

Housing Matters

Housing Matters BC provides a new vision for meeting British Columbians' housing needs. It delivers on government's commitment to build the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities, those with special needs, children at risk and seniors. It's only the beginning. We look forward to a continuing dialogue with our partners.

Housing Matters BC is based on the belief that housing is more than bricks and mortar. Safe, affordable housing provides a place from which we all can pursue our dreams. Our strategy will help homeless individuals stabilize their lives. It will help people with disabilities access suitable housing. It will help seniors remain living in the communities they have built. It will help low-income working families live affordably. And it will build the foundation to help our children realize their full potential.

Honourable Rich Coleman
Minister Responsible for Housing

HELPING THOSE IN NEED

- The Province will provide emergency shelters and reach out to the homeless to provide links to more permanent housing.
- People who need special support and can't find housing in the private market will receive priority for subsidized housing.
- Aboriginal people will have more housing resources.
- Tenants in subsidized housing will be offered new ways to become more self-sufficient and find affordable rental housing in the private market.
- Low-income working families will be helped through the Rental Assistance Program in the private rental housing market, where most already live.

HELPING HOMEOWNERS

Improvements to the First Time Home Buyers' Property Transfer Tax Exemption and the Home Owner Grant help people enter the housing market and with the cost of homeownership.

Steps are also underway to modernize the building safety system, improve consumer protection for homebuyers, enhance the residential tenancy system and increase professionalism in the residential construction industry.

For more information or to download a copy of **Housing Matters BC**, visit www.bchousing.org.



VIEWPOINTS

The Rental Assistance Program will address the income shortage problem faced by some working families. It will immediately assist households in core need to redirect some of their scarce resources away from rent and toward food, clothing and other necessities.

Al Kemp

CEO, RENTAL OWNERS AND MANAGERS SOCIETY OF BC

The majority of Aboriginal people live off-reserve and have a fundamental need for safe, adequate, affordable, healthy housing delivered in a culturally sensitive manner. BC Housing has made a shift to allow the supportive housing programs for off-reserve Aboriginal people to be delivered by the Aboriginal Housing Management Association and we applaud them for giving us this opportunity for self-management and self-determination.

Linda Ross

CEO, ABORIGINAL HOUSING MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

Ensuring B.C.'s building regulatory system is safe, stable and efficient is a team responsibility that needs to involve all levels of government in partnership with the housing industry. It means engaging our housing sector in various dialogues to provide an up-to-date and responsive regulatory framework.

