



MORTGAGE
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AFFORDABILITY FOR MANITOBA FIRST-TIME BUYERS

2026 Pre-Budget Submission to the Government of Manitoba



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About Mortgage Professionals Canada

Mortgage Professionals Canada is Canada's largest network of non-profit mortgage industry association, representing over 15,000 mortgage brokers and agents, as well as banks, lenders, insurers, and service providers. We are proud to be the industry that provides Canadians with choice when making the most important financial decision of their lives and helps people achieve the dream of homeownership.



First-time buyers face increasing financial pressure in a competitive housing market. CMHC reports that they take longer to save for a down payment, are more likely to put down less than 20%, and identify rising prices, upfront taxes and fees, and high interest rates as major barriers to homeownership.ⁱ

They are also younger—typically between 25 and 34—and more than 70% of them rented before buying their first home.ⁱⁱ Without the advantage of equity that repeat buyers rely on, first-time buyers are disproportionately impacted.

In Winnipeg, the average detached home price exceeded \$450,000 in September 2025, an 8% year-over-year increase.ⁱⁱⁱ The provincial average reached \$397,000, up 7.6% over the same period.^{iv}

While Manitoba provides support for existing homeowners through the Homeowners Affordability Tax Credit and maintains programs for affordable housing in specific regions, a gap remains in assistance for first-time buyers.

According to feedback from Manitoba mortgage brokers, first-time buyers regularly inquire about available financial relief when purchasing; however, provincial supports for this group are currently limited compared to other jurisdictions.

Recommendation: Introduce a Land Transfer Tax Rebate for First-Time Buyers

Manitoba homebuyers face the highest closing costs in the Prairies, driven largely by the land transfer tax. Unlike Saskatchewan and Alberta, Manitoba imposes a significant upfront charge: on a \$400,000 home, land transfer taxes alone can exceed \$6,000. This cost cannot be financed through a mortgage and adds to legal, appraisal, moving



expenses—increasing financial barriers for first-time buyers who lack existing home equity.

A land transfer tax rebate would directly address this gap, and align Manitoba with other provinces such as Ontario (rebate up to \$4,000) and British Columbia (exemptions for homes up to \$835,000 and new builds up to \$1.1 million).

Modest Fiscal Impact

Based on Manitoba Real Estate Association data, year-to-date home sales total 11,532 units.^v Projecting sales through year-end brings the estimate to 17,298 units. Applying CMHC's estimate that 55% of buyers are first-timers (noting that this CMHC national average may differ in Manitoba) suggests approximately 9,500 eligible households.^{vi} At a \$2,000 rebate, the total fiscal cost would be approximately \$19 million—about 12% of the \$150 million land transfer tax revenue forecast in budget 2025-26.

The fiscal impact can be further controlled by introducing a price cap—similar to the British Columbia's approach—so the rebate is focused on moderately priced homes most relevant to first-time buyers. The rebate may also encourage more first-time buyers to enter the market, supporting overall activity and generating additional tax revenue. In addition, not all buyers will qualify (e.g., non-citizens or purchases of rental/vacant properties), which further limits the total cost.

This policy strikes a balance between affordability relief and economic benefit. A land transfer tax rebate would ease the largest upfront cost first-time buyers face. While the fiscal cost is modest, the broader return is meaningful: improved affordability, greater participation from younger households, and increased movement within the housing system, freeing up rental spaces as more transition into ownership.

Additional Recommendations

Mortgage Professionals Canada is committed to improving fairness in the housing market by reducing mortgage fraud and advancing collaborative housing solutions. **We respectfully request that the Government of Manitoba encourage the federal government to advance the following priorities, and to reflect supportive language in the upcoming provincial budget.**

Recommendation 1: Support a Digital Income Verification Tool

Mortgage fraud is rising—up nearly 30% from pre-pandemic levels—driving up home prices, eroding confidence in the system, and giving dishonest buyers an unfair advantage. More than 90% of fraud cases involve falsified financial documents. A secure, CRA-enabled income verification tool would provide lenders and brokers the ability to validate income directly through tax data, making the process safer, more accurate, and less vulnerable to fraud.

Regulators across Canada—including the Mortgage Broker Regulators' Council of Canada, provincial regulators, and OSFI—support this solution. Canadians do too:



Pollara's July 2025 survey shows that 58% see mortgage fraud as a major issue, 64% say it drives up housing prices, and 78% believe it gives dishonest buyers an unfair edge.^{vii}

International models exist. The UK's Mortgage Verification Scheme has shown how securely verifying income through tax data can prevent fraud while protecting privacy. A Canadian version could validate key tax line items (e.g., Line 15000—total income) with client consent and limited access windows.

Although the federal government committed to this tool in the 2024 Fall Economic Statement, progress has stalled.

MPC asks the Government of Manitoba to urge the federal government to set a clear timeline and prioritize implementation of this initiative.

Recommendation 2: Establish a Permanent Housing Roundtable

Canada's housing challenges require coordinated action. MPC, alongside partners such as the Canadian Real Estate Association and the Canadian Bankers Association, is calling for a permanent housing roundtable that brings together federal and provincial governments, municipalities, industry, and civil society.

A structured, recurring forum would help align policy on key areas such as land use, skilled labour shortages, immigration, supply constraints, and pathways to homeownership. It would signal a shared commitment to coordinated, results-driven solutions.

MPC encourages the Government of Manitoba to advocate for the creation of this roundtable at the federal level.

ⁱ <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/professionals/housing-markets-data-and-research/housing-research/surveys/mortgage-consumer-surveys/2024-mortgage-consumer-survey>

ⁱⁱ *ibid.*

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://stats.crea.ca/board/winn>

^{iv} <https://stats.crea.ca/board/mreg>

^v <https://creastats.crea.ca/board/mrea>

^{vi} <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/professionals/housing-markets-data-and-research/housing-research/surveys/mortgage-consumer-surveys/2024-mortgage-consumer-survey>

^{vii} <https://www.canadianmortgagetrends.com/2025/09/most-canadians-say-mortgage-fraud-stacks-the-deck-against-honest-buyers/>