

Student Housing Nova Scotia

Presentation to HRM's Youth Committee

May 15, 2025



STUDENT HOUSING
NOVA SCOTIA



Introductions



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About us

- Non-profit organization, primary activity is providing housing to students.
- Strategic plan for next 2 years focuses on growing our portfolio by buying and building more rental units.
- Advocate, conduct and support research, and develop resources for students.
- Trying to change the market for student rentals in our province and build a more affordable future for everyone.



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Our story

- The only non-profit student housing organization east of Montreal
- Created by a group of Dalhousie students in 1965, one of the first non-profit student housing organizations in Canada.
- First property completed in 1967, a 112 development in partnership with a university. This was one of the first and largest non-profit housing developments in NS.
- Providing low-cost housing to thousands of students for nearly 60 years.



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Impact

- In 2023, our (1967) units were rented for 45% below CMHC market rates, saving students \$500+ per month.
- Saved students \$8.8 million between 2010 and 2023.
- Newly acquired units rented anywhere from market to \$300 below market rates.
- A safe, supportive, and empathetic environment for students.



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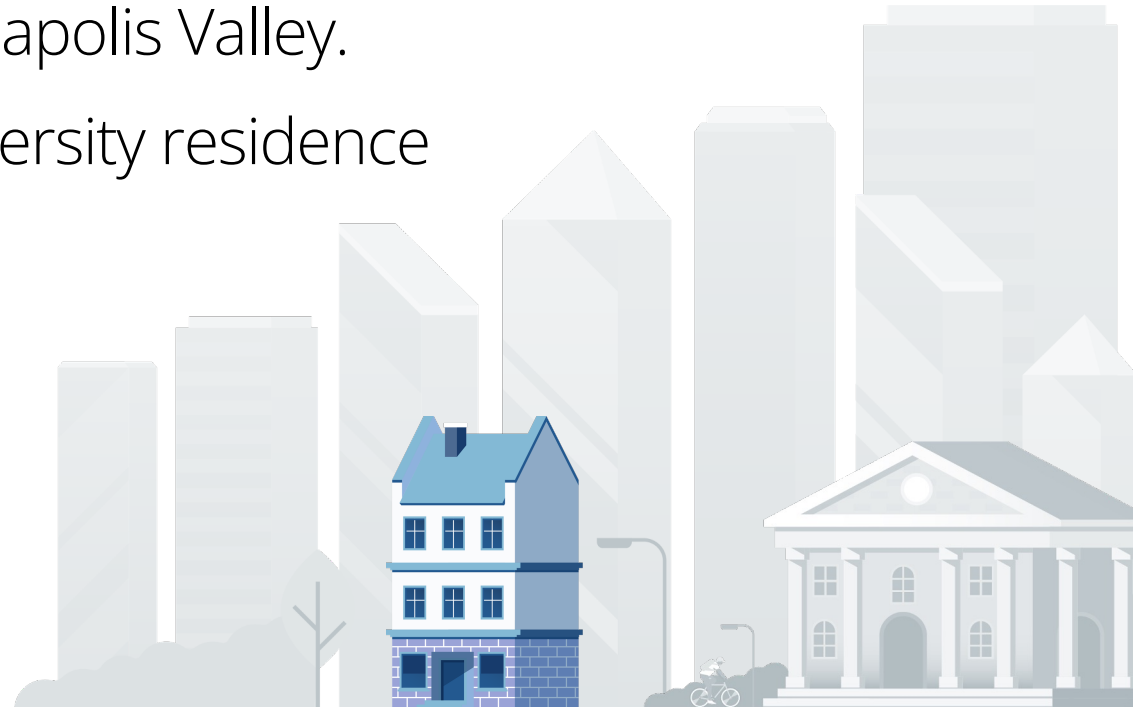


Last 18 Months

- Transformation with new name, brand, renewed province-wide mission.
- Made first acquisition (11 units) in Wolfville.
- Another 29 units in development in the Annapolis Valley.
- Initial property (112 units) converted to university residence at the end of our long-term agreement.
- Launched the DASH Fund, running two successful campaigns so far.



