

## The Vincentian Experience

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As Vincentians, we constantly witness the devastation that the lack of safe, secure affordable housing has on the people we serve. Across the country, we have seen how people are often forced to choose between paying the rent or buying decent food or even medications. Others put up with sub-standard or even dangerous accommodations so that they can pay for basic needs.

These stories compel us to act and advocate on behalf of persons in need.



*“In today’s world, voices are being raised which we cannot ignore and which implore our Churches to live deeply our identity as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. The first of these voices is that of the poor. ...”*

Pope Francis

## Support the Campaign

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You are encouraged to do two things:

1. Review our National Action Plan (NAP) [Safe, Secure and Affordable Housing is a Human Right](#) and all the resources at the housing website: [ssvp.ca/special-projects/safe-secure-and-affordable-housing-is-a-human-right/](http://ssvp.ca/special-projects/safe-secure-and-affordable-housing-is-a-human-right/) or [ssvp.ca/members/committees/housing/](http://ssvp.ca/members/committees/housing/)
2. Explore what actions can be taken to deal with the housing issues in your conference or council area.

To learn more about the topic, contact the National Housing Committee at [housing-logement@ssvp.ca](mailto:housing-logement@ssvp.ca). Find the name and contact information for any local Housing Campaign Champion. You can also get advice and support about how to engage with this campaign, how to volunteer or become a Housing Campaign Champion, if your area does not have one.

Let’s move together as one, to improve the housing situation of persons in need!

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Doing our part to achieve

**Safe, Secure and Affordable Housing**

A National Action Plan



NATIONAL HOUSING CAMPAIGN

*“You must not be content with tiding the poor over the poverty crisis; you must study their condition and the injustices which brought about such poverty with the aim of long term improvement.”*

Frédéric Ozanam

## The Campaign

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On February 7th 2021, in conjunction with Blessed Rosalie Rendu Feast Day, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul in Canada launched a multi-year, Canada-wide, campaign promoting the concept that safe, secure and affordable housing is a human right.

By saying that safe, secure and affordable housing is a human right, we mean that each one of us - our Society and governments included - are obliged to act with respect to housing and homelessness. We collectively must work to alleviate homelessness and provide adequate and affordable housing to all those in need. This must be done with a commitment to equality, measurable goals and timelines, and a comprehensive plan with accountability measures.

The affordable housing initiative recognizes and supports the Catholic Social Teachings on human dignity, and our rights and responsibilities toward each other. Our action on housing will deepen our faith and Vincentian spirituality.

## Goal

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The goal of this campaign is to bring about lasting improvements to the housing situation of those living in poverty, particularly those marginalized groups who have found themselves homeless or living in unsafe, insecure or unaffordable homes.

COVID-19 coupled with low vacancy rates across the country have exacerbated a housing and shelter crisis. Rising rents and inadequate incomes are leading to evictions, homelessness, and overwhelmed shelters. There is an urgent need for new affordable housing, public or otherwise.

Vincentians can assist by:

- Listening to the housing concerns of those they serve,
- Connecting persons in need with community housing services, and helping them to navigate those services effectively,
- Advocating for change among government and other service providers,
- Creating solutions to fill gaps in services, within the Society and community, and
- Becoming agents of positive change with regard to our own work, so that we are an effective part of the housing solution.

## Why Act Now

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On June 21, 2019, the National Housing Strategy Act became law in Canada. The Act will only truly deliver the right to housing if society – including groups like the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul – is willing to listen to the housing concerns of our neighbours in need, learn about existing housing supports, determine what programs might fill gaps, use funding from vehicles like the National Housing Strategy to fill those gaps, and bring concerns about systemic housing problems to those with the power to effect change – from the municipal level right up to the Federal Housing Advocate.