

The Alliance to End Homelessness

www.endhomelessnessottawa.ca

Submission to 2009 Consultations on Federal Housing and Homelessness Investments *Moving Forward on Housing and Homelessness, Oct. 15, 2009*

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PREAMBLE

Alliance to End Homelessness (ATEH) appreciates the opportunity to bring its perspective to this consultation process initiated by the Homelessness Partnering Secretariat, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.

ATEH recognizes that the current efforts of the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) are a strong and highly valued basis for significant policy changes that can affect historical partnerships with our community and others across Canada in all our efforts to end homelessness. Also recognized is the importance of a federal role in housing through Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation and programs such as the Affordable Housing Initiative (AHI) and the renovation programs for low-income households have a significant role in ending homelessness in Canada.

With close to 70 different agencies as members, ATEH is motivated by their direct experience of the long standing affordable housing crisis in Ottawa that has contributed to ever growing numbers of homeless individuals and families in our community. To that end our submission addresses the federal role in both homelessness and affordable housing.

For the last five years ATEH has gathered housing and homelessness data and reports on it in its *Report Card on Ending Homelessness in Ottawa*. ATEH highly values the use of rigorous data in its activities and recommendations. The data unequivocally demonstrate why Canada needs a comprehensive, coordinated and fully funded housing strategy (*see APPENDIX 1 for five-year data and charts*). This data shows that current policies allow communities to continue to maintain efforts to assist homeless people but do not address the conditions creating homelessness nor allow for an adequate community response to current need.

ATEH's analysis is data-based. There were 7,045 homeless people in Ottawa's shelters in 2008, the highest in five years, but these were not the same individuals as the 6,572 homeless people in 2007.

Every year new people become homeless due to the lack of new affordable housing stock and high market rents combined with low incomes. The result is that each year our member agencies assist three groups of homeless individuals and families –

- 1. Homeless for the first time.**
- 2. Repeat episodes of being homeless** as circumstances deteriorate due to job loss, reduced working hours, rent increases, unexpected expenses like long illnesses or funerals.
- 3. Chronically homeless and in need of supports** to be housed successfully.

79% of the 7,045 people, or 5,575 individuals, who stayed in an Ottawa emergency shelter in 2008, eventually found housing, either on their own or with the assistance of housing support staff (work that HPI program funding contributes to). It is important to remember that staying in a shelter is the end point of a difficult and devastating crisis for individuals and all family members.

Among the total homeless population in 2008 were 1,179 children under 16 and 1,149 parents and children over 16 who stayed in the family emergency shelters or motels for an average of 53 days, seven days more than in 2007. It is no surprise that even when housed returning to stable circumstances is seldom immediately possible when lives have been this disrupted. Finding permanent affordable and appropriate housing remains the biggest challenge of all.

In 2008, some 1,116 renter households were at the final stage in the eviction process in Ottawa when they received help by 'Housing Loss Prevention' (HPL) workers (efforts contributed to by HPS program funding); these are in addition to the 7,045 individuals who stayed in an emergency shelter. The final-stage eviction numbers are for households so this could mean 2,250 to 3,500 individuals at the brink of becoming homeless in just this one community.

- In total, HPL work in 2008 in Ottawa assisted almost 11,000 renter households, potentially 33,000 individuals (three people in the average Canadian family).
- *The number of shelter users is going up not down even though this valuable homelessness prevention work is undertaken.*
- The potential for risk in Canada is considerable if the government stalls at maintaining the status quo with very slow growth in new affordable housing stock delivered with federal involvement while moving slowly backwards in homelessness funding with virtually no growth over 10 years of HPS funding.

21% or 1,470 people were chronically homeless in 2008 due to insufficient *supportive housing* in Ottawa, based on the City of Ottawa's criteria of a person spending more than 60 cumulative nights in the past year in an emergency shelter and/or on the street who has reached the point where he/she lacks the physical or mental health, the skills or income to access and maintain housing (1073 adult male, 277 adult female, 52 young men and 68 young women).

In response to demonstrated need, only 134 units of new affordable housing were added in 2008.

At that rate it will take 72 years to provide affordable, appropriate homes for the 9,692 households on Ottawa's 'Social Housing Registry'. The 'Supportive Housing Network's' reported *no new supportive units* to respond to the 2,000 individuals on their waiting list.

