

## **Alberta Provincial Election 2015- Party positions on housing issues**

*As the provincial election began, Edmonton Coalition on Housing and Homelessness asked parties to respond to five questions about housing security. The Alberta, Liberal, New Democratic, Progressive Conservative, and Wild Rose parties were sent questions. Four responded. Note that the Liberal response was from an individual candidate, Donna Wilson, not from the party. The responses below are unedited from the documents received. ECOHH has also produced a leaflet with its perspective on the five issues, available at [www.ecohh.ca](http://www.ecohh.ca).*

Issue	Alberta Party	Liberal Party	New Democratic Party	Progressive Conservative Party	Wildrose Party
<p>Edmonton's Community Plan on Housing and supports estimates a current shortfall of 22,000 units of non-market affordable housing. Provincial government investment to support construction of new non-market housing has been limited for several years. What would your party do to ensure the construction of more non-market housing?</p>		<p>The Alberta Liberals do not have a specific policy on this important matter, however this is now a major and growing concern, and as such is expected to be a policy issue addressed by the Alberta Liberal party. Currently - the Alberta Liberals would raise government revenue (through a graduated personal income tax to replace the 10% flat tax and a 2% increase in the corporate tax rate for companies with over \$500,000 annual revenue while reducing the corporate tax rate to 0% for small businesses with less than \$500,000 annual revenue) and also improve government spending to ensure that all people in the province are supported as required and to enable their health and wellbeing through accessible and high quality education, health care, and other important matters such as safe housing. Current Alberta Liberal Policies of relevance to the matter of new non-market housing include: an expanded Canada Pension Plan, prohibiting high interest rates on payday and car title loans, establishing a start-up Alberta fund to support entrepreneurs and their small businesses, increase funding to FCSS, include dental care in the healthcare services covered by the Alberta Health Care Insurance plan, guarantee access to mental health assessment and treatment, support aging in place, restore the Seniors Property Tax Deferral</p>	<p>We know that there is a serious problem when it comes to affordable housing in Alberta and that we are missing a large number of units to meet affordable housing needs. In order to address this problem, we will work with municipalities to ensure they have the ability to put inclusionary zoning into place. This will increase the construction of affordable housing, though primarily by private companies. We will also adjust the priorities within the proposed provincial capital plan to start addressing shortfalls in funding for the PCs' previous 10 year plan proposed to address homelessness.</p>	<p>The Prentice Plan highlights our understanding of the needs of vulnerable Albertans, as part of our commitment to support Alberta families. We know that caring for each other has always been a defining quality of our province, and that government's foremost duty is to support our most vulnerable citizens.</p> <p>Between 2007 and 2012, our government invested \$1.2 billion to support the development of more than 12,000 affordable housing units. More than 7,800 units are now complete, with more than 4,200 to come over the next two years to meet the needs of low-to-moderate income Albertans. Since 2012, we've invested \$140 million for renewal of government-owned and supported seniors housing. We have also renewed the Investment in Affordable Housing agreement with the federal government that will direct \$202 million toward seniors housing between now and 2019.</p> <p>Alberta's 10-year plan to end homelessness is a Housing First Approach, which</p>	<p>The last AG report in 2013 criticized how the Alberta government handled the last major investment in affordable housing. They built a large number of units – over 11,000 - and spent over \$1 billion. But the results of the audit showed that the department did a very poor job of getting funding where it was needed, and that accountability was lacking. Wildrose would work with partners in the community on an improved, comprehensive model for affordable housing that increases the number of affordable, safe places to live, and ensures that a variety of affordable housing options are available in all parts of the city.</p>

