



**Alliance
to End Homelessness
Ottawa**

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2013 Report Card

on Ending Homelessness in Ottawa

Introduction

Each year since 2005, the Alliance to End Homelessness has published a summary of progress in reducing – and ending – homelessness. Building on the time and effort of countless committed individuals and led until 2013 by our former Executive Director, Lynne Browne, we are pleased to present this 10th annual Report Card.

It's timely to look back 10 years, just as we look ahead, with the City of Ottawa's adoption for 2014 of a new 10-year plan, boldly titled 'A Home for Everyone' – and naming as our community's goal an end to long-term homelessness within 10 years.

In some areas, progress over the past 10 years has been slow. For example, we know that in 2013 over 10,000 households contacted the Social Housing Registry of Ottawa to ensure their place on the waiting list, an increase from 2012.

At the same time, there is reason for hope. Our community is rich with knowledge on how to prevent and end homelessness – illustrated, in part, in the program successes identified inside. Efforts have been bolstered since 2011 by the City's annual

\$14M Housing and Homelessness Investment Plan. And for the first time since 2005, the total nightly use of shelter beds in our emergency shelter system declined from 2012 to 2013.

Turning the goals of our 10-year plan into reality will depend – more than ever before – on leveraging the investments and support of governments, the community, the private sector and social services. With the knowledge of what works, now is the time to sustain and enhance our investments, reducing long-term costs to the public purse, and restoring dignity for all of our neighbours.

We have a plan. The City has stated its goal. To achieve the results we want, we need to do more in the short-term, to get ahead for the long-term.



Mike Bulthuis
Executive Director



Tim Simboli
Chair, Board of Directors

Alliance to End Homelessness: Member Organizations

Action-Logement / Action-Housing
Bruce House
Canadian Mental Health Association, Ottawa Branch
Carlington Community Health Centre
Catholic Immigration Centre
Centre 454
Centre 507 Drop-In
Centre des services communautaires/Vanier Community Service Centre
Centre for Research on Educational and Community Services, University of Ottawa
Centretown Citizens Ottawa Corporation
Centretown Community Health Centre
City of Ottawa, Housing Services Branch
Community Legal Services Ottawa Centre
Cooperative Housing Association of Eastern Ontario
Cornerstone Housing for Women/LePilier
Daybreak Non-Profit Shelter
Elizabeth Fry Society of Ottawa
Housing Help
John Howard Society of Ottawa
Minwaashin Lodge / Oshki Kizis Healing Lodge
Montfort Renaissance
Multifaith Housing Initiative

Nepean, Rideau, Osgoode Community Resource Centre
Operation Come Home
Options Bytown Non-Profit Housing Corporation
Ottawa Inner City Health Inc.
Ottawa Inner City Ministries
Ottawa Pastoral Counselling Centre
Ottawa Salus Corporation
Pinecrest-Queensway Community Health Centre
Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre, Community Mental Health
Sandy Hill Community Health Centre
Shepherds of Good Hope
Somerset West Community Health Centre
South-East Ottawa Community Health Centre
St. Luke's Lunch Club
The Ottawa Mission
The Salvation Army Ottawa Booth Centre
The Well/La Source
Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health
Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre
Wigwamen Incorporated
YMCA-YWCA, National Capital Region
Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa

2013 Progress Report

Since 2005, the Alliance to End Homelessness has measured annual change in four areas. Since 2009, we have assessed annual progress based on a specific target for each area.

If these targets were achieved annually for 10 years, Ottawa would be able to effectively end homelessness for individuals and families. *See page 10-11 for details.*

Persons Using Emergency Shelters

Target:

500 less people using emergency shelters each year



Outcome:

548 less people used emergency shelters in 2013 than in 2012



Number of people using emergency shelter at any point in 2012: 7253

Number of people using emergency shelter at any point in 2013: 6705

Summary

An encouraging decline, particularly among families and single women. Can we replicate this success among other client groups?

Source: Homeless Individuals and Families Information System, City of Ottawa

Average Length of Shelter Stay

Target:

Reduce the average length of stay by 3 days per year



Outcome:

People stayed in shelters for 4 days longer in 2013 than in 2012



Average length of stay in 2012: 69 days

Average length of stay in 2013: 73 days

Summary

Longer shelter stays reflect an extreme shortage of affordable housing opportunities in the community, particularly for larger families needing larger units and for single individuals needing housing with supports.

Source: Homeless Individuals and Families Information System, City of Ottawa

Affordability

Target:

Make housing more affordable for people on low incomes by improving their incomes.



Outcome:

No significant improvement on incomes in 2013



Percentage of Ontario Works needed to cover average rent in 2013: 122%

Percentage of ODSP income needed to cover average rent in 2013: 71%

Percentage of minimum wage income needed to cover average rent in 2013: 43%

Summary

The message is clear: The poorest in our community fall well short of having enough income to access housing that is affordable. Modest increases in social assistance, and discussion of a rise in the minimum wage, offer hope – but the rates of increase are disappointing.

