



Student Housing: New Report Paints Grim Picture for Students

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TORONTO, ON - Today the Unité de travail pour l'implantation de logement étudiant (UTILE), released their Fostering Learning and Awareness on Student Housing (FLASH) survey results in the On Student Housing in Canada report. The survey was completed by 18,513 postsecondary students from across Canada. We at the College Student Alliance (CSA) are not surprised by the themes of the report but were startled by the statistics.

The survey found that most students (62%) earn less than \$20,000 a year. In Canada, renting is considered "affordable" when rent costs 30% or less of a household's net income. Unfortunately, with very low incomes, most students (72%) spend 30% or more on rent. Ontario is particularly bad on this front as the province has the lowest levels of student net income and the highest rent expenditure to income ratio in the country. Ontario also has highest shared housing occupancy in the country with 25% of respondents indicating that they live with 5 or more roommates.

This report comes out at a time when there is a new article being published everyday about postsecondary students struggling to find homes and turning to shelters. Clearly affordable student housing needs to be a top priority for politicians and administrations, especially in Ontario.

A good first step is to reevaluate the definition of affordability in the legislation. The current standard of 30% or less of a household's net income is an insufficient definition for affordable student housing. Having a more flexible definition of affordability is a necessary first step to ensuring student housing is integrated with existing municipal and provincial tools for providing affordability.

Another step is to have colleges and universities open lines of dialog with students about housing and demand affordability requirements from developers in turn. Most students want to live on campus but are forced into sub-optimal off-campus housing because institutions do not have available or affordable housing options. As the FLASH survey highlighted that this off-campus housing is becoming more expensive and crowded, which has a negative correlation with students' mental health. As the National Post recently stated by ignoring housing " , [universities have] inflicted pain on their students and the communities they inhabit."

We are CSA believe students deserve a voice when it comes to discussion about affordable housing. Affordable student housing has been overlooked by the legislator and postsecondary institutions for too long. We will advocate on behalf of students with the goal of ensuring this report is the bottom of the barrel for affordable student housing.



About College Student Alliance:

College Student Alliance (CSA) advocates on behalf of Ontario college students in partnership with student leaders. Through our member student associations, CSA represents the collective voice of Ontario's college students.

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