



# 2023 Progress Report

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**10-Year Housing  
and Homelessness  
Plan 2020 - 2030**





# Honouring the Anishinabe Algonquin Nation, First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples

Ottawa is built on un-ceded Anishinabe Algonquin territory.

The peoples of the Anishinabe Algonquin Nation have lived on this territory for millennia.

Their culture and presence have nurtured and continue to nurture this land.

The City of Ottawa honours the peoples and land of the Anishinabe Algonquin Nation.

The City of Ottawa honours all First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples and their valuable past and present contributions to this land.

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# Message from Mayor Sutcliffe



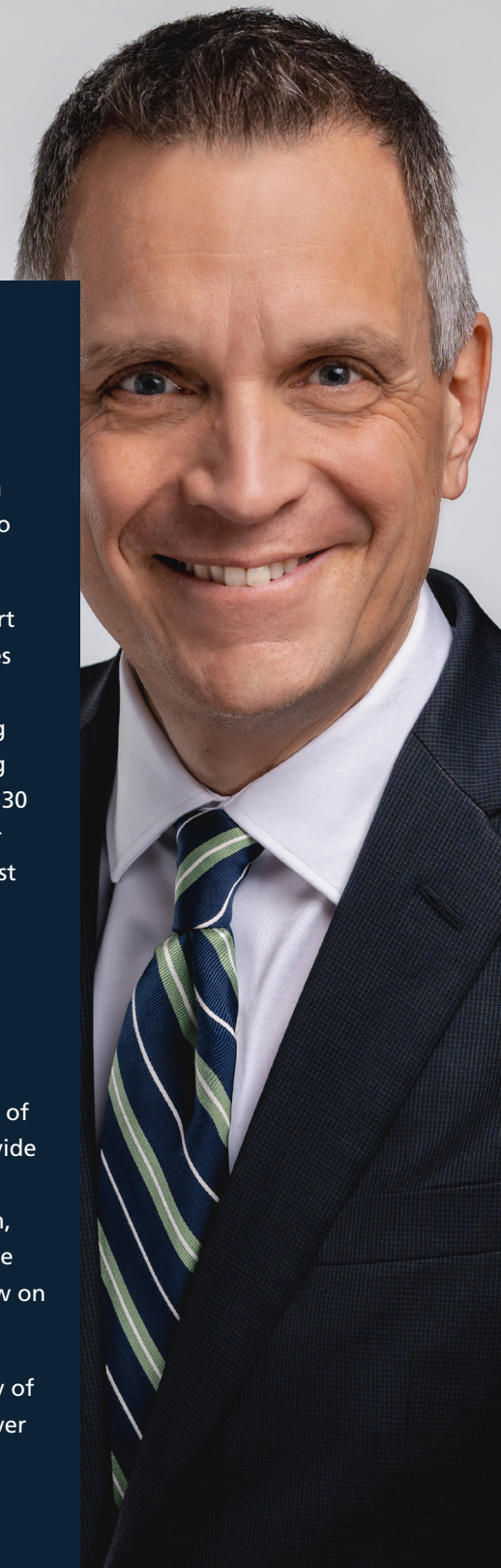
As the Mayor of the City of Ottawa, key priorities are housing and making Ottawa more livable and affordable for all residents. This priority is reflected in the 2023 to 2026 Term of Council priorities set by Council.

In 2023, demand on the emergency shelter system saw a record high, largely in part from an influx of newcomers and asylum seekers to Ottawa. Despite the challenges experienced within the housing and homelessness sector, we were able to achieve a number of important milestones that will help us respond to the current housing needs. As part of the 2024 budget, we invested a record amount in capital funding for new affordable housing by doubling our annual investment of \$15 million to \$30 million. Advocacy to higher levels of government resulted in increased funding for housing and homelessness, including \$24.1 million from the province for the largest affordable housing project that has been constructed in the city to date, with 271 units at 715 Mikinak Road.

Council also approved the Integrated Transition to Housing Strategy, including the strategic purchase of 1245 Kilborn Place. This building will help us provide much needed transitional and permanent supportive and affordable housing to people experiencing homelessness. Another important achievement in 2023 was the lease of the building for the Corkstown Transitional Housing Program. Corkstown will provide shelter and support services to families while they take steps to find permanent housing. During a year of record demand on the housing and homelessness system, I am proud of how our Housing & Homelessness staff and community partners have responded to the needs of our most at-risk residents, and the dedication they show on a regular basis in the work they do.

As more people choose to make Ottawa their home, the need to advance a variety of housing types becomes increasingly important. The decisions we make now and over the next few years are critical in ensuring we preserve the quality-of-life Ottawa residents deserve.

By working together with our community partners, we can continue to take bold and immediate actions to mitigate the pressures on our housing supports, build more affordable homes, and build them faster. We must continue to secure the funding we need from other levels of government to make Ottawa a safer and more affordable city for everyone.



## Message from Councillor Dudas

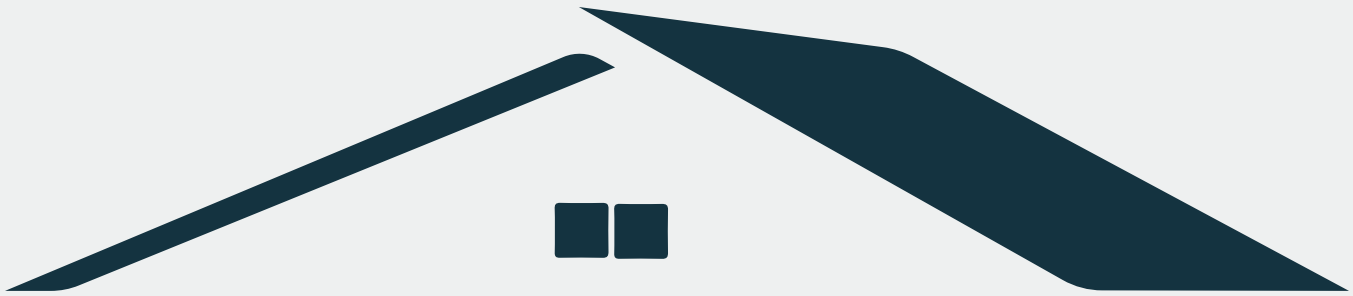


As we progress through Ottawa's 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan, we should pause to recognize the incredible work that has been done over the last six years, the importance of this work, and the need for further supports and resources to address issues of homelessness and the lack of housing supply. It is through supporting our most vulnerable residents that a powerful truth emerges; a city's strength lies in ensuring all residents have a safe place to call home. This past year, which saw unprecedented pressure on our emergency shelter system, was a stark reminder of how pressing this need is across our City, and how resoundingly compassionate Ottawa has been, and will continue to be, in its response.

The Plan is Ottawa's roadmap, the path to our vision of a city that is more livable for all. This report is a testament to the progress achieved, to the incredible work being undertaken by our front-line staff, and to the City of Ottawa's unwavering commitment to help lift families and individuals out of homelessness. This work is not something that can be done alone. It demands collaboration across many City departments; the support from community partners; and that we be united with clear and consistent advocacy to all levels of government for increased supports.

