
Policy Matters: Geordie Dent

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Later this year, Canadians will vote in the 43rd federal election. Many non-profit organizations, networks, and coalitions see elections as a critical opportunity to raise relevant public policy issues. Recently, the rules for charities engaging in public policy have become a prominent source of debate and discussion in government and the sector. As we countdown to the next election, The Philanthropist [is asking non-profit leaders](#) what public policy issues are top of mind for them.

Name and organization: Geordie Dent, Federation of Metro Tenants' Associations

What current election issues might impact your work?

For the Tenant Federation, the roll-out and expansion of the federal National Housing Strategy will have significant impact on our work. From the 1940s to the 1960s most of the affordable housing (owned and rental) was built in Canada with subsidies from the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation. In the 1990s, the federal government abandoned the housing file, returning to the issue again in 2016. The amount of funding allocated and the number of new units being built will have a major impact – if both are big enough.

What issues would you like to bring more attention to in the election?

The need for more housing – specifically Indigenous housing – needs attention. But also the fact that broad housing programs existed decades ago, and they need to return. Indigenous housing has been at a crisis point for decades, with critical needs in terms of mould, structural issues, and a lack of maintenance causing major health issues. Cat Lake First Nation declared a state of emergency over their housing recently. Vancouver and Toronto, meanwhile, are in the midst of major crises related to a lack of rental supply and major price escalation, while housing costs are shooting up in most areas of the country.

Where can we learn more about these issues?

[Cat Lake First Nation declares state of emergency over illness, death from 'profoundly poor' housing](#), CBC 2019

[Trudeau's housing spending is smoke and mirrors](#), *Spacing* 2017

[Feds announce \\$10M for affordable housing for women and their families in Hamilton](#), CBC 2019