The Ottawa community faces a situation that is harsher and more challenging than ever (see *APPENDIX 2 for data/updates as of Sept. 2009*). The HPS Consultation on what to do from 2011-2014 is appreciated as an opportunity to reinforce what communities need from their federal government. Our members are long past blaming governments or political parties.

A new National Housing Strategy and the existing Homelessness Partnering Strategy need to be de-politicized so that major changes or delays do not happen with changes in governments! The Alliance to End Homelessness is looking to both the immediate future as well as to the longer term for positive changes and substantive federal leadership.

Recommendations to the Government of Canada
From The Alliance to End Homelessness
Improving current approaches to housing and homelessness
to better meet the needs of Canadians

In considering the consultation's scope, ATEH looked first to its policy recommendations to the federal government in its submission to the Standing Committee on Finance Pre-Budget Consultation.

1. **Federal action to put in place a new National Housing Strategy that enshrines housing as a human right for everyone.** The consequences of Canada's lack of a national strategy is borne out by Ottawa's increasing homeless rate even as Statistics Canada shows a 10.4% increase in the combined housing investments by all orders of government.

Only a strong and direct federal role can ensure equal access to affordable housing for all people in Canada no matter their province. The federal government will need to continue its commitment to provision of emergency shelter and services for homeless people through partnership and based on local needs; and must recognise that the need for these programs will diminish quite gradually until the strategy addresses backlogs in the amount of affordable and supportive housing stock and in the amount of mental health and addictions services.

2. **Revamping and better funding of the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) will allow the federal government to invest in developing significantly more new affordable housing** for the majority of those who experience homelessness and will ensure prosperity and a sustainable future for everyone in Canada. ATEH proposes that the federal government also re-invest in affordable housing all surpluses created as the federal portion of the existing social housing operating agreements expire over the next 25 years as a cost-effective method.
3. **Increased and ongoing funding of the federal homelessness and housing programs, such as those in the Homelessness Partnering Secretariat need to be included in the Strategy.**
4. Also ATEH believes that the Strategy will require **improvements in the access to and the benefit rates of national income support programs to be successful** to assist people on low incomes in Ottawa (*Employment Insurance, Canadian Pension Plan, Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement*).
5. **Our experience with federal responses such as 'Stimulus measures' have reinforced the need for effective** federal guidelines for all affordable housing and homelessness funding, including any short-term funding such as the current '*Stimulus*' approach, to include local community determination of target populations to assist with meeting needs, as determined through local planning processes (i.e. local community action plans), of all people in a community who may be homeless or living on very low incomes and at risk of losing their homes. **These approaches also need to include the provision of adequate resources/support for project development and adequate lead-in and completion timelines for community groups and agencies** who cannot rely on having new projects "in the works" or "shovel-ready" if or until opportunities arise.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON THE CONSULTATION THEMES

The Alliance to End Homelessness (ATEH) contends that current federal policies and priorities do not meet the current reality experienced in our community and that addressing that reality is not feasible without growth in funding or the development of a new comprehensive framework embedded in a National Housing Strategy.

Communities are deeply aware of their own stress points or 'gaps' and bring them forward time and time again when they speak with politicians or participate in program evaluations and consultations; to a great extent housing and services gaps are now obvious to many in the general population!

ATEH also believes that decisions on the specific options for allocating and targeting homelessness and housing funding need to take place at the local level within the context of community-based decision processes such as priority setting or planning.

- ATEH recognizes that a mix of responses to end and prevent homelessness is necessary. In some communities the emphasis may be on increasing stable and affordable housing stock combined with housing loss prevention services as the best response for the majority of those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Long-term supportive housing or shorter term transitional housing with supports may be a secondary but still essential priority. Attending to assisting chronic homeless individuals or to increasing affordable housing stock or to improving low income levels are each part of the solution. Locally-determined approaches position communities to respond creatively and quickly to current needs and make the most effective and prudent use of public funds
- Communities need the Government of Canada to create permanency and stability in local efforts to address homelessness and the development of affordable housing.
- Clearly each community's success in addressing homelessness and in developing affordable and appropriate housing is dependent on much improved funding envelopes, especially so that longer-term initiatives can be planned within reasonable timelines for RFP's.