Throughout this report, you will find detailed the remarkable efforts undertaken to date, milestones achieved, and an acknowledgment of the work still to be done. Together, we can build an Ottawa where every resident feels welcome, safe, and has the proper supports to reach their full potential.





## A Home for Everyone

# Ottawa's 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan 2020-2030

### Goal 1: Everyone has a home

- Preserve the existing affordable housing stock
- Develop 575-850 new affordable housing options per year (new units + housing benefits) :
  - ▶ 10% of new units will be supportive housing units
  - ▶ 10% of new units will be accessible
- 65% of new affordable units are to be targeted to low-income households (deciles 1 to 3) and 35% are to be targeted to moderate-income households (deciles 4 to 6)
  - Increase access to housing that is affordable

### Goal 2: People get the support they need

- Unsheltered homelessness is eliminated
- The number of new people entering homelessness is reduced by 25%
  - Overall homelessness is reduced by 25%
  - Reduce chronic homelessness by 100%

### Goal 3: We work together

- Ottawa has an integrated housing system that is responsive to the needs of our residents.
- We have a system where resources are maximized and used efficiently for the benefit of the people we serve.

# Housing and Homelessness in 2023



**12,447**

Households were on the Centralized Wait List as of December 31, 2023



**1,186**

Households were housed from the Centralized Wait List



**610**

New housing benefits were provided to low-income households



**49**

New affordable housing units were completed



**57**

New supportive housing units were completed



**831**

Affordable and supportive housing units were under construction



**301**

Households were housed through the Housing First program



**1,129**

Households were housed from the shelter system



**988**

People were actively chronically homeless as of December 31, 2023



**382**

Individuals with a history of chronic homelessness were housed



**98**

Actively chronically homeless individuals were matched to Housing First Case Management Supports



**13%**

Increase in the number of people using the shelter system



**3%**

Decrease in the average length of stay (in days) for people using the shelter system



**25%**

Increase in newcomer inflow into the shelter system between 2022 and 2023

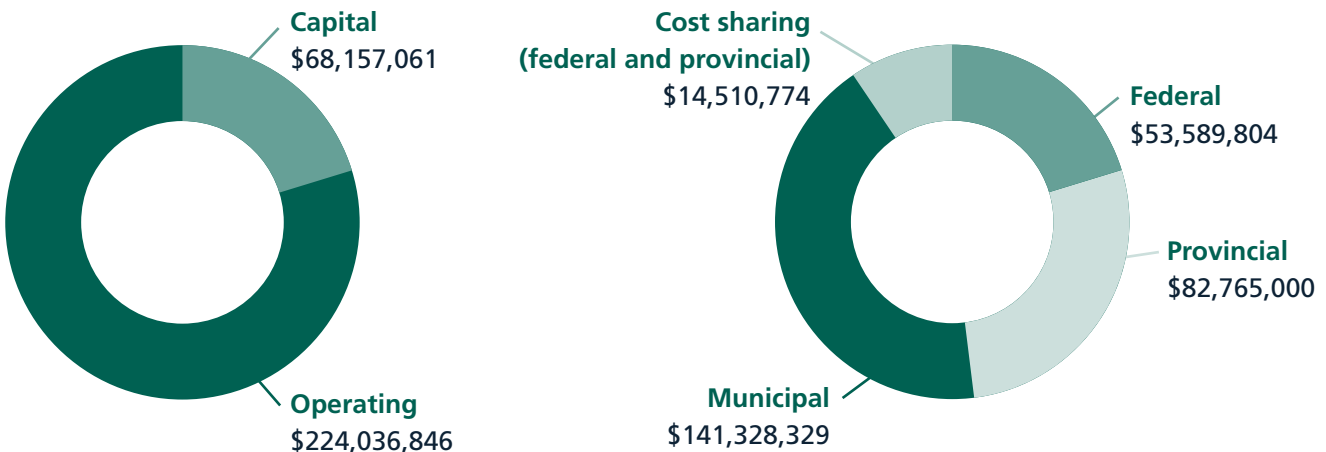
## Opportunities

- Increased collaboration between the City and community partners led to the creation of a number of new strategies and initiatives, including:
  - ▶ Integrated Transition to Housing Strategy (page 28)
  - ▶ Enhanced Housing Allowance Benefit/Rapid Rehousing (page 18)
  - ▶ New Transitional Housing Facilities (page 22)
  - ▶ Supportive Housing Community Hub (page 28)
  - ▶ Council-led Emergency Shelter Crisis Taskforce (page 28)
  - ▶ Housing and Homelessness Leadership Table (page 29)
- One of the areas of focus in the 2023-2026 Term of Council Priorities is “a city that has affordable housing and is more livable for all”
- In 2023, Council endorsed the City’s Municipal Housing Pledge, which demonstrates the City of Ottawa’s commitment to supporting the Province of Ontario’s goal of accelerating housing supply and having 151,000 new homes, including homes for low- to moderate-income households, in Ottawa by 2031.

## Changing context

- The overall average market rent (AMR) for Ottawa in 2023 was \$1,538, a 4.3 per cent increase from 2022 (Source: CMHC 2024 Rental Market Report).
- Higher interest rates, coupled with steep inflation rates, meant the cost to construct new units in 2023 was higher than it has been historically.
- The baseline construction cost of a mid-rise apartment building of up to 12 storeys was estimated by the Altus Group to be \$355 per square foot in 2023, compared to the baseline cost of \$275 per square foot in 2022.
- The opioid crisis continued to create challenges in the housing and homelessness sector with an increase in overdoses and toxic drug supply.
- Between 2022 and 2023 there was an 18 per cent increase in unsheltered homelessness and a 40 per cent increase in reported encampments.
- Ottawa experienced an influx of newcomers, asylum seekers, and refugee claimants in 2023, which had a significant impact on the emergency shelter system.

