

For Information Only

Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy Update

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Resolution

For Information Only

Health Impact Assessment

The Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy is founded on a vision of ensuring affordable, suitable and adequate homes for all Ontarians, to provide the foundation to secure employment, raise a family and build strong communities.

Background

In March 2016, the Province of Ontario announced the Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy (LTAHS) Update, which augmented the original LTAHS from 2010. The updated strategy was introduced to reflect new research and best practices related to housing and homelessness and to align with broader provincial government initiatives related to affordable housing (Poverty Reduction Strategy, long term goal of ending homelessness).

The strategy update was founded on the vision that “every person has an affordable, suitable and adequate home to provide the foundation to secure employment, raise a family and build strong communities.”

The province has identified key elements in the vision of how social housing will look in Ontario in the future. The key elements are organized around four themes:

1. A modern program framework
2. A more coordinated access system for people in need
3. New approaches to financial assistance
4. A vibrant not-for-profit and co-operative housing sector

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Health Impact Review

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The goals of the provincial strategy are:

1. An appropriate and sustainable supply of housing
2. An equitable, portable system of financial assistance
3. People centred, efficient housing programs
4. Developing an Indigenous Housing Strategy
5. Achieving an evidence-informed system.

The details of the LTAHS are included in the attached Appendix A

Implementing the Strategy

The Ministry of Housing has begun implementing specific initiatives to meet the desired goals. A detailed technical document was provided to municipal service managers in April 2016, highlighting legislative, regulatory and policy changes that are forthcoming. The following initiatives are being undertaken:

Developing a Framework for Inclusionary Zoning

- Would allow municipalities to require a certain percentage of affordable housing units in new housing proposals in order to be approved

A Stronger Supportive Housing System for Ontario

- Helping Ontarians with complex needs (seniors, people with physical and/or mental health issues, substance abuse issues, survivors of domestic violence, at-risk youth, and others)
- Funding commitment for support services and housing allowances
- Support coordination across sectors and ministries and engage key stakeholders

Developing a Framework for a Portable Housing Benefit

- A portable housing benefit that would be linked to people instead of a specific housing unit (as is the case with current Rent-Geared-To-Income (RGI) housing)
- Subsidy would be calculated based on the income of the tenant

Portable Housing Benefit for Survivors of Domestic Violence

- Pilot program, initially in three Ontario communities
- Survivors of Domestic Violence would have the option of receiving a portable housing benefit so they can find immediate housing in the community

Simplified Rent-Geared-To-Income (RGI) Calculations

- Harmonization of the definition of income, to make it more consistent with other income-tested programs, like the Ontario Child Benefit

Modernizing Social Housing in Ontario

- Streamline and simplify RGI calculations and administration
- Support vibrant mixed-income communities

- Recognize new and innovative forms of municipal housing assistance
- Increase local flexibility to manage housing assets and meet local needs
- Develop a voluntary accreditation system that encourages sector sustainability and high-quality tenant services

The Ministry of Housing has initiated implementation of some of the actions to attain the goals of the LTAHS. Ongoing consultation and further direction is expected in the near future.

The City's Planning Services has prepared reports regarding inclusionary zoning, detailing the municipal response to the proposed legislative changes and the reports have been approved by the Planning Committee. The Housing Services Section and Planning Services continue to work towards successful implementation of the LTAHS.

ONTARIO'S LONG-TERM AFFORDABLE HOUSING STRATEGY UPDATE



MARCH 2016

Ontario.ca/housingstrategy

ONTARIO'S LONG-TERM AFFORDABLE HOUSING STRATEGY UPDATE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS AND HOUSING	1
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
ONTARIO'S LONG-TERM AFFORDABLE HOUSING STRATEGY UPDATE	7
OUR VISION	9
KEEPING THE MOMENTUM GOING	10
LONG-TERM AFFORDABLE HOUSING STRATEGY UPDATE CONSULTATIONS: WHAT WE HEARD	11
OUR GOALS	12
INVESTING IN THE FUTURE	13
AN APPROPRIATE AND SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY OF HOUSING	15
AN EQUITABLE, PORTABLE SYSTEM OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE	19
PEOPLE-CENTRED, EFFICIENT HOUSING PROGRAMS	22
DEVELOPING AN INDIGENOUS HOUSING STRATEGY	29
ENDING HOMELESSNESS	31
ACHIEVING AN EVIDENCE-INFORMED SYSTEM	38
IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY	39

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS AND HOUSING



The 2010 release of Ontario's first Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy, *Building Foundations: Building Futures*, began transforming our housing system. It was a strategy rooted in the conviction that a home is more than a mailing address, more than just a roof over your head.

Home is where people live, raise a family and are part of a strong community. Stable affordable housing helps create a dependable environment for families and children that contributes to better health and educational results.

Good housing lies at the heart of any vision of a fair and prosperous society. That vision anchored the 2010 Strategy, the first of its kind for Ontario, and I am proud of the real impact it has had.

The 2010 Strategy recognized that local flexibility, with accountability, offers the best approach to housing and service delivery, and to building strong communities.

It consolidated five formerly separate homelessness-related programs into a single, flexible, outcome-focused program – the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative – and has helped more than 30,000 families and individuals experiencing homelessness obtain housing, and more than 100,000 households at risk of homelessness remain in their homes.

The update to the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy will continue this transformation. It supports our goal of ending chronic homelessness in 10 years, and charts a bold, co-ordinated, and progressive course towards housing policy and programs that are relevant to current realities and reflect new research and best practices. We have continued to take a whole-of-government approach to identify issues across the system and to make housing programs more people-centred and co-ordinated.

With this strategy, we are providing much needed funding to key areas of the sector that will help us achieve our goals.

Building on the 2016 Ontario Budget investment of \$178 million over three years, we are making a long-term commitment to stable funding that will continue our transformation of the housing system:

- investing more than \$17 million over three years to pilot a portable housing benefit targeted towards survivors of domestic violence that would eventually assist up to 3,000 survivors, growing from \$2.5 million in 2016/17 to \$10 million in 2018/19

- investing up to \$100 million in operating funding for housing allowances and support services to assist up to 4,000 families and individuals in new supportive housing over the next three years
- supporting the construction of up to 1,500 new supportive housing units over the long term, with operating assistance eventually assisting up to 6,000 families and individuals
- building on our current annual investment of almost \$294 million in funding for the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative with \$15 million in additional funding in 2017-18, climbing to \$30 million in 2018-19, for a total of \$324 million in annual investments
- investing up to \$2.5 million over three years to create an Innovation, Evidence and Capacity Building Fund to support research, evaluation and capacity building initiatives

With this update and these significant investments, we are focusing on linking two important and connected issues that lead to precarious housing for vulnerable people: the available amount of housing stock, and access to those affordable units.

We know we will only succeed in achieving better outcomes on housing and homelessness if we harness the combined strengths of Ontario's public, private and non-profit, and co-operative housing partners.