An important premise for a new strategy is the recognition of the essential role over the medium term of providing emergency shelter and services for homeless people.

- The need for emergency responses will only diminish gradually until communities have been able to address backlogs in the amount of affordable and supportive housing stock and in the amount of support services, especially mental health and addictions services.
- ATEH asserts that being homeless should not be, or be perceived to be, accepted by the Government of Canada as a 'normal' alternative among the various housing arrangements available to people in Canada. Stable, affordable and appropriate housing is not just a big part of the solution to homelessness; it is always a fundamental component of successful outcomes for federal expenditures.
- Without stable, affordable and appropriate housing other endeavors, services or interventions such as education, employment, training, life skills development, and treatment

for substance abuse or mental health issues will not work long term. Nor should the devastating impact of homelessness on individuals, families and communities should not be minimized or downplayed by subsuming housing and homeless programs in other departments or programs.

- Federal policies need to be reviewed to ensure conflicting requirements do not create unnecessary bureaucracy for communities to navigate. Streamlining bureaucratic requirements aligned within a National Housing Strategy will increase time and resources spent on direct service and program delivery.
- ATEH highly values the contribution of academic research, especially when it is undertaken with community partners, but both the federal government and local communities will benefit from a separate funding stream for research so that academics are not competing with service providers.
- ATEH recommends mandating a requirement of structural coordination across government departments or silos to improve program delivery; the diversity of contributing factors and solutions to ending homelessness or indeed ending poverty in Canada require high levels of collaboration and purpose. Without a National Housing Strategy and without adequate funding, efforts to mobilize stakeholders, including other orders of government, or to foster partnerships, develop community-based planning and decision-making structures and collaborate with other federal departments can be undermined.

Measuring and demonstrating success are critical to effective stewardship of public funds and should be part of a National Housing Strategy. Efforts in this area also contribute to effective communication between orders of government, between communities and their governments and within communities.

- ATEH's experience producing its annual community Report Card on Ending Homelessness demonstrates the communication and public education value of using of research and data originally gathered to fulfill federal reporting functions; the report card shares several types of federal data including statistics on emergency shelter use gathered with the federal Homeless Individuals and Families Information System.
- In general we advise measuring all aspects of housing need in Canada, including, but not limited to, supply and affordability; setting realistic and practical national targets and timelines to meet the needs of those who are not adequately housed.
- It will be extremely important to purposefully engage all partners including all orders of government, the non-profit sector including the housing and homelessness sectors, and private sectors, Aboriginal groups and others) in a coordinated set of initiatives, including adequate funding, effective regulations, and other programs and services. Thus all efforts should be regularly monitored and evaluated as initiatives roll-out, and the Government of Canada should be publicly accountable for the results.
- A new National Housing Strategy should be built on a commitment to equity across the country, to roles for each order of government and for stakeholders in local communities and to both transfers and dedicated, direct federal funding to underwrite that principle of fairness.

ATEH is mindful that over the last 15 years governments have looked to the private sector for housing solutions. It is time to recognize that approach failed.

- It is now ATEH's belief that partnerships with private sector will happen only if provinces and municipal governments use regulations to require inclusive housing and if they use public funds to subsidize business involvement.
- In Ottawa, there was 0% growth in apartment housing starts between August 2009 and August 2008. At this time, the homelessness sector in this community plays a lead role in new housing for low income people through its development of supportive housing.

ATEH recognizes the value and significant contributions of existing federal housing and homelessness programs, established by this and the previous government. Unfortunately the scope of these efforts and the national leadership to assure success and equity across the country are lacking.

