



The Alliance to End Homelessness

www.endhomelessnessottawa.ca

PROVINCIAL ELECTION 2011

The Alliance to End Homelessness Statement on Local Candidates' Responses to its Questionnaire

The Alliance to End Homelessness as a non-partisan coalition with 70 organizations as members takes action to end homelessness. The statement is being released at Cornerstone Housing for Women, a shining example of supportive affordable housing that shows what can be accomplished with provincial funding combined with federal, municipal and personal donations directly from the community.

In contrast, **110,585 households or 33.3% are renting** in Ottawa and **26.9% – more than 86,000 of Ottawa households – have incomes under \$40,000**. The vast majority of these households are renters. Yet out of 70,078 housing starts in the city between 2000 and 2011, 94% were ownership and only 5.8% were rental units.

The provincial government plays an essential role in Ottawa's ability to address affordable housing and homelessness. Ontario recently signed the *Investment in Affordable Housing (AIH)* agreement, a four-year funding agreement with the federal government to continue investment in affordable housing in this province. **The province agreed to spend \$240.3M over the next four years which will be matched by the federal government for a total of \$480.6M.**

Potentially, if the funds for new affordable housing are allocated by population, **Ottawa could see over 4 years a total of about \$33.6 M or 7% of the \$480.6 million federal/provincial total available**. It's quite a contrast to the last agreement. Previously, the City of Ottawa was allocated **\$75.6M between 2005 and 2010** under the Affordable Housing Program (AHP) which created about 1,240 new units. **The federal/provincial allocation for Ottawa was previously \$15M per year on average under AHP, it is likely to go down to \$8.4M per year under this new AIH agreement, nearly a 44% drop.**

The Alliance was looking for two things when it sent five questions to the provincial election candidates running in six riding in Ottawa – (1) a measure of candidates' interest in homelessness and affordable housing; and (2) an indication of their party's position on the specific questions so it could be shared with voters on our website. **Our community needs representatives at Queens Park who will proactively fight for the housing needs of people at every income level.** The Alliance knows that those elected sometimes need to lead the way in their own caucus and as well as speak up in Legislative Assembly.

1. Response Rate

There was an encouraging response rate on the questionnaire. **Eighteen of the 24** candidates responded directly with questionnaire answers, **a 75% return rate**. All **six of the Liberal and NDP** candidates replied as did **five Green** candidates. The Alliance was also sent a statement by email from the person handling the Progressive Conservatives Stakeholder Relations; for these purposes an assumption was made that Randal Denley asked that it be sent as he was the only local candidate who was copied on this. A welcome but unsolicited reply was received from the Liberal candidate in Glengarry Prescott Russell, but not included it in this tally.

2. The ATEH Assessment of the Answers

The questionnaire sought from candidates a clear statement of intent for each party on five questions. Would their party significantly increase funding for affordable housing in order to create 10,000 new units annually province-wide; would they fund the maintenance and repair of existing social housing stock? The Alliance also wanted to know if a party would ensure that Ministries work together to develop

long-term sustainable funding programs that include both housing and support dollars. Candidates were asked if they would invest in an Ontario Housing Benefit to provide a monthly payment to low income tenants to help bridge the gap between rent and 30% of income. And finally they were asked if their party would amend Ontario's Planning Act to give municipalities the authority to require the inclusion of housing at prices lower income households can afford in the development and redevelopment of land.

The Alliance believes that any multi-year plan to address homelessness is based on a combination of strategies including legislation, appropriate levels of secure funding, inter-ministry collaboration and multi-jurisdictional approaches.