We also know our efforts will work best if federal, provincial and municipal initiatives are all working together. I look forward to working closely with the federal government, and with our provincial and territorial counterparts on the development of a national housing strategy for all of Canada.

I would like to thank the dedicated individuals and organizations for their participation and input during the consultation process. Your input has helped shape the update to this strategy and the focus of the investments we are making.

By working together, we can start taking meaningful actions to transform Ontario's housing system into one that helps more people and prevents homelessness.

Yours truly,



The Honourable Ted McMeekin
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

LONG-TERM AFFORDABLE HOUSING STRATEGY UPDATE

In 2010, Ontario launched the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy, Building Foundations: Building Futures. The strategy began a process of transforming Ontario's housing system into one that is people-centred, partnership-based, locally driven, and fiscally responsible.

Our update to the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy is bold and transformative, reflecting current realities, new research and best practices. Our goal is to support social and economic inclusion, end chronic homelessness, and meet the housing needs of all Ontarians. It is guided by an updated vision.

Every person has an affordable, suitable and adequate home to provide the foundation to secure employment, raise a family and build strong communities.

To achieve this vision our strategy will include a framework for a portable housing benefit that would help to give people who receive housing assistance the flexibility to choose where they want to live, and develop a Supportive Housing Policy Framework to improve client outcomes.

We propose legislation for inclusionary zoning that would enable municipalities to mandate the inclusion of affordable housing units in new development projects.

Building on the 2016 Ontario Budget investment of \$178 million over three years, we are also making a long-term commitment to stable funding that will continue our transformation of the housing system.

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

Ontario is committing new operating and capital funding to support the broader Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy Update initiatives.

Survivors of Domestic Violence Pilot Project

- investing more than \$17 million over three years to pilot a portable housing benefit targeted towards survivors of domestic violence that would eventually assist up to 3,000 survivors, growing from \$2.5 million in 2016/17 to \$10 million in 2018/19



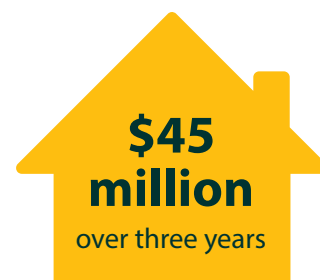
Supportive Housing

- investing up to \$100 million in operating funding for housing allowances and support services to assist up to 4,000 families and individuals in new supportive housing over the next three years
- supporting the construction of up to 1,500 new supportive housing units over the long term, with operating assistance eventually assisting up to 6,000 families and individuals



Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative

- Building on the current annual investment of almost \$294 million in funding for the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative with \$15 million in additional funding in 2017-18, climbing to \$30 million in 2018-19, for a total of \$324 million in annual investments



Innovation, Evidence and Capacity Building Fund

- investing up to \$2.5 million over three years to create an Innovation, Evidence and Capacity Building Fund to support research, evaluation and capacity building initiatives



MEETING OUR GOALS

An appropriate and sustainable supply of housing

- expanding and enhancing the range of land use planning and municipal finance tools that municipalities can use to build more affordable market housing
- proposing enabling legislation for inclusionary zoning and reducing complexity/cost around second units in homes
- supporting a vibrant non-profit and co-operative housing sector

An equitable, portable system of financial assistance

- introducing a framework for a portable housing benefit and simplified rent-geared-to-income calculations to reduce paperwork and give people more flexibility and choices

People-centred, efficient housing programs

- developing a modernized framework for social housing aligned with the government's focus on poverty reduction
- improving co-ordination across related government systems (e.g. health, community services, children and youth) to help people find the right housing and supports
- enhancing housing options for survivors of domestic violence
- transforming the supportive housing system

Developing an Indigenous Housing Strategy

- developing a housing strategy in partnership with Indigenous organizations to address the unique housing challenges and needs of First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples

Ending homelessness

- accepting the recommendations made by the Expert Advisory Panel on Homelessness, and committing to end chronic homelessness in 10 years
- advancing our long-term goal of ending homelessness, including measuring progress on chronic homelessness, youth homelessness, homelessness amongst Indigenous peoples and homelessness following transitions from provincially-funded institutions and service systems

Achieving an evidence-informed system

- developing a data strategy (2015) and performance indicators and proposing legislative amendments to require Service Managers to conduct local enumeration of the homeless population

IMPLEMENTATION

We will consult and collaborate with our partners to develop these bold initiatives and phase-in implementation over time. This will include:

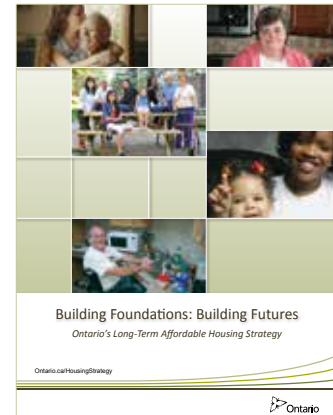
- undertaking technical consultations on legislative and regulatory initiatives leading to the introduction of proposed legislation in 2016
- striking a Steering Committee to begin the process of modernizing social housing
- collaborating on a Supportive Housing Policy Framework and Best Practice Guide
- continuing sustained engagement with First Nation, Métis and Inuit partners with the goal of developing an Indigenous Housing Strategy
- continuing to implement the recommendations of the Expert Advisory Panel on Homelessness

ONTARIO'S LONG-TERM AFFORDABLE HOUSING STRATEGY UPDATE

In 2010, Ontario launched the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy, Building Foundations: Building Futures. The strategy began a process of transforming Ontario's housing system into one that is people-centred, partnership-based, locally driven, and fiscally responsible. Since then, a number of outcomes have been achieved.

- **2012: Ontario Housing Policy Statement and Housing Services Act** – The Housing Services Act, 2011, and the Ontario Housing Policy Statement resulted in changes to the legislative framework for housing services in Ontario. The changes support better decision making at the local level, and require Service Managers¹ across Ontario to develop 10-year Local Housing and Homelessness Plans and new accountability measures.
- **2013: Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative** – Ontario consolidated five formerly separate homelessness programs into a single, flexible, outcome-focused program funded by the province and delivered by Service Managers. As part of the Poverty Reduction Strategy 2014-2019, Ontario enhanced funding to this program by \$42 million a year starting in 2014-15 to almost \$294 million annually.
- **2014: Poverty Reduction Strategy** – Realizing Our Potential – Ontario's renewed Poverty Reduction Strategy establishes a long-term goal to end homelessness in Ontario as one of its four key pillars.
- **2014: Minister's Forum on Affordable Housing and the Private Sector** – Representatives from across the housing sector recommended strategies for governments and the private sector to work together to facilitate construction of affordable home ownership and rental housing. We have included this advice as part of this strategy update.
- **2015: Report of the Expert Advisory Panel on Homelessness – A Place to Call Home** – The report includes recommendations on the need to define, measure and collect data on homelessness, and the importance of setting a target to end chronic homelessness in Ontario. We've set a goal of ending chronic homelessness in 10 years and have taken early steps to meet that goal.