- In ATEH's assessment the Homeless Partnering Initiative has worked particularly well BECAUSE these funds do not require matched contributions; the result has been successful and innovative programs that have put communities in position to quickly engage other partners, including provincial governments.
- In terms of program design it seems that the Community Entity Model is basically working well and may help assure community-based decisions. The challenge is to structure any model carefully to avoid municipal direction in allocating program funding and to assure decisions and approaches have input from the community including groups that are not currently receiving federal funding. In a climate where need is far greater than the available funding, staff may be influenced by protocols and obligations outside of the broader non-governmental community's vision and priorities.
- Matched funding approaches seem to be useful only in specific time-limited situations such as the current Stimulus funding which was met with considerable buy-in by provincial governments. Generally though there has not been consistent, and thus fair, buy-in by all provinces. Variations in per capita spending on housing provide ample evidence, as those of us in Ontario know too well.
- ATEH believes that an effective National Housing Strategy will include and strengthen the current housing programs and the existing homelessness programs, including the seven funding streams – 61 Designated Communities; Outreach Communities; Aboriginal Communities; Federal Horizontal Pilot Projects; Homelessness Knowledge Development; Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS); and Surplus Federal Real Property for Homelessness Initiative (SFRPHI).
- Closer alignment between homelessness and housing programs and departments will be instrumental to a successful national strategy particularly if that informs adjustments in CMHC's targets and expenditures are combined with a commitment to re-invest all CMHC surpluses back into affordable housing.

ATEH expects the Federal Government to provide decisive leadership in setting a national agenda, formalized in an adequately funded National Housing Strategy and to ensure that everyone living in Canada has an affordable and appropriate home.

Funding without a strategy is disconnected and subjective. It is time to de-politicize the right of Canadians to adequate housing.

At this point in time, such a strategy also means taking the lead in ending homelessness and giving priority to addressing the failure to provide sufficient housing or funding for housing stock for those on living on low incomes in Canada.

ATEH believes Canada needs the federal government to take the lead in ending homelessness and in making sure everyone has an affordable and appropriate home. Our members recognizes the value in exploring ways to revise the current system to improve collaboration and cooperation between various orders of government and government departments to make the delivery of funding, programs and services more efficient and effective.

Submitted by

Marion Wright, Chair

Perry Rowe, Past Chair

Alliance to End Homelessness, October 2009

APPENDICES FOLLOW

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please contact

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Report Card on Ending Homelessness in Ottawa

5 YEAR TREND DATA The Alliance to End Homelessness

| HOUSING | | | | | | |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | % diff |
| Pre-1995 social housing units (total stock) | 22,400 | 22,400 | 22,400 | 22,400 | 22,400 | 0.0% |
| Post-2000 affordable units (total stock) (i.e., Action Ottawa & NHI units) | 509 | 521 | 760 | 833 | 967 | 16.1% |
| Rent supplements (City of Ottawa & CMHA) | 3,000 | 3,085 | 3,198 | 3,200 | 3,200 | 0.0% |
| Supportive housing places | 665 | 863 | 865 | 885 | 915 | 3.4% |
| Waiting Lists | | | | | | |
| Households on social housing waiting list | 10,500 | 9,914 | 10,055 | 9,370 | 9,692 | 3.4% |
| Supportive housing waiting list | 2,000 | 2,214 | 2,630 | 2,000 | 2,660 | 33.0% |
| Waiting Lists | | | | | | |
| Rental vacancy rate | 3.9% | 3.3% | 2.3% | 2.3% | 1.4% | n/a |
| Average rent for a 1-bedroom apartment | \$771 | \$762 | \$774 | \$798 | \$827 | 3.6% |
| INCOME | | | | | | |
| Ontario Works for a single person | \$520 | \$536 | \$548 | \$560 | \$572 | 2.1% |
| ODSP Assistance for a Single Person | \$930 | \$959 | \$979 | \$999 | \$1,020 | 2.1% |
| Average monthly # of Ontario Works cases | 17,879 | 17,552 | 16,541 | 15,296 | 14,329 | -6.3% |
| Minimum Wage | \$7.15 | \$7.45 | \$7.75 | \$8.00 | \$8.75 | 9.4% |
| Increase in Consumer Price Index | 1.8% | 2.3% | 1.1% | 2.0% | 1.7% | n/a |
| HOMELESSNESS | | | | | | |
| # of times shelter beds were used | 322,626 | 309,353 | 322,639 | 341,212 | 386,506 | 13.3% |
| # of individuals in an emergency shelter | 6,534 | 6,733 | 6,630 | 6,572 | 7,045 | 7.2% |
| Single men | 3,130 | 3,169 | 3,235 | 3,249 | 3,325 | 2.3% |
| Single women | 877 | 910 | 1,042 | 960 | 928 | -3.3% |
| Youth | 361 | 385 | 430 | 365 | 464 | 27.1% |
| Families | 635 | 672 | 619 | 643 | 747 | 16.2% |
| <i>Children</i> | 801 | 759 | 853 | 907 | 1,179 | 30.0% |
| Adults | 1,365 | 1,510 | 1,070 | 1,091 | 1,149 | 5.3% |
| LENGTH OF SHELTER STAY | | | | | | |
| Average length of stay in shelters (days) | 45 | 44 | 40 | 46 | 51 | 10.9% |
| Single men | 49 | 48 | 47 | 48 | 48 | 0.0% |
| Single women | 41 | 42 | 37 | 43 | 46 | 7.0% |
| Youth | 25 | 19 | 17 | 27 | 46 | 70.4% |
| Families | 49 | 40 | 34 | 46 | 53 | 15.2% |

