

# Shelter and Housing Justice Network

## *Shelter Rights, Housing Rights, Human Rights*

### **Mandate / Mission Statement**

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The Shelter and Housing Justice Network (SHJN) is a collective of homelessness and housing advocates, shelter providers, healthcare professionals, faith leaders, legal workers, and researchers who have come together to address the issue of homelessness in Canada on a local, provincial, and national level.

Responding to the homelessness crisis through a humanitarian approach, SHJN seeks to raise awareness and demand change as it relates to emergency shelter, social housing, and the protection of human rights.

Operating under the mantra of “shelter rights, housing rights, human rights” SHJN seeks immediate action and long-term sustainable solutions in the shelter and housing sectors.

#### **SHJN’s mandate includes:**

- Ensuring safety, dignity and autonomy for those experiencing homelessness;
- Ensuring access to housing for all regardless of age, race, faith, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, income, or immigration status;
- Advocating the re-establishment of a national social housing supply program in Canada;
- Enhancing access to critical services and supports that not only assist individuals and families currently experiencing homelessness, but also prevent those who are at-risk of becoming home-less from being forced to live on the streets or in precarious circumstances.

### **List of Demands**

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- 1) **Homelessness State of Emergency:** That the City of Toronto call a state of emergency as it relates to the homelessness crisis in the city.
- 2) **Opioid State of Emergency:** That, due to its impact on people who are homeless, and the rising number of overdoses and overdose deaths in and out of the shelter system, that the City of Toronto call a state of emergency as it relates to the opioid crisis, and seek Provincial and Federal assistance in the fast tracking and funding of Overdose Prevention Sites and other overdose prevention initiatives.
- 3) **Open all available emergency shelter options now:** That the City of Toronto immediately open all four Sprung Instant Structures, and any other available spaces to ensure there is adequate access to shelter during this current emergency, including 24/7 safe spaces for women, children, LBGT individuals, as well as harm reduction and low barrier options.
- 4) **Add 2,000 new shelter beds or transitional housing units.** That the City of Toronto open an additional 2,000 shelter beds or transitional housing units in 2019 in order to respond to the dangerously overcrowded occupancy levels currently being experienced in all sectors of the city's shelter system.
- 5) **Increased investment in rent-geared-to-income social housing:** That the City of Toronto commit to investing in, at a minimum, 5,000 new rent-geared-to-income social housing and supportive housing units per year.
- 6) **Significant budget increase for housing and homelessness supports:** That all levels of government, including the City of Toronto, immediately commit to investing an additional 1% of their total budgets to solving the housing and homelessness crisis.
- 7) **Increased investment in preventing homelessness:** That the City of Toronto preserve our current supply of affordable housing by ensuring no further TCHC housing is sold or shuttered due to disrepair, and by developing a framework of policies and funded programs to prevent the loss of low-income housing and the displacement of low-income tenants.