Main Points

1. **As expected, individual candidates sent answers that were consistent by party.** Candidates for the Liberal, New Democrat and Green parties answered the questions posed to them using a combination of their party platforms, past achievements and future commitments. The Progressive Conservatives do not answer questions during election time unless they specifically relate to their party's platform. Homelessness and safe, affordable housing are not included in their platform so they provided a letter on other matters.
2. **Party commitments varied in response to the five questions; not all answers were affirmative, but many comments recognized the importance of meeting the housing needs of all Ontarians.**
 - The **Liberals'** referred to actions they have taken and to policy priorities but did not commit to implement any of the specific housing initiatives about which the Alliance asked (see chart below).
 - The **Progressive Conservatives'** letter made no mention of housing or homelessness and focused on other ways they would make life more affordable (see letter text below).
 - The **New Democrats** made specific commitments in relation to each of the housing initiatives in the ATEH questionnaire (see chart below)
 - The **Green Party** expressed a general commitment to affordable housing and green retrofitting, but did not provide any specific commitments in response to ATEH's questions other than amending the Planning Act (see chart below).
3. **Ontario's economy will benefit by the creation of new housing to address homelessness and poverty.** Building a combination of non-profit housing and private sector housing at the lower end of the market, both rental and ownership, will make Ontarians and the economy stronger. *The Ontario Home Builders Association makes a good case, stating that in 2010 \$2.12 billion in PST/HST revenue was generated from Ontario housing starts, renovations and other related expenditures while employing 358,300 people and putting \$18.5 billion in wages into the economy. The Ontario government could step up and spend much more on new affordable housing.*
4. **Individuals and families need stable, secure housing and income supports to contribute to or benefit from the high standard of living in Ontario.** That high standard should be available to everyone in the province. Thousands of children and their families and thousands of individuals are unable to find affordable housing due to significant shortages that have substantially increased through lack of government action over the years. These same children and families and individuals suffer from a range of problems that put a strain on our health care and education systems, something communities can no longer afford. ***Investment in safe, affordable housing is an investment in children, families and individuals and in the economic future of Ontario.***

OTTAWA VOTERS – Please read what candidates & their parties say on 5 important housing issues. Chart follows.

Chart of Local Candidates' Responses to The Alliance to End Homelessness Questionnaire

ANSWERS: Y = Yes N = No P = Partial or Possible na = No Answer

Candidates' comments follow. Candidates listed alphabetically. Incumb. = Incumbent