		<p>Program, implement a poverty reduction strategy for Alberta, and support for the Housing First model.</p>		<p>means that we understand the need for permanent housing as well as support services. Since the implementation of our plan, more than 10,500 homeless individuals have been provided with housing, as well as the supports that will help keep them housed. We are making progress: approximately 73 per cent of Housing First clients have remained housed. We know there is more work to do. Budget 2015 sees \$163 million dedicated in 2015-16 for homeless and outreach support programs, which will help house about 1,800 Albertans this year. A re-elected PC government will build on this strong foundation, and continue to make strides toward achieving our ultimate goal: ending homelessness.</p>	
<p>Sudden changes in circumstances can make rental housing unaffordable for people and lead to insecure alternatives and even homelessness. What proposals does your party have on the funding of rent supplements to ensure rental cost does not create a crisis for people?</p>		<p>Low income/affordable housing has been a long-time concern of the Alberta Liberals and also the Federal Liberals. The Alberta Liberals do not have a specific policy on this important matter, however this is now a major and growing concern, and as such is expected to be a policy issue addressed by the Alberta Liberals. Currently - the Alberta Liberals would raise government revenue (through a graduated personal income tax to replace the 10% flat tax and a 2% increase in the corporate tax rate for companies with over \$500,000 annual revenue while reducing the corporate tax rate to 0% for small businesses with less than \$500,000 annual revenue) and also improve government spending to ensure that</p>	<p>In March 2013, the PCs introduced a budget that cut the rent supplement given to low income families, in Edmonton this meant that their monthly supplement would be cut from \$550 to \$500. We opposed this and expressed our concern about the impacts this would have on low-income families. Our platform has several components that would help low-income families make ends meet. Unlike Jim Prentice, we have committed to immediate implementation of the</p>	<p>A PC government is committed to helping lower-income families, seniors and those in need, which is why our rent supplement program currently assists more than 11,000 Alberta households.</p> <p>A PC government is committed to an annual review of programs like these to ensure they are meeting the intended objectives, and continuing to provide these kinds of support programs so critical to protecting at-risk Albertans from</p>	<p>Wildrose has not proposed any changes or reductions to the current model including "direct-to-tenant" and landlord supplements.</p>

		<p>all people in the province are supported as required and to enable their health and wellbeing through accessible and high quality education, health care, and other important matters such as safe housing. Current Alberta Liberal Policies of relevance to the matter of affordable rents include: an expanded Canada Pension Plan, prohibiting high interest rates on payday and care title loans, establishing a start-up Alberta fund to support entrepreneurs and their small businesses, increase funding to FCSS, include dental care in the healthcare services covered by the Alberta Health Care Insurance plan, guarantee access to mental health assessment and treatment, support aging in place, restore the Seniors Property Tax Deferral Program, implement a poverty reduction strategy for Alberta, and support for the Housing First model.</p>	<p>enhancement to the Alberta Family Employment Tax Credit and the Alberta Working Family Supplement so low-income families can benefit from both these programs now and not wait until July 2016. In the next year, we are committed to improving the Alberta Working Family Supplement to address concerns that it phases out too quickly and only applies to working incomes so not all children are covered.</p>	<p>homelessness.</p>	
<p>Alberta's <i>10 Year Plan to End Homelessness</i> is at the half-way point but recent counts of homeless people in cities indicate homelessness remains a significant issue for thousands of people each day. Is your party committed to funding the 10 Year Plan and how would you implement it for the remaining term?</p>		<p>The Alberta Liberals do not have a specific policy on this important matter, however this is now a major and growing concern, and as such is expected to be a matter addressed by the Alberta Liberals. Currently - the Alberta Liberals would raise government revenue (through a graduated personal income tax to replace the 10% flat tax and a 2% increase in the corporate tax rate for companies with over \$500,000 annual revenue while reducing the corporate tax rate to 0% for small businesses with less than \$500,000 annual revenue) and also improve government spending to ensure that all people in the province are supported as required and to enable their health and wellbeing through accessible and high quality education, health care, and other important matters such as accessible safe</p>	<p>We are committed to ending homelessness and we are supportive of the 10 year plan to end homelessness. We believe that in addition to providing more affordable housing and shelter spaces, we also need to address the root causes of poverty, including the improvements to the income supplements and tax credits noted above. In our platform, we have made a commitment to protect and improve core services such as health care and education, and to revise the currently broken mental health system in Alberta. We need to make sure that it</p>	<p>Our government supports the 10 year plan, and reassesses our support programs annually to ensure objectives are being met, and Albertans in need are being served.</p> <p>Alberta, including our major cities, has been recognized for our approach to ending homelessness that acknowledges the solution to this problem requires more than putting a roof over someone's head. It also requires wrap-around services that are responsive to individual needs and help ensure that people are successful in their housing solutions.</p>	<p>Wildrose fully supports the principles of the 10-year plan to end Homelessness. Wildrose has also proposed a longer-term funding strategy for social agencies that would take away some of the uncertainty they face in funding and allow them to support new initiatives, knowing that their budgets will not be drastically different year to year.</p>

