

A photograph of a man and a young girl hugging outdoors. The man is on the left, seen from the back, wearing a blue and red striped t-shirt. The girl is on the right, with her arms around the man's neck, wearing a grey sweater with a floral pattern. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees and a white car. A large, semi-transparent teal graphic with curved lines is overlaid on the left side of the image.

**Community and Social  
Services—Term in  
Review: 2019 to 2022**





# General Manager's message

Ottawa works best when we work together. Our City's Community and Social Services Department (CSSD) is more than the sum of numerous service areas operating in parallel to achieve important well-being outcomes for Ottawa. It is one harmonious team working as a single unit alongside our colleagues in other City departments and hundreds of vital community partners.

Over this past term of Council, extraordinary circumstances drove new innovations in how we worked and aligned with other departments and external partners. We forged new relationships to deliver services that grew out of necessity from ongoing and increasing challenges. These connections have opened new ways of operating that continue today.

We could not have achieved these outcomes alone. We are grateful for our strong relationships with other departments across the City's government, with our Mayor and members of Council, with our provincial and federal program counterparts, with private and community partners who also make our work possible, and importantly, with the communities we serve.

As you will see in this report, the work we do is not simply to administer programs and services—it is to make a difference in the lives of the people of Ottawa. It is to help put a roof over the heads of precariously housed residents or those at-risk of becoming homeless. To make child care available to parents and families. To respond to human needs when disaster strikes. To offer employment and financial assistance to individuals and families and provide access to basic needs in challenging times.

Our city has faced substantial change and upheaval over recent years. We have faced new and unique challenges and continue to face ongoing and increasing change. And yet we persevere. We have established a new foundation for the future that is more prepared for adversity. We continue to move forward with goals and plans that strive for results greater than we have achieved before. We push ahead with bold plans that not only work to address current needs, but also anticipate the needs of a growing city.

The work we do together is essential to making Ottawa a welcoming city to all.

*I thank all my colleagues and partners for their dedication.*



**Donna Gray (she/her)**

General Manager, Community and Social Services Department

City of Ottawa



# Community Safety and Well-Being

The City of Ottawa approved and began to implement the Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Plan in October of 2021.

This plan, put simply, is about how the City will work with community partners, businesses, institutions, and other groups, to improve the safety, health and well-being of Ottawa residents.

- **Discrimination, marginalization and racism**
- **Financial security and poverty reduction**
- **Gender-based violence and violence against women**
- **Housing**
- **Integrated and simpler systems**
- **Mental well-being**

We consulted more than 1,600 residents from across a diverse range of communities to design the CSWB Plan's priorities. Many of these priorities are inter-related and will involve the efforts of a wide range of City departments—not just CSSD—as well as external partners. These are complex social problems that require collaboration and partnership across sectors,

institutions, and groups. In fact, one of the core concepts of the plan is that it will complement work already underway in the city.

We look forward to working together with our colleagues and our community partners to create a sustainable city where everyone is safe, has a sense of belonging, has access to services, and can meet their needs for education, health care, food, housing, income, and social and cultural expression.

Learn more about our CSWB Plan through the video below, or [read the complete plan on our website](#).



Video link: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=bxHHgihWKFI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bxHHgihWKFI)



# Many teams working as one

Our work is focused on the needs of Ottawa residents—essential human needs that must be met to create a city we all want to live in. These vital needs include housing, employment and financial assistance, child care, emergency assistance, long-term care, gender and equality services, and access to community resources.

CSSD is administered through several functional units, including:



**Children's Services**



**Employment and Social Services**



**Housing Services**



**Long-Term Care**



**Community Safety and Well-Being,  
Policy and Analytics**



**Gender and Race Equity,  
Inclusion, Indigenous Relations  
and Social Development**



**Human Needs Task Force/  
Human Needs Command Centre**



**Business Support Services**





# CSSD's Mission

*We offer programs and services, in collaboration with our partners, to enrich people's well-being.*

## **An integrated team**

Collaboration and integration are two of the most important aspects of the way we work. Without working together as One City, One Team, each branch of our department would merely operate in a vacuum, not taking into consideration the various and complex needs of the community. Residents need us to be connected and aligned. We wrap our services around our clients—bringing assistance where and when it is needed most.

