves them behind. This violates Canada's commitments to uphold housing as a human right for all under international human rights law.

What are the Barriers to Accessible Housing and What Rights do they Violate?

1. Lack of Affordable & Accessible Housing

- People with disabilities often earn less income, making it hard to afford suitable housing in their communities that meets their needs.
- Even when housing is affordable, it may not be accessible—leading to a poorer quality of life, loss of independence, increased risk of injury, and limits access to employment, education, and healthcare.
- Publicly funded housing or subsidized housing has **long waitlists**, and **only 9% of units are accessible**.
- Many affordable units still have stairs, narrow doorways, no visual fire alarms, no accessible elevators, lacks automated lighting or heating systems, adjustable counter tops in the kitchen etc.

Homes must be inclusive and should cater to all needs so that everyone can live independently and with dignity. **The lack of affordable and accessible housing violates Article 28 and General Comment 2 on Article 9 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).**

[1] Any impairment that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person's full and equal participation in society. A disability might include an impairment or functional limitation that is physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication, or sensory and it can be episodic, temporary or permanent.

2. Institutionalization

Because people cannot find accessible housing in their communities, they are often forced to live in:

- Hospitals
- Long-term care homes
- Other institutions far from family and community

These institutions were designed for medical care, not long-term living. Institutionalization of people with disabilities take away people's autonomy and right to live independently. **This violates Article 19 of the CRPD.**

3. Lack of Security of Tenure & Discrimination

People with disabilities often face:

- Unfair treatment by landlords
- Informal evictions without a chance to present their case
- Barriers to accessing legal help because they cannot afford a lawyer

These forms of discrimination impacts a person's ability to engage with access-to-justice mechanisms, **which in turn violates Article 13 of the CRPD.**

What Can Community Advocates Do?

Under Canada's **National Housing Strategy Act (NHSA)**, you have the right to speak up about housing barriers through a human rights process called review panels. Review panels are made up of 3 members of the National Housing Council. They listen to individuals and communities through written and oral submissions and collect evidence about how housing issues are affecting people's human rights across the country.

Another important mechanism that is formed under the NHSA is the Federal Housing Advocate. The Advocate looks into serious housing issues that communities are facing and gives advice to the federal government on how to fix those problems in a way that respects human rights.

Review Panel on the Lack of Accessible Housing in Canada

A new review panel has just been formed to look into the lack of accessible housing[2] in Canada as requested by the Federal Housing Advocate.

From March 26 to June 5 of 2026, the review panel will be accepting written submissions from community advocates, organizations, and lived experts. In the summer, the panel will be scheduling oral hearings where lived experts, advocates, and organizations can directly share their concerns in person or online, on the lack of accessible housing in Canada. To know more about this review panel please see here.

After these hearings, the review panel will issue human rights findings and recommendations to the federal Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, who will have 120 days to make a formal response.

Here's how you can engage with the review panel:

1. **Use our submission template to make your submission**

Hear from people who are directly affected by inaccessible or unaffordable housing—and help bring forward solutions grounded in their lived experiences Follow the template and our human rights language guide to prepare strong, rights-based submissions.

When you are making your submissions do remember to share:

- Impact of lack of accessible housing on your community
- Gaps in housing, services, or policies that makes it difficult for people with disabilities to find safe and accessible housing
- Solutions that governments and communities can lead to address these gaps

2. **Mobilize your community**

- Host conversations
- Educate people about the right to housing
- Support community members to make submissions on their own experiences

[2] For the review panel, accessible housing is defined as a home that is designed or adapted to remove barriers and enable safe, independent living for all people.

Let’s Make This Opportunity Count

Your voice can help change Canada’s housing system.
Together, we can push for **accessible, affordable housing for all**.

If you’re unable to make a submission alone and have no one to make a submission on your behalf, **contact us** and we can connect you with a **local or national housing organization** who may be able to help.

This flyer was made possible through the generous support of The Law Foundation of Ontario.

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