

2021-6 Housing Stability During Public Health Emergencies

Mover: North End Community Renewal Corporation

Whereas: Housing stability is a cornerstone of healthy and safe neighbourhoods and is vital to maintaining stability and wellness during times of public health emergencies.

Whereas: Many Manitobans are at risk of homelessness due to COVID. Unemployment rates have trended between 7.0% and 11.4% during the COVID-19 pandemic, while many more are not even counted in unemployment numbers. Over 80,000 customers are unable to keep up with their utility payment as a result of COVID.

Whereas: In March 2020, the Manitoba Government implemented an eviction ban to prevent people from losing their housing if unable to pay the rent. Despite an increase in the number of individuals testing positive for the virus, the ban was lifted on October 1, 2020. An estimated 5,456 - 7,882 tenants and their households are now at risk of eviction, resulting in overcrowding and homelessness putting a greater number of people at risk of contracting and spreading the virus.

Whereas: Increasing the number of those at risk of homelessness will result in costly health and safety issues, affect people's ability to practice social distancing, self-isolate when required, and increase the rate of child apprehension by child welfare systems.

Whereas: The development of a safe and humane housing stability plan that supports both landlords and tenants during public health emergencies is the best strategy to ensure that people are able to safely comply with public health orders without creating undue hardship on landlords, tenants, and emergency services.

Whereas: This resolution fits within the Ending Poverty theme area of the CCEDNet Public Policy Road Map, as housing stability and security is key to supporting people living in poverty and as a pathway out of poverty.

Be it Resolved That: The Province of Manitoba reinstate the provincial eviction ban and rent freeze to prevent homeless during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Be it Resolved That: The Province of Manitoba strike a working group composed of housing support experts, landlord/property managers, and government to design a strategy that supports housing stability during public health emergencies.

Be it Resolved That: The proposed working group be tasked to draft a housing stability plan that focuses on:

- A. Devising a repayment plan process for tenant in arrears before evictions are granted
- B. Increasing supports under rent assist
- C. Improving supports for landlords who are housing vulnerable tenants
- D. Setting criteria for enacting rent freezes and housing supports during future public health emergencies

How the Resolution will be Advanced: The North End Community Renewal Corporation will continue to lead direct advocacy and can facilitate the working group once it is struck. The Make Poverty History Manitoba and Right to Housing Coalitions will also continue to lead collaborative work on this

file alongside coalition members during the COVID-19 pandemic through direct advocacy, organizing, and awareness-raising.