

# CANADA'S FIRST HOUSING ADVOCATE

## THE ISSUE: WHAT'S AT STAKE?

It has been over a year since the Government of Canada made its historic commitment to the progressive realization of the human right to housing via the **National Housing Strategy Act (NHSA)**. A key pillar of the NHSA is the creation of the role of the Federal Housing Advocate. Canada will see the **elimination of homelessness and a significant reduction in inadequate housing** if those who have borne the brunt of Canada's housing crisis are able to exercise their human right to housing through a strong Federal Housing Advocate.

## WHAT IS THE HOUSING ADVOCATE?

- The Housing Advocate will **promote and ensure compliance with the government's legislated commitment to the progressive realization of the human right to housing** and to a rights-based National Housing Strategy. The Advocate will **actively monitor and drive forward** the federal government's progress in setting and meeting goals to this end.
- The Housing Advocate will understand that the **NHSA relies on international human rights**, in particular the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, to define the government's commitment to the right to housing as a fundamental human right. Their role will be to **issue authoritative opinions about what this commitment means** and what measures are required in various contexts, drawing from thorough research, engagement with affected communities, consultation with experts, and relevant international human rights norms.
- The Housing Advocate will **initiate inquiries** into systemic housing-related incidents, issues, or conditions in any community, institution, industry, or economic sector within Canada.
- The Advocate will **actively shape new human rights mechanisms** for hearing from vulnerable groups or affected communities, and for assessing compliance with the human right to housing.
- The Advocate will receive submissions on **systemic housing-related issues**, and will report to the federal government on findings and recommendations that will advance the progressive realization of the human right to housing.

- The Advocate may refer critical systemic issues for **hearings before a Review Panel**, providing the Panel with a summary of the issue and working with affected groups to bring forward presentations and proposals to the Panel.
- The Housing Advocate will **amplify the voices** of those who have borne the brunt of Canada's housing crisis, prioritizing and representing the voices of **those most impacted by, and those with lived experience of**, homelessness and inadequate housing.

## WHO DO WE NEED TO FILL THIS ROLE?

To drive forward and shape this critical human rights mechanism, Canada needs a candidate with a strong understanding of what this role means and can accomplish. In order to eliminate homelessness and significantly reduce inadequate housing through the NHSA, we need a Housing Advocate who:



- Understands their role in the context of the NHSA's commitment to the right to housing. They need to be a **human rights expert** who can provide authoritative opinions and findings, based on evidence and relevant law, about how this commitment is to be fulfilled.



- Can represent, and is preferably a member of, **intersectional communities that are affected by homelessness and inadequate housing**, with experience of engaging effectively with those communities and advocating for their rights.



- **Understands the human right to housing** and systemic inequality in housing, and comes from a related sector of work.



- Sees themselves as a **human rights defender and vocal advocate**. Their passionate, consistent, and human rights-based advocacy will be essential in shaping this critical human rights mechanism as outlined in the NHSA.

See the federal government's full [notice of recruitment here](#), and please share it with your network! Deadline for applications is **December 30th, 2020**.

LEARN MORE AT:  
[WWW.HOUSINGRIGHTS.CA](http://WWW.HOUSINGRIGHTS.CA)



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**RIGHT TO HOUSING**  
 NETWORK