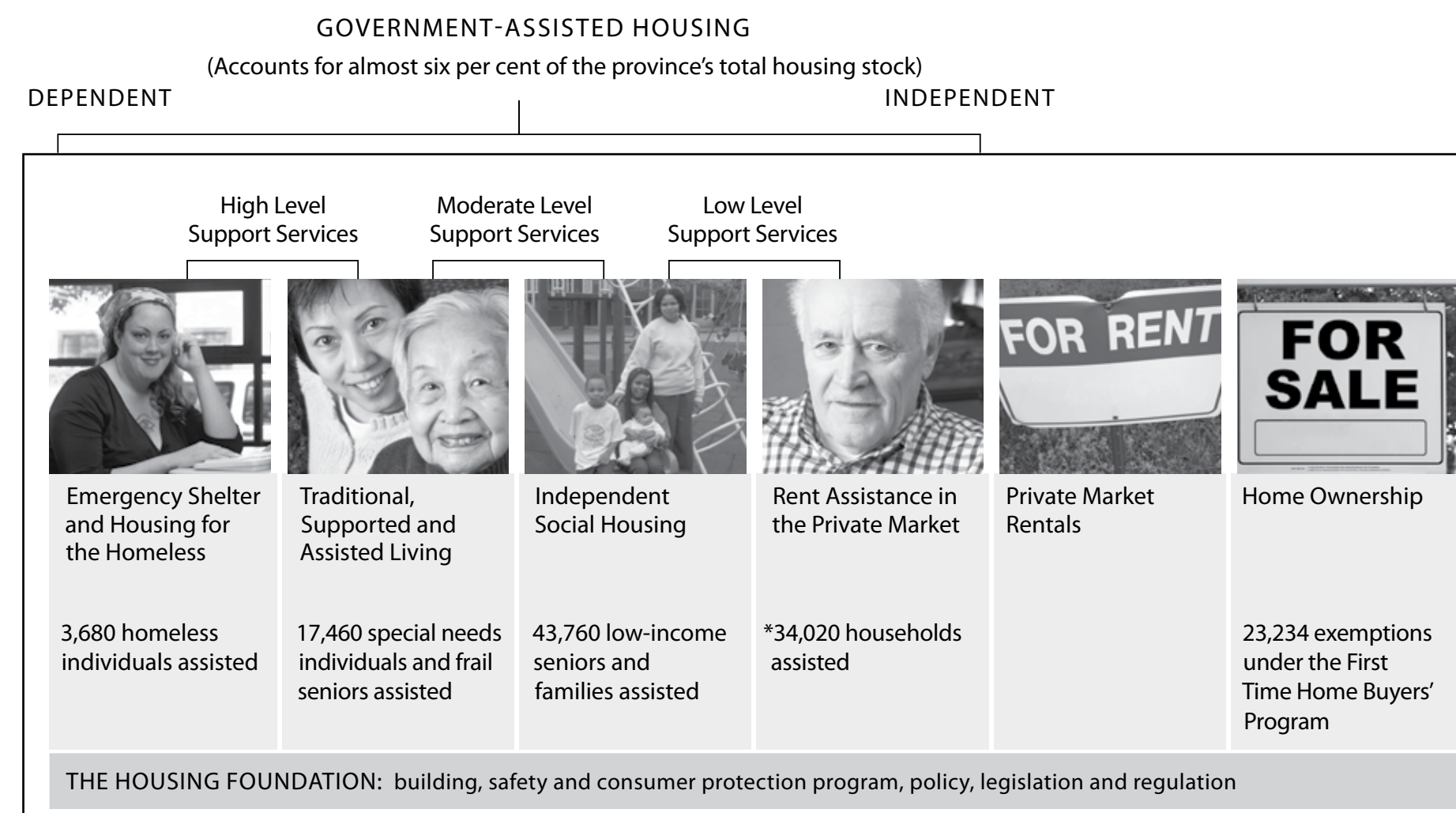
MJ Whitemarsh

CEO, CANADIAN HOME BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION OF BC

Housing Fact

In B.C., research estimates the cost of homelessness to government health care, social and justice systems at \$30,000 to \$40,000 per person, per year.

RANGE OF HOUSING OPTIONS



*This includes a projection of 15,000 low-income working families to be helped under the Rental Assistance Program.



Rental Assistance Program

It can be a struggle for low-income working families to make rent payments in B.C.'s housing market. That's why the Province is introducing the Rental Assistance Program. The program will provide direct cash assistance to eligible low-income working families with children under the age of 19. Assistance is paid directly to eligible households to assist these families with monthly rent payments in the private market.

Who is eligible?

You may be eligible if:

- You have at least one or more dependent child under the age of 19.
- You have an annual income below \$20,000.
- Some or all of your annual income comes from employment.
- You have less than \$10,000 in assets.
- You file an annual income tax return.
- You pay more than 30 per cent of your household income towards rent for your home, or pay pad rental for a manufactured home (trailer) that you own and occupy.
- You have lived in British Columbia for the full 12 months immediately preceding the date of application.
- You meet the citizenship requirements for the program.

You will not be eligible if:

- You live in subsidized housing.
- You live in co-operative housing and are a shareholder.

- You or your family receive income assistance under the B.C. Employment and Assistance Act (excluding the Medical Services Plan).
- You own a home that you do not live in.
- You or a member of your family does not meet the citizenship requirements or came to Canada under a private sponsorship agreement that is still in force.

The program gives the most money to the people with the least income. The amount of assistance is determined by the household size, income, rent and where you live in the province.

To obtain an application form for the Rental Assistance Program:

- Download an application from www.bchousing.org;
- Call BC Housing at 604-433-2218 or 1-800-257-7756 (outside the Lower Mainland) to have an application mailed to you; or,
- Ask in person at any BC Housing office.



BC Housing