Following on lessons learned throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, building on community feedback, and leveraging our experiences from adapting our response, we understood that prioritizing integration within the different areas of our department was vital to simplifying access to services. In August of 2022, the Catherine Street Community Service Hub opened, serving the Centretown area. It is an accessible, person-centred space where residents can access City and community social supports in one location. The hub is a perfect example of what we are moving towards when it comes to integrated services.

## **A story via City staff:**

*"A woman came to the Catherine Street Hub fleeing an abusive situation. Two Case Workers sat with her for five hours and helped her file her entire in-land refugee claim. Since that time, they've helped her get onto Ontario Works, apply for the Housing Registry, and get her and her children onto the shelter waitlist. The client continues to reach out to the Hub staff whenever she has questions or needs additional supports. The client said that she didn't know any of this was possible before coming to the Hub."*



# Putting People First



*CSSD works to deliver real benefits for the people of Ottawa. The past four years have been especially challenging for many residents.*

Flooding in 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic. Disruptions caused by the demonstrations in the downtown core. Damage from the derecho earlier in 2022. These and other challenges have upended every aspect of our lives and caused major financial challenges for so many people.

Times like these are precisely why a robust set of community and social services is so important.

Real people experienced real hardships—most often through no fault of their own. CSSD’s job is to ensure that a strong foundation of social programs exists and that resources are spun up to meet the needs of the community.

The core of CSSD’s four-year results, however, lies in the real-life impacts on the quality of life of residents.

Real, human impacts.

More people in secure living situations. More money distributed to families for child care. More funding distributed to community agencies. More construction projects launched to build affordable housing. More equitability and accessibility in our city. More resources for the most at-risk.

We removed barriers—pre-existing, systemic and new ones that arose from the pandemic—that prevented people from accessing services. And we did all this with creativity and immediacy, with the support of our partners in other levels of government and the community, to ensure our social safety net endured.

Let’s look at just some of the highlights from the last four years.



# Equity

To address the needs of every resident of Ottawa, it is important to recognize that inequities exist in our communities. These factors necessitate extra effort to remove barriers so underserved people and marginalized communities can access services that empower them to reach their full potential.

*As a City, we are making strides to ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities for all. Over the last term of Council, we created the City's first Anti-Racism Strategy and Women and Gender Strategy, we established the Integrated Neighbourhood Services Team (INST) and we launched the Gender and Race Equity, Inclusion, Indigenous Relations and Social Development (GREIIRSD) branch of CSSD.*

This specialized team within the department has created targeted outreach programs and resources to help a wide range of equity-deserving groups in Ottawa neighbourhoods. By working alongside all other branches of CSSD, GREIIRSD has made real progress in levelling the field and advancing issues of equity in the city.



# 3,000+



The City **engaged** with and received input from more than 3,000 **residents** through our Anti-Racism and Women and Gender Equity Strategy outreach groups and discussion forums.

# 132



Number of **actions** designed to confront and reduce systemic racism in municipal government included in the first-ever, Council-approved [Anti-Racism Strategy](#) in 2022.

# 52



Concrete **actions** that integrate a gender lens into City policies, strategies and plans as part of the City of Ottawa's [Women and Gender Equity Strategy](#).

The City joined the UN Women's Safe Cities Global Flagship Programme Initiative in 2022, which supports local and national governments in preventing and responding to sexual violence and other forms of gender-based violence against women and girls in public spaces.

# \$19M

Since 2020, CSSD allocated \$19+ million in Social Service Relief Funds for **COVID recovery, food security and other basic needs**, with high priority given to Black, racialized and other equity-deserving groups, as well as Indigenous communities.

# \$27M

Annual investment across more than 100 social services agencies in Ottawa through the Community Funding Frameworks to address **poverty reduction, community development and social infrastructure**.

# 474,601



The number of **clients** in 2021 that benefitted from programs and services funded through Community Funding.