¹Service Managers are responsible for delivering and administering social and affordable housing, other social services programs such as Ontario Works and childcare, and local homelessness services. They can be regional governments, counties or separated cities, and District Social Services Administration Boards, which are boards established in each of the 10 districts in Northern Ontario.



Real Results Since 2010

All 47 Service Managers developed 10-year comprehensive local housing and homelessness plans.

Since 2011, the Investment in Affordable Housing for Ontario (IAH) program has:

- built or repaired more than 14,700 affordable units
- assisted over 14,900 households with rent or down payment assistance
- committed \$37 million to build and repair 399 units and provide down payment assistance to 215 households under the Aboriginal Component of IAH

In 2014-15, funding under the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) has assisted approximately 30,500 families and individuals experiencing homelessness obtain housing and has helped approximately 104,400 households at-risk of homelessness remain in their homes.

As a legacy of the Toronto 2015 Pan Am Games, the Athletes' Village is being converted into a new, sustainable, mixed-use community, known as the Canary District, which will include 100 affordable home ownership units and 353 affordable rental housing units, of which a minimum of 10 per cent will be accessible for people with disabilities.

OUR VISION



Our update to the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy is bold and transformative, reflecting current realities, new research and best practices. Our goal is to support social and economic inclusion, end chronic homelessness, and meet the housing needs of all Ontarians. It is guided by an updated vision.

We are committed to building a fair society that puts people first – a society where everyone has a place to call home.

This vision is associated with two overarching outcomes:

- decreasing the number of people who are homeless
- increasing the number of families and individuals achieving housing stability

The bold initiatives set out in this updated strategy enhance the transformative steps our government has taken on housing and homelessness issues.



Every person has an affordable, suitable, and adequate home to provide the foundation to secure employment, raise a family, and build strong communities.

Taking a whole-of-government approach, our focus is on strengthening people-centred housing programs and on increasing co-ordination between government services.

Ontario's updated Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy reflects the fundamental connections between improving housing outcomes for Ontarians and other key government priorities, including poverty reduction and improving mental health and addictions services.

Complementary Initiatives across several Ontario government ministries are featured throughout this report to highlight these connections.



KEEPING THE MOMENTUM GOING

We have made significant progress over the past five years. Thousands of affordable units have been built and repaired, and thousands of families and individuals have received rental assistance or down payment help to support affordable home ownership.

However, we know there are still many challenges to overcome – and opportunities to harness. Meeting Ontario’s growing and changing demands for affordable housing options over the long term will call on all the creativity, innovation and combined efforts of governments, and the private and non-profit/co-operative sectors.

Ontario is up for the challenge and we are taking the lead.



LONG-TERM AFFORDABLE HOUSING STRATEGY UPDATE CONSULTATIONS: WHAT WE HEARD

From April to July 2015, the government consulted with major housing, health and human services stakeholders,

and the general public as part of the strategy update. We received feedback and advice at over 30 stakeholder meetings and from 113 formal written submissions that reflect the housing needs of Ontarians across the province.



Major themes emerged from the consultation process.

- the supply of affordable housing needs to be increased (affordable rental and affordable home ownership)
- the current Rent-Geared-to-Income system needs to be overhauled
- housing assistance should be portable, not tied to a specific housing unit
- access to housing and support services is too complicated for individuals and families – it needs to be streamlined
- access to support services needs to be expanded to make it more easily available to tenants receiving housing assistance
- Ontario needs a dedicated Indigenous Housing Strategy
- Service Managers and housing providers need better data to make the best decisions

This update addresses these themes.

“There is much at stake to address the long-term needs of Ontarians for affordable housing. Ontario’s communities need a stable and secure housing market that creates jobs, attracts new workers, meets the needs of seniors and young families, and keeps our most vulnerable citizens off the streets.”

- Association of Municipalities of Ontario²

“Housing with supports are critical components of recovery from mental illnesses and addictions. With the right housing and supports, people recovering from mental illnesses and addictions gain a renewed sense of dignity and hope and can re-integrate into the community more successfully. There is no recovery without proper housing.... The development of a revamped Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy (LTAHS) for Ontario brings a renewed focus on the rising numbers in need of affordable housing and people with mental illnesses and addictions who need supportive housing options.”

- Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Ontario Division³

“All levels of government must work together to improve access to affordable housing and to strengthen Ontario’s social housing sector. The sector is a significant asset to the province, and must be recognized as such. While federal and municipal investment is necessary, as the order of government that stands to benefit most from the many psycho-social, health and economic benefits of a strong housing sector, it is incumbent upon the Province to take a leadership role in its renewal.”

- Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association (ONPHA)⁴

OUR GOALS

Achieving our vision for the future of affordable housing in Ontario starts with setting ambitious goals:

- an appropriate and sustainable supply of housing
- an equitable, portable system of financial assistance
- people-centred, efficient housing programs
- an Indigenous Housing Strategy
- ending homelessness
- achieving an evidence-informed system

² Strengthening the Foundation for Housing in Ontario, Response to the Provincial Consultation on the Renewal of the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy, Association of Municipalities of Ontario, July 6, 2015. p.2

³ Submission in Response to Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy Update Consultations, Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Ontario Division in collaboration with local CMHA Branches in Ontario, July 3, 2015. p.7

⁴ Building a stronger rental housing system, ONPHA'S Recommendations for the Update of Ontario's Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy, ONPHA, July 3, 2015, p.5

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

The Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy update charts a course for the creation of the sustainable housing that Ontario needs. This plan is ambitious in scope and its success will depend on committed partnerships – between the private, non-profit and co-operative sectors, and at all levels of government.

Ontario welcomes the new federal government's pledge to a new level of engagement on affordable housing and homelessness issues. We look forward to participating in the development of a National Housing Strategy for Canada, and to working together to ensure affordable housing for every person in our country.

Real progress will demand cooperation and innovation, but it will also require substantial financial investment – including on the part of the federal government.

That is why Ontario is taking the lead by supporting the strategy update with smart investments. Building on the 2016 Ontario Budget investment of \$178 million over three years, we are making a long-term commitment to stable funding that will continue our transformation of the housing system.

We are providing incentives to create the appropriate affordable and supportive housing options that will support the government's commitment to end chronic homelessness in 10 years.

Ontario is committing new operating and capital funding to support the broader Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy Update initiatives:

- Survivors of Domestic Violence Pilot (see [p. 24](#) for details)
- Supportive Housing (see [p. 26](#) for details)
- Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (see [p. 34](#) for details)
- Innovation, Evidence and Capacity Building Fund (see [p. 38](#) for details)

Ontario Investments and Expected Outcomes

- More than \$17 million over three years to pilot a portable housing benefit targeted towards survivors of domestic violence that would eventually assist up to 3,000 survivors, growing from \$2.5 million in 2016/17 to \$10 million in 2018/19
- Investing up to \$100 million in operating funding for housing allowances and support services to assist up to 4,000 families and individuals in new supportive housing over the next three years
- Supporting the construction of up to 1,500 new supportive housing units over the long term, with operating assistance eventually assisting up to 6,000 families and individuals
 - This will help the government make progress on its long-term goal to end homelessness, prioritizing provincial action to reduce homelessness in four areas: youth, Indigenous people, chronic homelessness, and homelessness following transitions from provincially-funded institutions and service systems
- Building on our current annual investment of almost \$294 million in funding for the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative with \$15 million in additional funding in 2017-18, climbing to \$30 million in 2018-19, for a total of \$324 million in annual investments
- Investing up to \$2.5 million over three years to create an Innovation, Evidence and Capacity Building Fund to support research, evaluation and capacity building initiatives

Ontario's investments under the Strategy Update support the following outcomes.