Sources: Statistics Canada, CMHC, Province of Ontario

New Affordable Housing

Target:

Create 1000 new affordable housing options each year



Outcome:

185 new housing options were created in 2013



Number of new housing options in 2012: 886

*Number of new housing options in 2013: 185**

Summary

*Special mention is due to the City of Ottawa, for allocating \$1 million to save 344 provincially funded housing allowances that would have ended. However, in total, we saw only 185 new affordable housing options for the community following two previous years in which over 700 new affordable housing units were created.

Source: City of Ottawa





Can we prevent and end homelessness in Ottawa?

A snapshot of community experience says “Yes, we can.”

What do we know about adults in Ottawa who are chronically homeless?

Claire Vayalumkal, University of Ottawa

Did you know? Chronically homeless adults vs. formerly homeless adults:

- Are less likely to have finished highschool
- Are more likely to need partial or complete help for personal care and taking medications
- Are more likely to be taking antidepressants, antipsychotic medications and sleep aids
- Are more likely to have cirrhosis, tuberculosis and history of traumatic brain injury
- Are more likely to drink above the recommended maximum daily intake of alcohol
- Take longer to complete a test of sustained attention & sequencing (Colour Trails Test)
- Score worse on a screening test of executive function (Quick EXIT)

Have you ever wondered why some people have so much trouble exiting homelessness?

- A comparison of chronically & formerly homeless individuals suggests that chronically homeless persons may have more difficulty exiting homelessness because of difficulties in planning, organizing, self-monitoring, and anticipating the consequences of actions/decisions.

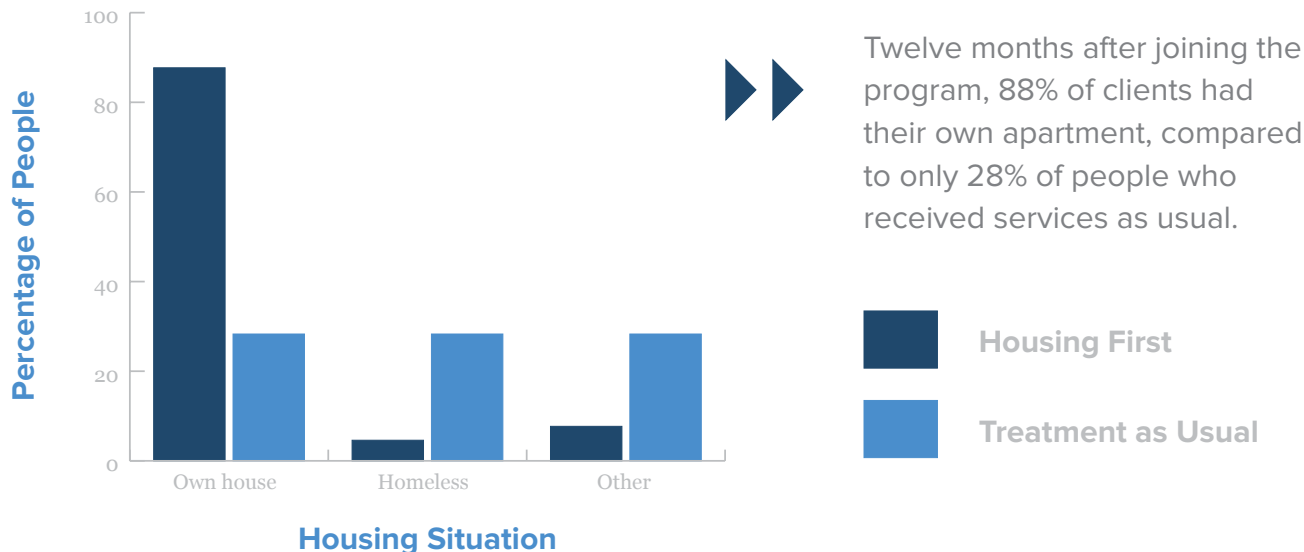
Supported Housing Addiction Recovery Program: Housing First

The Supported Housing Addiction Recovery Program - Evaluation (SHARP-E) is a study of a Housing First program for people with addictions currently being conducted by the Centre for Research on Educational and Community Services at the University of Ottawa. Clients have access to subsidized housing and intensive case management. The program is a collaboration between the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Ottawa and the Oasis (Sandy Hill Community Health Centre).