# 42



In-person and virtual **outreach events** carried out since 2020. These include information sessions, job coaching events, mentorship activities and career fairs in collaboration with various community partners in Ottawa.



# 22



**New agencies** onboarded in Community Funding in 2021, which focused on serving groups that face the highest levels of inequity. Many of these new agencies are grassroots organizations founded by, led by and focused on Indigenous, Black and other racialized communities.

# 27



Number of **priority neighbourhoods** that have been identified in the City facing the greatest inequities to access programs, services and amenities. Five community development coordinators are embedded in these neighborhoods.

# 34



Number of **youths hired as Neighbourhood Ambassadors** working within these priority neighbourhoods doing outreach to youth through the Neighbourhood Ambassadors Program (NAP). NAP is an initiative defined through collaboration between the Integrated Neighbourhood Services Team (INST), Ottawa Public Health, and the Boys and Girls Club of Ottawa.

# \$3.4m

**Funding** secured and distributed by the INST for **priority neighbourhoods** in COVID-19 response and local, place-based programs and services, including \$1.35 million in helping set up free Wi-Fi at 15 City-run facilities, and \$385,420 to deliver the Workforce Readiness Program to train and upskill 60 participants from equity-deserving groups in advance of upcoming employment opportunities at the City of Ottawa.

# \$0

**The cost of initiatives to families** facilitated by INST for targeted at-risk communities, such as free basketball programs in Ottawa's West End, and free summer camps and park animation in priority neighbourhoods.



# Indigenous Relations Branch



CSSD established the Indigenous Relations Branch in 2022 to help develop and maintain meaningful relationships with Indigenous partners and residents, including Urban Indigenous and Host Anishinaabe Algonquin Nation partners in a consistent manner.

In March 2022, the Indigenous Relations branch reported that all 14 of the actions established in the City’s 2018 Reconciliation Action Plan were completed or ongoing. It has since worked on understanding and strengthening relationships, creating a picture of the possibilities for Indigenous relations, and mapping out a way forward with Indigenous communities.

This plan includes:

- **Supporting Indigenous sovereignty, self-determination, and governance by exploring the application of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples**
- **Developing relationship agreements with Indigenous partners**
- **Continuing to reflect and act on reconciliation commitments**

- **Carrying out community priorities**
- **Integrating Indigenous worldviews into City practices**
- **Planning for more inclusive Indigenous engagement**
- **Centralizing and increasing training on Indigenous awareness**

The branch also supports ongoing efforts to recognize important dates and leverage them as opportunities to raise awareness, including Indigenous History Month, Indigenous Peoples Day, and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

The 2018 Reconciliation Action Plan included many commitments to help educate and inform City staff about Indigenous culture and history. In 2020, the “Pathways to Indigenous Learning” program was launched in the Learning Center, which is designed to help Councillors and staff understand more about Indigenous culture and self-determination. Since its launch, 1,291 staff have taken this important virtual training.



# Housing

*A basic requirement for the well-being of residents is to make sure everyone has a home.*

The City of Ottawa, alongside its many community partners, has taken up this charge with dedication and determination over the past four years, and in doing so has achieved tangible, meaningful results.

The progress that the City has made in improving shelter conditions, building affordable and supportive housing, and reducing chronic homelessness is very positive and speaks well to our future plans. These results, and these ongoing plans, speak not only to the City's commitment, but to the commitment of all three levels of government to create the full range of housing options needed over the coming decade.





# \$198.4M

This dollar figure represents the next decade of work to put Ottawa's residents into secure housing. It is dedicated municipal funding approved as part of the City's first ever **Long-Range Financial Plan**. This plan, and this financial commitment, offers stability and direction. This plan gives our city a set of guiding principles and guaranteed funding to see projects through from beginning to end.

# 2.5x

The \$198.4 million committed through our 10-year plan is 2.5 times **higher than the previous yearly average that Ottawa spent on housing and homelessness programs**. This funding represents an important dedication to solving homelessness and housing issues that continue to impact our city.

# 575

Number of **new affordable housing units completed** during this prior council term, up to the end of 2022.

# 547

Number of affordable housing **units** currently **under construction**.