Better Results for People

- fewer people who are homeless, and targeting an end to chronic homelessness in 10 years
- more families and individuals are stably housed and assisted through a portable housing benefit
- better housing outcomes for the chronically homeless, Indigenous peoples, youth, seniors and people transitioning from provincially-funded institutions and service systems

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- increased education and employment outcomes
- decreased use of emergency health care, policing, corrections and justice services

A Stronger Housing System

- a more financially sustainable, efficiently managed housing system with more coordinated access
- more effective, efficient and responsive supportive housing programs
- a greater supply of affordable units provided by the private sector and private homeowners
- an increased number of financially viable non-profit/co-op housing providers and net new units created
- decreased spending on rent-geared-to-income administration

Investments and expected outcomes for each of the initiatives are detailed throughout this report.



AN APPROPRIATE AND SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY OF HOUSING

There is a clear shortage of affordable private and non-profit sector rental housing in Ontario and more opportunities for affordable home ownership are needed. In many communities, affordability is eroding due to increased housing and rental prices, lagging household incomes, and increased levels of household debt. Federal funding for social housing is scheduled to continue to decline, and the province and municipalities are limited in their ability to fill the gap.

More Affordable Market Housing

At present, municipalities have access to a range of existing land use planning and financial tools to encourage greater private sector participation in affordable market housing development.

Our government is helping the private sector and private homeowners to create more affordable housing units. We are proposing to expand and enhance the range of land use planning and municipal finance tools, and we'll make sure municipalities and developers know about the broad range of tools they have available to meet their local needs and circumstances.

Introducing Inclusionary Zoning

In high-growth municipalities where housing prices are becoming increasingly out of reach, more affordable housing units can be created through the development process.

Proposed enabling legislation would, if passed, give all municipalities the ability to require private developers to include affordable housing units in their development proposals.

Second Units

Second units – self-contained living units within detached and semi-detached houses, townhouses, and accessory structures – are widely recognized as one of the most affordable forms of rental housing. The government is introducing legislation and proposing regulatory amendments that would, if passed, reduce the complexity and cost of developing second units in new homes and provide more affordable housing options to Ontarians.

We are proposing to require municipalities to provide development charge exemptions for second units in new homes, and amend the Building Code standards to reduce unnecessary costs to building second units.

Encouraging Small Landlords to Provide Rental Housing

Small landlords face unique challenges and concerns – some of which can affect their ability to stay in the rental housing market. Ontario is responding to their concerns.

We will consult with stakeholders on potential amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 (RTA) to make it easier for landlords to conduct business while maintaining fairness to tenants.

Complementary Initiatives

Reviews of Municipal Act, 2001 and City of Toronto Act, 2006

The reviews focus on accountability and transparency, financial sustainability, and responsive and flexible service delivery. Possible amendments to regulations respecting municipal/city services corporations and Municipal Housing Capital Facilities Agreements could encourage the private sector to build more affordable housing.

Land Use Planning and Appeal System and Development Charges System Changes

The Smart Growth for Our Communities Act will give residents more say in how their communities grow, set out clearer rules for land use planning, give municipalities more control and stability over their planning documents, and make it easier to resolve disputes. This legislation will also enable municipalities to more effectively use development charges to pay for transit.

Co-ordinated Review of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, Greenbelt Plan, Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and Niagara Escarpment Plan

The Co-ordinated Review of Ontario's land use plans is an opportunity to see if more can be done to ensure that a range and mix of housing, including affordable housing, is planned in the right locations. Planning for Health, Prosperity and Growth in the Greater Golden Horseshoe: 2015-2041, the fall 2015 report of the Co-ordinated Review Advisory Panel, provided recommendations on how to amend and improve the plans.

Ontario's Condominium Act Review

The Protecting Condominium Owners Act, 2015 creates mandatory qualifications for condominium managers, addresses the needs of the fast-growing condominium community, and supports the long-term sustainability of condominium living.

Ontario's Building Code Amendments for Mid-Rise Wood Construction

Changes to the Building Code allow wood frame buildings to be built up to six storeys high, raising the limit from four storeys. The changes give builders a safe option that can reduce construction costs that in turn may make housing more affordable.

Cont'd on page 18

Green Investment Fund: Social Housing Retrofits

Ontario is investing \$92 million from the Green Investment Fund into social housing retrofits, which includes \$82 million in energy retrofits for high-rise social housing towers of 150 units or more, and \$10 million to help improve electricity efficiency in approximately 1,300 single social housing homes. Starting February 2016, eligible social housing Service Managers and Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services may submit expressions of interest to receive funding from the province to complete retrofits. The selected Service Managers will receive funds beginning in Spring 2016 to distribute to the most appropriate projects in their communities.

A Vibrant Non-Profit and Co-operative Housing Sector

Ontario's non-profit and co-operative housing sector provides roughly 20 per cent of all purpose-built rental accommodation in the province.

Our government is strengthening the sector's capacity and flexibility so it can continue to maintain, replace, and expand affordable housing options.

The steps we're taking to help the non-profit and co-operative housing sector to modernize and tap into its entrepreneurial spirit will help make it possible for the sector to operate in a more efficient and business-like manner, and maintain its social purpose. We are:

- developing voluntary accreditation standards for providers so they can better serve communities
- exploring changes to the Ontario Competitive Financing Renewal Process to give non-profit providers and municipalities more flexibility to access refinancing options for revitalization, repair or new construction activities
- proposing legislative changes that would provide more flexibility for Service Managers to make use of their building assets, for example, by clarifying that public housing providers can encourage mixed-income communities in their buildings

These initiatives will complement program modernization initiatives described later in this report.

AN EQUITABLE, PORTABLE SYSTEM OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ontario is taking a consistent approach to a modern form of housing assistance that better supports economic and social inclusion in Ontario.

Portable Housing Benefit Framework

At present, Ontarians needing assistance with rent have access to various programs – but many are on waiting lists for rent-geared-to-income (RGI) housing. RGI assistance allows an eligible family or individual to pay rent that is proportionate to their income.

There are several challenges with the current system. Not all people in need receive assistance, and people in similar situations may receive different levels of support. Because income changes can result in a reduction of RGI subsidy, the system can act as a disincentive for tenants who pursue employment opportunities to earn additional income, which can discourage tenants from becoming more economically self-sufficient. Further, since RGI assistance is generally tied to the physical unit, not the person, if a tenant moves out of social housing, they lose their assistance.