Research to-date on the program shows that **twelve months after joining the program, 88% of clients¹ had their own apartment**, 5% were homeless (shelter, temporary stay with family/friends), and 8% had 'other' housing (supportive, group, or rooming house). In comparison, 28% of people receiving services as usual had their own apartment, 42% were homeless, and 30% had 'other' housing

¹ Housing First N = 65; Treatment as Usual N = 60

SHARP-E: Results to-date



From the Street to Housing:

The Salvation Army Housing Response Team

Together with clients, private sector landlords and community partners, the Salvation Army's Housing Response Team (HRT) is moving individuals from the street to permanent, scattered-site housing, reducing street homelessness in Ottawa. Through Housing First interventions, a harm reduction approach, and coordinated case management, the HRT offers outreach services and engages the client in landlord negotiations while, when available, portable rent supplements

are provided through City funding (drawing on the municipal \$14M HHIP). Case managers facilitate stabilization services and broker longer-term supports through community partnerships. Housing loss prevention services or re-housing assistance, if required, are also available. According to program reports, **among 160 individuals served since 2008, 91% are currently housed.**



Meet TESP & TED:

Transitional Emergency Shelter Program & Targeted Engagement Diversion

TESP, a 49 bed program for men and women, is a partnership between the City of Ottawa, the Champlain LHIN, Shepherds of Good Hope, CMHA and Ottawa Inner City Health that was developed to increase treatment and care available to individuals not accessing services due to complex health and social issues. The program provides integrated care for clients prior to transfer to mainstream treatment. Three multidisciplinary teams, supported by peer outreach workers, provide the following on-site supports:

- Supervision and support for individuals under the influence of drugs/alcohol or exhibiting symptoms of

mental illness, providing medically supervised detox and overdose prevention

- Access to short stay Treatment and Care unit for medication stabilization, treatment for physical health concerns and concurrent disorder treatment
- Access to a transitional environment for individuals awaiting treatment, housing or other services

TESP / TED has reduced reliance on emergency services (police, paramedics) through successful diversion while providing accessible, wrap-around supports in a community setting.

Preventing Homelessness:

Supporting social housing tenants through community collaboration

Successful tenancies are made possible through community collaboration. Since 2009, in partnership with 7 service providers and 2 housing providers, the Supports to Social Housing program (funded by the City of Ottawa) has supported the stabilization of clients in social housing units who have a history of chronic homelessness. For example, since 2010, Ottawa Community Housing and Salus have partnered in response to the diverse needs of some OCH tenants at risk of homelessness due to mental illness and/or addictions. In 3 OCH communities, Salus is providing

client-centred Intensive Case Management (ICM) supports. The cross-agency collaboration is key, with referrals sometimes made to other community-based supports. According to program reports, **among 74 clients served in this OCH – Salus partnership since 2010, 93% of individuals have stabilized, or are in the process of stabilizing their housing, and their ability to function shows consistent increases.** The program improves client quality of life, supports healthy communities and reduces the costs of providing emergency shelter.

Ottawa's Housing Loss Prevention Network

An important part of the housing support system is the ability to work with individuals and families who are at risk of losing their housing in order to prevent evictions and homelessness. Challenges that may put one's housing stability at risk could include: job loss leading to inability to pay rent or falling into arrears with utilities; seniors living on fixed income who find health care and independent living costs are increasing;

people who may feel unsafe in their current housing; tenants who may have conflict with landlords and/or neighbours putting their housing at risk. The citywide Housing Loss Prevention Network (HLPN) – a collaboration of 6 agencies - provides housing support services for individuals and families at risk of homelessness.



HLPN Services include:

- Providing information, support and assistance for those at risk of losing their housing
- Eviction prevention, assistance in resolving landlord/tenant disputes, addressing neighborhood issues, providing information, referrals and advocacy related to housing issues
- Assisting with applications to the Social Housing Registry, as well as providing information regarding the Registry's Centralized Waiting List.

Each year the HLPN serves on average 2960 individuals/families. The success rates reflect the value of this service to the clients. **Between April and December, 2013, the network supported 2197 different households; of these, 95% retained their housing.** Housing Loss Prevention Workers are available at: Action Logement-Action Housing, Housing Help, the Nepean Rideau and Osgoode Community Resource Centre, and at 3 Community Health Centres – Carlington, Pinecrest-Queensway and South-East Ottawa.

In 2013, the City allocated a combined total of \$14.5M in federal, provincial and City funding, to 3 projects to be developed in 2014-15.

The projects will add 112 much needed affordable dwelling units.

