



Canadian  
human rights  
commission

Commission  
canadienne des  
droits de la personne

Housing

# The Office of the Federal Housing Advocate Review of Homeless Encampments

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OMSSA Speakers Series

Ian Hamilton, Senior Policy Advisor

Catherine McKenney, Consultant

# National Housing Strategy Act (2019)

- Recognizes **housing as a human right** in Canadian law for the first time – but not enforceable by courts like a Charter right
- Commits Canada to the “**progressive realization**” of the right to housing
- Requires government to implement a **National Housing Strategy** based on human rights
- **Establishes accountability mechanisms**
  - Federal Housing Advocate
  - National Housing Council
  - Review Panels

# What is the right to adequate housing?

Adequate housing is defined under international law as:

- **Secure:** *Protected from eviction, forced relocation, harassment*
- **Affordable:** *Housing costs not a barrier to meeting other basic needs*
- **Habitable:** *Adequate space for inhabitants and properly maintained*
- **Accessible:** *For people of all abilities, particularly those facing discrimination or vulnerable circumstances*
- **Providing basic services:** *Safe drinking water, sanitation, heating, lighting, emergency services*
- **In an appropriate location:** *that is close to employment and basic social services*
- **Culturally appropriate:** *for the expression of the inhabitants' cultural identity and ways of life*

Everyone should be able to access adequate housing without discrimination or harassment  
Safety, autonomy, privacy, and dignity are also key facets of adequate housing

# Federal Housing Advocate: mandate, roles & duties

- **Monitor and report** on the right to housing in Canada & the National Housing Strategy
- **Conduct research & studies** on systemic housing issues
- **Engage with people with lived experience** and involve them in the work
- **Receive & review submissions** on systemic housing issues from individuals and organizations
- **Review systemic housing issues**, or refer **systemic issues to a Review Panel set-up by the National Housing Council**
- **Provide meaningful recommendations** to improve Canada's housing laws, policies and programs to enable individuals and families to have access to safe, adequate, suitable and affordable housing to meet their needs.
- **Make an annual report to the Minister** responsible for housing on how to better address systemic housing issues

# Review of Systemic Housing Issues

## Review Panels

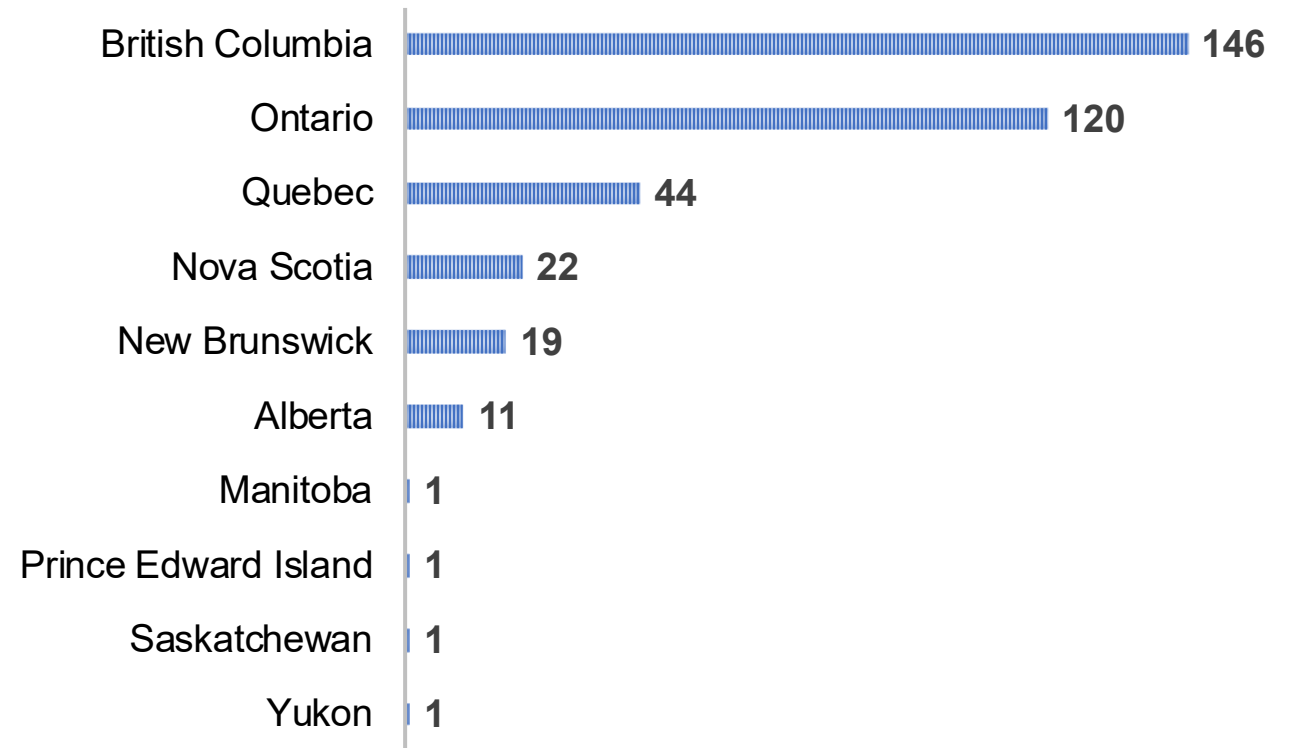
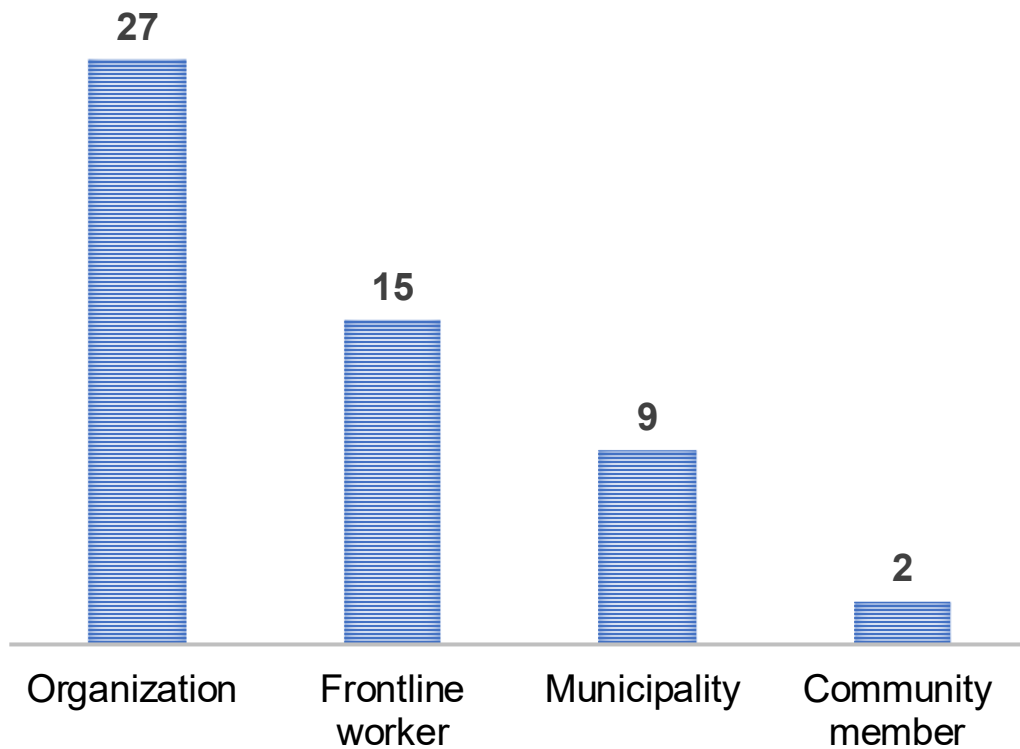
- 1. Financialization of purpose-built rental housing**
  - Referred to the NHC in September 2022
  - Written hearing from April to June 2023
  - Oral hearings from October until December 2023
- 2. Failure to eliminate homelessness amongst women and gender-diverse people**
  - Referred to the NHC in May 2023