## Total investment in housing and homelessness: \$292,193,907

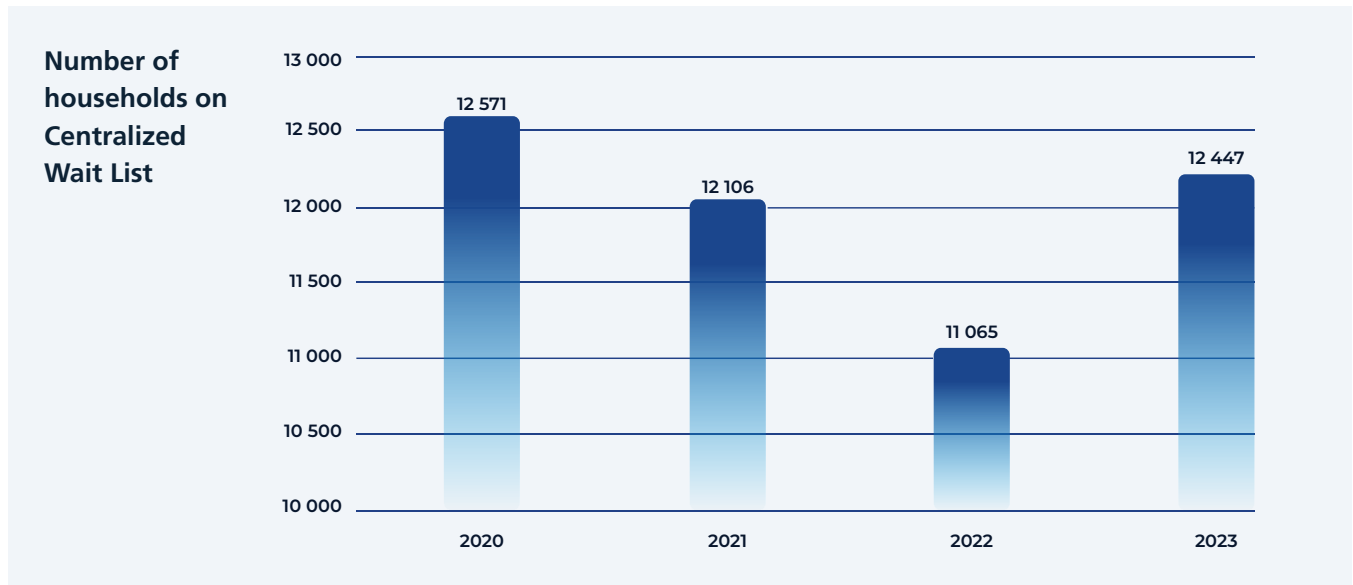




## Goal 1: Everyone has a home

# Community Housing

Community housing, which is comprised of subsidized rent-geared-to-income housing and new affordable housing with below market rents, is a vital community resource, providing affordable housing options to low- to moderate-income families and individuals across Ottawa.



**77**

Number of community housing providers including rent supplement and affordable housing providers



**1,186**

Number of households housed from the Centralized Wait List in 2023



**23,000**

Number of units within community housing



**4,732**

New applications in 2023



**1,437**

Total housing benefits as of December 31, 2023



**610**

Number of new housing benefits issued in 2023

Rooftop community garden at CCOC's Beaver Barracks



## Preserving community housing

**10 Year Plan target:** to preserve the existing affordable housing stock. Investments in capital repairs and funding for organizational sustainability helps us to achieve this goal.

### Egleson Co-operative Homes Inc.

#### \$3M investment from Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative funding

Complete building envelope repairs, including new brickwork, windows, and balcony repairs. The completed repairs will result in greater energy efficiency of the building.



#### Investments in capital repairs in 2023:

**\$16.6 million**

Total capital funds allocated

**\$13.5 million**

Provincial/Federal Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI)

**\$3.1 million**

Municipal

#### Capital repairs funded:



Number of capital repair projects approved.



Critical building system replacements such as hot water tanks and domestic boilers. Window replacement. Generator replacement.



Roof repairs and replacements. Balcony repairs. Building envelope repairs.

## Organizational sustainability

In 2023, **\$1 million** from the Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI) Transitional Operating funding program was allocated to support **13 projects** from **11 housing providers**. The primary aim of this program is to enable housing providers to tackle pressing operational issues while ensuring long-term viability.

**This funding supports the following types of projects:**

- Building condition assessments and energy audits.
- Acquisitions and mergers of housing providers and their assets.
- Funding for Urban Native Housing Programs.
- Property tax reassessments.
- Asset management planning.

## Ontario Renovates

The Ontario Renovates program provides funding to low-income seniors, persons with disabilities, and qualifying private and not-for-profit landlords for essential repairs and accessibility modifications to increase the supply of accessible housing and to support independent living. **\$600,000** was allocated under the Ontario Renovates program in 2023.

**36**

Number of households benefitting from Ontario Renovates allocations in 2023

**Types of repairs funded in 2023:**



### Main repairs

Heating and cooling, roofs, windows and doors, plumbing, electrical.



### Accessibility modifications

Stairlifts, walk-in showers, flooring, ramps, decks and railings.



**\$127,000**

Seniors



**\$97,361**

Persons with a disability



**\$70,000**

Households with a senior/person with a disability



**\$283,000**

Not-for-profit landlords



**\$15,000**

Private landlords

# Affordable and Supportive Housing Development

**10 Year Plan target:** 575-850 new affordable housing options per year (new units + housing benefits).

106

Total new affordable and supportive housing units completed in 2023

610

New housing benefits in 2023

716

Total new affordable housing options in 2023

**10 Year Plan target:** 10% of new units will be supportive housing units.

**10 Year Plan target:** 10% of new units will be accessible.

54%

Percentage of total units completed in 2023

13%

Percentage of accessible units completed in 2023

18%

Percentage of total units under construction in 2023

21%

Percentage of accessible units under construction in 2023

59%

Percentage of total new units funded in 2023

15%

Percentage of new accessible units funded in 2023

## Affordable Housing Land and Funding Policy

The Affordable Housing Land and Funding Policy states that when City-owned land deemed appropriate for residential development is sold, **25%** of the net proceeds be transferred to the Affordable Housing Reserve Fund to fund the development of new affordable housing.

In 2023, **\$402,637** was transferred to the Affordable Housing Reserve Fund from land sales.

## New affordable housing units completed in 2023: 49

### 159 Forward Avenue (CCOC) : 49 units (6 accessible)

With a mix of unit sizes, ranging from studio to three-bedroom units, the development at 159 Forward Avenue provides affordable housing options to a range of demographics in the Mechanicsville neighbourhood.

The building is built to Passive House standards, which results in reduced energy consumption that not only lessens the impact of the building on the environment, but it also means lower energy costs for tenants in the building. The building is also located near the O-Train, giving tenants easy access to public transit.



## New supportive housing units completed in 2023: 57

### 1095 Merivale Road (Shepherds of Good Hope): 57 units (8 accessible)



### 399 & 401 Bell Street South (John Howard Society): 40 units (6 accessible)

While completed in late 2022, most residents moved into this new building in 2023. The building at 399 & 401 Bell Street South is the first mid-rise building in Ottawa completed using modular construction.



## Affordable housing units under construction as of December 31, 2023: 654

254-256 St-Denis Street: 12  
3865 Old Richmond Road: 35  
822 Gladstone Avenue: 273  
715 Mikinak Road: 271  
505 & 515 Branch Street: 32  
1 Dunbar Court: 31

3865 Old Richmond Road



715 Mikinak Road



## Supportive housing units under construction as of December 31, 2023: 177

494 Lisgar Street: 29  
44 Eccles Street: 46  
56 Capilano Drive: 54  
216 Murray Street: 48

494 Lisgar Street



44 Eccles Street



## New supportive housing units funded in 2023: 54

**56 Capilano Drive (Ottawa Salus):**  
54 supportive housing units (8 accessible)



## Units in the pre-development stage: 849

Pre-development means projects that have received some funding and are at the planning approvals stage and require additional funding to be constructed.