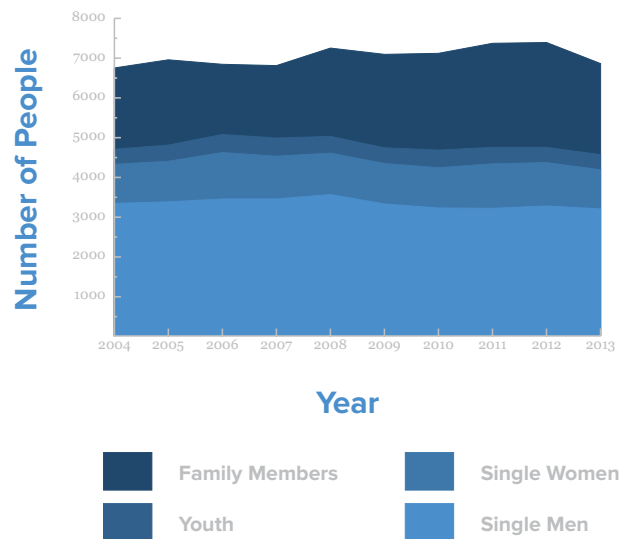
- John Howard Society will construct 34 units. On-site wrap around supports will be provided for chronically homeless men (including seniors) who are currently living with mental illness and/or addictions.
- Résidence Montfort Residence will construct a 36-unit residence. Round the clock supervision will be provided for persons with mental and physical disabilities who currently reside in the emergency shelter system. The building will be 100% accessible and will also be the new site for Gourmet Xpress, a social enterprise that will provide meals and access to training and volunteer opportunities.
- Ottawa Salus Corporation will develop 42 units. Forty two individuals from the emergency shelter system will be relocated to Clementine and other residences operated by Ottawa Salus where residents will receive direct support and skill training. In this state of the art building, all units will be easily convertible for barrier free access.



Persons Using Emergency Shelters:

After 10 years, the proportion of Ottawa's population accessing the emergency shelter system is virtually unchanged, with 0.73% of Ottawa's population accessing a shelter bed in 2004, compared to 0.71% in 2013 (after peaking at 0.78% in 2012). The past year, however, has been promising, particularly for single women and families. In total, the number of individuals using shelters in 2013 was down 7.6% from the 10-year high in 2012. Can we make this decrease an annual trend?

People Accessing Services

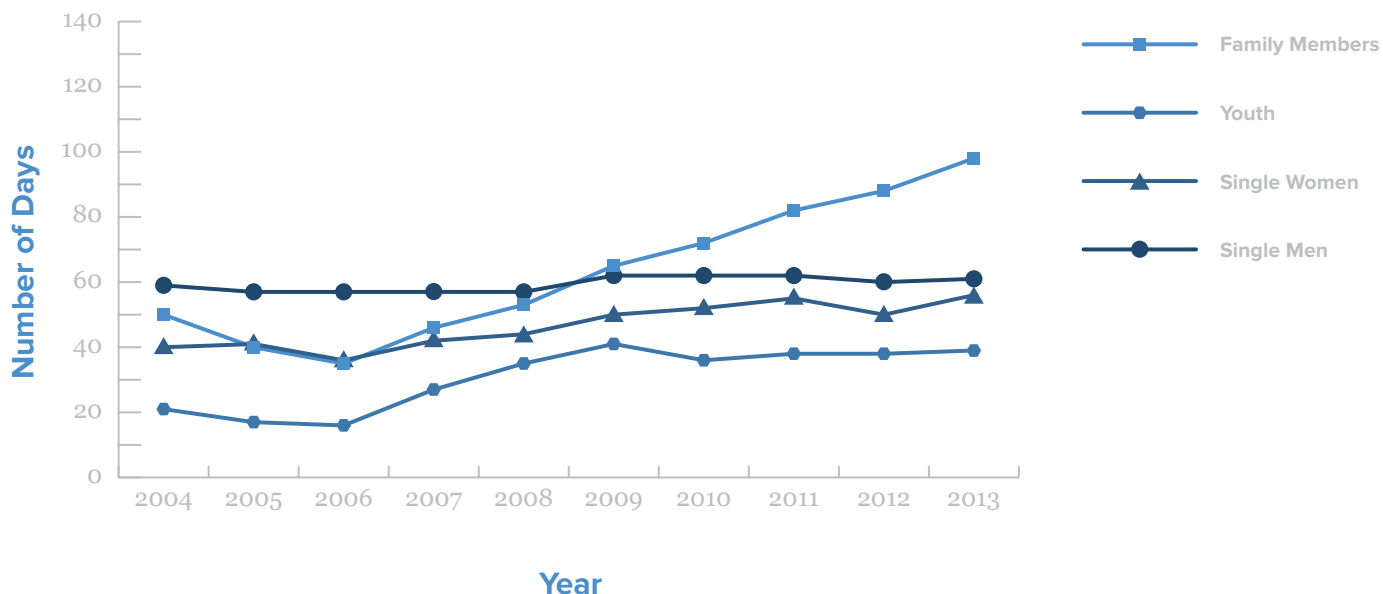


Average Length of Shelter Stay:

Across all client groups, the average length of time individuals stay in emergency shelters has increased over ten years – nearly doubling for families and single youth, and increasing by 40% for single women. While the proportion of the population accessing shelter beds may not have changed substantively since 2004, the

total bed nights used has increased 53% (from 320,285 in 2004, to 489,289 in 2013). This number declined from 2012 to 2013 for the first time since 2005. These trends point to a crisis – a shortage of affordable housing options to enable homeless persons to rapidly exit the costly shelter system.