Note –

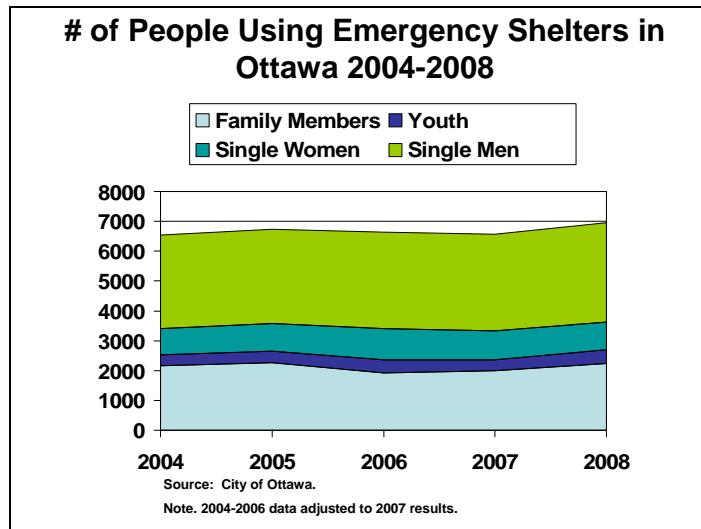
2007 & 2008 data on homelessness indicators, as provided by the City of Ottawa (v.5).

2004-2006 data on homelessness indicators represents adjusted numbers from previous report cards calculated from differences in 2007 numbers provided by the City of Ottawa (v.5).

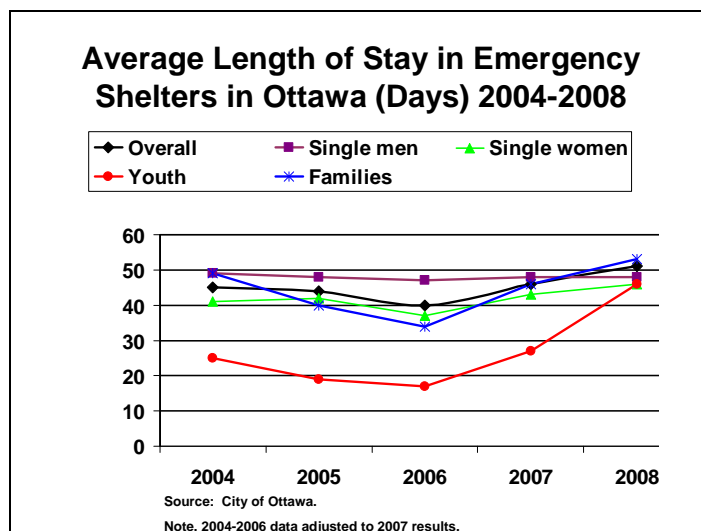
5 Year Trend Graphs: Homelessness in Ottawa, 2004-2008

Report Card on Ending Homelessness in Ottawa, Alliance to End Homelessness

There has been an increase in number of individuals using shelters from 2007 to 2008 to 7,045, the highest total to date in the five years of collecting data, due especially to families. It was relatively stable from 2004-2007, ranging from 6,500 to just over 6,700.