To better meet the needs of tenants and providers, Ontario is working with stakeholders on the development of a provincially-defined framework for an income-based portable housing benefit.

- **More choice:** People could retain financial assistance as their housing needs change – financial assistance would be separated from any physical unit or building. A portable benefit would give people more freedom to choose where they would like to live: closer to family, social support networks, schools and employment opportunities.
- **More flexibility:** Once developed, the portable housing benefit framework would allow Ontario's municipalities to provide more housing choices to more tenants and get them housed faster.
- **More consistency and certainty:** A portable housing benefit framework would help establish a simpler, more even form of housing benefit right across Ontario, while still ensuring flexibility to meet diverse local needs.

Ontario will explore opportunities to move to the use of a portable housing benefit over time.

Providing a Portable Housing Benefit - Example

Mario lives with his partner and one child in a one-bedroom apartment that his family can barely afford.

CURRENT STATE	FUTURE STATE
<p>Mario works a full-time minimum wage job in Toronto and cannot afford a larger apartment for his partner and young child.</p> <p>Mario's family has applied for a rent-geared-to-income (RGI) unit but has been on the social housing waiting list for over six years.</p>	<p>Mario is offered a \$350/month Portable Housing Benefit, which he accepts instead of waiting for an RGI unit.</p> <p>His Service Manager helps Mario find a 2-bedroom apartment.</p> <p>Because the apartment is close to childcare options, schools, work, and other amenities his family needs, Mario's family has more opportunities to thrive in their community.</p> <p>And as their child grows or job opportunities arise, the portable benefit will give them more flexibility and choices.</p>



Simplified Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) Calculations

Ontario needs a simpler and fairer way to determine household assistance.

Under the current system, calculating assistance can be a complex and confusing process, difficult for tenants to understand and for providers to administer.

Working with Service Managers, housing providers and tenant groups, Ontario will harmonize the definition of income so it is consistent with other income-tested programs.

This shift will eliminate a lot of paperwork. Instead of dealing with complex, time consuming rent calculations, Service Managers and housing providers will have more time to spend with their tenants to build strong, sustainable communities.

- Tenants would only have to declare income once a year, and they would no longer risk losing their rent-geared-to-income (RGI) assistance if the records they submitted were incomplete.

If a tenant's income decreases significantly over the year, they could ask for a recalculation of their rent. If a tenant's income increases, they would still be required to report this change. The government will minimize the impact of these changes on existing RGI tenants by gradually phasing existing tenants into the new, simplified income calculation.

Complementary Initiatives

Commission for the Review of Social Assistance in Ontario Report – Brighter Prospects: Transforming Social Assistance in Ontario (2012)

Following recommendations of the Lankin-Sheikh commission report, Ontario's 2013 Budget created a \$200 monthly earnings exemption for people who receive benefits from Ontario Works or the Ontario Disability Support Program.

Recommendations of the Drummond Report (2012)

The Drummond report recommends the Province “move aggressively towards a fully integrated benefits system that simplifies client access, improves client outcomes and improves fiscal sustainability through

Cont'd on page 22

greater program effectiveness and reduced administrative costs.” As part of the transformation of its benefits system, the government is evaluating opportunities to improve the delivery and administration of the broad spectrum of Ontario’s benefits system.

PEOPLE-CENTRED, EFFICIENT HOUSING PROGRAMS

Housing programs, services and supports should be based on an approach that is people-centered, partnership-based, locally driven and fiscally responsible – one that focuses on positive results for individuals and families.

Modernized Social Housing Programs

While the demand for subsidized housing in Ontario continues to grow, the current supply of social housing remains static and its condition deteriorates as federal funding for social housing programs steadily declines.

Ontario is committed to modernizing our social housing system. Today, the system spans a patchwork of 10 legacy programs, each developed separately between the 1950s and 1990s, and each with separate – and sometimes very rigid – sets of rules.

Ontarians need social housing programs that are strong and efficient, and focus on meeting peoples’ real needs. We are undertaking a significant transformation of social housing programs to meet current and future realities.

We will begin by introducing legislation that would propose reforms to allow Service Managers to use other forms of appropriate, municipally-funded housing assistance to contribute to their Service Level Standards. Service Managers would then be able to develop strategies to manage housing assets in a manner that better reflects their local needs and reduce wait lists.

In partnership with the housing sector and key partner ministries, we are developing a modernized framework for social housing aligned with the government’s focus on poverty reduction.

Complementary Initiatives

Ontario's Action Plan for Seniors (2013)

Ontario's Action Plan for Seniors is intended to help prepare for the economic and social opportunities and challenges of an aging population. The Action Plan focuses on active aging, improved safety and security and better access to high quality health care in the community. The Action Plan is designed to help ensure seniors and their caregivers have access to the services they need, when and where they need them.

Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative

Ontario consolidated five formerly separate homelessness-related programs into a single flexible outcome-focused program aimed at addressing, preventing, and reducing homelessness, aligning with overall modernization goals.

A Co-ordinated Access System

One size does not fit all when it comes to housing programs. People in different situations need different services and supports to make housing stability a reality for them. Ontario needs a co-ordinated system to help everyone access the specific services they need.

As part of the broader context of housing program transformation, Ontario will work with stakeholders to develop a provincial framework for housing access that improves co-ordination across systems (e.g. health, community services, children and youth) and provides better referrals for clients to find the right housing and supports. This important change will make it easier for Ontarians to access a range of housing options to improve housing stability.

A co-ordinated system aligns with the goal of an integrated and modernized housing system that achieves the best results. More flexibility will enable Service Managers to match people with housing needs to an appropriate form of assistance.

Enhancing Housing Options for Survivors of Domestic Violence

Access to housing should never be a barrier to escaping violence. The current Special Priority Policy (SPP) provides survivors of domestic violence with priority access to RGI housing and supports the government's Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment.

However, many SPP applicants wait six months or longer for housing, with few supports and limited ability to select where they will live. Ontario will work with stakeholders and Service Managers on co-ordinated and integrated policy and program solutions to improve the system, such as improving housing options available for women and their children to escape an unsafe and abusive situation.

The goal is to help women become independent from their abuser and become self-sufficient, and to help them and their children on the path to greater housing stability.

To support this goal, Ontario is investing more than \$17 million over three years to introduce a portable housing benefit targeted towards survivors of domestic violence, growing from \$2.5 million in 2016/17 to \$10 million in 2018/19. This program would eventually assist up to 3,000 survivors achieve housing stability.



The program will be piloted initially in three Service Manager areas and include an evaluation component to measure success. Based on the outcomes of the pilot, the province will consider ways to enhance the Special Priority Policy and expand the use of this approach.

Offering Greater Choice to Survivors of Domestic Violence – Example

Sandra is 35 and recently left an abusive partner, and is staying in an emergency shelter for survivors of domestic violence with her 7-year-old daughter, Abby.