Average Length of Stay



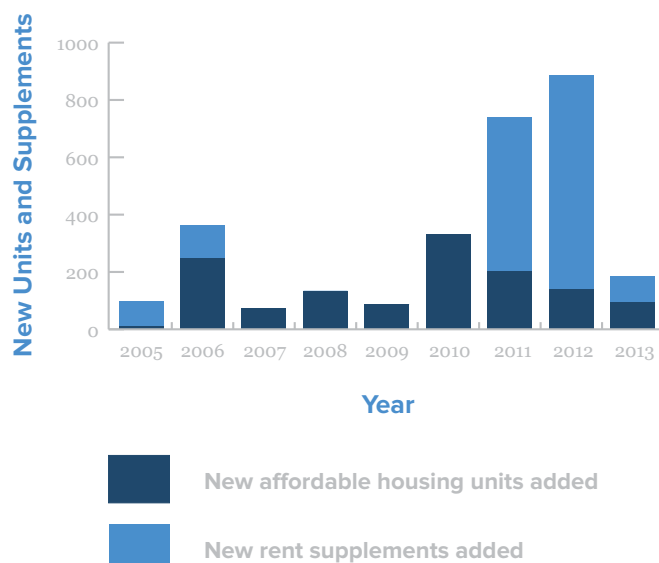
New Affordable Housing:

Over the past 10 years, through federal, provincial and municipal funding, we've seen new units of affordable housing through some construction and the creation of rent supplements, while the active number of households on the social housing waiting list has remained virtually unchanged. In addition to new units, efforts to make housing affordable have been bolstered since 2011. Through the City of Ottawa's \$14M annual Housing and Homelessness Investment Plan alone, new rent supplements and housing allowances have made housing affordable for 1001 additional households.

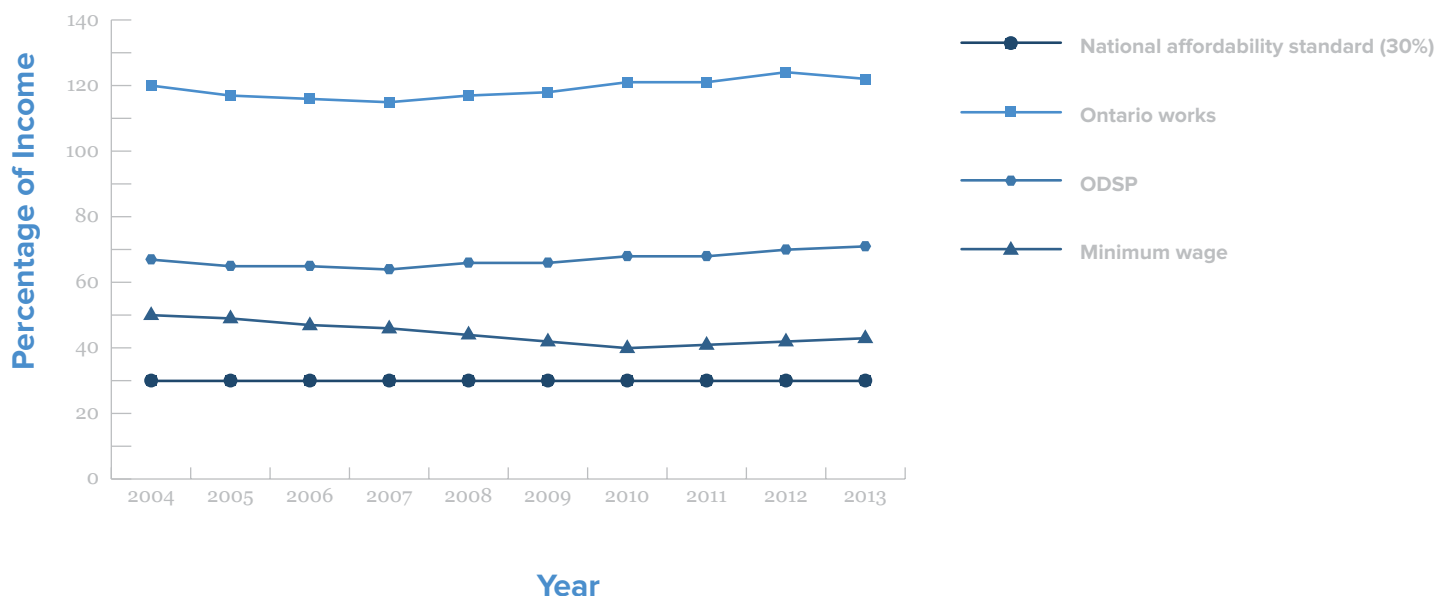
Affordability:

One factor that leaves many households at imminent risk of homelessness is low-income, particularly among those receiving social assistance or earning minimum wage (even when working full-time). Over the past decade, people receiving income from Ontario Works or the Ontario Disability Support Program have seen rents rise faster than income – leaving rents in the private market consistently well beyond the national affordability standard of 30% of income.

New Affordable Units & Rent Supplements Added



Percentage of Income Spent on Rent



Expanded report card: 2013

What are we basing our grades on?