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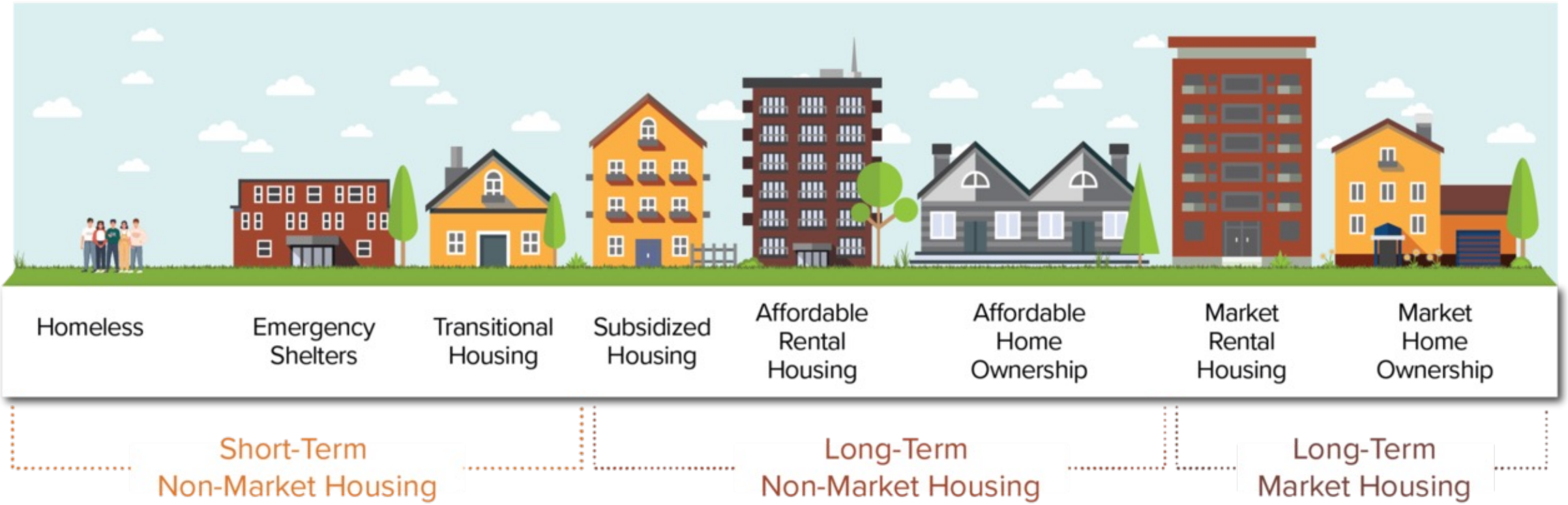


What is non-profit housing?



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Non-market housing examples

- Non-profit housing (owned by non-profit organization)
- Co-operative housing (co-owned by residents)
- Campus residences (owned by university)
- Public housing (owned by government)



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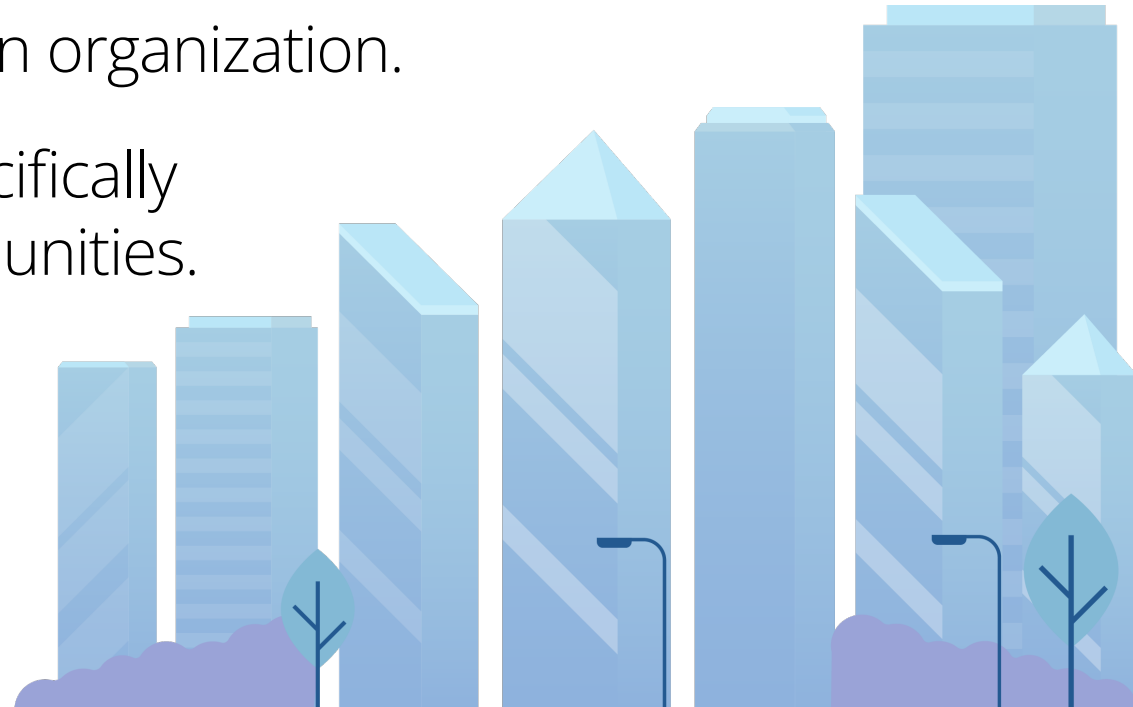


What is non-profit housing?