# 20

Strategic **City-owned sites** identified for future affordable housing development.

# ~333

New affordable **housing units set to begin construction** in 2023. Another 678 are in the pipeline and may begin construction during this term of Council.

# ~1,230

The number of **households**, as of October 2022, **that receive a housing allowance benefit**. Housing benefits assist households with rental costs in the private housing market.

# \$250–\$737

The **average** funding range per household, per month, for **housing benefits** to assist households with rental costs in the private housing market.

# 5,289

The City moved almost 5,300 **households** off the centralized waiting list and **into permanent housing** over the past four years. While there continues to be a waitlist for affordable housing, this is a significant improvement. We are making positive gains in finding Ottawa families a place to live.

# \$45.4M+

Amount invested in **community housing renovations** from 2019 to 2022, focused on 292 repair projects that benefitted thousands of housing units.

# 19%



In collaboration with community partners and homelessness response agencies, **chronic homelessness** in Ottawa **was reduced** by 19 per cent as of May 2022.

Thanks to our City's ongoing focus on supportive housing and a concerted housing-first outreach plan, we have helped improve conditions for people in our city experiencing homelessness. Council approved new shelter standards which have improved conditions at and communications through our shelter programs. We have also continuously worked to move people into stable housing, resulting in this important change.

We have also launched new programs, administrative enhancements and brick-and-mortar improvements that have impacted many areas of housing.

### Homelessness prevention pilots

The City has enhanced our preventative programs to conduct greater outreach and be more proactive in keeping residents from needing to access shelter services.

### Temporary Emergency Accommodations Dashboard

We launched a new [online administrative and analytical tool](#) to help assess data about the temporary housing needs in Ottawa. This database is a comprehensive and customizable way for City staff and community partners to understand in real time how resources can be best applied for greatest results, particularly as we analyze the needs of specific populations.





# Emergency Response



As part of the City's Emergency Plan, CSSD oversees and supports the social service responses to help residents impacted by unexpected events. The past four years have provided their fair share of situations that have affected every resident of the city in one way or another. The pandemic stretched our mandate to reach even further and help address the direct impacts COVID-19 had across so many communities.

CSSD reacted quickly to provide short- and long-term assistance to residents facing adversity. Each branch of CSSD has played a role in designing and providing these essential services as part of the City's overall emergency response.

The Human Needs Command Centre and Housing Services helped provide emergency information and resources during natural disasters like the 2022 derecho and to offer ongoing respite, isolation and physical distancing facilities made necessary by COVID-19.

Employment and Social Services has gone into impacted communities to provide information and resources and to respond to resident inquiries.

Children's Services has made available and adapted vital child care spaces to essential workers.

Gender and Race Equity, Inclusion, Indigenous Relations and Social Development has launched programs and conducted outreach to marginalized communities that have been especially hard-hit by various major events.

Long-Term Care fortified the City's facilities to ensure greater protection for vulnerable residents during the pandemic.

Each branch of CSSD counted on the contributions and dedication of all others—and of our partners in other City departments and the community—to help protect and provide for every resident of Ottawa in their time of need.



# 70,763



The total number of **visits to respite centres**, which were stood up at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

# 10,000+



COVID-19 **emergency discretionary benefits** given from March to June 2020 to residents receiving social assistance who were facing additional financial hardship due to the pandemic.

# 40%



Percentage of Ottawa residents surveyed who **reported experiencing worse mental health and well-being** compared to before the pandemic. The Human Needs Task Force, alongside its community partners, implemented wellness checks for vulnerable populations.

# 2,300+



Emergency **financial benefits** distributed to **low-income residents** who lost food during the 2022 derecho.

# 3,700+



**Emergency Assistance applications** from residents impacted by the 2022 derecho.

# 1,100



**Staff at long-term care homes safeguarded** by newly implemented Pandemic Preparedness and Response program designed in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

# 32



Total of **agencies and partners mobilized** within the first week of the demonstrations in February 2022 in downtown Ottawa to ensure service delivery to the affected areas.

