

Terms of Reference

Affordable Housing Review Panel

BACKGROUND

The Government of Alberta committed that housing would be more affordable and accessible for those who need it in Alberta, including seniors in need of specialized housing. The Government also committed to deliver housing projects in partnership with private and non-profit developers through an expanded use of mixed-income operating models. Compounding economic uncertainty is also challenging the Government to reduce spending further while still taking steps to address the growing demand for affordable housing. A review of programs across the affordable housing spectrum will help to clarify government's priority outcomes in supporting housing for Albertans in need, balancing financial sustainability with growing demand. This panel of housing and financial sector experts will provide advice to improve Alberta's affordable housing programs and propose recommendations on system improvement.

This Affordable Housing Review Panel (the Panel) is established under section 7 of the *Government Organization Act*.

PURPOSE: MANDATE AND ROLE

The purpose is to reimagine GOA's role and develop a vision to articulate the circumstances under which government should provide housing supports, for whom, and identify priority outcomes. The review will identify best-fit strategies for government's housing assets, funding and legislative levers, and will be guided by these questions:

- How can we get more value for government spending on housing?
- Can government address housing needs through the private market?
- What are the reasons people need subsidized housing and what role should government play?

To achieve this mandate the Panel will:

- Review economic and housing market outlooks, trend forecasts, and projections to explore long-term scenarios for housing supply and demand.
- Compare housing systems and programs in other peer jurisdictions, including government spending and outcomes achieved.
- Engage with key target groups to understand current challenges and to hear input on future opportunities.
- Identify opportunities for program redesign that could better serve target populations in need through existing housing capacity.
- Identify options for government to adjust its property portfolio, funding mechanisms, and legislation to achieve priority outcomes and strategic objectives.
- Provide advice on any other matter the Panel deems relevant to its mandate as a result of information coming to its attention during the course of the review.

SCOPE

The Panel will examine opportunities in the areas of government housing asset portfolio, capital and operating investments and spending, rent supports for Albertans, funding mechanisms, and legislative and regulatory tools.

In scope are the following types of affordable housing: seniors' lodges, senior-only housing, family and community social housing, family and community long-term supportive housing, and near-market affordable housing. The Panel recognizes there is overlap in the types of accommodations operators offer seniors. While continuing care standards, operating programs and funding will not be considered as these will be covered in the review of continuing care led by Health, the Affordable Housing Review Panel may forward related recommendations to the Ministry of Health for consideration.

The Panel also recognizes the interface with the province's income support programs and housing, including access, social supports, eligibility and rent rates. Recommendations made by the panel may include suggested changes to income support programs, as they relate to housing affordability. While the panel may consider the broad policy framework under which these programs operate, legislation, regulation or operating guidelines for income support programs are not in scope.

Private market housing is outside the scope, except for the purpose of analyzing and understanding opportunities in low-rent housing markets.

Emergency shelters and transitional accommodation are out of scope.

DELIVERABLES

The Panel will deliver its final report and recommendations to the Minister of Seniors and Housing no later than September 30, 2020.

An interim report on research findings and summary of engagement input will be provided to the Minister of Seniors and Housing no later than August 31, 2020.

The Panel shall provide any follow-up clarifications, explanations, or other advice as may be requested by the Minister of Seniors and Housing until November 30, 2020.

ENGAGING WITH TARGET GROUPS

The Panel will gather perspectives from the following groups to understand their perspectives on housing affordability, their specific needs and the current programs:

- Seniors;
- People with disabilities;
- Northern and remote residents;
- Indigenous peoples;
- People with mental health and addiction issues;

- Newcomers;
- Veterans;
- LGBTQ2 community;
- Survivors fleeing family violence; and,
- People experiencing homelessness.
- Housing operators;
- Working households who live in affordable housing
- Households on income supports

The panel may identify additional groups and engage with them as the Panel deems relevant to its mandate. An engagement plan will be created to establish how the panel will gather these perspectives.

MEMBERSHIP

The Panel will be led by an MLA and consist of up to ten members representing a diversity of perspectives: non-profit operator, non-profit rental operator, rental developer, real estate investor, academic expert and housing advocate.

Membership is established by the Minister of Seniors and Housing under Ministerial Order 004/20.

The Executive Lead, Housing Review and one other department staff will participate in Panel meetings as guests of the Panel. The Deputy Minister of Seniors and Housing may attend as a guest as well, from time to time and at the Panel's request. The role of department staff is limited to providing information as requested by the Panel. Department staff do not have the ability to make motions, debate or make decisions on Panel activities and deliverables. The Panel may request department representatives leave a Panel meeting to hold discussion in camera.