ATEH QUESTION	NEPEAN-CARLETON		OTTAWA CENTRE		OTTAWA-ORLEANS		OTTAWA SOUTH		OTTAWA-VANIER		OTTAWA WEST-NEPEAN	
1. AFFORDABLE HOUSING: Will you put significant funding for affordable housing in each provincial budget – enough to create 10,000 new units annually – to meet the needs of Ontarians?	Ric Dagenais (NDP)	P	Robert Dekker (PC)	na	Tanya Gutmanis (Green)	P	Wali Fara (NDP)	P	Dave Bagler (Green)	P	Wendy Byrne (NDP)	P
	Don Dransfield (Liberal)	P	Anil Naidoo (NDP)	P	Andrew Lister (PC)	na	Jason MacDonald (PC)	na	Paul Etienne Laliberte-Tipple	P	Bob Chiarelli (Liberal) Incumb.	P
	Gordon Kubanek (Green)	P	Yasir Naqvi (Liberal), Incumb.	P	Douglas McKercher (NDP)	P	Dalton McGuinty (Liberal) Incumb.	P	Madeleine Meilleur (Liberal) Incumb.	P	Randall Denley (PC)	na
	Lisa MacLeod (PC) Incumb.	na	Kevin O'Donnell (Green)	P	Phil McNeely (Liberal) Incumb.	P	James Mihaychuk (Green)	na	Fred Sherman (PC)	na	Alex Hill (Green)	P
2. EXISTING HOUSING STOCK: Will you fund the maintenance and repair of existing social Housing stock?	Ric Dagenais (NDP)	Y	Robert Dekker (PC)	na	Tanya Gutmanis (Green)	P	Wali Fara (NDP)	Y	Dave Bagler (Green)	P	Wendy Byrne (NDP)	Y
	Don Dransfield (Liberal)	P	Anil Naidoo (NDP)	Y	Andrew Lister (PC)	na	Jason MacDonald (PC)	na	Paul Etienne Laliberte-Tipple (NDP)	Y	Bob Chiarelli (Liberal) Incumb.	P
	Gordon Kubanek (Green)	P	Yasir Naqvi (Liberal), Incumb.	P	Douglas McKercher (NDP)	Y	Dalton McGuinty (Liberal) Incumb.	P	Madeleine Meilleur (Liberal) Incumb.	P	Randall Denley (PC)	na
	Lisa MacLeod (PC) Incumb.	na	Kevin O'Donnell (Green)	P	Phil McNeely (Liberal) Incumb.	P	James Mihaychuk (Green)	na	Fred Sherman (PC)	na	Alex Hill (Green)	P
3. SUSTAINABLE FUNDING: Will you ensure that Ministries work together to develop long-term sustainable funding programs that include both housing and support dollars?	Ric Dagenais (NDP)	Y	Robert Dekker (PC)	na	Tanya Gutmanis (Green)	na	Wali Fara (NDP)	Y	Dave Bagler (Green)	na	Wendy Byrne (NDP)	Y
	Don Dransfield (Liberal)	P	Anil Naidoo (NDP)	Y	Andrew Lister (PC)	na	Jason MacDonald (PC)	na	Paul Etienne Laliberte-Tipple (NDP)	Y	Bob Chiarelli (Liberal) Incumb.	P
	Gordon Kubanek (Green)	na	Yasir Naqvi (Liberal), Incumb.	P	Douglas McKercher (NDP)	Y	Dalton McGuinty (Liberal) Incumb.	P	Madeleine Meilleur (Liberal) Incumb.	P	Randall Denley (PC)	na
	Lisa MacLeod (PC) Incumb.	na	Kevin O'Donnell (Green)	na	Phil McNeely (Liberal) Incumb.	P	James Mihaychuk (Green)	na	Fred Sherman (PC)	na	Alex Hill (Green)	na
4. ONTARIO HOUSING BENEFIT: Will you invest in an Ontario Housing Benefit to provide a monthly payment to low income tenants to help bridge the gap between rent and 30% of income?	Ric Dagenais (NDP)	Y	Robert Dekker (PC)	na	Tanya Gutmanis (Green)	P	Wali Fara (NDP)	Y	Dave Bagler (Green)	P	Wendy Byrne (NDP)	Y
	Don Dransfield (Liberal)	P	Anil Naidoo (NDP)	Y	Andrew Lister (PC)	na	Jason MacDonald (PC)	na	Paul Etienne Laliberte-Tipple (NDP)	Y	Bob Chiarelli (Liberal) Incumb.	P
	Gordon Kubanek (Green)	P	Yasir Naqvi (Liberal), Incumb.	P	Douglas McKercher (NDP)	Y	Dalton McGuinty (Liberal) Incumb.	P	Madeleine Meilleur (Liberal) Incumb.	P	Randall Denley (PC)	na
	Lisa MacLeod (PC) Incumb.	na	Kevin O'Donnell (Green)	P	Phil McNeely (Liberal) Incumb.	P	James Mihaychuk (Green)	na	Fred Sherman (PC)	na	Alex Hill (Green)	P
5. AMEND ONTARIO'S PLANNING ACT: Will you amend Ontario's Planning Act to give municipalities the authority to require the inclusion of housing at prices lower income households can afford in the development and redevelopment of land?	Ric Dagenais (NDP)	Y	Robert Dekker (PC)	na	Tanya Gutmanis (Green)	Y	Wali Fara (NDP)	Y	Dave Bagler (Green)	Y	Wendy Byrne (NDP)	Y
	Don Dransfield (Liberal)	N	Anil Naidoo (NDP)	Y	Andrew Lister (PC)	na	Jason MacDonald (PC)	na	Paul Etienne Laliberte-Tipple (NDP)	Y	Bob Chiarelli (Liberal) Incumb.	N
	Gordon Kubanek (Green)	Y	Yasir Naqvi (Liberal), Incumb.	N	Douglas McKercher (NDP)	Y	Dalton McGuinty (Liberal) Incumb.	N	Madeleine Meilleur (Liberal) Incumb.	N	Randall Denley (PC)	na
	Lisa MacLeod (PC) Incumb.	na	Kevin O'Donnell (Green)	Y	Phil McNeely (Liberal) Incumb.	N	James Mihaychuk (Green)	na	Fred Sherman (PC)	na	Alex Hill (Green)	Y