CURRENT STATE	FUTURE STATE
<p>Sandra cannot afford a market rent unit and has applied for an RGI unit under the Special Priority Policy.</p> <p>Sandra and her daughter stay in the emergency shelter for six months until an RGI unit becomes available.</p> <p>Sandra is eventually approved for a RGI unit that is located on the other side of their city. The unit is far from family and friends and located outside the school catchment area.</p> <p>Without any other options, Sandra accepts the RGI unit and relocates, resulting in Abby changing schools mid-year.</p> <p>Without family and friends nearby, Sandra has limited opportunities for childcare for Abby after school.</p>	<p>After applying for assistance under the SPP, Sandra is offered the option of accepting a \$300/month Portable Housing Benefit instead of waiting for an RGI unit.</p> <p>With the assistance of a Housing Worker at the shelter, Sandra is able to find an apartment within 10 days.</p> <p>She chooses to live in an apartment located close to her family and friends, and within the catchment area of Abby's school.</p> <p>Both Sandra and Abby are able to begin to rebuild their lives and with a new apartment of their choosing, they are adjusting well to their new home.</p> <p>Local Service Managers and community social service organizations work together to provide the adequate supports Sandra and Abby need to remain safely housed.</p>

Creating More Supportive Housing Spaces to Help the People Who Need It Most

We are creating new supportive housing spaces to make progress towards our goal of ending homelessness. The government will invest up to \$100 million in operating funding over three years to provide housing allowances and support services to assist up to 4,000 families and individuals, focused on the four provincial priorities: youth, Indigenous people, chronic homelessness, and homelessness following transitions from provincially funded institutions and service systems. Over the long term, capital funding will support the construction of up to 1,500 new supportive housing units, with operating assistance eventually assisting up to 6,000 families and individuals. To read more about this initiative and our goal to end homelessness, see [page 31](#).

Complementary Initiatives

It's Never OK: An Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment (2015) (OWD) and The Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act, 2015

On March 8, 2016, Ontario passed legislation to amend six existing Acts; fulfilling commitments made in It's Never Okay, the government's groundbreaking action plan to stop sexual violence and harassment. The Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act, 2015 makes workplaces, campuses, rental housing and communities safer and more responsive to the needs of survivors and to complaints about sexual violence and harassment.

Transformation of the Supportive Housing System



Providing the right housing and supports is key in preventing and reducing homelessness and helping people achieve housing stability. Supportive housing assists a wide range of Ontarians with complex needs: seniors, people with physical and/or mental health issues, people with problematic substance use issues, survivors of domestic violence, at-risk youth, and others who may require additional supports.

Like social housing, Ontario's supportive housing programs have developed separately over 50 years to meet a variety of challenges at specific points in time. This has resulted in programs and services that were developed without a common vision or principles, and aspects of some programs are inconsistent with current best practices.

To address this, Ontario will develop a Supportive Housing Policy Framework that provides a common vision, principles and outcomes for supportive housing-related programs. The framework will be developed collaboratively by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Ministry Of Health and Long-Term Care, Ministry of Community and Social Services, and Ministry of Children and Youth Services, and through engagement with key stakeholders.

The new Supportive Housing Policy Framework will be guided by the following principles:

- programs, services and supports are client-centred and foster independence, respect, dignity and inclusion
- housing and supports foster client choice, portability as appropriate (follow people if they move), and flexibility to accommodate changing client needs
- system encourages local innovation to explore new approaches to better meet peoples' needs
- services are well co-ordinated across systems (housing, health, community services, and children and youth), with a common commitment to help people thrive
- programs and services are evidence based, committed to continuous improvement, and support the long-term sustainability of the system

Building on these principles, Ontario will work with stakeholders to:

- improve access to supportive housing programs and increase awareness about housing and homelessness programs and services
- develop a Best Practice Guide which, together with the proposed Supportive Housing Policy Framework, could assist the supportive housing sector bring existing programs up to best practice
- develop a plan to modernize the Homes for Special Care program toward evidence-based, best practice supportive housing with a focus on supporting independence and recovery
- develop common outcomes-focused performance measures to better understand the impact of supportive housing programs and to improve our ability to measure progress in meeting peoples' needs

Housing First and At Home / Chez Soi

The LTAHS Update reinforces the province's commitment to a Housing First approach to homelessness. A Housing First approach puts a primary focus on helping people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, to quickly access safe, affordable and stable housing, combining the immediate provision of permanent housing with wrap-around support services.

An evaluation of the Mental Health Commission of Canada's At Home/Chez Soi project, which examined using a Housing First model for housing people who were homeless and had a mental illness, found that for high-needs participants, every \$10 investment in housing assistance with individualized support services resulted in average savings of \$21.72 (in averted costs for hospitalizations and other services). Participants also spent fewer nights in shelters or at emergency departments.

Complementary Initiatives

Open Minds, Healthy Minds: Ontario's Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy

In 2011, with the support of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services and the Ministry of Education, the government released Ontario's Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy. Open Minds, Healthy Minds offers a comprehensive approach to transforming the mental health and addiction systems through a clear mission, forward-thinking vision and long-term strategies for change. The Strategy aims to strengthen services, create a responsive and integrated system and build awareness and capacity within communities. **A Mental Health and Addictions Leadership Advisory Council** has also been established to provide advice on the implementation of the Strategy.

Developmental Services Transformation

The vision of the developmental services transformation is to support adults with developmental disabilities to live as independently as possible in the community and to support their full inclusion in all aspects of society.

Cont'd on page 29

Patients First: A Roadmap to Strengthen Home and Community Care

In May 2015, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care released *Patients First: A Roadmap to Strengthen Home and Community Care*, a three-year plan to transform home and community care. The Roadmap outlines the path Ontario will follow to introduce greater consistency in care, a better understanding of the services available, more support for caregivers and, ultimately, better access to the right care for those who need it most to help them live independently at home, where they want to be.

DEVELOPING AN INDIGENOUS HOUSING STRATEGY

Culturally appropriate housing and homelessness services

Tackling the serious problem of inadequate housing and homelessness among First Nation, Métis and Inuit people in Ontario involves addressing a complex range of issues.

Indigenous peoples living off-reserve are significantly over-represented among the homeless population and have higher rates of core and deep core housing need compared to non- Indigenous Ontarians.

While developing the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy Update, we heard about the need to develop a specific housing strategy in partnership with Indigenous organizations to address the unique housing challenges and needs of First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples.

As part of prioritizing and setting targets to end homelessness in Ontario, the Expert Advisory Panel on Homelessness recommended that the province set four priorities to guide provincial action – including Indigenous homelessness. The province accepted the recommendation immediately, and has committed to an ongoing process of engagement with First Nation, Métis and Inuit organizations and communities to develop a dedicated Indigenous Housing Strategy for Ontario.

