



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF QUÉBEC

SECOND SESSION

FORTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE

Bill 20

**An Act to enact the Act to facilitate
access to housing and amending
various provisions with respect
to housing**

Introduction

**Introduced by
Madam Caroline Proulx
Minister Responsible for Housing**

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EXPLANATORY NOTES

This bill enacts the Act to facilitate access to housing, which provides for the implementation of a lease application portal for dwellings in affordable or low-rental housing. That Act establishes the rules governing the allocation and leasing of a dwelling in affordable housing, and allows the filing of an application with the Administrative Housing Tribunal to fix the rent of a dwelling in affordable housing, even if the dwelling is situated in a recently erected immovable or has been the subject of a recent change of destination. It provides that the Société d'habitation du Québec is subrogated by operation of law to the rights of the lessee of a dwelling in low-rental housing to have their rent fixed.

The bill makes adjustments to the rules governing the lease of a dwelling intended for a person pursuing studies and sets out the cases in which the lessee of such a dwelling must send the lessor proof of his or her enrollment and full-time student status.

The bill allows part of the contingency fund of a divided co-ownership to be invested for the long term. It also clarifies the Government's power to set standards applicable to the maintenance log and to the contingency fund study of such a co-ownership.

The bill authorizes the Société d'habitation du Québec to fully exercise its right of ownership on certain immovables and empowers it to carry out pilot projects on housing. The bill also allows housing bureaus to administer an immovable that received financial assistance with respect to housing.

The bill authorizes a member of the Administrative Housing Tribunal to engage in remunerated teaching activities and amends certain rules relating to the member's role, in particular those governing the member's recusation. It authorizes the Tribunal to impose procedural limitations on a party that is making abusive use of a pleading or that adopts conduct that is vexatious or quarrelsome. It also provides that the chairman of the Tribunal may require the parties to hold a conciliation session.

The bill allows the alienation, by onerous title, of surplus immovable State property to any person for it to be used for housing purposes.

LEGISLATION ENACTED BY THIS BILL:

- Act to facilitate access to housing (*insert the year and chapter number of this Act and the number of the section of this Act that enacts the Act to facilitate access to housing*).

LEGISLATION AMENDED BY THIS BILL:

- Civil Code of Québec;
- Cities and Towns Act (chapter C-19);
- Municipal Code of Québec (chapter C-27.1);
- Act respecting municipal taxation (chapter F-2.1);
- Act respecting the Société d’habitation du Québec (chapter S-8);
- Act respecting the Administrative Housing Tribunal (chapter T-15.01);
- Act to amend various legislative provisions with respect to housing (2024, chapter 2).

Bill 20

AN ACT TO ENACT THE ACT TO FACILITATE ACCESS TO HOUSING AND AMENDING VARIOUS PROVISIONS WITH RESPECT TO HOUSING

THE PARLIAMENT OF QUÉBEC ENACTS AS FOLLOWS:

CHAPTER I

ENACTMENT OF THE ACT TO FACILITATE ACCESS TO HOUSING

1. The Act to facilitate access to housing, the text of which appears in this chapter, is enacted.

“ACT TO FACILITATE ACCESS TO HOUSING

“DIVISION I

“GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. The purpose of this Act is to support persons whose situations are precarious and to improve their socio-economic conditions by facilitating equitable access to housing that meets their needs.

2. For the purposes of this Act,

“by-law” means a by-law of the Société made under the Act respecting the Société d’habitation du Québec (chapter S-8);

“dwelling in affordable housing” means a dwelling intended for lessees of modest income, other than a dwelling in low-rental housing, determined by by-law;

“dwelling in low-rental housing” means a dwelling in low-rental housing within the meaning of article 1984 of the Civil Code;

“Société” means the Société d’habitation du Québec;

“Tribunal” means the Administrative Housing Tribunal.

3. The provisions of this Act take precedence over any inconsistent provision of Chapter IV of Title II of Book V of the Civil Code.

“4. A clause in a lease of a dwelling in affordable housing that is inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is without effect.