Note: *Glengarry Prescott Russell* candidate, *Liberal Grant Crack*, sent an unsolicited answers that appear to be from the text of Liberal Leader Dalton McGuinty's letter.

Provincial Party Responses to ATEH questions, in order of current number of seats

Liberal Party (From Dalton McGuinty's questionnaire, the text of which was used by the other Liberal candidates in their answers.)

1 & 2. Ontario Liberals know that affordable and secure housing provides the stability needed to raise families and build futures. We have therefore invested more toward housing than any previous government. And despite a serious global recession, we stayed the course with these investments. To date, we have invested more than \$2.5 billion for repairs, new construction and rent supplements. Through our investments, we have built and repaired over 270,000 units and provided 35,000 supplements. Our investments have benefited more than 680,000 low-income Ontarians since 2003.

Ontario's housing supply was put into a catastrophic state by the PCs. They underfunded housing and cancelled the construction of 17,000 new units. They downloaded the entire housing portfolio onto local governments without providing money to repair an aging system or to meet future demand.

Ontario Liberals are the first to develop a Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy (LTAHS) and are committed to ensuring that the resources are available. It builds on our unprecedented investments to date, providing greater flexibility to local governments so they can create plans for housing delivery that are reflective of their unique local needs.

We recently signed an agreement with the federal government that guarantees new, four-year funding for affordable housing in Ontario (Investment in Affordable Housing — IAH). This agreement will see \$480.6 million invested in Ontario's housing stock — with \$240.3 million coming from the provincial government — and will provide local governments with funding for an array of housing options and the flexibility to design strategies across the housing continuum based on local needs and priorities. This investment will improve access to affordable housing that is safe, sound and suitable for households across Ontario. It is noteworthy that both the PCs and NDP voted against our 2011 Budget, which included our \$240.3-million investment.

The future of housing depends on sustained long-term funding that is fair and that will help meet the needs of Ontarians. We will continue to actively lobby the federal government for a long-term deal and a national housing strategy.

In this election, we are the only party to address affordable housing in our platform. And after repeatedly voting against our strategic housing investments, and then ignoring the issue for most of this election campaign, the NDP has finally spent one afternoon of the campaign addressing poverty and housing, without the presence of their party leader. Their plan proposes no new ideas and sets an unrealistic long-term target for new units, without any indication of how they would pay for them.

Meanwhile, the PCs stated that they intend "to get out of the non-profit and co-op housing business." Their current plan to impose a one-year ban on eligibility for social assistance for new Canadians means that people who come to Ontario to start a new life — new Canadians and refugees, women and their children fleeing domestic violence, and people with disabilities — will be denied the help they need to get that start. This includes any help we can give them to find — and afford — safe housing.

Ontario Liberals have been working hard to remedy the problems created by the PCs — and we will continue to work to help affected Ontarians receive the housing assistance they need. We are proud of our record and energized about doing more to meet the affordable housing requirements of Ontarians. Together with our housing partners and other levels of government, we will continue to help Ontarians shift out of poverty.

3. Our housing and homelessness program consolidation will enable local governments to tailor solutions to reflect local housing needs through more responsive and integrated services. It will begin with five homelessness-related programs (including the Provincial Rent Bank Program — see below) that are targeted for consolidation by 2013. For example, funding that must currently be used for another emergency shelter bed could instead be used to provide that person with transitional housing.

