



Alliance
to End Homelessness
Ottawa



2014 PROGRESS REPORT

ON ENDING
HOMELESSNESS
IN OTTAWA

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INTRODUCTION

Ending homelessness. This goal guides the Alliance and compels us to take stock each year of progress towards that end. Following last year's 10-year retrospective, this 11th Progress Report summarizes the state of homelessness in Ottawa in 2014.

There is both good news and challenging news. Positively, our community saw a 2.6% reduction (175 people) in the number of individuals using an emergency shelter in 2014 compared to 2013. However, the average length of stay of shelter clients increased from 73 nights in 2013 to 77 nights in 2014 – resulting in over 15,000 additional nights of shelter bed usage through the year. Among families, the average length of stay increased to 105 nights – pointing to the acute shortage of affordable housing options in Ottawa.

The City of Ottawa's 10-year housing plan clearly states our community's goal as an end to long-term homelessness. The plan articulates a community target – that by 2024, emergency shelter stays will be 30 days or less for any homeless person. To lay a foundation for measuring progress towards this goal, this Report identifies the number of adults and families who were chronically or episodically homeless in 2014 – those who have been homeless for six months or more, or for repeat episodes, within the calendar year.

For the first time, this Report also includes data on the shelter use of two sub-populations who require our on-going attention: young people (16–25) and older adults (50+).

- Recognizing the unique needs of young people in their transitions to adulthood, in 2015 the Alliance and community partners – supported by United Way Ottawa – will begin development of an integrated community strategy to prevent and end youth homelessness, drawing on a Housing First framework. In 2014, 932 young people between the ages of 16–25 used an emergency shelter (including, but not limited to youth shelters). We need to work together to ensure our homeless young people do not become homeless adults.
- Older adults who are homeless also present unique issues in comparison to other homeless individuals – arising from their pathways to homelessness, their health concerns and the rate at which they utilize homeless services. Alongside an aging population, are we seeing the 'greying of the homeless population'? Reporting on this for the first time, we know that over 1200 individuals aged 50+ used an emergency shelter in Ottawa in 2014.



This year's Report continues to highlight the shortage of housing that is affordable. Only 141 new affordable housing options in the form of newly created housing or housing subsidies were created in 2014. Over 10,200 households ended the year on our community's wait list for subsidized housing. Clearly, the potential success of a Housing First approach or any effort to rapidly rehouse individuals is challenged by a lack of affordable and supportive housing options.

With an election near, it is important to note that federal investments in social housing are expiring. The \$1.6 billion federal investment in affordable housing is set to drop to \$0 by 2040 – unless a commitment is made to retain this investment. This is the time to commit to new social housing, to the repair and maintenance of existing social housing, and to the creation of new rent subsidies with supports for vulnerable Canadians (www.housing4all.ca).

In Ontario, the Province's commitment to ending homelessness and the 2015 update to its Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy need to be leveraged for better housing outcomes. Municipally, the City of Ottawa can and should grow its Housing and Homelessness Investment Plan. This is also time to broaden the base of support – welcoming, alongside governments, strengthened engagement of all sectors across the community.

Investments in affordable, appropriate housing outcomes are cost-effective – reinforcing other investments in training, education and health, and reducing costs in social services and emergency responses. To achieve real progress, we all need to be champions for our community's goal of ending homelessness. The ten-year plan is now.

BY THE NUMBERS

Since 2005, the Alliance to End Homelessness has measured annual change in four areas: the number of persons using emergency shelters, the average length of shelter stay, housing affordability and the number of new affordable housing options created.

This year, information on emergency shelter use is enhanced with the addition of specific data on the numbers of youth (16-25), older adults (50+) and individuals who are chronically or episodically homeless.



Number of persons using overnight Men's, Women's, Youth and Family emergency shelters at any point during the year Goal: To reduce the number by 500 each year Source: Homeless Individuals and Families Information System, City of Ottawa		2013	2014	CHANGE
	Total	6695	6520	-175 (-2.6%)
	Single Men	3169	3058	-111 (-3.5%)
	Single Women	985	914	-71 (-7.2%)
	Single Youth (in youth shelters)	378	379	+1 (0%)
	Families	706	705	-1 (0%)
	Dependants (17 and under)	1310	1322	+12 (0.9%)
	Total Bed Nights	489,579	504,873	+15,294 (3.1%)

Average Length of Shelter Stay (nights) Goal: To reduce the average length of stay by 3 nights per year Source: Homeless Individuals and Families Information System, City of Ottawa		2013	2014	CHANGE
	Average (all clients)	73	77	+4
	Single Men	61	64	+3
	Single Women	56	60	+4
	Single Youth (in youth shelters)	40	39	-1
	Families	98	105	+7