“DIVISION II

“LEASE APPLICATION PORTAL

“5. The Government designates a body responsible for making available to the public a lease application portal for dwellings in affordable or low-rental housing in accordance with the standards determined by by-law.

The portal makes it possible to match applicants for the lease of a dwelling with the lessors and includes, in particular, the following registers:

- (1) a register of lease applications for dwellings in affordable housing; and
- (2) a register of lease applications for dwellings in low-rental housing.

“6. The designated body draws up, in accordance with the by-laws, one or more lists of eligible persons for each register according to, if applicable, the categories or subcategories of dwellings established by by-law.

“7. Any lessor who fulfills the conditions determined by by-law must register with the portal according to the terms prescribed by by-law.

“8. In the exercise of its functions, the designated body is considered to be a municipal body exclusively for the purposes of the

(1) Act respecting Access to documents held by public bodies and the Protection of personal information (chapter A-2.1); and

(2) Act respecting contracting by municipal bodies (chapter C-65.01).

If the body is a public body subject to the Act respecting contracting by public bodies (chapter C-65.1), the first paragraph does not apply.

For the purposes of the Act respecting contracting by municipal bodies, a municipal body may, despite sections 29 and 30 of that Act, award by mutual agreement a contract referred to in Title III of that Act to the designated body.

“9. A body whose designation ends must transfer to the Minister, as soon as possible, the data collected in the exercise of the functions entrusted to it under this Act as well as the resources and information assets determined by the Minister.

“DIVISION III

“ALLOCATION AND LEASING OF A DWELLING IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING

“10. A person is eligible to lease a dwelling in affordable housing if they meet the conditions prescribed by by-law, including those relating to the maximum income threshold.

“11. A person who wishes to lease a dwelling must file with the designated body a lease application that meets the requirements prescribed by by-law.

The body enters the application on each list referred to in section 6 for which the person is eligible.

“12. An applicant who is of the opinion that the designated body has not processed their lease application in accordance with the standards determined by by-law may apply to the Tribunal within one month after becoming aware of the body’s failure or, if a decision has been rendered, within one month of the decision. The body then has the burden of establishing that it acted in accordance with the by-law, failing which, the Tribunal may order the applicant to be entered, re-entered or reclassified on any list for which the Tribunal deems them eligible.

“13. A lessor who learns that one of their dwellings will be available to rent must inform the designated body as soon as possible so that the latter can refer eligible applicants to the lessor.

The matching of eligible applicants with the lessor must be performed in accordance with the terms and conditions prescribed by by-law.

“14. The lessor offers the dwelling to the applicant who is entitled to it according to the standards prescribed by by-law.

When a dwelling is allocated to an applicant, the lessor must notify the designated body as soon as possible.

“15. If the lessor allocates a dwelling to a person other than the applicant who is entitled to it, the applicant may apply to the Tribunal within one month after the allocation of the dwelling.

The lessor then has the burden of establishing that they acted in accordance with the by-law, failing which, the Tribunal may order them to house the applicant in a dwelling to which the applicant is entitled or, if no such dwelling is vacant, to allocate to the applicant the next equivalent dwelling that becomes vacant, in which case the lessor must send, as soon as possible, a copy of the decision to the designated body, which must, in accordance with the decision, enter the applicant on the list of eligible persons for the dwelling.

The Tribunal may also, in an urgent case, order the lessor to house the applicant in an equivalent dwelling, covered by this division or not, corresponding, if applicable, to the category of dwelling to which the applicant is entitled. If the rent for that dwelling is higher than the rent the applicant would have paid for the dwelling they are entitled to, the lessor is bound to bear the difference between the rents.

“16. If the lessor allocates a dwelling based on a misrepresentation made by the lessee, the lessor may, within two months after becoming aware of the misrepresentation, apply to the Tribunal to resiliate the lease or to modify certain conditions of the lease if, as the case may be, the dwelling would not have been allocated to the lessee or would have been allocated to the lessee on different conditions.

“17. If the lessor is not required to register with the portal, they are substituted for the designated body for the application of the provisions of this division.

