

Ten things to know about the newly-signed federal-provincial-territorial housing framework agreement

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A federal-provincial-territorial (FPT) framework agreement on housing was [signed on April 10 in Toronto](#). It supports the Trudeau government's [National Housing Strategy](#), which was released last fall.

Here are 10 things to know about the just-signed agreement:

1. **Though a National Housing Strategy (NHS) was released last fall, a federal-provincial-territorial (FPT) framework agreement still had to be signed.** That's because a lot of the funding proposed in the Strategy is dependent on cooperation from provincial and territorial governments.
2. **The federal government will now seek to negotiate bilateral agreements with every provincial and territorial government.** In fact, it's quite likely that the federal government has already begun to negotiate such agreements with some provinces and territories. If recent history serves as any guide, the federal government will likely begin by trying to negotiate agreements with provincial/territorial governments they think are especially keen to sign on (British Columbia might be low-hanging fruit in this regard).
3. **Each bilateral agreement will have a clause that ensures equal terms for all jurisdictions.** Such a clause will stipulate that if a subsequent signee gets better terms, those better terms will apply to any provincial or territorial government that previously signed. The intent of such a clause is to not discourage a provincial or territorial government to come to the table early.
4. **One important section of the newly-signed agreement pertains to the National Housing Co-Investment Fund.** The newly-signed agreement stipulates that provincial and territorial governments will have a role in decision-making pertaining to this fund; whereas, last fall's NHS agreement suggested it would be a unilateral federal program. (For more on this fund, see point #3 of [this previous blog post](#).)
5. **The newly-signed agreement touts the goal of removing 490,000 households from [core housing need](#) over 10 years.** While hundreds of thousands of households may well be removed from core need, this is likely an unrealistic target. For example, the Canada Housing Benefit would need to be very deep and reflect regional differences in order to completely remove most beneficiary households from core housing need (For more on problems associated with using core housing need as a metric, see [this June 2017 analysis](#) by Steve Pomeroy.)^[1] Also, the (NHS) released just last fall indicated that the goal was to remove 530,000 households from core housing need; likewise, the media release for the just-signed agreement also uses the 530,000 figure.
6. **Much of the federal funding committed will have to be matched by provinces and territories—but still, very few details have been offered as what this will look like.** Some of the matching dollars won't come from provincial/territorial governments themselves—but rather, from municipal governments, Indigenous organizations, non-profits and private entities. Some of these

details will surface later in bilateral agreements. Also, some of the federal funding (such as the “targeted northern funding”) won’t require cost matching.

7. **No specific information has been provided on program structure.** These details will appear in the schedules in bilateral agreements. Such details will include information regarding who’s eligible for housing support and how exactly funds can be used.
8. **The federal government plans to introduce legislation that would underpin the framework agreement.** Regardless, future federal, provincial and territorial governments will still have some opportunity to back out as future governments always have the opportunity to pass legislation to undo all of this. However, there would be political risk in doing so (i.e., they’d get a lot of political flak).
9. **The just-signed agreement says nothing new about homelessness per se.** The homelessness file is being handled by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), while the NHS is being handled by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. An [Advisory Committee on Homelessness](#) has been meeting over the course of the past year “to support the redesign” of Canada’s Homelessness Partnering Strategy. Their consultation has concluded and they recently [released a ‘what we heard’ document](#).
10. **The just-signed agreement says nothing about supportive housing.** Supportive housing refers to subsidized housing for marginalized groups (including persons experiencing homelessness) that comes with social work support. I suspect we may hear something about supportive housing from ESDC over the coming months. It’s also possible that the bilateral agreements stemming from the just-signed agreement will get into the details on supportive housing.

In sum. The just-signed FPT housing framework agreement marks a crucial step toward making NHS a reality on the ground. The Calgary Homeless Foundation will be watching the status of bilateral negotiations closely, especially those involving the Government of Alberta. We’ll also be watching for developments on the federal homelessness front.

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[1] There’s a footnote in the [NHS](#) in reference to this. It makes reference to this target being related to either the removal of a household from core housing need *or* the household’s degree of core need being “significantly reduced” (p. 4).