



Pre-Budget Submission to the Government of Ontario February 2022

Delivered to:

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy

Minister of Finance and President of the Treasury Board

Government of Ontario

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About OAEH

The [Ontario Alliance to End Homelessness](#) (OAEH) is a network of 50+ communities, agencies, and individuals dedicated to preventing and ending homelessness in Ontario.

Our Issue

Housing affordability is one of the most pressing issues in cities, towns, and rural areas all across Ontario. There are a number of compounding factors that have allowed the costs of housing to far outpace average wages. As an alliance to end homelessness, our focus lies largely on non-market supply and demand, relied on by those on very low incomes to meet their human right to housing. This government has spent millions of dollars providing shelter accommodations throughout the pandemic. As that funding winds down and shelters return to pre-pandemic capacity, thousands of individuals and families face life on the streets without funding and housing units to transition them back into housing.

The province has the opportunity in this budget to take decisive steps that can prioritize those who find themselves without a safe, affordable place to call home. New investments and regulatory reform are both needed.

Our Recommendations

1. **Investments in both capital and operations.** Municipalities need increased provincial contributions for affordable housing development. There is also an ongoing need for the province to invest in operating grants for affordable housing providers, especially supportive housing providers.

2. **Increased social assistance rates.** Ontario's social assistance programs, including Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), are a targeted solution to poverty in this province. But when the social assistance rates are out of step with the costs of living, people remain trapped in poverty with few choices to better their circumstances. Currently, a single person on OW receives just \$390/month for housing.
3. **Renewed and expanded rent supplement programs.** According to the March 2021 [Housing and Homelessness Programs Report from the Financial Accountability Office](#) (FAO), the province currently only provides rent supplements for approximately 40% of the households identified as being in core housing need. The same FAO report shows the provincial portion of all housing programs averages only 0.3% of the province's expenditures. Rent supplements are currently provided through three main funds slated to end in the next two years.
4. **Transitional supports from provincial institutions.** Youth aging out of care, patients being discharged from health care institutions, and people being released from incarceration often end up homeless or underhoused due to the lack of transition supports.

The under-investment in the housing needs of low-income Ontarians is contributing to the large increase in the inflow into our homelessness systems, and severely impacting communities ability to re-house people. We are all aware that it is [more cost-effective to offer financial support to provide individuals with housing than to house them in shelter beds](#) so providing deeply affordable housing benefits us all. We are asking the province to invest in a healthier, more resilient Ontario through this budget with permanent solutions for those experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, homelessness.