“DIVISION IV

“SPECIAL RULES FOR LEASES OF DWELLINGS IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING

“18. The lessee of a dwelling in affordable housing must send the lessor or any other person designated by the Société the information on the lessee’s household composition and income in accordance with the standards prescribed by by-law.

“19. If the lessee fails to send the information set out in section 18, the lessor or the person designated by the Société may apply to the Tribunal to have the Tribunal order the lessee to remedy the failure within the time the Tribunal determines.

Should the lessee fail to send the information to the lessor within the prescribed time, the latter may apply to the Tribunal to obtain the resiliation of the lease.

“20. The lessee may not sublease the dwelling.

“21. The Société may, from the renewal of a lease, require, in accordance with the standards prescribed by by-law, a compensation from a lessee who ceases to be eligible for a dwelling in affordable housing on the ground that the lessee’s household income is greater than the maximum income threshold prescribed by by-law or that the lessee failed to send the information set out in section 18. The compensation is exigible from the day that is one month after the lessee received a notice from the Société informing the lessee of its decision.

The lessee may, within one month after receiving the notice, apply to the Tribunal if the lessee considers that the compensation was not determined in accordance with the by-law or that it is not exigible.

“22. The lessee who pays a compensation under the first paragraph of section 21 may, if their household income becomes equal to or lower than the maximum income threshold prescribed by by-law or if the lessee is no longer in default of sending the information provided for in section 18, request the Société to stop collecting the compensation or to reduce it, as the case may be. If the Société refuses to do so, the lessee may, within one month after the decision, apply to the Tribunal to have it rule on the exigibility of the compensation and on its amount, and order, if applicable, the repayment of any overpaid compensation.

“23. If a lessee has failed to pay the compensation, the Société may send the lessee a notice so informing them. If the lessee fails to remedy the failure within three months after receiving the notice, the lease is resiliated by operation of law, in which case the Société must notify the lessor as soon as possible.

If the lessor does not evict the lessee within one month after the notification, the Société may require the lessor to pay the compensation it would have collected from the lessee from that date.

“24. The lessee may, if they cease to be eligible for a dwelling in affordable housing on the ground that their household income is greater than the maximum income threshold prescribed by by-law, resiliate the lease by giving three months’ notice to that effect to the lessor and to the Société. Upon receipt of the notice by the Société, the latter may not require the compensation referred to in the first paragraph of section 21.

“25. The Société may designate a person to exercise the powers conferred on it by this division.

“DIVISION V

“AMENDING PROVISIONS

“CIVIL CODE OF QUÉBEC

“26. Article 1955 of the Civil Code of Québec is amended by inserting “, other than a dwelling in affordable housing within the meaning of the Act to facilitate access to housing (*insert the year and chapter number of this Act and the number of the section of this Act that enacts the Act to facilitate access to housing*),” after “dwelling” in the second paragraph.

“27. Article 1985 of the Code is amended

(1) by adding the following paragraph at the beginning:

“A person wishing to lease a dwelling in low-rental housing must file with the lessor a lease application that complies with the requirements prescribed by by-law of the Société d’habitation du Québec.”;

(2) by striking out both occurrences of “d’habitation du Québec” in the first paragraph.

“28. Article 1986 of the Code is amended by replacing “the list of eligible persons” in the third paragraph by “any list for which the court deems the person eligible”.

“29. The Code is amended by inserting the following articles after article 1995:

“1995.1. The lessor must send the Société d’habitation du Québec or any other person the Société designates a copy of any notice of modification of the lease.

The Société is subrogated by operation of law in the rights of the lessee who receives such a notice for the sole purpose of having the court fix the rent.

“1995.2. Where a lessor of a dwelling in low-rental housing must register with the lease application portal provided for by the Act to facilitate access to housing (*insert the year and chapter number of this Act and the number of the section of this Act that enacts the Act to facilitate access to housing*), the body designated by that Act is substituted for the lessor for the purposes of articles 1985 and 1986.

For the purposes of article 1989, the lessor must request the body to re-enter the lessee on any list of eligible persons, in accordance with the by-laws of the Société d’habitation du Québec. Should the lessor refuse, the lessee may apply to the court, within one month after receiving the notice of the refusal, to contest the lessor’s decision.”