Number of Single Youth, aged 16-25, using any emergency shelter at any point during the year (with Average Length of Shelter Stay (nights) = Avg LOS) Source: Homeless Individuals and Families Information System, City of Ottawa		2013	2014	CHANGE
	Total	923 Avg LOS: 41	932 Avg LOS: 39	+9 (1.0%)
	Male Youth	561 Avg LOS: 37	579 Avg LOS: 37	+18 (3.2%)
Female Youth	355 Avg LOS: 46	347 Avg LOS: 43	-8 (-2.3%)	

Number of Older Adults, aged 50+, using an emergency shelter at any point during the year

(with Average Length of Shelter Stay (nights) = Avg LOS)

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

	2013	2014	CHANGE
Total	1176	1204	+28 (2.4%)
Male	921 Avg LOS: 86	947 Avg LOS: 89	+26 (2.8%)
Female	255 Avg LOS: 68	257 Avg LOS: 91	+2 (0.8%)



Number of Chronically and/or Episodically Homeless clients in a given year

(with Average Length of Shelter Stay (nights) = Avg LOS)

Goal:
By 2024, there will be no chronic homelessness in Ottawa.

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

	2013	2014	CHANGE
Single Men Chronically Homeless	351 Avg LOS: 288	358 Avg LOS: 280	+7 (2.0%)
Single Men Episodically Homeless	68 Avg LOS: 60	73 Avg LOS: 62	+5 (7.4%)
Single Women Chronically Homeless	93 Avg LOS: 257	81 Avg LOS: 270	-12 (-13.0%)
Single Women Episodically Homeless	17 Avg LOS: 54	13 Avg LOS: 66	-4 (-23.5%)
Family Units Chronically Homeless	83 Avg LOS: 249	98 Avg LOS: 255	+15 (18.1%)
Family Units Episodically Homeless	0	0	0

No single youth staying within the youth designated shelters were chronically or episodically homeless as reported within the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System

Chronically homeless refers to individuals who are currently homeless and have been homeless for six months or more in the calendar year (i.e., have spent more than 180 cumulative nights in a shelter).

Episodically homeless refers to individuals who have experienced three or more episodes of homelessness in the calendar year (of note, episodes are defined as periods when a person would be in a shelter, and after at least 30 days, would be back in the shelter).

New Affordable Housing Options	2013	2014
	New Affordable Units	94
Newly administered Rent Supplements	10	0
Newly administered Housing Allowances	81	5
Total	185	141

Goal: To create new affordable housing options, using a combination of newly built housing units and newly administered housing subsidies

Source: City of Ottawa

Housing Affordability	2013	2014	CHANGE
	Average Market Rent (bachelor apartment)	\$766	\$780
Ontario Works (OW) per single individual / per month	\$626	\$656	+ \$30
% required for average rent	122%	119%	- 3%
Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) per single individual / per month	\$1086	\$1098	+ \$12
% required for average rent	70.5%	71%	+ 0.5%
Minimum wage	\$10.25 / hr	\$11.00 / hr	+ \$0.75
% required for average rent	43%	41%	- 2%

Goal: To make housing more affordable by improving peoples' incomes

Source: Statistics Canada, CMHC, Province of Ontario

One indicator of the affordable housing challenge in Ottawa is the number of people who have applied and are waiting for subsidized housing. In subsidized homes, rent is made affordable, based on household income. Ottawa has over 22,000 units of subsidized housing; yet, as of December 2014, has a central waiting list with 10,224 households – each having registered or renewed their place on the list in 2014. Of this total, 665 were households where the primary applicant was between ages 16–24, representing a 24% increase for this group since 2013.

Many others are in need of affordable housing. As the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association noted in their provincial 2015 Wait List Survey report, “Nearly half of all Ontario renters and close to a third of all homeowners are spending more than they can afford on housing, placing themselves and their families at risk of homelessness.” It is time for all governments, the private sector and communities to work together to deliver the housing and subsidies that Ottawa households need.

Active Households on the Central Waiting List for Affordable Housing: December 31, 2014	Household Type	2013	2014
	Seniors (60+)	2,086	2,139
Families	3,667	3,676	
Single Adults	3,689	3,701	
2+ Adults	647	708	
Total number of active households	10,089	10,224	

Active Households on the Central Waiting List, Primary Applicant Age 16–24	Household Type	2013	2014
	Families	173	228
Single Adults	332	403	
2+ Adults	32	34	



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Editor: Mike Bulthuis | Special thanks to volunteers with the Research and Evaluation Working Group and the City of Ottawa.
Published with funding from the Community Foundation of Ottawa and the support of Alliance members
Design and Layout: Stanley Ounaron

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