933 Gladstone Avenue (Ottawa Community Housing Corporation)	336
2040 Arrowsmith Drive (Wigwamen Incorporated)	50
Multiple addresses (Centretown Citizens Ottawa Corporation)	20
2262 Braeside Avenue (Ellwood House)	38
2865 Riverside Drive (St. Patrick's Home)	133
8 Withrow Avenue (Anglican Diocese of Ottawa/Multifaith Housing Initiative)	65
Interval House	10
1083 Merivale Road (Shepherds of Good Hope)	56
665 Albert Street (Dream LeBreton/Multifaith Housing Initiative)	133
251 Penfield Drive (Ottawa Community Housing Corporation)	8

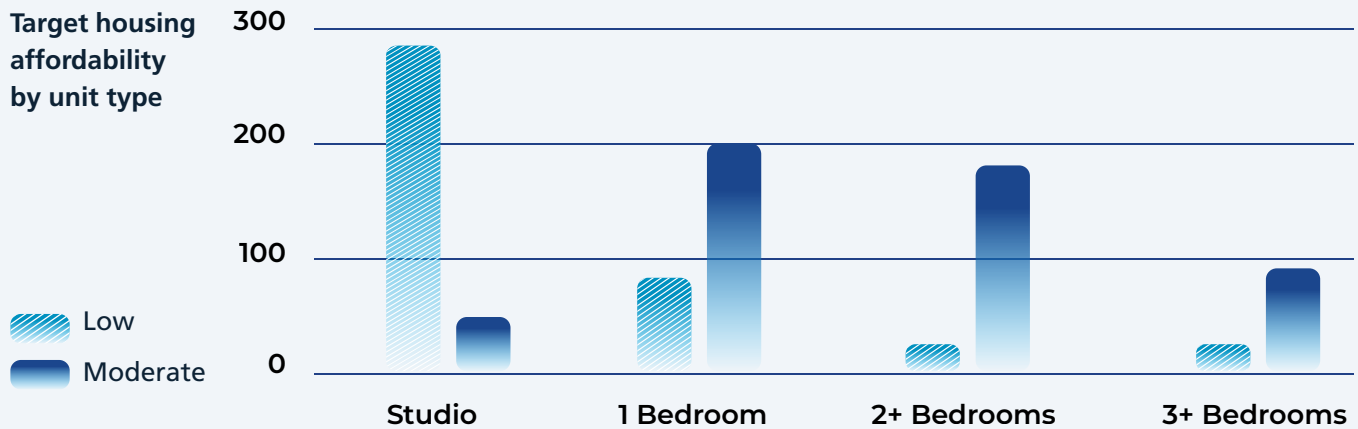
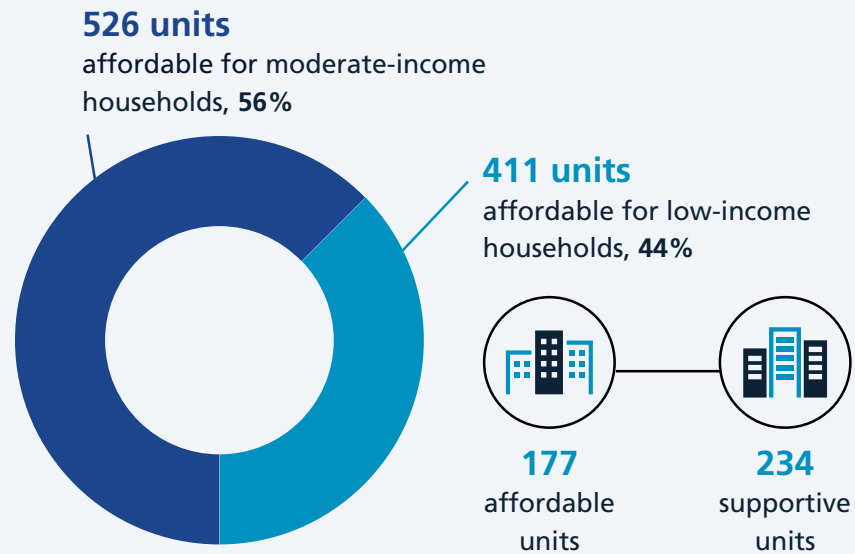


## Housing affordability

**10 Year Plan target:** 65% of new affordable units are to be targeted to low-income households (deciles 1 to 3) and 35% are to be targeted to moderate-income households (deciles 4 to 6).

	Income Deciles	Annual Income	Maximum Affordable Rent
Low-Income Households	1 to 3	\$17,727 - \$40,320	\$443 - \$1,008
Moderate-Income Households	4 to 6	\$53,296 - \$81,103	\$1,332 - \$2,028

Level of affordability for units completed and under construction in 2023





# Supportive Housing

**10 Year Plan objective:** increase access to housing that is affordable, and that people get the support they need to ensure they achieve housing stability and long-term housing retention.

Supportive housing is deeply affordable housing combined with on-site supports such as case management, goal planning, community referrals, advocacy, recreational opportunities, health services, and substance use supports for the households. The provision of supportive housing is an important component for ending chronic homelessness as it allows people living with mental health and/or addiction issues and other debilitating illnesses or conditions to access the supports they need, while living in a stable and safe environment.

## 2023 highlights

**\$390-\$556**

Typical rent charged per unit (Ontario Works shelter allowance or Ontario Disability Support Program shelter allowance)

**\$39,390**

Average annual operating funding per unit

**\$906,900**

Average annual operating funding per project



**78%**

Percentage of people who remained housed for 1 or more years



**56%**

Percentage of people who remained housed for 2 or more years



*John Howard Society of Ottawa's supportive housing program is a rewarding and exciting atmosphere. The clients we serve are developing a sense of community, helping keep the exterior clean. It is thrilling to see the clients helping one another and engaging in weekly group activities, socializing, and having fun. Having a safe place to live provides the opportunity to focus on other areas of their lives and take advantage of the supports offered. Seeing our clients grow truly is very fulfilling.*

*- Craig Murphy, Residential Coordinator,  
John Howard Society of Ottawa*

# Residential Services Homes

Residential Services Homes are private or non-profit residences that provide long-term housing to vulnerable adults who require some supervision and services to maintain their independent living and offer supports to promote housing stability and long-term housing retention. The City contributes a subsidy to support this affordable housing option for individuals who are typically living with a psychiatric, developmental, or physical illness and/or disability.



**23**

Number of homes that were under agreement with the City of Ottawa in 2023



**1,027**

Number of residents living in residential services homes in 2023



**482**

New applicants in 2023



**256**

New individuals placed into residential services homes in 2023



## **Ross Anderson**

*RN, Psychiatric Outreach Nurse, The Royal Ottawa Hospital*

Number of unique residents served in 2023 by the psychiatric nurse: **128**

Since the fall of 2022, the City of Ottawa has partnered with The Royal Ottawa Hospital to increase support within the Residential Services Homes Program in Ottawa. As a result of this collaboration, Ross Anderson, a Registered Nurse with The Royal's Psychiatric Outreach Team is now working with the Residential Services Homes across the city providing support, intervention and education to clients and staff in these homes.