4. Ontario Liberals are working hard on behalf of low-income Ontarians and will continue to make poverty reduction a priority. In 2008, we released the province's first-ever Poverty Reduction Strategy, with a target of reducing poverty by 25 per cent by 2013. To enshrine this commitment into law, we passed the Poverty Reduction Act, 2009 to ensure that successive governments remain focused on the fight against poverty. According to Statistics Canada, while poverty in other Canadian jurisdictions increased during the global recession, poverty decreased in Ontario. Our Poverty Reduction Strategy and other concerted efforts are contributors to this trend.

As part of the strategy, Ontario Liberals are delivering programs and services that are making a real difference in the lives of low-income Ontario families. The Ontario Child Benefit is providing up to \$1,100 a year to over one million children and helping families to move from social assistance to employment more easily. This will increase to \$1,310 in 2013. Full-day kindergarten is saving families thousands of dollars per year on child care costs. We have increased the minimum wage to \$10.25, increased social assistance rates seven times and launched the largest review of social assistance in 20 years.

Because of these investments, we are seeing results. A single mother with a small child working full-time at minimum wage has seen her income increase by \$10,500 since 2003. Despite the worst global economic downturn in recent memory, child poverty levels decreased in Ontario from 2008 to 2009 — meaning that 19,000 fewer Ontario children were living in poverty.

Ontario Liberals will continue to make poverty reduction a priority and are committed to building on our success. If re-elected, we will consider delivering a new housing benefit for Ontarians who are struggling and we will ask our experts working on the social assistance review to develop options.

5. Our Provincial Policy Statement directs municipalities to provide a range of housing types and densities with minimum targets for affordable housing. In addition, our Housing Services Act makes amendments to the Planning Act that will require municipalities to establish official plan policies and zoning by-law provisions allowing second units. By adding "affordable housing" as a "matter of provincial interest" in the Planning Act, we are sending a strong signal to decision-makers that affordable housing is one of our key priorities that they must take into account when making land use planning decisions. There is a range of existing tools that local governments can use to promote and support affordable housing. For example, under the Planning Act, we allow municipalities to set minimum density standards to ensure more units are required on a given parcel of land, pass by-laws for second units, and use community improvement plans to encourage affordable housing. Also, pursuant to the Municipal Act, we allow municipalities to establish municipal services corporations, which can acquire and develop sites for affordable housing. Municipalities may also enter into agreements with municipal housing corporations to provide financial and staff support. Under the Development Charges Act, municipalities may also provide full or partial exemptions from development charges for types of development, which can include affordable housing.

Progressive Conservatives (Hande Bilhan from Stakeholder Relations, sent a letter, copied only to Randal Denley, that did not answer the five questions or mention anything about affordable housing or homelessness. When asked to clarify if the correct letter had been sent, the following was received: “during the writ period we are only commenting on Changebook initiatives. We are looking forward to meeting and consulting with many important groups such as yours after October 6th.”)

“Thank you for your email and survey about poverty reduction and for the opportunity to tell you about the ways *changebook* proposes to support low income Ontario families.

All Ontario families are struggling. They’re struggling to deal with Dalton McGuinty’s job losses, skyrocketing energy bills, new taxes and sneaky eco taxes. There struggling because incomes have stalled in Ontario, according to Statistics Canada. And for 56 consecutive months, longer than Dalton McGuinty’s entire second term, Ontario’s unemployment rate has been higher than the rest of Canada.

Life has simply become less affordable, under Dalton McGuinty. Ontario families have less money to put food on the table, to pay the bills, buy medications or send their kids to daycare, college or university. This election Dalton McGuinty is offering more of the same. Ontario families simply can’t afford four more years of Dalton McGuinty.

It’s time for change in Ontario. Change built on a focused plan that puts Ontario families first.