## Advocate-Led Review

- 1. Review of Homeless Encampments**
  - Review launched in February 2023
  - Engagement until August 2023
  - Release of interim report in October 2023
  - Engagement on recommendations until December 2023
  - Release of final report on February 13, 2024

# Encampment Review – Submissions

- 366 submissions – 313 from individuals / 53 from organizations





# What We Heard: Human Rights Concerns

## HOMELESSNESS CRISIS

- Systemic barriers to secure housing
- The homelessness crisis is disproportionately impacting Indigenous Peoples
- Inadequate program funding for community services
- The need for human rights-based action and more accountability
- Inadequate emergency shelters

## ENCAMPMENTS

- Encampment evictions and clearances
- Violence, stigma, increased isolation and risk of harm
- Unmet basic needs of encampment residents
- Gendered experiences in encampments
- Safety and security risks for people experiencing homelessness
- Absence of services and supports



# Calls to Action - National Encampments Response Plan

The Federal Housing Advocate calls on the federal government to establish a National Encampments Response plan by **August 31, 2024**, that will:

- Act immediately to save lives
- End forced evictions of encampments
- Work with all governments and provide support to municipalities
- Respect the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples
- Respect and uphold human rights
- Offer people permanent housing options as rapidly as possible
- Address the root causes of encampments

# Recommendations

1. The Federal Government must lead the development of a National Encampments Response Plan in cooperation and consultation with all other governments

All governments must:

2. Commit to a human rights-based approach to address the needs of encampment residents
3. Implement measures that respect the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples
4. Take immediate action to respect and protect the human rights and dignity of all people living in encampments and reduce the risks that they face
5. Implement immediate measures to address the root causes of encampments and provide access to adequate housing
6. Ensure government accountability and access to justice for people experiencing homelessness

# Important Links

## Reports:

- [Final Report on Homeless Encampments](#)
- [Interim Report on Homeless Encampments](#)
- [Federal Housing Advocate's 2022–2023 Annual Report](#)
- [Review Panel on the Financialization of Housing in Canada](#)

## For more information:

- Right to housing video: [The Right to Housing in Canada – YouTube](#)
- Submission tool video: [Housing submission tool – YouTube](#)
- [Online Housing Submission Tool](#)