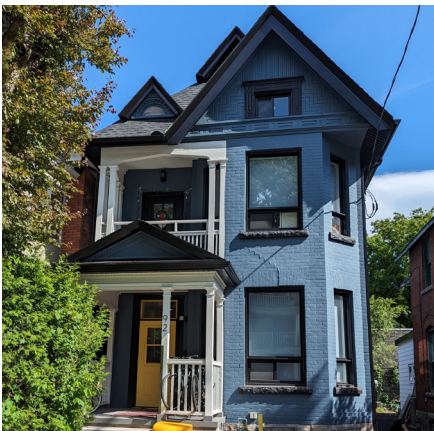
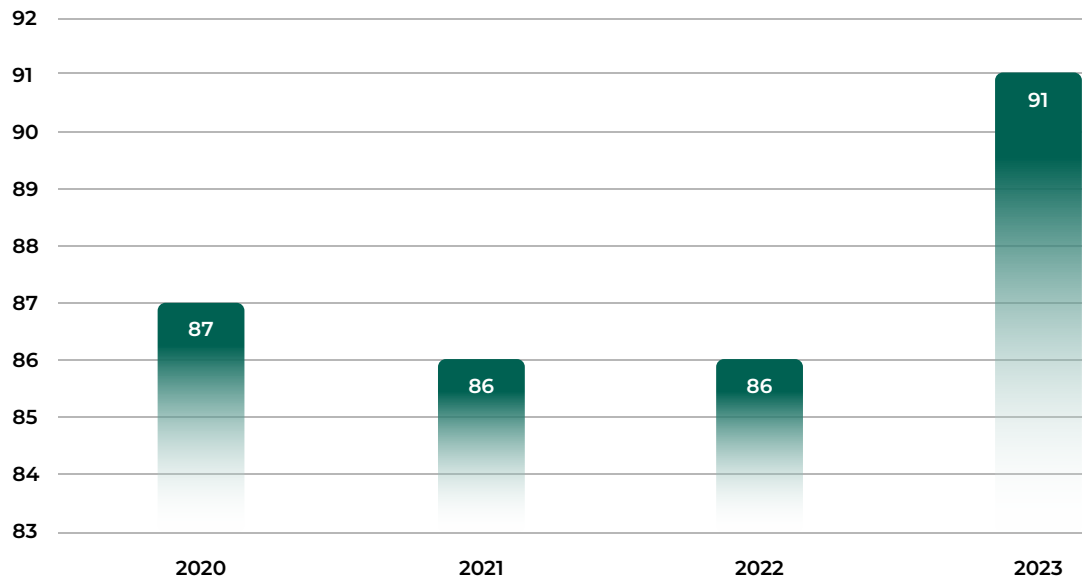
This pilot project assists individual residents to access and navigate the mental health supports that are available within their community. Outreach also has a role to provide education and support for staff working within the Residential Services Homes.

Psychiatric Outreach is a strong advocate for the ongoing provision of safe and affordable housing for those living with mental health challenges. The services offered by this program have been well received and are in high demand.

# Rooming Houses

Rooming houses represent a vital, but vulnerable, part of the affordable rental housing supply. Rooming houses offer long term housing for individuals on fixed or low incomes, as well as serving as a first step for individuals leaving emergency shelters, and provide short-term housing for students, new immigrants and single professionals requiring affordable housing. Rents for rooms within rooming houses range from \$450 to \$1,600 per month. The City funds a support worker in one large rooming house operated by a not-for-profit and one sector-wide rooming house crisis worker to ensure tenants have the support they need to maintain their housing.

Number of rooming houses



2023 was the first year in decades we experienced a 5% increase in the rooming house stock. This increase is due to a renewed interest in rooming houses for students and single professionals resulting from the high cost of self-contained apartments and low vacancy rates.

## Goal 2: People get the support they need

# Homelessness Programs and Housing First

## Funding streams

The City administers funding from all three levels of government to support a service system aimed at preventing homelessness and helping people experiencing homelessness to become stably housed.

**2023 total investment : \$106.5 million**

**\$48.4 million**

Provincial

**\$33.2 million**

Municipal

**\$15.9 million**

Federal

**\$9 million**

Interim Housing Assistance Program funding (IHAP)

This funding supports contracts with 32 non-profit agencies.

## Increased newcomer supports

In 2023, the City provided funding to support newcomers to Ottawa by onboarding three agencies: Matthew House, Stepstone House and Carty House. These agencies work to divert refugee claimants from the shelter system through the operation of transitional homes. Refugee claimants are a unique population with unique needs and these agencies provide specialized supports and services resulting in better outcomes. In addition, City funded newcomer support agencies provided resettlement, general housing assistance, legal, medical, income and employment and language training services.

 **matthew house ottawa**

### Matthew House

Serves single adult refugee claimants with scattered sites across Ottawa. At the beginning of 2023, they had seven homes with a total capacity for 49 individuals; by the end of 2023, they had 14 homes with a total capacity for 120 individuals.



### Carty House

Serves single refugee women in a single site with capacity for 10-12 individuals.



### Stepstone House

Serves single adult refugee claimants with scattered sites throughout Ottawa. In 2023, they increased their capacity from 5 homes with capacity for 50 individuals to 10 homes with capacity for more than 120 individuals.

## Built for Zero

Built for Zero Canada is an ambitious national change effort helping a core group of leading communities end chronic homelessness and veteran homelessness, which is a first step on the path to eliminating all homelessness in Canada.

### Veteran homelessness

Built for Zero Canada's target for communities is to reduce veteran homelessness by at least 10% within six months of establishing a baseline, then continuing to reduce that number on an ongoing basis until veteran homelessness ends.

In June 2023, the baseline in Ottawa was 33 individuals per the veterans identified. In November 2023, this list was down to 21 individuals, meaning we achieved a **36% reduction in veteran homelessness**.

## Pilot projects in 2023

### Large Family Pilot

In 2023, the City developed a housing benefit program that aims to transition large families (of seven or more members) experiencing chronic homelessness into permanent housing. Standard benefits often do not provide adequate income for large families, so this benefit program was designed to provide deeper affordability. The new benefit program was successful in providing deeper affordability for large families by using the same calculation as rent-geared-to-income housing subsidies.

In 2023, nine families totaling 65 members were successfully housed using the Large Family Pilot. The average cost of housing was \$3,131 and the average benefit provided was \$2,288.

### Rapid Rehousing Pilot

The Rapid Rehousing Pilot was implemented in October 2023 with the goal of housing 120 single people from the Physical Distancing-Emergency Overflow Centres by providing them an Enhanced Housing Allowance Benefit for private market units. This pilot was co-led by the City of Ottawa and the Alliance to End Homelessness.

Working together with multiple internal and external partners, 120 people secured housing by the end of 2023, and of those, 57 people moved into their new units.

### Bridge Funding

Bridge Funding is a homelessness prevention program to help people who receive social assistance avoid shelter entry. Working together, Employment and Social Services and Housing & Homelessness Services staff identify individuals who are at imminent risk of homelessness. These individuals are provided with short-term, barrier-free housing benefits while they work towards housing stability.

In 2023, a total of 294 people, comprised of 54 families, 112 singles and 6 couples, were supported with Bridge Funding.

## Unsheltered homelessness

**10 Year Plan target:** Unsheltered homelessness is eliminated.

There has been ongoing growth in the number of unsheltered individuals over the past few years, and in 2023 Ottawa saw some of the highest numbers to date. Throughout the year, the number of individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness ranged from 150 to as high as 295\*.

In 2023, Ottawa saw some of the highest number of reported encampments in the past four years. At various points in 2023, there were over 60 unique reported encampments throughout all of Ottawa.

### Our response:

The City's encampment response is support-driven where we send a service request to our primary outreach provider, the Salvation Army Street Outreach Team, to engage with the individuals at the reported encampment. Outreach workers engage with people to provide housing-focused case management services, with the goal of supporting people to move into permanent housing.