“CITIES AND TOWNS ACT

“30. Section 500.5.3 of the Cities and Towns Act (chapter C-19) is amended by replacing “modest-rental” in subparagraph 3 of the first paragraph by “affordable”.

“MUNICIPAL CODE OF QUÉBEC

“31. Article 1000.5.3 of the Municipal Code of Québec (chapter C-27.1) is amended by replacing “modest-rental” in subparagraph 3 of the first paragraph by “affordable”.

“ACT RESPECTING MUNICIPAL TAXATION

“**32.** Section 45.1 of the Act respecting municipal taxation (chapter F-2.1), amended by section 51 of chapter 33 of the Statutes of 2025, is again amended by replacing “modest-rental” in subparagraph 1 of the second paragraph by “affordable”.

“ACT RESPECTING THE SOCIÉTÉ D’HABITATION DU QUÉBEC

“**33.** Section 86 of the Act respecting the Société d’habitation du Québec (chapter S-8) is amended, in the first paragraph,

(1) by inserting “loan guarantee,” after “a loan,” in subparagraph g;

(2) by replacing subparagraph g.1 by the following subparagraph:

“(g.1) prescribe any compensation that may be exigible from a lessee who ceases to be eligible for affordable housing as well as the rules relating to such compensation;”;

(3) by replacing “low rental” by “affordable or low-rental” in subparagraphs *n* to *p*;

(4) by inserting the following subparagraph after subparagraph *p*:

“(p.1) establish allocation and leasing rules specific to low-rental housing for which the Société agrees to pay an amount towards the rent, including rules applicable to dwellings in the private rental market that become low-rental housing, as well as the rules applicable to the lessees of such dwellings;”;

(5) by replacing “low rental” in subparagraphs *q* and *r* by “affordable or low-rental”;

(6) by replacing subparagraphs *s* and *t* by the following subparagraphs:

“(s) require that a person entered on a register of lease applications or on a list of persons eligible for a dwelling in affordable or low-rental housing communicate to the lessor of such a dwelling or to the body designated under section 5 of the Act to facilitate access to housing (*insert the year and chapter number of this Act and the number of the section of this Act that enacts the Act to facilitate access to housing*) information or documents which are necessary to the lessor or body in the exercise of their functions;

“(t) establish the standards according to which the body designated under section 5 of the Act to facilitate access to housing is responsible for making available to the public the portal provided for in that section, as well as those according to which the body keeps the registers of lease applications and the lists of eligible persons;

“(t.1) subject every decision of the body designated under section 5 of the Act to facilitate access to housing to the authorization of the Société and impose on the body any obligation regarding accountability;”;

(7) by adding the following subparagraph at the end:

“(x) establish the terms and conditions relating to the registration by a lessor with the portal provided for in section 5 of the Act to facilitate access to housing.”

“34. The Act is amended by replacing all occurrences of “modest-rental housing” by “affordable housing”.

“ACT RESPECTING THE ADMINISTRATIVE HOUSING TRIBUNAL

“35. Section 28 of the Act respecting the Administrative Housing Tribunal (chapter T-15.01) is amended by replacing “, 1984 to 1990 and 1992 to 1994 of the Civil Code” in subparagraph 2 of the first paragraph by “and 1984 to 1995.2 of the Civil Code or in the Act to facilitate access to housing (*insert the year and chapter number of this Act and the number of the section of this Act that enacts the Act to facilitate access to housing*)”.

“DIVISION VI

“FINAL PROVISION

“36. The Minister Responsible for Housing is responsible for the administration of this Act.”

CHAPTER II

AMENDING PROVISIONS CONCERNING HOUSING

CIVIL CODE OF QUÉBEC

2. Article 1070.2 of the Civil Code of Québec is amended

(1) by replacing the first paragraph by the following paragraph:

“The board of directors causes a maintenance log to be established for the immovable, keeps it up to date and has it reviewed periodically. The board of directors may however be exempt from doing so in the cases provided for by government regulation. The log, where it must be established, describes, in particular, maintenance done and maintenance required.”;

(2) by inserting “, in particular,” after “vary” in the second paragraph.