Numbers of Individuals using emergency shelters at any point during the year.

Target: To reduce the number by 500 each year

	2012	2013	Change
Total	7253	6705	-548 (7.6%)
Single Men	3254	3180	-74 (2.3%)
Single Women	1090	984	-106 (9.7%)
Single Youth	382	379	-3 (0.8%)
Family	860	706	-154 (17.9%)
Dependants (family members) under 18	1473	1163	-310 (21.0%)
Total Bed Nights	498,415	489,289	-9,126 (1.8%)

Source: Homeless Individuals and Families Information System, City of Ottawa

Average Length of Shelter Stay

Target: To reduce the average length of stay by 3 days per year

	2012	2013	Change
Average (all clients)	69	73	+4
Single Men	60	61	+1
Single Women	50	56	+6
Single Youth	38	39	+1
Family	88	98	+10

Source: Homeless Individuals and Families Information System, City of Ottawa

New Affordable Housing

Target: To create 1000 new affordable housing options each year, using a combination of newly built housing units and rent subsidies

	2012	2013	Change
New Units	139	94	-45
New Rent Supplements	490	10	-480
New Housing Allowances	123	81	-42
Other Subsidies	134 (OASIS and CMHA)	0	-134
Total	886	185*	-701

Source: City of Ottawa

* In addition to the 185 new units created in 2013, the City invested \$1M to protect 344 housing allowances that would have been lost due to provincial funding cuts.

Affordability

Target: To make housing more affordable for people on low incomes by improving their incomes

	2012	2013	Change
Average Market Rent (bachelor apartment)	\$754	\$766	+\$12
Ontario Works (OW) per single individual / per month	\$606	\$626	+\$20
% required for average rent	124%	122%	-2%
Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) per single individual / per month	\$1075	\$1086	+\$11
% required for average rent	70%	71%	+1%
Minimum wage	\$10.25 / hr	\$10.25 / hr	Unchanged
% required for average rent	42%	43%	+1%

Source: Statistics Canada, CMHC, Province of Ontario

The Families First Program 2 ½ years later:

Challenges, successes, lessons learned

Ofelia Levoir, Families First, Pinecrest Queensway Community Health Centre,

John Sylvestre, Centre for Research on Educational and Community Services, University of Ottawa

The Families First Program was developed as part of the City of Ottawa's \$14 million Housing and Homelessness Investment Plan, with additional support provided by the federal government's Homelessness Partnering Strategy. Launched in September 2011, the program provides help to families moving from emergency shelters to housing in the community as well as other families at risk of losing their homes, identified through the Housing Loss Prevention Network and Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization. The support, which can last up to 9 months, is provided by a multidisciplinary team with expertise in child and youth development, substance abuse, mental health and multiculturalism. The program works with families holistically – including parents and children of varying ages – helping them to develop skills, strengthening their family, fostering social and community integration and providing assistance with mental health and substance use.

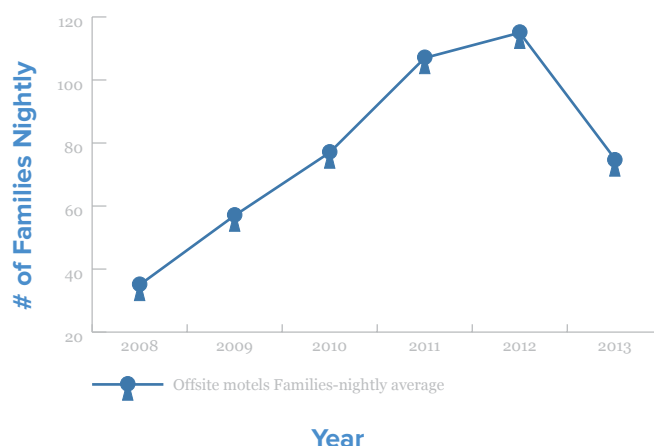
Over 2 ½ years, the program has helped 400 families with almost 1,300 family members. Of 166 households assisted in 2013, 130 have been placed in social housing, 19 in RGI (rent-geared-to-income) units and 17 in market rent units. A notable success has been an almost 100% housing retention rate for families. Strong partnerships have been developed to support families from diverse backgrounds to improve their quality of life, develop life skills, build family capacity, and foster social and community integration through participation in social and cultural activities.

The program is collaborating with a research team from the University of Ottawa (John Sylvestre, Tim Aubry, and Catherine Lee) to study the program as it develops and to make recommendations for improvements. The

team is following 76 families over a one year period as they leave the shelters for community housing to study program implementation and patterns of family shelter use over the life of the program.

Families First Program staff have learned lessons about the diversity of families they support, their strengths and resilience, the importance of cultural sensitivity and competency, and the need for strong and solid partnerships with partners to improve access to community resources. Program staff are convinced that issues of family homelessness can be solved, and that Families First is one important element of this solution. However, a complete solution requires strategies to ensure effective housing loss prevention, rapid re-housing, and policies to address the structural disadvantages some families face.