**Clients gained safety, comfort and security from visits to centres such as the Tom Brown Respite Centre.**

*"I would like to thank the many staff, volunteers, security, and food providers of the respite centre that offered many meals, friendly faces and safety. To all the people that offered donations, it is very appreciated. I am very grateful for all the time and effort people have put into making a safe environment for all."*



# Human Needs Task Force/Human Needs Command Centre

*The Human Needs Task Force (HNTF) was stood up in March 2020 as part of the City's initial emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The HNTF brought together City staff and external partners to respond to challenges we faced.*

Recognizing the scalability of the City's emergency response, and the critical service gaps for the most at-risk residents, the department created the Human Needs Command Centre (HNCC) in November 2020 to build on the accomplishments of the HNTF. This temporary, purpose-built structure within the department worked across all teams, coordinating and implementing initiatives in response to the public health emergency that spanned the CSSD spectrum. HNCC exemplified the integrated way our department operates.

The HNTF and HNCC encapsulated CSSD's mission since their inception during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, when it became clear that our most at-risk residents would require additional immediate resources to help ensure their health and safety. It was a highly responsive structure that grew to work with partners and communities to respond to new and emergent needs as the pandemic progressed.

Our department recognized the importance of working as one entity to create essential services for the people of Ottawa and implemented the command centre to do so. The team worked with all areas of our department and with groups across municipal government and external partners on matters of pandemic relief—vaccination program support, respite, physical distancing and isolation centres, among others—as well as housing, employment services and other emergency responses.

## **Respite and physical distancing**

CSSD opened numerous temporary physical distancing, respite and isolation centres during various stages of the pandemic to give people—including those precariously housed or experiencing homelessness including single adults and families—a safe place to go to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.



### Support with vaccination program rollouts

Once vaccines were available, CSSD supported Ottawa Public Health to implement both logistical and informational programs for staff and in priority neighbourhoods. We collaborated and supported in the distribution of supplies, including personal protective equipment (PPE). We also supported vaccination drives in City-run facilities such as long-term care homes and respite and physical distancing centres.

### Asylum support

We work alongside community partners and Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada to provide financial assistance, housing support and other vital social services to asylum seekers, including refugees from Ukraine in 2022.







# Families and Children



The past three years have demonstrated the vital importance of family supports in the community. As we have dealt with school shutdowns and other disruptive events, helping to provide access to stability and support for families—through child care, long-term care, financial and employment services or emergency relief—has never been more important.

*CSSD's branches have worked together, alongside other City partners and community groups, to help build and sustain a network of services and programs to help the families of Ottawa persist and thrive through adversity.*

The work we have done touches every aspect of a person or family's life. We have enabled access to and administered employment programs and services and housing and child care subsidies. We have continued to provide services in long-term care homes, even during a time when the limits of the long-term care system have been pushed to the breaking point.

**Over the last four years, on average:**

**497** 

Unique **children served** at City-run municipal child care centres.

**9,882** 

The annual number of unique children who received **child care fee subsidies**.

**31,652** 

Child care **spaces funded** per year.

# 440



Total number of **licensed child care sites** in Ottawa, including 341 not-for-profit centre-based sites, 15 not-for-profit home-based agency sites, 74 for-profit centre-based sites, and 10 municipal-run sites.

# 94%



The federal and provincial governments launched the **Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) System** last year, and CSSD is responsible for overseeing the distribution of funding for fee reductions to child care service providers in the city. Since that launch, 94 per cent of **licensed child care service provider sites have enrolled**.

# 21,000



Number of **children whose child care space is covered by the CWELCC fee reductions**, resulting in a savings for their families—retroactive to April 1, 2022.

# -50%



Total **difference in cost for daily child care** for those children receiving care with a service provider who enrolled in CWELCC after a further reduction set to come into effect in 2023. This further reduction will result in a floor cost of \$12 per day for child care, a 50 per cent reduction from 2020 costs.

# \$2.2M

Targeted **emergency child care funding** allocated for free child care across 134 child care sites for frontline workers during school shutdowns in 2021.

# \$13.4M

Safe Restart funding allocated up to March 2021 **to help child care service providers reopen safely** after pandemic closures. Funding covered enhanced protective equipment, cleaning and additional staffing costs.

