



# The Alliance to End Homelessness

[www.endhomelessnessottawa.ca](http://www.endhomelessnessottawa.ca)

## HIGHLIGHTS

### from the Second Report Card on Homelessness in Ottawa (Jan –Dec 2005)

*Grade and full Report Card released Feb. 28, 2006. For the first time ever, the Alliance will assign a 'grade' on Ottawa's progress toward ending homelessness, comparing 2005 statistics on homelessness, housing and income indicators to the baseline established by the Report Card for 2004. English and French PDFs available at [www.endhomelessnessottawa.ca](http://www.endhomelessnessottawa.ca).*

1. More people used the shelter system in Ottawa in 2005 than in 2004 – 8,664 compared to 8,853 a year earlier. (The 2004 numbers are shown in brackets). More adult men 4,905 (4,845), adult women 1,267 (1,221) and youth 543 (509) used a shelter at some point during the year as compared to a year earlier. More families – 668 (631) - were also accommodated in shelters. These families had more adults 1,103 (997) and 1,035 children although this was fewer than last year (1,092).
2. The average length of stay in a shelter was lower in 2005 than in 2004. For adult men and women, the average length of stay did not change a great deal – from 39.8 to 39.1 days for men and from 30.7 to 31.9 days for women. For youth and families, the reductions were more significant – from 23.0 to 17.4 days for youth and from 44.5 to 36.7 days for families.
3. Despite the higher number of people, the shorter stays for some resulted in the number of people using the shelters on any given night in 2005 was lower than in 2004 – 880 (932).
4. There are 964 shelter beds in Ottawa – 510 for single men, 108 for single women, 36 for youth and 260 for families.
5. People who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, often cannot afford housing on the open market either because they work at low or minimum wage jobs that are often not full-time or because they are dependent on income support programs such as Ontario Works or the Ontario Disability Support Program. Outside of the open market, the options include:
  - a. "Social Housing" units in projects built on a variety of housing programs that existed up to 1995. There are 22,400 such units administered by the City of Ottawa.
  - b. "Rent supplements" units, in private buildings where the government pays the difference between the market rent and the 30% of the tenant's income. There are 3,085 units in the Ottawa area.
  - c. "Supportive Housing" includes the provision of on-site services in addition to housing. The number of such units increased from 500 to 667 from 2004 to 2005.
  - d. Through the Action Ottawa program, the City of Ottawa provides incentives to non-profit and other groups to build affordable housing. Eighty-five additional units were built during 2005 to bring the total to 441 built since 2001.
6. Coordinated access to social housing is managed by the Social Housing Registry. The number of households waiting for units went down during the year from 10,500 to 9,914 in 2005. The Supportive Housing network had a waiting list of 2,214 at the end of 2005 compared to 2,000 a year earlier.
7. CMHC reported that average rents in Ottawa decreased during 2005 with a resulting drop in the vacancy rate. *Unfortunately, last year it took 59% of a full time minimum wage income or 77% of the Ontario Works benefits for a single parent with one child to cover the average one-bedroom rent in Ottawa.*
8. The minimum wage increased by 30 cents in February 2005. There was also 3% increased in the benefits under the Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Programs. Statistics Canada reported that the cost of living increased by 2.3 percent in 2005 compared to 1.8 percent a year earlier.