PANEL/MEMBERSHIP TERM

Panel members are appointed for a five-month term, from July 1, 2020 to November 30, 2020, with potential extension to a maximum of one year if required. Vacancies will be filled by the Minister through Ministerial Order.

PANEL MEETINGS

The Panel will meet approximately once every two weeks for full- or half-day meetings, for a minimum of six meetings during the term.

Members will provide notification of absence to the Chair in advance. If more than two meeting absences are expected in the term, the member must notify the Chair. A minimum quorum of five members and the chair are required to hold meetings.

Meeting materials will be provided by the secretariat support one week in advance of each meeting. Summary notes from each meeting will be approved by the Panel.

Decisions will be made by discussion and consensus.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The discussions and deliberation of the Panel are confidential and cannot be shared beyond Panel members, the Minister, and secretariat support staff. Information gained through the course of participation on the Panel cannot be used for personal interest or gain, or that of a close family member. Members will be required to swear an Oath in front of Commissioner for Oaths and returned a signed copy to the Minister. Any real or perceived conflicts of interests must be disclosed to the Chair immediately.

Public disclosure of reports submitted to the Minister are under the discretion of the Minister.

All Panel records will be considered Government of Alberta (GOA) information and will be retained by the department for a period of ten years. Information will be managed in compliance with the Records Management Regulation, the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, and applicable Information Management Technology Standards.

- All of the GOA Information shall be and remain the property of the GoA.
- The GoA shall continue ownership including copyright, patent, trade secret, industrial design or trade mark all materials which were owned by the GoA prior to the execution of the Panel and shall own all materials created by or on behalf of the GoA's employees, subcontractors and agents during the review.
- No use, copy or disclosure, except as necessary for the performance of the services or as required by law, or upon written authorization of the GoA, of any protected GoA information.
- All GoA information will be kept secure and shall comply with all security policies, regulations or directives, including those relating to cloud storage and data residency.
- All GoA information, including transitory information, will have a records retention and disposition schedule applied to it and will be retained and dispositioned in accordance with the applicable schedule and with GoA disposition procedures.
- Should a Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) or any access request for Personal Information be received from the FOIP office, the Panel will provide all Personal Information and other information necessary for the GoA to fully and completely respond to the FOIP or any access request within five (5) business days of notification.

REMUNERATION AND EXPENSES

Panel members may also be reimbursed for reasonable expenses necessarily incurred in the course of performing their duties as Panel members in accordance with the Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Policy, as amended, the Seniors and Housing Travel Policy and Procedures, and the Seniors and Housing Hospitality Policy.

Virtual meetings will be encouraged to ensure safe physical distancing practices and adherence to any travel and meeting restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Where relevant or required, members will

be reimbursed for travel costs and expenses related to meetings as per the policies listed above. Travel must be pre-approved by the department, by submitting a request to the secretariat or Chair. Travel expense claims must be sent to the department of Seniors and Housing for reimbursement.

Honoraria will be available to those whose roles or income cannot support their participation on the Panel. Panel members must notify the secretariat if they will experience a loss of remuneration and financial burden as a result of service on the Panel. At the Minister’s sole discretion, the member may be deemed to meet the above conditions and a panel member may receive an honorarium as per the authority and guidelines of the Committee Remuneration Order (OC 466/2007), schedule B Part 2.

SECRETARIAT

A contracted consultant will provide secretariat support to the Panel, which will include the following:

- Arrange meeting logistics, recording meeting notes and assisting the Chair with drafting and delivering meeting agendas and materials
- Serve as the liaison between the Panel and the department
- Arrange access to information as required, including in relation to other departments and agencies of the government
- Conduct research and analysis on behalf of the Panel
- Assist with engagement planning, arrange logistics for meetings with key groups, develop engagement tools and discussion guides under the Panel’s direction, and draft notes and summaries of the input
- Draft the interim and final report deliverables for panel review

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Responsibilities
Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets the agenda. • Chairs and facilitates meetings.
Panel Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review meeting materials in advance. • Attend meetings. • Make motions, debate or make decisions on the Panel’s activities and deliverables, within the scope of the Panel’s mandate. • Take an active role in directing and analyzing research and deliverables. • Provide expense claims and suitable documentation of any eligible expenses requested for reimbursement.
Secretariat (contracted support)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops and distributes agenda and minutes, under the direction of the Chair. • Makes arrangements for members’ participation. • Makes arrangements to implement the engagement plan.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receives direction from the Panel to collect information, conduct research, analyze information, and draft meeting materials and reports. • Supports follow-up actions from meetings or Panel information requests for Seniors and Housing, other departments or agencies of government, as required.
Department Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend meetings as guests of the Panel • Limited to providing information at the Panel's request • Are not present for in camera discussions