**In 2023, the Salvation Army Outreach Team served 591 individuals.**

**In 2023, the Salvation Army Outreach Team housed 108 individuals in permanent housing.**

*\*As the population tracked by these statistics is transient, these numbers are an underrepresentation and must be viewed as moving estimates.*

## The Community Engagement Team

The Community Engagement Team is a mobile City of Ottawa social services team that connects with members of the community experiencing homelessness or other crises to refer them to social services, support emergency services, businesses, and collaborate with community partners.

The top four needs reported are: wellness checks, naloxone kit handouts, housing supports, and health supports.





## **HousingWorks**

*A Master Leasing Social Enterprise at Operation Come Home*

Operation Come Home, with the support of the City of Ottawa, started a new master leasing initiative through their newest social enterprise, HousingWorks. HousingWorks creates partnerships with private market landlords by entering into commercial lease agreements for a three-year term. These units are then offered to youth experiencing homelessness under occupancy agreements. The youth agree to participate in this program for the duration of their occupancy, which can last up to three years, and benefit from the enhanced focus that helps them maintain their housing long-term.

Landlords benefit as well. Through HousingWorks, landlords receive assurances that rent will always be paid on time, and that any issues that arise early in the tenancy will be addressed quickly and professionally.

### **HousingWorks in 2023**

- 7 participating landlords, 5 of whom have offered multiple units.
- 12 additional units were obtained. 6 of those from existing landlords and 6 from newly participating landlords.
- At the end of 2023, HousingWorks had a total of 16 units.
- At the end of 2023, 20 youth had been housed through HousingWorks.
- 20 per cent of Master Leasing occupants housed in 2023 were chronically homeless. 100 per cent of these occupants remained stably housed in 2023.
- HousingWorks has a 95% success rate for housing retention.

## **Testimonials**

### **Youth testimonial**

*“After a year of being homeless, HousingWorks got me the most basic human necessity that had eluded me for far too long. Having my very own space where I feel safe and warm means the world to me.” - Idris, 22*

### **Landlord testimonial**

*“I would encourage landlords to actually go for a program like this. We have direct contact with the agency, and it really makes life much easier.”*

*- Ted Guillaume, Master Leasing Landlord of six units.*

## Housing First

Ottawa's Housing First Program connects individuals and families experiencing chronic homelessness with case management services to assist with securing permanent housing, ongoing life skills and other supports. The Housing First program also provides housing loss prevention through case management services targeted at maintaining housing. At any given time, over 860 single individuals and 225 family units are being supported at various stages in their housing journey, from homelessness to stable housing.

**2023 total investment: \$7.1 million**

Funds are provided for:

- Housing Based Case Management.
- Housing allowances, including payment of first and last month's rent.
- Funds to cover furnishings and other essential items.

## Housing First Services



## 2023 updates

**301**

Individuals were housed through Housing First

**241**

Families were supported through Housing First



*Taylor, a Housing Allowance recipient, spoke to the City about her story. She described that she was in a very dark place when she reached out for help. At 16 years old she did not have a place to call her own. Taylor says that the Housing Based Case Management program with a Housing Allowance gave her a roof over her head and the courage to find a job and create a better life for herself and her child. She shares that she would not have been able to do it without the program. Taylor happily shared that she is now planning her wedding, has a beautiful child and is in school full time with a place to call home.*



# Community Shelters

People experience homelessness for a variety of reasons, which may include a change in economic circumstances, family breakdown, domestic violence, addiction, mental health challenges, and immigration to Canada or migration within Canada.

In 2023, the City owned and operated one family shelter and three overflow facilities, and partnered with eight community organizations to provide temporary emergency shelter services to people in need. The goal of the shelter system is to help people obtain suitable, long-term housing.

## Number of people housed from the shelter system in 2023



## Increased capacity in shelters

In 2023, the City continued to operate overflow facilities in order to maintain adequate space in the shelter system. This need for overflow space was necessitated by an unprecedented inflow of newcomers to the city.

Additionally, a lack of affordable housing, rising rental costs, inadequate social assistance rates, and rising cost of living all contributed to increased demand on the system.

## Capacity in the shelter system (including overflow facilities)

	2022	2023	% change
Family	655	655	0
Singles	888	1122	+26%
Youth	60	60	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1603</b>	<b>1837</b>	<b>+15%</b>

The City ended **2023** with three overflow facilities with a total **398 beds**.

As of December 31, 2023, **36 per cent** of total shelter beds in the adult shelter system were provided by overflow facilities.

Data source: Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS). HIFIS is a data collection and case management system used by the shelter system to collect information on people experiencing homelessness.

## Inflow

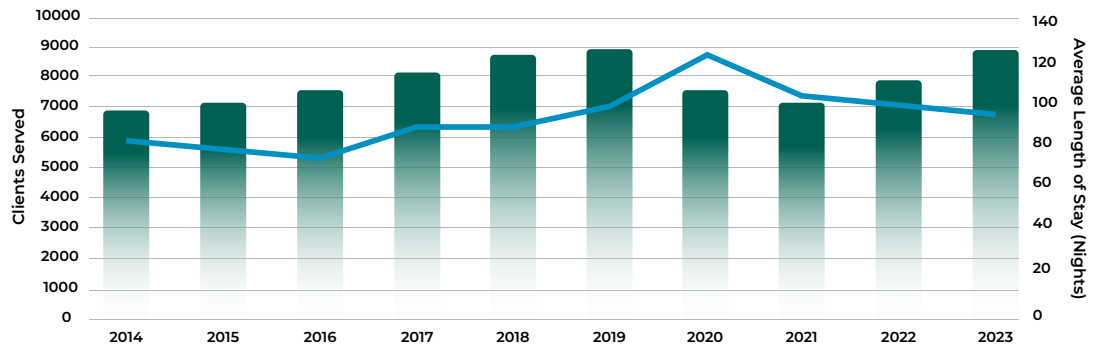
**10 Year Plan target:** The number of new people entering homelessness is reduced by 25%

Inflow	2022	2023	% change
Newcomer Inflow	524	655	+25%
Non-Newcomer Inflow	350	281	-19.7%
<b>Total Inflow</b>	<b>874</b>	<b>936</b>	<b>+7%</b>

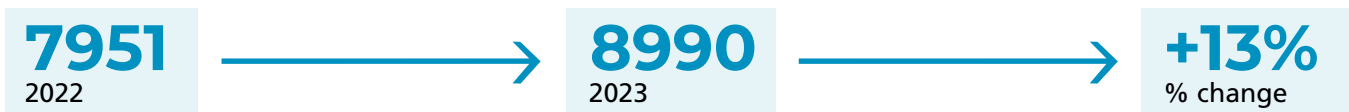
**10 Year Plan target:** Overall homelessness is reduced by 25%

Total shelter system use and average length of stay (LOS)

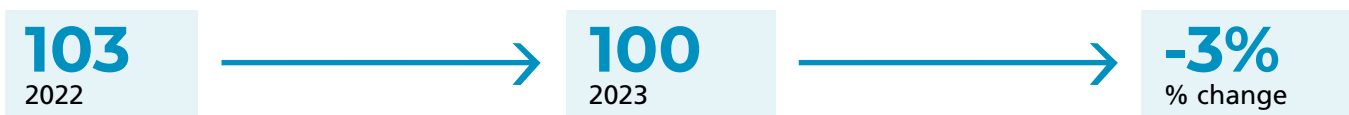
Average LOS  
 Clients served



### Clients served in shelter system



### Average length of stay (days)



## Chronic homelessness

Chronic homelessness is defined as individuals or families who are currently experiencing homelessness and who meet at least one of the following criteria:

- They have a total of at least six months (180 days) of homelessness over the past year; or they have recurrent experiences of homelessness over the past three years with a cumulative duration of at least 18 months (546 days).