**Child care makes a real difference in the lives of Ottawa families. It allows them to pursue their own needs and goals without barriers.**

*“My two children are having amazing experiences with Huron Early Learning Centre staff and educators. I also want to thank those who prepare the fresh and nutritious food for our children and keep the centre a clean environment. My son needed help to deal with his social anxiety and Huron’s educators did this for him—now he’s a big boy in kindergarten! My daughter started the toddler program, and I can see how she’s growing and gaining lots of skills at daycare. All Child Care Workers at Huron deserve my appreciation.”*

# 2,948



The number of **residents that attended workshops** in just one year of CSSD-led employment skills development programs, from April 2021 to March 2022.

# 999



Number of **people who became employed, or received paid training leading to employment**, through CSSD-run employment skills development programs from April 2021 to March 2022.

# 19,300



Average number of **households served monthly** through the Ontario Works Program, the Home Support Services Program, and the fully municipally funded Essential Health and Social Supports program.

# 3,004



Total number of **visits**, between its opening in August 2022 and October 2022 alone, **to the new Catherine Street Community Service Hub**.

The hub provides a “single or any door” approach to help residents and families access information, services and supports including housing support and referrals, financial and social assistance, child care fee subsidy application support, employment services and community and health services referrals.

## Bringing our services into the community

We are challenging the status quo and breaking down barriers to accessing essential human services.

Necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, Employment and Social Services launched the Outreach and Mobile Services Team, which brings programs and services, such as employment, financial, child care and other social services into the community and closer to the residents who need them. The team provides services from 12 different locations and partner organizations throughout the city, such as shelters, day programs, community centres and food banks.

The Community Engagement Team launched in January of 2022. It conducts outreach activities and connects with housed and non-housed residents, local businesses, and community partners to better understand their issues and concerns. In just six months, this team took part in nearly 6,000 engagements with residents to identify needs and connect them to services.

## Working to attract and keep new talent

In 2022, Children’s Services launched a new three-pronged strategy to appeal to child care workers and show them why Ottawa is the right place to build their career. This program focuses on enhanced professional learning and development, on equitable practices in the industry, and on promoting the sector’s value to students as a career.





# Progress Continues



*While the accomplishments in this report are all successes that we can—and should—be proud of, our work continues.*

Homelessness and access to affordable, stable and secure housing is an ongoing concern in Ottawa. We will keep working to build on our results. Commitments such as our 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan show that we are continuing to turn dedicated resources into solutions. It also shows that the City of Ottawa has taken a strong stand against homelessness and housing inequality. We celebrate the gains we have made to this point, while remaining vigilant and committing to see this work develop and grow well into the next decade and beyond.

Children and families in Ottawa will continue to need stable access to quality, affordable child care. CSSD's work will be essential to ensure child care centres keep their doors open and subsidy money flows to those that need it. We will be working with purpose and direction, guided by our data-based Child Care and Early Years Service System Plan.

With a possible recession on the horizon, employment conditions will continue to be uncertain in 2023 and beyond. Employment and Social Services must keep close watch on the state of the economy and of local communities, particularly at-risk populations, to ensure benefits and employment programs continue to reach residents in need.

CSSD will push forward as one integrated, unified team, delivering foundational and critical services to Ottawa residents. We will build and strengthen bonds between CSSD, other City departments, community partners, Ottawa City Council, and beyond.

Social services can be delicate. They are often essential to peoples' survival and yet invisible to those who they do not impact. Our city must not lose sight of our commitment to provide these vital services, particularly to those most in need.

We've learned so much over these last four years. We've built partnerships with communities and external groups that will endure in the future and enhance our work. We've learned the immense value of embedding our staff into the community. We have established the benefits of wrapping our services around the person at the heart of them. We will continue to integrate and simplify what we do and how our services are delivered. These learnings will be the foundation for the work we will do in next four years.

CSSD's work from 2019 to 2022 illuminates the best of what a compassionate city can do. We look forward to carrying these positive outcomes into the future.



[ottawa.ca/socialservices](https://ottawa.ca/socialservices)