Average Yearly Motel Use for Families 2008-2013



Due to the increased efforts of the city and the community, we have seen a reduction in nightly demand for motels as overflow family shelter space.

A plan to end chronic homelessness!

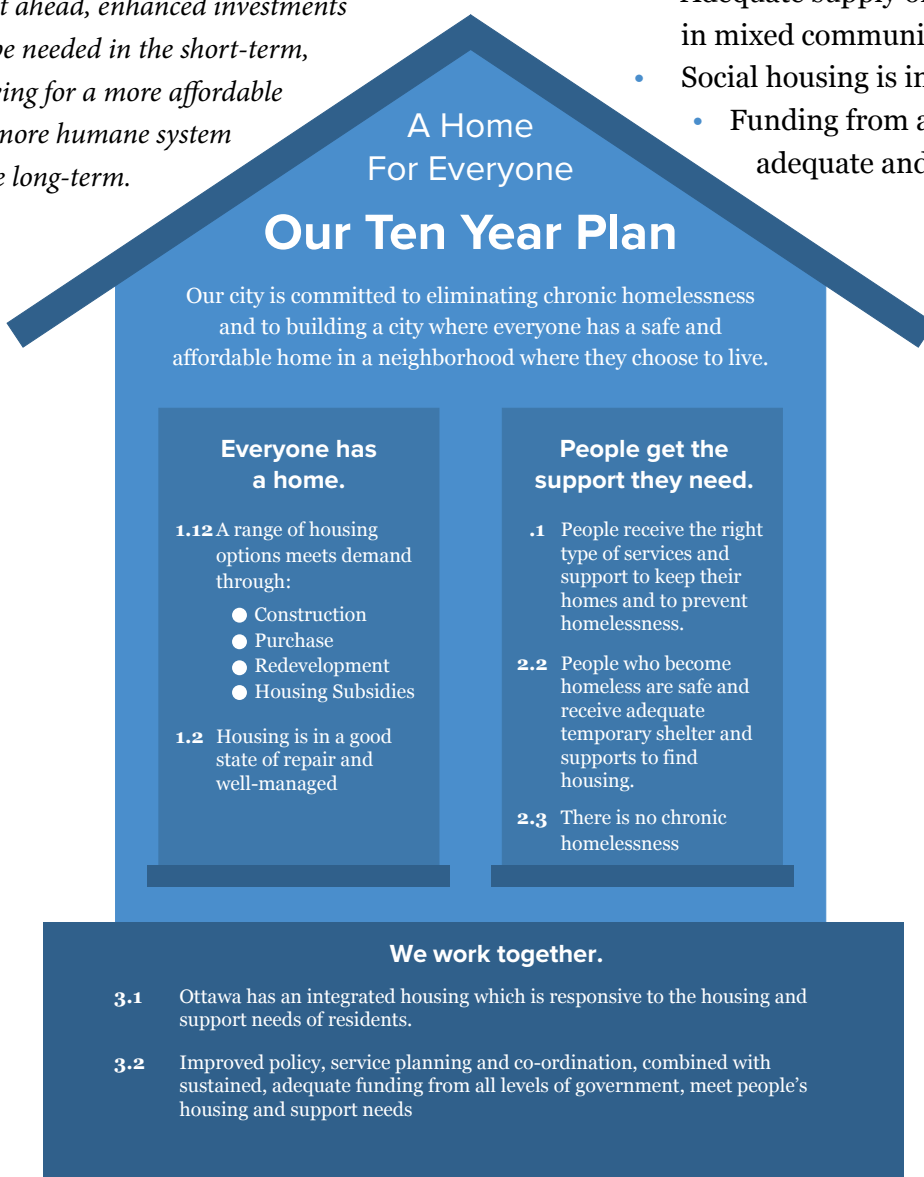
The City of Ottawa now has its own plan to end chronic homelessness – created with great input from the community. In September 2013, City Council approved a new 10-year housing and homelessness plan: “A Home for Everyone.” Developed with over 400 people and organizations, the plan boldly establishes the goal of eliminating chronic (long-term) homelessness by 2024.

Did you know?² A 2013 study found that 12% of individuals accessing Ottawa’s shelter system between 2004-2007 were doing so repeatedly or for long periods (many for years), consuming 52% of the shelter bed spaces. Creating long-term housing solutions for long-term shelter clients, with the supports needed to remain housed, will return our shelter system to its roots as an “emergency” system. To get ahead, enhanced investments will be needed in the short-term, allowing for a more affordable and more humane system in the long-term.

Ottawa’s 10-year plan recognizes the need for partnerships, and for adequate and sustained funding – not only to eliminate chronic homelessness – but to provide affordable housing options across the city and to ensure that people receive the supports they need.