**10 Year Plan target:** Reduce chronic homelessness by 100%

Chronically Homeless	2022	2023	Change
Families	284	226	-20%
Women and Gender Diverse Peoples	186	163	-12%
Single Men	619	647	+4.5%
Youth 18 and under	9	5	-44%



### Expanded day program

For the first time, Centre 507 drop-in expanded their hours to 24/7 operations. Centre 507 offers low-barrier respite services including access to basic amenities, snacks, hygiene facilities and social service support to all residents accessing their program. The expanded hours were put in place to ensure that people who are living unsheltered had warming options.

# Indigenous Housing & Homelessness in Ottawa

As defined by the federal Reaching Home program, Indigenous homelessness refers to Indigenous Peoples who are in the state of having no home due to colonization, trauma and/or whose social, cultural, economic and political conditions place them in poverty.

Each Indigenous community member is a spirit with an identity based on culture. Connection to spirit, identity and culture were disrupted as the traumas imposed on Indigenous people through colonialism have cascaded and been compounded through generations. When talking about Indigenous homelessness, the needs extend well beyond housing and include food security, mental health supports, community, and connection.

Responding to the needs of Indigenous community members experiencing homelessness in Ottawa involves supporting them on their life journey, which includes securing and sustaining safe and affordable housing in the context of Indigenous ideas of home, which are rooted in relationships to family, community, and land, and not only to a permanent building.

Mental health distress profoundly disrupts the ability to obtain and maintain a home. Research conducted by the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition (OAC) found that Indigenous community members in Ottawa experience a strong connection between increased mental health issues and housing needs. 92% of the community members that indicated a need for permanent housing also identified a need for other supports: mental health (39%) support around addictions/substance use (36%), or support for ongoing medical conditions (21%), among other needs.

## Indigenous community members experiencing homelessness in Ottawa in 2023\*

Indigenous community members are disproportionately represented in shelter systems compared to the general population of Ottawa. 32% of people who are homeless in Ottawa are Indigenous. Indigenous people make up 5% of the Ottawa population.

**6.6%**

Percentage of new individuals and families entering the shelter system who identify as Indigenous

**56%**

Percentage of homeless Indigenous community members who have children

**43%**

Percentage of community members who are homeless and have been in child welfare

**14%**

Percentage of individuals who were homeless within a day of leaving child welfare at 18 years of age

- Total number of Indigenous people using the overnight shelter system: 694
- In 2023, single Indigenous men accounted for 10.4% of all single men in the shelter system.
- In 2023, single Indigenous women accounted for 14.1% of all single women in the shelter system.
- In 2023, single Indigenous youth (18 and under) accounted for 9.8% of all single youth in the shelter system.

## Measuring our progress

**\$2,969,411**

Total investment in Indigenous agencies in 2023

**164**

Number of people matched to Indigenous Housing First in 2023

**57**

Number of households housed through Indigenous Housing First in 2023

## Supporting a holistic response

Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations work in Ottawa to provide safe Indigenous cultural supports for housing and other social determinants of health. Community members can access Indigenous coordinated access which includes multiple partners, such as emergency shelters, outreach teams, hotels, the City of Ottawa, and hospitals. Referrals and coordinated support are essential when providing services for Indigenous community members experiencing homelessness.

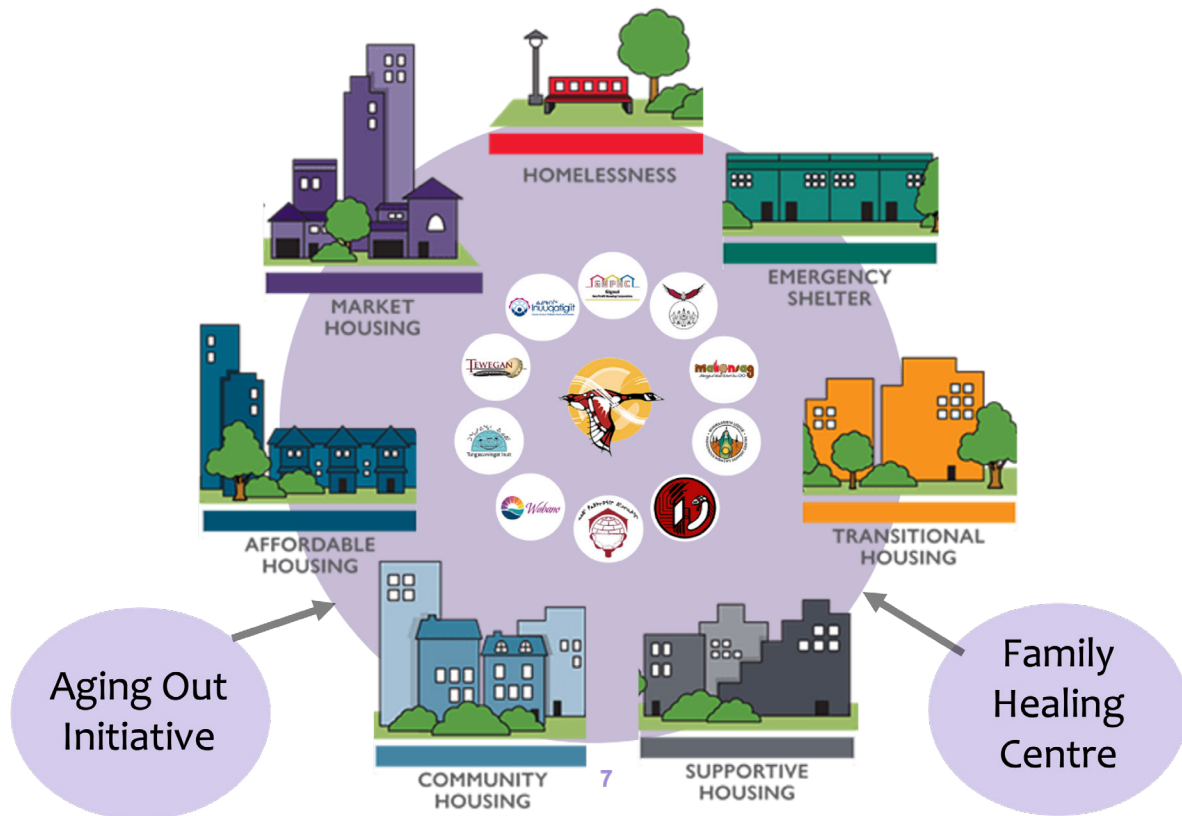
The shelter system remains an inadequate response to Indigenous homelessness. In a survey done of Indigenous homeless community members the

experience of shelters was mixed. It was positive and problem-free for some, while others were scared to go and felt unsafe because of racism, drug use, violence, and lack of privacy. Working with the City of Ottawa, the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition is working on an integrated response to homelessness that integrates housing and other services. A 2023 survey conducted by the OAC and the Alliance to End Homelessness Ottawa found that the top 3 needs beyond housing identified by Ottawa service providers were cultural programming (36%), access to Identification (32%), and mental health services (32%). We are starting there.