- Owned and/or operated by a non-profit organization.
- Similar costs (and sometimes higher) compared to for-profit housing.
- Can generate "profit", but this is reinvested in organization.
- Serves various populations, sometimes specifically dedicated to serve specific groups or communities.
- Rental rates vary, often below market.



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Why isn't there more of it?

- Significant start-up costs, difficult to build momentum.
- Availability of capital funding for new and existing non-profits.
- Lack of consistent government investment and limited public funding.
- High build costs and market conditions.
- A high-risk, low-return, long-term venture.



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Solutions to support growth

- Maintain and increase funding programs at all levels of government (federal, provincial, and municipal).
- Implement and enhance municipal programs such as property tax reductions, deed transfer tax rebates, or favourable zoning and development policies.
- Provide more free or low-cost land to non-profit housing organizations.
- Find new solutions to access capital.



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Housing is the **defining
issue** of this generation



Is there a student housing **crisis**?



48%

Have gone without groceries to pay for housing costs



56%+

Have felt unsafe, live in housing that needed repairs, or have been mistreated by their landlord.



95%

Could not find a suitable place to live on short notice.



1/3

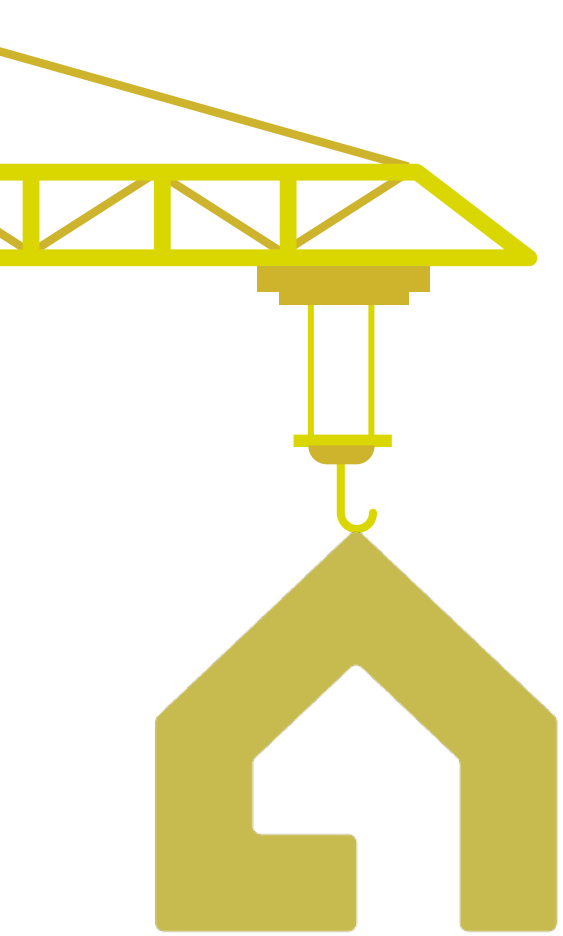
Reported experiencing discrimination while trying to access housing.

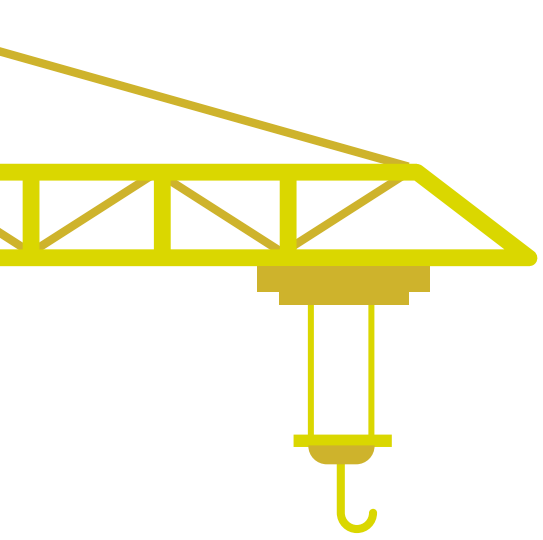
How can we **solve** this?



How can we **solve** this?







DASH FUND





- The Developing Affordable Student Housing (DASH) Fund generates the funds needed to support the development and acquisition of housing projects.
- Funded through a \$5/semester addition to student fees.
- Facilitated through a referendum, and voted on by all students during student union elections.
- Based off a successful model used in Montreal.
- Successful at Acadia and Saint Mary's, hoping to run more campaigns in the year ahead.



How it works

- We design, build, and manage properties with input from student leaders.
- DASH Fund contributions are used as a “down payment” to start housing projects (5-10% of total cost).
- Student Housing NS uses funding sources and financing to cover the remaining of project costs.
- Could fund over \$30 million in housing projects for students in Halifax over 5 years.



Questions & Discussion



Thank You!