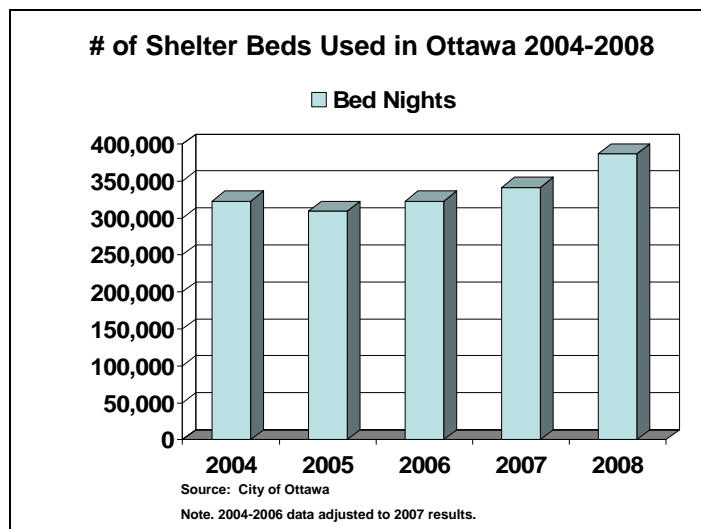


The average length of stay in shelters from 2004 to 2008 shows initial decreases from 2004 to 2006 followed by increases from 2006 to 2008 to the point that the shelter stay in 2008 is the highest of the five-year period on which we have data.



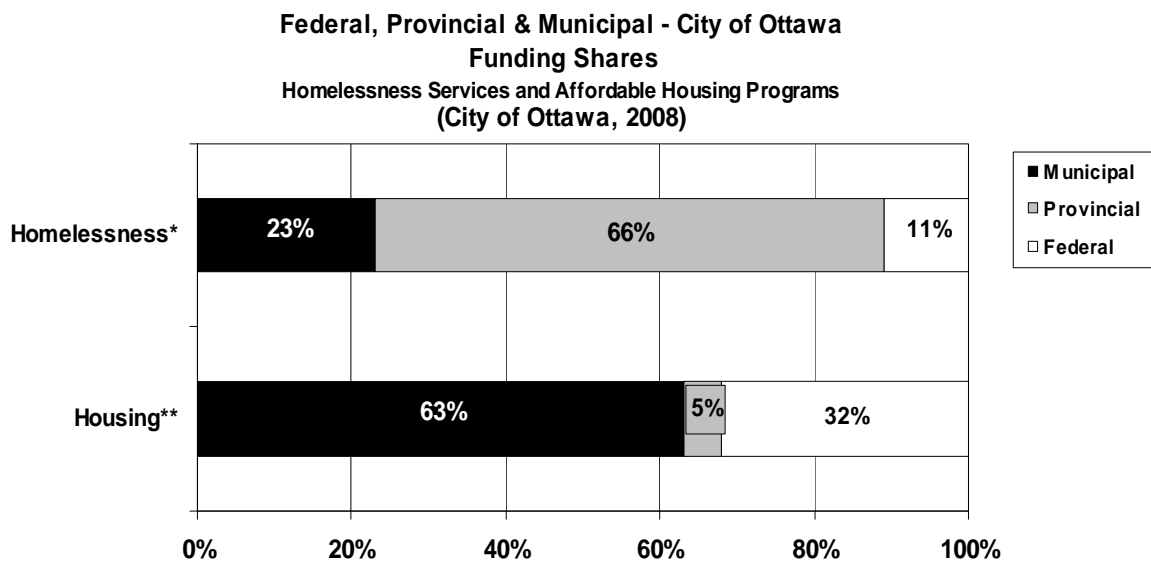
The total number of shelter beds used reflects a combination of the number of different individuals using shelter and the average length of stay. From 2004-2006 there was relative stability followed by increases in 2007 and 2008.

Over the five year period the greatest use was in 2008, reflecting the need for more than 1000 beds per night (only 966 beds are available).