3. Article 1071 of the Code is amended

(1) by replacing the second sentence of the first paragraph by the following sentence: “The capital of the fund must be guaranteed; a part of the fund must also be liquid and be available on short notice.”;

(2) in the second paragraph,

(a) by replacing “The study” by “The board of directors may be exempt from doing so in the cases provided for by government regulation. The study, where it must be obtained,”;

(b) by inserting “, in particular,” after “vary”.

4. Article 1979 of the Code is amended by inserting “, on condition that the person provide the owner with proof of his enrollment not later than three months after the beginning of the lease and proof of his full-time student status not later than 1 December and 1 April each year and the person is deemed to be enrolled full-time for the summer period following or preceding that period” after “full-time student” in the second paragraph.

5. The Code is amended by inserting the following article after article 1979:

“1979.1. The educational institution or the owner holding a recognition may, at the time of the renewal of the lease and for serious reasons, relocate the person pursuing studies to a dwelling of the same type as that which he occupies, situated in the same neighbourhood as that dwelling and at equivalent rent. However, the educational institution or the owner holding a recognition may do so only if they inform the person thereof within the time prescribed to give notice of modification of the conditions of a lease of a dwelling.”

6. Article 1980 of the Code is replaced by the following article:

“1980. A person pursuing studies who leases a dwelling from an educational institution and who wishes to avail himself of the right to maintain occupancy shall give notice of one month before the expiry of the lease that he intends to renew the lease.”

7. Article 1982 of the Code is replaced by the following article:

“1982. The educational institution may resiliate the lease of a person who ceases to be a full-time student. The institution shall give him prior notice of one month, which may be contested, on its merits, within one month after it is received.

An owner holding a recognition may resiliate the lease of a person who has failed to provide proof of his enrollment or his full-time student status; the owner shall then give the person prior notice. Within one month after receiving the prior notice, the lessee must provide the proof of enrollment to the lessor or notify the lessor that he is vacating the dwelling; otherwise, the lessee is deemed to have agreed to the resiliation.

A lessee who is no longer a full-time student may resiliate the lease by giving prior notice of one month in the case of a dwelling leased from an educational institution and of two months in the case of a dwelling situated in an immovable for which the owner is recognized. The resiliation may take effect before the one-month or two-month period expires if the parties so agree or when the dwelling is re-leased during that period. The lessee is required to pay only that part of the rent that relates to the services which were provided before he vacated the dwelling. The same applies to the cost of such services if they are provided by the lessor under a contract separate from the lease.”

8. Article 1983 of the Code is amended by adding the following paragraph at the end:

“The lease of a person who leases a dwelling situated in an immovable for which the owner is recognized is terminated by operation of law one month after the date on which the owner ceases to be recognized. If the dwelling remains offered for lease, the owner must offer to the person to enter into a new lease whose rent must correspond to the rent that was charged under the previous lease less, if applicable, the part of the rent relating to the cost of the services, accessories, dependencies and other benefits that will no longer be provided under the new lease. The term of the new lease must be at least equivalent to that of the previous lease, unless it was indeterminate.”

9. The Code is amended by inserting the following article after article 1983.1:

“1983.2. If an immovable for which the owner is recognized is alienated, the new owner is deemed to be recognized on the condition that he made an application to be recognized within one month after the alienation. This presumption applies until the date of the authority’s decision concerning his application for recognition.”

ACT RESPECTING THE SOCIÉTÉ D’HABITATION DU QUÉBEC

10. The Act respecting the Société d’habitation du Québec (chapter S-8) is amended by inserting the following sections after section 3.4.3:

“3.4.4. The Société may, in respect of an immovable for which the Société becomes the owner under section 68.17 or following the exercise of its hypothecary rights and to pursue the achievement of its objects,

- (1) hold, retain, administer and operate the immovable; and

(2) see to the development and furnishing of the immovable and, to that end, acquire, rent, maintain and retain any movable property.