A Tim Hudak government will put more money in your pocket. We will remove the HST from home hydro and heating bills, and will take the Debt Retirement Charge off hydro bills. We will unplug those mandatory smart meters that force you to do laundry way into the night and we will cancel the eco taxes on items you use around your house every day.

And when it comes to jobs, a Tim Hudak government will be driven by one goal: to make Ontario Canada’s leader in private sector job creation once again.

Since we understand the challenges of mental health, we are committed to putting patients first. A Tim Hudak government will introduce a series of patient centered reforms that make the patient, not bureaucracies or administrators, the focus of our health system. One of the many ways we’ll do this is by growing annual investments in health care by more than \$6 billion, by the end of our first term.

We also know many families are relying on full day kindergarten for their children. That’s why we will make it fully operational for all 4 and 5 year olds, by 2014. And when their children are ready for college or university, we’ll raise the threshold on financial support to make it more accessible for low and middle income families. To read more about the change we are proposing for Ontario families, I encourage you to visit www.changebook.ca and to contact your local Ontario PC Candidate Fred Sherman.”

New Democrats (NDP) (Each candidates replied directly; the answers were very similar to those also provided by Jessica Park, Ontario’s New Democrats’ Riding and Policy Support Officer on behalf of all Ottawa Candidates.)

1. We will fund and build more than 50,000 new affordable housing units for Ontario over the next 10 years, including over 14,000 in the next 4 years. We will invest \$1.1 billion over ten years to partner with the federal government on Affordable Housing Programs. This partnership starts with a \$240 million provincial investment.
2. We will improve access to low-cost financing for affordable housing construction, renovation and repairs by making it easier for housing providers to access the Infrastructure Ontario Affordable Housing Loan Fund. Social housing providers (including not-for-profit providers and co-ops) will qualify for retrofit grants as part of our \$300 million low-income energy efficiency program.
3. We are committed to ongoing and increasing funding for new affordable housing over the next 10 years.
4. We will make housing more affordable by implementing a new housing benefit for low-income tenants who pay unaffordable rents. In 2016-17, when fully phased-in, the benefit will provide an average of \$96 a month for individuals who pay more than 40% of their income on rent and an average of \$120 for families who pay more than 30% of their income on rent. The benefit will cost \$240 million a year when fully phased-in and will vary according to city size, family size, a tenant’s income and rent paid. The benefit will go to nearly 200,000 Ontarians.
5. We will pass legislation allowing municipalities to adopt inclusionary housing practices.

Green Party

1. The Green Party budget balances the books in 2015 which is the point in time I can promise to revisit significant funding for affordable housing. Outside of direct funding for new units in the very short term, the Green Party of Ontario is committed to creating new Affordable Housing units immediately by requiring that new housing developments (such as condo developments) include affordable housing units as well. We would set targets for new units across Ontario and within individual municipalities. By applying the same rules across the province we can ensure that all developments fall under the same rules. The Green Party also believes that housing co-ops are an excellent mechanism for keeping costs low while strengthening communities. That is why we actively support the co-op initiatives and, once elected, will take steps to ensuring continued support for cooperatives across Ontario.

2. The Green Party of Ontario is committed to a comprehensive Green Building Program that will include tax credits for home energy retrofitting. This will not only allow affordable housing units to be repaired and maintained but will also reduce energy costs for tenants.

3. na

4. The Green Party of Ontario are firmly committed to finding ways to aid low income tenants find afford housing and rising energy costs. We will work together with municipalities, NGOs, and renters to ensure that mechanisms exist to help those most in need. We also want to address energy affordability issues by raising the Personal Income Tax exemption by \$2000 instead of the flat-tax cuts other party’s are proposing.

5. The Green Party of Ontario believes that it is time to allow municipalities to take active steps to promote affordable housing in their communities. We strongly support amending the Planning Act to give municipalities the power to demand affordable housing units be included in development plans.