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<p>Federal and provincial funding for social housing is set to end with the expiry of current operating agreements. This will affect approximately 53,500 social housing units across Alberta which currently house low-income households. Would your party commit to maintaining funding after the expiry of the agreements for social housing to ensure continued stable, affordable housing for those in need?</p>		<p>Low income/affordable housing has been a long-time concern of the Alberta Liberals and also the Federal Liberals. The Alberta Liberals do not have a specific policy on this important matter, however this is now a major and growing concern, and as such is expected to be a policy issue addressed by the Alberta Liberals. Currently - the Alberta Liberals would raise government revenue (through a graduated personal income tax to replace the 10% flat tax and a 2% increase in the corporate tax rate for companies with over \$500,000 annual revenue while reducing the corporate tax rate to 0% for small businesses with less than \$500,000 annual revenue) and also improve government spending to ensure that all people in the province are supported as required and to enable their health and wellbeing through accessible and high quality education, health care, and other important matters such as social housing.</p>	<p>Ensuring that stable and affordable housing is available for people who need it is of utmost importance and it is something that we are committed to funding. In order to do so, we have proposed changes to Alberta's tax system so that everyone pays their fair share. We have proposed to raise corporate taxes to 12% and increase income tax rates for the top 10% of tax fillers on taxable incomes above \$125,000 per year. These changes will allow Alberta to get off the oil roller coaster and to have stable funding to pay for much needed social programs, many of which relate to homelessness.</p>	<p>We are committed to ensuring Albertans who are in need of supports have access to safe, affordable housing and we will work with all partners, including other orders of government, to support Alberta's most vulnerable citizens.</p>	<p>Wildrose does not have a current policy related to these agreements, but would have to learn more from ECOHH and other stakeholders on this issue.</p>

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<p>A major review of the Municipal Government Act is underway with the potential to increase municipal powers to provide non-market housing. What is your party's position on the following amendments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Allow municipalities to set aside land specifically for non-market housing when new neighbourhoods are developed under a new "non-market housing reserve".</li> <li>- Allow for inclusionary zoning powers to municipalities to include affordable housing in new developments, as is the case in many other jurisdictions?</li> </ul>		<p>Low income/affordable housing has been a long-time concern of the Alberta Liberals and also the Federal Liberals. The Alberta Liberals would enhance municipal jurisdictional matters through predictable and fair funding across urban and rural municipalities, with urban municipalities of major concern in relation to non-market housing as more homeless people live in larger cities such as Edmonton and Calgary. The Alberta Liberals do not have a specific policy on this important matter, however this is now a major and growing concern, and as such is expected to be a policy issue addressed by the Alberta Liberals. Currently - the Alberta Liberals would raise government revenue (through a graduated personal income tax to replace the 10% flat tax and a 2% increase in the corporate tax rate for companies with over \$500,000 annual revenue while reducing the corporate tax rate to 0% for small businesses with less than \$500,000 annual revenue) and also improve government spending to ensure that</p>	<p>Alberta's NDP is supportive of both these amendments. We believe that it is important for developers to play a role in the solution to the affordable housing crisis. Implementing these changes would require and encourage the construction of affordable housing in new developments and we believe that this is an important step in increasing the availability of affordable housing.</p>	<p>Our party looks forward to continuing conversations with municipalities and Albertans on this and related issues. As you are likely aware, the Government of Alberta is currently working with municipalities on a review of the Municipal Government Act (MGA), as well as with Calgary and Edmonton on city charter discussions. These venues will provide an opportunity to discuss important issues, including the use of municipal reserves, with our municipal partners, school boards and industry stakeholders.</p>	<p>Wildrose is opposed to these policies. We have questions about the constitutionality and also have concerns about the effects on the cost of all housing in the municipality if we introduce requirements that are too restrictive.</p> <p>Wildrose looks for solutions that rely on less regulation. Examples could include options that encourage builders to build smaller, more affordable homes, and working with municipalities to remove barriers to the creation of secondary suites and garage suites.</p>

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