The powers provided for in the first paragraph must be exercised temporarily by the Société until the alienation of the immovable concerned.

“3.4.5. For the achievement of its objects, the Société may, with the authorization of the Government, develop and implement a pilot project on housing.

The Government determines the conditions applicable to the pilot project, including its duration and the terms under which the Société may implement the pilot project.

Within the framework of such a pilot project, the Société may

(1) acquire, construct, alter, restore and renovate an immovable;

(2) hold, retain, administer and operate the immovable or entrust its administration and operation to a housing bureau; and

(3) see to the development and furnishing of the immovable and, to that end, acquire, rent, maintain and retain any movable property.”

II. Section 57 of the Act is amended by replacing paragraph *d* of subsection 3.1 by the following paragraph:

“(d) administer, in accordance with an agreement entered into with its owner, a residential immovable belonging to the Société, a municipality or a non-profit organization or, with the authorization of the Société, any other immovable that received financial assistance with respect to housing;”.

ACT RESPECTING THE ADMINISTRATIVE HOUSING TRIBUNAL

12. Section 13 of the Act respecting the Administrative Housing Tribunal (chapter T-15.01) is amended by inserting “but may, with the chairman’s written consent, engage in teaching activities for which they may be remunerated” at the end.

13. Section 31 of the Act is amended by adding the following paragraph at the end:

“Despite the first paragraph, the chairman of the Tribunal, the vice-chairman designated under section 10 or the person designated by either may, if he considers that the interests of justice justify it, require the parties to hold a conciliation session.”

14. Section 56.2 of the Act is amended

(1) by inserting “within 45 days after the application is instituted” in the first paragraph after “record of the Tribunal”;

(2) by striking out the second paragraph.

15. Section 63.2 of the Act is amended

(1) by replacing “a proceeding” in the first paragraph by “an application or other pleading”;

(2) in the second paragraph,

(a) by replacing “a proceeding to prevent the execution of a board decision” by “an application or other pleading or is adopting conduct that is vexatious or quarrelsome”;

(b) by inserting “or other pleading” after “application”;

(3) by replacing “a proceeding” in the third paragraph by “an application or other pleading”.

16. Section 64 of the Act is replaced by the following section:

“**64.** A member who has knowledge of a valid cause for recusation must declare that cause in a writing filed in the record and advise the parties of it.”

17. Section 66 of the Act is replaced by the following section:

“**66.** A party may, at any time before the decision and provided the party acts with dispatch, apply for the recusation of a member seized of the matter if the party has serious reasons to believe that there is a cause for recusation.

The application for recusation is addressed in writing to the chairman of the Tribunal. Unless the member recuses himself, the application is decided by the chairman or the vice-chairman, or by a member designated by either of the former.”

18. Section 88 of the Act is amended by inserting the following paragraph after the second paragraph:

“Where the member is unable to act or has ceased to hold office, another member of the Tribunal designated by the chairman may correct the decision.”

ACT TO AMEND VARIOUS LEGISLATIVE PROVISIONS
WITH RESPECT TO HOUSING

19. Section 92 of the Act to amend various legislative provisions with respect to housing (2024, chapter 2) is amended

(1) by replacing the first paragraph by the following paragraph:

“The minister having authority over an immovable may alienate it to any person for it to be used, in whole or in part, for housing purposes. The alienation may be by gratuitous title where the purchaser is a housing cooperative, a non-profit organization or a housing bureau and where the immovable will be used for the purposes of social or affordable housing or of dwellings intended for persons pursuing studies within the meaning of article 1979 of the Civil Code. The minister may also transfer authority over an immovable to another minister in order for that minister to alienate it in accordance with this paragraph.”;

(2) by inserting “by a housing cooperative or a non-profit organization” after “acquired” in the fourth paragraph;

(3) by adding the following sentence at the end of the fifth paragraph: “The regulation may specify conditions that vary depending on the legal status of the purchaser.”

CHAPTER III

FINAL PROVISION

20. The provisions of this Act come into force on (*insert the date of assent to this Act*), except the provisions of section 1, which come into force on the date or dates set by the Government.

