# Homelessness in Ottawa

# Municipal Election Toolkit

## A Snapshot of Homelessness in Ottawa[[1]](#footnote-1)

* In 2017, over 7,500 people in Ottawa were homeless and 43% of those people were families with children.
* 42% of renters in Ottawa spend more than 30% of their income on housing, the level considered affordable.
* There are 22,500 social housing units in Ottawa that provide affordable, adequate housing for people in need, but over 10,000 families and individuals are on the waiting list for that housing.
* In 2017, the waiting list for social housing grew by 4,567 new applicants and only 1,541 moved into housing, meaning the waiting list keeps growing.
* Between 2014 and 2017, the City funded only 364 new affordable and supportive housing units.

Why Should You Care: Invest Now or Pay Later[[2]](#footnote-2)

* Homelessness is costly in human and economic terms.
* Homelessness results in increased costs for health, policing, social and emergency services.
* Research shows that affordable housing has a positive impact on health and employment.

Annual Costs of Alternative Housing Options:

Institutional (prison, hospital): $66,000-$120,000

Emergency Shelters: $13,000-$42,000

Supportive and Transitional Housing: $13,000-$18,000

Affordable Housing without Supports: $5,000-$8,000

Affordable housing is the most cost-effective approach for dealing with homelessness!

What the City Can Do:

* Increase the supply of housing affordable to those at risk of homelessness.
* Use all available planning tools to create affordable housing in every ward of the City.
* Restore the Capital Reserve fund for Affordable Housing.
* Aggressively pursue proposals for available funding through the National Housing Strategy.
* Improve conditions for people living in rooming houses by better enforcement of property standards.
* Invest in appropriate support services for families and individuals who are homeless or at risk of losing their housing.

What You Can Do:

* Raise affordable housing issues at debates and meetings with municipal election candidates.
* E-mail or write to municipal election candidates in support of affordable housing and reduced homelessness.
* Share your thoughts in every way you can on why affordable housing is important in your community.
* Be informed and know where municipal candidates stand on affordable housing and homelessness.

Questions You Can Ask Local Candidates:

1. *What will you do to ensure safe, secure and affordable housing is available to those who need it in your community?*
2. *What will you do to prevent homelessness in Ottawa?*
3. *How will you ensure people in rooming houses are kept safe and healthy?*
4. *What planning tools will you support to ensure more affordable housing in Ottawa?*
5. *How will you make sure services are implemented in the community in order to provide housing stability?*

Want to learn more? Visit the Community Ministries Website at <https://ottawa.anglican.ca/community-ministries> and the Alliance to End Homelessness Website at <https://www.endhomelessnessottawa.ca>

Make An Informed Vote!

1. Statistics from City of Ottawa 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan Progress Report, Ottawa.ca and the Alliance to End Homelessness Progress Report 2017, endhomelessnessottawa.ca [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See for example “The Impacts of Affordable Housing on Health: A research summary”, “The Real Cost of Homelessness: Can We Save Money by Doing the Right Thing?” and “the Cost of Homelessness: Analysis of Alternate Responses in 4 Cities” all on homelesshub.ca and “The Economic and Fiscal Benefits of Affordable Housing” on plannersweb.com. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)