“The need for a First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) specific housing framework for Ontario is great. FNMI people experience higher rates of homelessness, core housing need, poverty, violence, children placed in care, disability, mental illness and addictions, and family breakdown that cannot be adequately addressed by non-Indigenous housing and service providers because FNMI peoples have experiences and cultural values that are unique, historical, and specific.” - Métis Nation of Ontario; Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres; and, Ontario Native Women’s Association⁵

⁵ Ontario Urban & Rural First Nations, Métis & Inuit Housing Policy Framework, Métis Nation of Ontario; Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres; and, Ontario Native Women’s Association (2013), p.25

Complementary Initiatives

Long-term Response to Violence Against Aboriginal Women

Ontario has committed \$100 million in new funding over three years to support implementation of the province's Long-Term Strategy to End Violence Against Indigenous Women. The strategy was developed in collaboration with Indigenous partners. It outlines actions to prevent violence against Indigenous women and reduce its impact on families and communities. It builds on the existing work of government, Indigenous partners and community organizations to raise awareness of and prevent violence, improve socio-economic conditions and heal deep wounds within Indigenous communities.

Aboriginal component of the Investment in Affordable Housing for Ontario Extension

The extension of this program offers an Off-Reserve Aboriginal Housing component delivered in partnership with two Aboriginal Program Administrators – Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services and Miziwe Biik Development Corporation.

ENDING HOMELESSNESS

Ontario's 2014 Poverty Reduction Strategy sets a bold, long-term goal to end homelessness.

A lot of great work is already underway in Ontario communities – championed by municipalities and community agencies across the province. The province wants to build on this work. This will require partnerships at all orders of government, and in the non-profit, co-operative and private sectors.

First Steps

In 2015, Ontario took an important step to help advance its long-term goal to end homelessness by establishing an Expert Advisory Panel on Homelessness. The Panel was established to provide expert advice to government on definitions, enumeration, setting a homelessness-related target and building capacity within the sector.

In October 2015, the Expert Panel released its report, *A Place to Call Home*. The report reflects the complexity of the issue and sets out a series of progressive recommendations. The province responded immediately with commitments to prevent, reduce and end homelessness and set the foundation for the long-term work to come:

- setting a target to end chronic homelessness in 10 years
- setting four priority areas to guide provincial action, focussing on
 - chronic homelessness
 - youth homelessness
 - Aboriginal homelessness
 - homelessness following transitions from provincially-funded institutions and service systems (such as hospitals, prisons, youth justice, violence against women shelters and the child welfare system)
- adopting the recommended definitions of homelessness and chronic homelessness, to build common language and understanding about the problem
- providing up to \$10 million over two years in targeted funding from the Local Poverty Reduction Fund to help prevent and end homelessness across the province

Definition of Homelessness

Homelessness describes the situation of a person or family without stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means, and ability of acquiring it.

Homelessness describes a range of housing circumstances, with people being without shelter at one end, and being insecurely housed at the other. That is, homelessness encompasses a range of physical living situations, organized here as a typology that includes:

Types of Homelessness

1. Unsheltered, or absolutely homeless and living on the streets or in places not intended for human habitation.
2. Emergency Sheltered, including those staying overnight in shelters for people who are homeless, as well as shelters for those impacted by violence.
3. Provisionally Accommodated, referring to those whose accommodation is temporary or lacks security of tenure.
4. At-risk-of-homelessness, refers to people who are not homeless, but whose current economic and/or housing situation is precarious and does not meet public health or safety standards.⁶

Federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy definition for chronic homelessness: People, often with disabling conditions, who are currently homeless and have been homeless for six months or more in the past year.⁷

Next Steps

Ending homelessness will require good data. Currently, there are no common, systematic approaches to measuring the number of homeless people in Ontario, and therefore no way to measure the success of overall efforts.

Our update to the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy advances the campaign to deal with homelessness:

- proposing legislative amendments to require Service Managers to conduct local enumeration of the homeless population

⁶ Place to Call Home: Report of The Expert Advisory Panel on Homelessness (2015). p.27

⁷ Employment and Social Development Canada, Homelessness Partnering Strategy (2014)

- enhancing the homelessness policy direction provided to Service Managers in the Ontario Housing Policy Statement
- committing to develop a provincial framework of indicators to advance the long-term goal of ending homelessness, including measuring progress on chronic homelessness, youth homelessness, homelessness amongst Indigenous peoples and homelessness following transitions from provincially-funded institutions and service systems

Ending Chronic Homelessness within 10 years



Chronic homelessness is an urgent problem and Ontario is taking comprehensive and aggressive measures to tackle it. A range of new investments and policy changes related to provincial priorities and local enumeration, in combination with related initiatives in this update and previously-announced commitments, have all laid the foundation to advance the goal of ending chronic homelessness within 10 years.

Increased Supportive Housing Funding – Four Priorities for Provincial Action on Homelessness

Ontario is committing up to \$100 million in operating funding for housing allowances and support services to assist up to 4,000 families and individuals in new supportive housing over the next three years. Over the long term, capital funding will support the construction of up to 1,500 new supportive housing units, with operating assistance eventually assisting up to 6,000 families and individuals.

This funding will support a range of innovative supportive housing options based on locally-developed solutions that align with the Supportive Housing Policy Framework. The goal is to create an innovative model for developing and bolstering best-practice supportive housing that responds to the changing needs of an individual. It will promote a more person-centred approach to supportive housing by providing a portable housing benefit in addition to funding and supports.

Increased Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative Funding

In 2014-15, Ontario invested almost \$294 million through the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative, which assisted approximately 30,500 families and individuals experiencing homelessness obtain housing and has helped approximately 104,400 households at risk of homelessness remain in their homes. Based on the success of this program, we are increasing funding for this program to help more people get housing and stay housed.

Ontario will increase the amount of funding dedicated towards the program by \$45 million over three years, beginning in 2017-18.

Complementary Initiatives

Local Poverty Reduction Fund

The Local Poverty Reduction Fund is a \$50 million, six-year initiative created to support innovative, community-driven projects that measurably improve the lives of those most affected by poverty. The fund provides resources to community organizations and municipalities to evaluate their poverty reduction initiatives, create partnerships and build a body of evidence of programs that work for Ontarians living in poverty.

Investment in Affordable Housing for Ontario Extension

The 2014 federal commitment to extend this program for five years continues the federal-provincial partnership to provide affordable housing in Ontario. The extension (\$800 million) provides an opportunity for the province to better align affordable housing and support services to meet local needs. There are four components to the program, including a homeownership component that provides down payment assistance for affordable homeownership units.

Cont'd on page 35

Corrections Transformation Strategy

Ontario is developing a Corrections Transformation Strategy that will include improved and co-ordinated release planning efforts for all inmates, and improved co-ordination with other ministries and community agencies.



Preventing Youth Homelessness

Homeless youth, and youth at risk of becoming homeless, have unique needs. Helping young people, including those who are Indigenous, LBTTQ, those leaving care and those with mental health and addictions issues, means developing distinct policies.

Ontario will engage with young people – including youth with lived experience of homelessness – to inform future actions.

