

NEWS RELEASE

Effective processes needed to assess and manage conditions of provincially owned affordable housing

EDMONTON, AB — November 18, 2024 — The Department of Seniors, Community and Social Services does not have effective processes to manage the condition of Alberta’s affordable housing facilities according to a report released today by the Auditor General of Alberta.

“We did this audit in response to previous ministry annual reports from the Department of Seniors, Community and Social Services which showed declining housing conditions and over \$1 billion in outstanding maintenance,” said Auditor General Doug Wylie. “The facilities need maintenance to stay functional and safe for Albertans who require support to afford housing.”

The audit found that the department does not have:

- current information on the condition of its 2,800 housing facilities valued at over \$2.3 billion
- a maintenance strategy to guide third parties who operate the facilities on behalf of the department
- support for how it prioritizes maintenance projects requested by the facility operators
- performance measures to assess the overall state of housing conditions

The Auditor General made three recommendations to the department to maintain facility condition information, improve oversight processes, and implement performance measures.

“Without effective processes to manage the condition of provincially owned housing facilities, vulnerable Albertans may be living in deteriorating housing with potential health and safety problems,” said Wylie.

“The department will not know the extent of work required to keep the inventory of housing facilities in adequate and safe condition without facility condition assessments and performance measures. Major maintenance issues may persist, and minor issues may become major and lead to higher costs in the future. Where maintenance is continually not completed, the financial sustainability of the housing program may be impacted.”

The Department of Seniors, Community and Social Services owns over 27,000 affordable housing units in 2,800 facilities and is responsible for the development and maintenance of these facilities to ensure Albertans have access to safe housing options. The department also subsidizes rent in these housing units for Albertans with low income, including families, seniors, and individuals with special needs. In 2022-2023, operators submitted over 3,400 requests for maintenance projects totaling \$333 million and the department approved 215 projects for a total of \$31 million.

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The report is available at www.oag.ab.ca.

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