

HomeFirst

The government's *HomeFirst* strategy was implemented in 2004 and expanded in 2007 to improve available housing with:

- over 2,000 affordable housing units and the renovation of 3,000 homes
- a \$60 million expansion of *HomeFirst* announced in February 2007 that will revitalize inner-city neighbourhoods and northern communities and provide construction industry training opportunities for youth
- the securement of \$50.6 million from the federal government through the Off-Reserve Aboriginal Housing Trust (\$26.4 million) and the Affordable Housing Trust (\$24.2 million) to increase the supply of affordable housing by up to 300 homes and to help non-profit and cooperative housing groups complete improvements to approximately 700 existing senior's and family housing

Today's announcement includes the following new affordable housing projects:

Project	Units	Funding	Description
The Lighthouse	120	\$11.5 M	Supported living with dining, housekeeping services for low-income individuals and those with long-term disabilities.
Family housing	10	\$0.52 M	New construction of family housing.
Three apartment buildings	46	\$3.5 M	Renovation of three existing apartment buildings for low- to moderate-income occupants.
Habitat for Humanity	9	\$0.15M	New construction of 4 to 5 bedroom houses for low-income families.
Total	185	\$15.67M	

These government programs assist people with low- to moderate-incomes with quality, affordable housing:

- ***HomeFirst* Secondary Suites Program (NEW!)**

A forgivable loan of 50 per cent for construction and renovation costs to a maximum of \$24,000 per suite in the South and \$28,000 in the North are available for people wanting to develop legal, secondary suites for low- to moderate-income renters. The suites must be private, self-contained units and funding is limited to one suite per one-unit dwelling.

This program will receive a funding commitment of \$2 million to develop 100 secondary suites in the private housing market over three years. To further increase the supply of affordable rental housing, Saskatchewan Housing Corporation will invest \$5 million to develop 100 secondary suites in the corporation's portfolio.

- ***HomeFirst Homeownership Program- Enhanced (NEW!)***

The *HomeFirst* Homeownership Program has been enhanced to address changes in the housing market including:

- a forgivable loan to a maximum of \$20,000
- a deferred second mortgage (up to a maximum of \$30,000) that will allow participants to access more money for a down payment at a subsidized interest rate, and provide them with an opportunity to build equity in a home which will enhance their capacity to repay the deferred second mortgage plus interest after 10 years or upon the sale of the home
- financial assistance of up to 25 per cent of the cost of the housing unit, to a maximum of \$50,000
- a subsidized interest rate on the deferred second mortgages, which will be two percentage points below the 10-year government borrowing rate

The program is a funding commitment of \$23 million that will deliver an estimated 500 homeownership units over a five year period.

- ***HomeFirst Homeownership Education Expansion (NEW!)***

The Homeownership Education Package for provincial housing program clients will now be available to any interested Saskatchewan resident. The program empowers homeowners with information related to homeownership including financial, real estate, legal, home inspection, and other services.

- ***Increased Shelter Allowances (NEW!)***

More than 16,000 households are benefiting from the following increases:

Social Assistance Program and Transitional Employment Allowance shelter rates increased by, on average, \$5 to \$75 per month.

The Saskatchewan Rental Housing Supplement increased by \$6 to \$21 per month.

The Provincial Training Allowance increased by \$20 to \$35 per month.

Shelter allowances were changed to make them more flexible and responsive to Saskatchewan's housing situation (e.g. single clients and childless couples will be eligible to receive greater benefits when they share accommodations).

- ***HomeFirst Affordable Rental Options***

Affordable Housing Rentals is a subsidized program where levels of rent are fixed and kept affordable for low- to moderate-income families and individuals. Financial assistance is also available for the development of affordable rental housing.

The Social Housing Rental Program is for low-income seniors, families, and people with disabilities. Eligibility is based on need, with priority given to those people with health and/or social needs, or families in crisis. A graduated rental scale (GRS) determines rental payments based on 25 per cent to 29 per cent of gross household income.

- ***HomeFirst Repair and Renovation Options***

Financial assistance is available to low- and moderate-income homeowners or property

owners housing low-income tenants for:

- renovations that improve the health and safety of a property
- modifications that improve quality and accessibility
- renovations or development of emergency shelters
- energy retrofits such as heating system upgrades, tankless hot water heaters, insulation, and draft proofing, etc.

- **Better Use Plan**

The Saskatchewan Housing Corporation works with communities and housing authorities across the province to select underutilized units from the corporation's assisted rental portfolio and sell them at fair value for alternative uses, including homeownership. This program increases the number of affordable homes available for sale and allows the corporation to divert resources where there is greater need.