As part of the plan to simplify the current rent-geared-to-income calculation process and to help youth remain housed while removing barriers to education and employment, Ontario will

exempt certain scholarships and bursaries from calculations for all post-secondary students.

Complementary Initiatives

Youth Homelessness Pilot

In May 2015, Ontario provided one-time grant funding of \$390,000 over two years to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health Foundation on behalf of the Toronto Homeless Youth Transitions Collaborative for the development of a strategy to support youth leaving homelessness. The research pilot project aims to improve the health and quality of life of 30 previously homeless youth.

Child and Family Services Act review; other legislative changes

Following the 2015 review of the Child and Family Services Act, Ontario's Ministry of Children and Youth Services is working to update and modernize the Act. The review of the Act focused on two areas: improving outcomes for children and youth, and modernizing and clarifying the language of the Act.

Involvement in child welfare, youth justice and mental health systems significantly increases the risk of a youth becoming homeless. The Aboriginal Children and Youth Strategy will guide the multi-year cross-ministry transformation of the system of services for Aboriginal children and youth in Ontario, including mental health, suicide prevention, child welfare and youth justice.

Enhanced Ontario Youth Action Plan and Stepping Up: A Strategic Framework to Help Ontario's Youth Succeed

In June 2015, Ontario introduced the enhanced Ontario Youth Action Plan. The plan will expand the impact of the Ontario government's efforts to prevent youth violence. It will focus government funding on those youth and communities most in need of support.

The province launched Stepping Up in 2013 as a guide for decision-making, program planning and partnerships so everyone involved in supporting youth between 12 and 25, can work together through a common, overall approach in support of Ontario youth.

Better Results for Transitional Housing

Ontario's transitional housing providers need to be able to admit and serve clients in the greatest need of support, while still protecting client rights and helping them successfully transition to independent living.

Ontario will consult with stakeholders on amending the Residential Tenancies Act to facilitate transitional and supportive housing.

Local Enumeration and Data Collection

To obtain a picture of homelessness needs in local communities, Ontario is taking a provincewide approach to data collection and measurement. Ontario's 47 Service Managers will conduct local enumeration to count people who are homeless using a menu of standardized options, some of which are already in use throughout the province. Enumeration will improve data collection, will lead to a better understanding of community homelessness trends over time, and provide a greater evidence base for decision making, future target setting and reporting on progress.

Ontario has provided \$50,000 to support the 20,000 Homes Campaign, organized by the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, and we are endorsing the Point-in-Time counts undertaken through the federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy.

Capacity Building

Working with Service Managers, different orders of government and sector organizations, our government will play a leadership role in supporting evidence-based approaches to preventing and ending homelessness at the local level.

Ontario is building an evidence-informed system that has the capacity to respond effectively to our changing needs:

- developing a framework for sharing research and best practices regarding homelessness services
- promoting cultural sensitivity and awareness across service managers and housing providers
- hosting a Homelessness Summit to build capacity, foster local dialogue and information sharing

ACHIEVING AN EVIDENCE-INFORMED SYSTEM

“As the steward of Ontario’s housing system, the Ontario Government must lead the creation of a provincial data collection strategy and housing measures. A common data set with defined standards and definitions is crucial for evidence-based decision-making. Further, while we believe that the Province must take a leadership role in the creation of sector research, it is important that the data collected be publicly accessible to support the work of sector stakeholders, researchers and others.” – Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association (ONPHA)⁸

Getting good housing results for Ontario depends on good data.

In 2015, Ontario developed a Housing and Homelessness Data Strategy to build an evidence-informed system to collect, manage, access and use housing and homelessness data.

The Data Strategy will play an important role in informing decision-making, policy development, the delivery of programs, and in measuring performance and outcomes. We will continue to work collaboratively with sector partners and stakeholders, and use our enhanced data to respond effectively to changing needs and support the goals of the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy Update, including the goal of ending homelessness.

Innovation, Evidence and Capacity Building Fund

The ability to achieve our goals is dependent on the ability of Service Managers, as well as housing and service providers, to manage change, develop new skills and take advantage of new opportunities.

Achieving Ontario’s vision for housing and reaching the goal of ending chronic homelessness within 10 years are dependent on the capacity of Service Managers, municipalities, housing providers and homelessness service providers to effectively manage their activities, assets and resources to meet needs.

⁸ ONPHA, p.23

To support this work, Ontario will make available up to \$1 million per year to create an Innovation, Evidence and Capacity Building Fund to support research, evaluation and capacity building initiatives across key themes:

- a sustainable supply of housing stock (public and private)
- a fair system of housing assistance
- co-ordinated and accessible support services
- the goal of ending homelessness
- an Indigenous housing strategy
- effective use of evidence and best practices to inform policy and program development and define and measure outcomes

IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY

This update of Ontario's Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy continues the long-term transformation of Ontario's housing and homelessness prevention system.

The bold initiatives contained in the update will be developed through consultation and collaboration with our partners, and implemented in a progressive, phased-in approach.

Near-Term Milestones

Our first step will focus on final technical consultations on the wide range of short-term legislative and regulatory initiatives leading to the introduction of proposed legislation in 2016.

We will consult with stakeholders on amendments to the Planning Act, the Building Code, the Development Charges Act, the Residential Tenancies Act, the Housing Services Act, and regulations under the City of Toronto Act and the Municipal Act, in order to:

- create an enabling framework to allow municipalities to implement inclusionary zoning
- increase the supply of second suites
- give municipalities more flexibility to finance affordable housing projects
- improve the delivery and administration of social housing
- require homeless population enumeration by Service Managers

We will strike a Steering Committee in partnership with Service Managers and other partners to begin the process of turning social housing into a modern, outcome-based system and program framework.

We will establish working groups under the Steering Committee to provide initial recommendations and advice to government regarding:

- a Portable Housing Benefit Framework
- enhancing housing options for survivors of domestic violence
- improvement to access and co-ordination across systems (e.g. health, community services, children and youth) so that eligible applicants can apply easily for other programs, services and supports when they apply for social and affordable housing
- voluntary accreditation standards for non-profit and co-operative housing providers

We will work with stakeholders to develop:

- a Supportive Housing Policy Framework and Best Practice Guide
- better client access systems and information on programs and services
- a plan to modernize the Homes for Special Care program to better meet the needs of residents
- a set of common outcomes-focused performance measures

We will continue sustained engagement with First Nation, Métis and Inuit partners with the goal of developing an Indigenous Housing Strategy.

We will continue to implement the recommendations of the Expert Advisory Panel on Homelessness and work with Service Managers to develop a menu of enumeration methods.

Working with local communities, we will develop a framework to share research and best practices regarding homelessness, highlighted by a Homelessness Summit hosted by the Ontario government in 2016.

The Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy Update sets Ontario on the path to future sustainable progress in tackling housing and homelessness challenges.

The strategy encompasses a broad and ambitious range of transformational measures, and brings us closer to realizing our vision for an affordable, suitable, and adequate home for every person in Ontario.

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

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