BACKGROUNDER: Affordable Housing in Ottawa, Sept. 2009 Update

In our community, the municipal government contributes the lion’s share to affordable housing. In 2008, the City contributed 63% of the affordable housing money via incentives to non profit and other groups and 23% of the homelessness funding. The Federal government contributed 11% of the homelessness funding and 32% of the money spent on affordable housing in Ottawa. *The Province contributed only 5% of affordable housing and 66% of homelessness funding.* Housing funds covered new affordable housing, the homeownership down payment program and operating subsidies for 56 housing providers, including rent subsidies. People who are homeless or at risk of homelessness often cannot afford housing on the open market; they may be dependent on income support programs such as Ontario Works (OW) or the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) or work at low or minimum wage jobs that are often not full-time.



- * **Homelessness:** includes emergency shelter per diems, homelessness services (incl. drop-ins and housing loss prevention), Rent Bank, and domiciliary hostels.
- ** **Housing:** includes new affordable housing, homeownership down payment program, and operating subsidies for 56 housing providers (incl. rent subsidies).

0% growth in apartment starts in Ottawa CMA (Aug 2009 compared to Aug 2008, CMHC)

| CMHC Housing Starts for Ottawa CMA Released Sept. 9, 2009 | | | | | | |
|---|---------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|
| | Aug-08 | Aug-09 | % Change | YTD 08 | YTD 09 | % Change |
| Single-Detached | 288 | 222 | -22.9% | 1,922 | 1,406 | -26.8% |
| Multi-Family | 351 | 200 | -43.0% | 2,643 | 1,703 | -35.6% |
| Semi-Detached | 14 | 20 | 42.9% | 122 | 151 | 23.8% |
| Row House | 196 | 180 | -8.2% | 1,452 | 985 | -32.2% |
| Apartment | 141 | 0 | -100.0% | 1,069 | 567 | -47.0% |
| Total | 639 | 422 | -34.0% | 4,565 | 3,109 | -31.9% |

Breakdown by owner occupied and rental

| | Homeowner | | | | Rental | | | Condo | | Total |
|----------|-----------|------|------|-----|--------|-----|-----|-------|-----|-------|
| | Single | Semi | Row | Apt | Semi | Row | Apt | Row | Apt | |
| Aug-08 | 288 | 14 | 196 | | | | 9 | | 132 | 639 |
| Aug-09 | 222 | 20 | 180 | | | | | | | 422 |
| 2008 YTD | 1922 | 122 | 1452 | 16 | 0 | 0 | 142 | 0 | 911 | 4565 |
| 2009 YTD | 1406 | 149 | 982 | 18 | 2 | 3 | 65 | 0 | 484 | 3109 |

NB: The latest CMHC Rental Market Report for Ottawa (2008, table 4.3.2) shows that rental condominium apartments in Ottawa are about 19.1% of the total universe.”

Average Apartment Rents in Ottawa, April 2009 (CMHC Rental Market Survey)

| Apartment unit size | Average apt. rent April 2008 | Average apt. rent April 2009 | # Vacant private apartments April 2009 | Total # apartments in Ottawa is 60,841 |
|---------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|--|--|
| Bachelor | 666 | 669 | 143 | 5,940 |
| One bedroom | 819 | 817 | 764 | 30,383 |
| Two Bedroom | 957 | 995 | 633 | 22,178 |
| Three bedroom | 1,116 | 1,213 | Data not available | 2,339 |

MORE on housing:

- **75.2% of Ottawa’s low-income renters in 2005 were in core housing need* – the worst record of any Census Metropolitan Areas in Canada (Toronto = 74.3%, Vancouver = 69.7%, Calgary = Gatineau = 49.3%, 43.7%)** (Living in housing does not meet one or more of the adequacy, suitability or affordability standards and households spend 30% or more of its before-tax income to pay the median rent of alternative local market housing that meets all three standards. (CMHC Research Highlight: *Low-income Urban Household Not In Core Housing Need, March 2009, Socio-economic Series 09-001*)
- **Ottawa has seen only 967 additional units since 2001**, for people on low incomes built through programs such as the Action Ottawa program and the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program. **134 units were built during 2008 and 74 units were built in 2007.** The City of Ottawa’s target is 500 new units annually.
- **There were 9,692 households on the social housing registry in 2008 and in 2007 9,370 households.** *22,400 units of Social Housing in projects were built prior to 1995.*
- **There are 915 spaces of supportive housing** provided by members of the Supportive Housing Network and **2,600 households** are on the supportive housing waiting list at the end of 2008
- **Children and Youth** – In the spring of 2005, the results of a housing checkup demonstrated that over 50% of the families who participated lived in housing need. This survey into the housing needs of children and youth accessing emergency health services at the Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) conducted in 2005 made clear that families need access to affordable, suitable, adequate housing to optimize the health and wellbeing of children and youth.
 - In 2008, **10,899 households at risk of losing their housing** received housing loss prevention assistance and among those **1,116 households were at the final stage of eviction.**
- **LEBRETON FLATS –LeBreton Flats land was expropriated by the National Capital Commission in the 1960s. 35 years later, not one single unit of affordable housing has been built on the expropriated land.** In 2006, the NCC contracted with Claridge Homes to re-develop LeBreton Flats first phase and LeBreton Flats Housing Task Force determined that the plan would not result units that would be truly affordable for those on very limited incomes.