Working with governments, lenders, developers, other private sector partners, the faith community and philanthropy, and led by the City’s Housing System Working Group, we will pursue the following goals by 2024:

- No one is unsheltered
- People receive the supports they need to remain housed
- Chronic homelessness is eliminated
- Shelters are available for emergencies and stays are 30 days or less
- Adequate supply of affordable housing options in mixed communities
- Social housing is in a good state of repair
 - Funding from all levels of government is adequate and sustained



² Tim Aubry, Susan Farrell, Stephen W. Hwang, Melissa Calhoun (2013) “Identifying the Patterns of Emergency Shelter Stays of Single Individuals in Canadian Cities of Different Sizes” Housing Studies, 28:6, 910-927.

The Policy Landscape

Strong public policy is necessary to achieve the City of Ottawa's 10-year housing and homelessness goals. What policy changes have occurred over the past year, and what needs to be done?

What has been done?

Government of Canada:

- Announced a 5-year extension to the **Homelessness Partnering Strategy** (2014-2019) directing a majority of funds to “housing first” approaches
- Announced a 5-year extension to the **Investment in Affordable Housing program** (2014-2019), valued at \$253 million a year (nationwide), for rehabilitation and new construction

As reported by Michael Shapcott,³ federal investments in housing, as a percentage of GDP have fallen to less than 0.7% in recent years, after they were as high as 1% until the mid 1990s. They are projected to drop even further.

Province of Ontario:

- Consolidated 5 homelessness funding programs into a single envelope, the **Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative**, and capped fundings
- Eliminated the **Community Start-Up and Maintenance Benefit (CSUMB)** – a funding envelope that assisted households on an as-needed basis with emergency housing costs.
- Increased **social assistance** by \$14 per year for single adults, and increased the benefit rate for the Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Programs by 1%

City of Ottawa:

- Continued delivery of the annual **\$14 million Housing and Homelessness Investment Plan** (HHIP), making possible a combination of newly built units and rental assistance
- Approved “**A Home for Everyone**,” a new 10-year Housing and Homelessness plan for the City of Ottawa
- Combined federal, provincial and municipal dollars, recognizing the need to combine capital and support funding for supportive housing units, to create 112 units in 2014-2015

The Housing and Homelessness Investment Plan (HHIP) continues to be successful in enabling us to come close to annual housing targets. Between 2011 and 2013, 1001 households received new rent supplements and housing allowances through HHIP. Funding has also been allocated to capital funding for new housing supply.

³ Shapcott, Michael (2013) “A decade of changes in Ontario and beyond and a look to the future” Presentation at Community Forum on Homelessness, hosted by the Alliance to End Homelessness Ottawa, November 26.

What needs to be done?

Government of Canada:

- HPS funding is frozen at pre-2014 levels and needs to grow; as outlined by Nick Falvo,⁴ Ottawa's current allocation represents only a portion of the program's original 1999 value
- Funding must be sustained for services supporting those at-risk of homelessness or those seeking short-term assistance
- Annual spending of \$1.7 billion in social housing operating agreements, set to expire over the next 5-10 years, must be reinvested in new housing solutions

Province of Ontario:

- The Province needs to match the 5-year 2014-2019 federal IAH funding commitment, ensuring timely and predictable funding for municipalities
- Capital and operational funding, for both housing and supports, needs to be aligned
- Substantive increases to social assistance, as recommended in the 2013 report of the Commission for the Review of Social Assistance, are needed
- Access to affordable housing needs to be incorporated as a cornerstone of the renewed Poverty Reduction Strategy
- Further progress is needed towards implementation of a meaningful minimum wage
- Municipalities need authority to pursue inclusionary housing programs
- After the elimination of CSUMB, the \$42 million in one-time funding for housing and homelessness prevention must become an annual investment

City of Ottawa:

- Annual targets are needed to ensure progress towards 10-year goals
- The City needs to build on the success of its HHIP, drawing on the increased value (from 2010 to 2014) of the provincial upload of various social services costs and allocating additional funds to cost-effective housing initiatives
- Progress must be made towards achieving the City's Official Plan target that 25% of new residential development be affordable
- In high density development, affordable housing targets need to be pursued, with tools such as Section 37 of the Ontario *Planning Act*
- The City needs to monitor and report on the loss of affordable housing through demolition and conversions

⁴ Falvo, Nick (2013) "Emerging themes in Canadian homelessness policy" Presentation at Community Forum on Homelessness, hosted by the Alliance to End Homelessness Ottawa, November 26.

**We know what to do... Now let's make it happen.
Together, we can do this.**

Why?



Everyone deserves a home
Housing solutions are cost effective
You can make a difference

Who?



**This is about you: engaging politicians,
candidates, your neighbour**

How?



Inform yourself
Use your vote
Share your story
askmeottawa.ca
Volunteer your time

Upcoming Elections:

Municipal: Monday, October 27, 2014

Provincial: as early as Spring, 2014

Federal: Monday, October 19, 2015



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