\*Indigenous data must be viewed with caution recognizing that the numbers are underreported and do not accurately reflect the nature and scope of the issue and result in Indigenous people being not served at all, being underserved or being poorly served. Data sources include 2021 Census data and the 2021 Point-in-Time Count, which is a community level measure of sheltered and unsheltered homelessness.

## What we are doing next

The City of Ottawa has supported the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition to create the Indigenous Housing and Homelessness Strategy. The strategy, working from an Indigenous worldview, has centered the person regardless of what type of housing they may require. The need for services is not limited to their type of housing and in some cases, services can ensure they can avoid homelessness.



The strategy includes an Inuit violence against women shelter, a family healing lodge, and the establishment of 1000 homes in the housing continuum by 2034. Indigenous organizations are partnering with non-Indigenous housing services to increase coordinated access and cultural training, and educate organizations about Indigenous-specific housing needs. These priorities are informed by research conducted by and for the Indigenous community. Research done in this way helps ensure Indigenous data is reported and interpreted in a manner that reflects the true nature and scope of the issues Indigenous community members face, leading to better supports and services.

## Goal 3: We work together

# Integrated Transition to Housing Strategy

In July 2023, Council approved the Integrated Transition to Housing Strategy to help single people experiencing homelessness find housing and to address the pressures in the shelter system.

Collaboration with the housing and homelessness sector was critical to the development of the Integrated Transition to Housing Strategy. The City engaged with its partners who operate shelters for single adults and the housing and

homelessness sector partners through the Alliance to End Homelessness, the Homelessness Community Advisory Board, the Housing Systems Working Group, and the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition.

The Integrated Transition to Housing Strategy includes short term, medium term (next 1-5 years), and long term (5+ years) goals to meet the objectives of the strategy. Below is a summary of the short-term goals that have been achieved.

### Rapid rehousing prototype/enhanced housing allowance benefit

120 clients secured housing in 2023, and of those, 57 clients moved into their new homes in 2023.

### Purchase of 1245 Kilborn Place

The City purchased 1245 Kilborn Place in 2023 for \$18.5 million. The long-term plan for the site is the creation of a Supportive Housing Hub.



### Winter response

- On October 26, 2023, Mayor Sutcliffe and Councillor Dudas launched an Emergency Shelter Crisis Taskforce, alongside Councillors Carr, Hubley, Kavanagh, Plante and Troster.
- **On November 23, 2023, 4 motions were passed leading to the:**
  - ▶ Addition of 325 beds/warming spaces using bunkbeds, and the opening of two temporary overflow shelters.
  - ▶ Initiation of overnight low-barrier respite services at Centre 507 providing access to basic amenities, snacks, hygiene facilities, and supports.
  - ▶ Identification of supports and alternative placement options to serve newcomer clients.
  - ▶ Active advancement of a rapid construction option (e.g., a sprung structure).

# Housing & Homelessness Services Governance Review

In 2022, Housing & Homelessness Services undertook a review of its relationship with external partners within the housing and homelessness sector. An independent consultant conducted an extensive consultation with the sector to develop an enhanced governance framework for Housing & Homelessness Services.

The consultation was comprised of:



**25**

In-depth interviews with key partners



**2**

Full day in person consultations



**149**

Online surveys



**5**

Peer review meetings

The culmination of this work was the recommendation for a 16-member Housing and Homelessness Leadership Table (HHLT), and in 2023 an interim board was put in place to guide the drafting of Terms of Reference for the HHLT, distribute the summary report that will outline the results of the consultation, and to guide the recruitment process for a permanent board for the HHLT.

## Housing and Homelessness Leadership Table

### Membership

- Co-chaired by the Director of Housing & Homelessness Services and a community-based participant on the HHLT
- Diverse representation from various sectors, including youth, justice, newcomer support, community health, gender-based violence, housing, and homelessness
- Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition, Alliance to End Homelessness, Ottawa Community Housing, and Ottawa Social Housing Network



# Community Capacity Building Training

The first line of defense against homelessness is to ensure strong, skilled frontline workers in the homelessness sector. The Community Capacity Building Training program (CCBT) has provided training and support for homelessness service agencies in Ottawa since 2005 on topics relating to understanding client challenges, burnout prevention and self-care, and networking.

## CCBT in 2023

**Total investment of \$50,000**

In 2023, there was an increase in the number of trainings, and the number of frontline workers utilizing the website, with a 13% growth rate and trending upwards.

- 166 training sessions provided
- 14 in person training sessions
- 130 virtual training sessions
- 9 self-directed training sessions
- 13 sponsored by CCBT that were completed at partner agencies
- 1881 individuals trained



### Examples of training partnerships sponsored by the CCBT in 2023:

- Peer Support Worker training provided by Somerset West Community Health Centre.
- Mental Health First Aid was given by the Royal Ottawa to 7 agencies.
- Options Bytown provided Ottawa Inner City Health with a training session about hoarding behaviours.

### New training sessions offered:

Inuit Cultural Sensitivity, Management Strategies for Psychological Safety in the Workplace, Destigmatizing Sex Work, Tough Talk for Positive Change, Understanding and Managing Mental Health, and many more.

### Anticipated growth and new trainings being developed for 2024:

- New training being developed to tackle the challenges of the toxic drug supply, immigration challenges, high levels of staff turnover and onboarding new staff, challenges for veterans and burnout prevention.

The City's Community Capacity Building Training Program was featured on the International Stage at the International Journal on Homelessness Conference in March 2023 in Chicago, USA

# Data Improvements

## We work with community agencies

The Homelessness Individual and Family Information System (HIFIS) is a comprehensive data collection, reporting and case management system that supports the day-to-day operations of housing and homelessness service providers across Canada. In 2023, HIFIS was expanded, allowing the City to:

**26** Number of new programs onboarded

**108** Total number of programs reporting into HIFIS

**8** Number of new community agencies reporting into HIFIS

**32** Total number of agencies using HIFIS

### Benefits of the HIFIS expansion and improvements:

- This expansion contributes to a system-wide support network that ensures clients can access services through a “no wrong door” approach.
- Community agencies, including Indigenous providers, can refer clients for Housing Based Case Management services and track progress directly from HIFIS, creating a more efficient coordinated access process.
- Community partners can report statistical data directly in HIFIS, making it easier for the City and the community to analyze and interpret real time and accurate housing and homelessness data.

## We work with other branches within Community and Social Services

The Social Policy & Research Analytics (SPRA) team assists Housing & Homelessness Services in the following areas:

- Internal business improvements through the creation of apps and dashboards to manage various datasets related to housing and homelessness.
- Data analysis and forecasting, such as forecasting shelter usage.
- Research and evaluation related to pilot projects and different initiatives Housing & Homelessness Services undertakes, and through partnerships with educational institutions and community partners.
- Open data, such as the publication of homelessness metrics to Open Ottawa and supporting the Point in Time count.

**In 2023, SPRA assisted Housing & Homelessness Services with over 60 unique data requests.**