- **Stable housing is a precondition for economic stability in Ottawa. Unfortunately, Ontario has the worst record among all the provinces in terms of affordable housing investments. In the fiscal year ending March 31, 2009, Ontario spent \$64 per capita on affordable housing, about half the provincial average of \$115 per person** (source: Wellesley Institute calculation based on Statistics Canada Government Revenue and Expenditures database). At the head of the provincial pack are Saskatchewan (\$214 per capita – almost three and one-half times greater than Ontario), Nova Scotia (\$175) and Alberta (\$154). On March 12, 2009, the Alberta government announced a \$3.2 billion, 10-year housing plan. Ontario’s housing plan is not expected until late 2010 or 2011.

2008 HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS & FAMILIES IN OTTAWA

- **7,045 homeless people stayed in an emergency shelters at some time in 2008** (473 more than 2007)
 - **1,179 children under 16 in 2008 in 747 families stayed in shelters** in 2008 (compared to 907 children in 643 families in 2007); **464 youth, 928 single women and 3,325 single men**
 - **The average length of stay in a shelter was 51 days in 2008** (10% increase over 46 days in 2007).
 - **Families stayed an average of 53 days** (15% increase over 2007)
 - Youth stayed an average of 46 days (70% increase over 2007)
 - Single women stayed an average 46 days (7% increase over 2007)
 - Single men stayed an average 48 days (same rate as 2007)
- **An average of 1059 people daily stayed in Ottawa shelters in 2008** compared to 935 in 2007. There was a **13%** increase in the times shelter beds were used in 2008 to 386,506 from 341,212 in 2007. *(There are 966 shelter beds in Ottawa – 525 beds for single men, 95 beds for single women, 36 for youth, 260 beds for families, 55 beds for mixed gender, and 140 beds for overflow.)*
- **79% or 5,575 people were homeless for less than 60 days in 2008.** Many of these individuals and families in Ottawa did eventually find housing, either on their own or with the assistance of housing support staff. The problem our community faces is that **each year new people become homeless** due to the lack of new affordable housing stock and high market rents combined with low incomes. Others experience homelessness episodically as their circumstances deteriorate due to job loss, reduced working hours, rent increases, unexpected expenses like long illnesses or funerals. **21%, or 1,470 people were chronically homeless (stayed over 60 days and need supports to be successfully housed)**
- **The Report Card on Ending Homelessness in Ottawa trend after 5 years shows current policies assist communities to maintain efforts to assist homeless people but do not end homelessness.** The length of shelter stay and the times shelter beds are used in Ottawa increased over the 2004-2008 period. Last year’s homeless total, the highest in five years in Ottawa, was due especially to increased homelessness among families.

AUGUST 2009 – UPDATE ON OTTAWA SHELTER DATA

| All Clients in Ottawa Emergency Shelters | TOTALS |
|---|---------------|
| August 4 – 10, 2009 | 1308 |
| August 11 – 17, 2009 | 1327 |
| August 18 – 24, 2009 | 1300 |
| August 25 – 31, 2009 | 1320 |
| 3 Months Ago (May 26 – June 1, 2009) | 1078 |
| 6 Months Ago (Feb 24 – Mar 2, 2009) | 1033 |
| 1 Year Ago (Aug 26 – Sept 1, 2008) | 1111 |