



ONTARIO MUNICIPAL SOCIAL SERVICES ASSOCIATION
L'ASSOCIATION DES SERVICES SOCIAUX DES MUNICIPALITÉS DE L'ONTARIO

A Strategy to End Homelessness

April 2008

Ontario Municipal Social Services Association Strategy to End Homelessness

Executive Summary	2
Recommendations and Roles	4
Poverty Reduction and the Continuum of Housing and Support Services	7
A. Time to Act	8
B. The Experience of Homelessness	9
<i>i. The Definition of Homelessness</i>	11
<i>ii. Degrees of Homelessness</i>	11
<i>iii. Factors that Contribute to Homelessness</i>	12
<i>iv. The Cost of Homelessness</i>	13
C. A Service System Strategy to End Homelessness	15
<i>i. Objectives to End Homelessness</i>	15
<i>ii. Principles for a Service System to End Homelessness</i>	16
<i>iii. Barriers to Meeting Needs of People for Stable Housing</i>	17
<i>iv. Approaches to Preventing and Ending Homelessness</i>	19
<i>v. Current Roles in Addressing Homelessness</i>	19
<i>vi. Service System Planning</i>	20
D. Features of an Effective Service System Strategy to End Homelessness	21
<i>Accessibility</i>	21
<i>Flexibility</i>	21
<i>Coordination</i>	21
<i>Comprehensiveness</i>	22
E. Comprehensive Service System Management	23
<i>i. How Service System Management Works</i>	23
<i>ii. Collaboration for Successful Service System Management</i>	24
F. Recommendations	26
Appendix A Continuum of Housing and Support Services	29
Appendix B Members of OMSSA Task Force to End Homelessness	30

Executive Summary

The Ontario Cabinet Committee on Poverty Reduction, led by the Honourable Deb Matthews, Minister of Children and Youth Services, has committed to the development of a focused poverty reduction strategy by the end of 2008. The Premier has said: "We want everyone in Ontario to have the opportunity to succeed."

Yet, without affordable and stable housing people do not have the opportunity to succeed. Homelessness and unstable housing impose huge costs both on people who experience homelessness and on all of society, while stable housing contributes to social and economic health. Ending homelessness must be a central part of Ontario's poverty reduction agenda.

The Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA) is ready to work with the Province of Ontario and other concerned stakeholders to reduce poverty by ending homelessness in Ontario. Municipal governments have long been committed to their key responsibility in addressing the many issues presented by homelessness. They have defined community needs, developed local plans and mobilized local agencies, community groups and private sector partners to address the daily needs of people experiencing homelessness and those at risk of becoming homeless. And over the years the Federal and Provincial governments have provided funding to support innovative municipal and community initiatives. But now the funding is scheduled to come to an end. By early 2009, all of the federal programs will end.

There is an immediate urgency for the Federal and Provincial Governments to act. They must ensure that resources are available to sustain these local initiatives and to build on the successes of the past, in social service programs, in housing programs and in dedicated homelessness initiatives by:

- Extending funding for programs scheduled to end in early 2009, including the federal Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program, the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program, the Homelessness Partnering Strategy, and the Provincial Rent Bank Program for which funding ended in 2007
- Committing to permanent and sustainable funding for programs to end homelessness in every community and to meet the costs incurred by municipal service managers to plan and coordinate program delivery
- Directly engaging municipal service managers in the definition of needs and the design of program solutions
- Committing to active collaboration between Ministries and Departments within each order of government and between the different orders of government to ensure coordination and seamless service delivery and to avoid gaps

To end homelessness across Ontario, the current service system management approach should be affirmed and enhanced, with the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager or District Social Services Administration Board in each area being confirmed by all orders of government as the comprehensive Service System Manager for Homelessness and Housing.

Service System Managers are prepared to provide leadership and coordination; but they cannot do it alone. Ending homelessness requires a long term commitment from all orders of government - Federal, Provincial and Municipal. It requires sustainable funding and resources for people and

agencies in every local community to implement innovative solutions. It also requires the active collaboration of Ministries and Departments in all orders of government.

The Service System to End Homelessness must be broader than the programs and services specifically defined as homelessness programs. In addition to programs funded by the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) and the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care provincially, and those funded by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and Service Canada federally, the service system must include programs and services provided by other Ministries and Departments.

Since housing stability is a key determinant of health, ending homelessness must be a primary health priority: “Housing is the Best Medicine”. It is essential that health authorities, including the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC) and Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) participate in identifying barriers in the health care system and providing resources to support people to maintain stable housing.

The Federal and Provincial governments should establish ongoing sustainable funding agreements with individual Service System Managers. The funding agreement will identify the resources to be allocated and program targets to be achieved, based on a local service system developed in the context of province-wide and nation-wide priorities.

Service System Managers will establish and sustain community engagement and accountability mechanisms which reflect local circumstances, including community advisory panels and funders’ forums as well as mechanisms to engage consumers of homelessness services. They will develop and enhance mechanisms to engage a range of community organizations to work with the Service System Manager to determine the needs of the community and to design a service system which incorporates the appropriate mix of program responses for that community. Service System Managers must have adequate resources to ensure the success of this collaboration and to guarantee effective facilitation of the service system.

OMSSA has developed specific recommendations for action in four key areas:

- Housing
- Support to Access and Maintain Housing Stability
- Income Support, and
- System Capacity

OMSSA’s housing recommendations complement those set out recently by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Big City Mayors Caucus.¹

The detailed recommendations appear at the end of the paper; the following table summarizes the recommendations, showing the role of each order of government in carrying out the recommendation.

¹ Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Big City Mayors’ Caucus, Sustaining the Momentum: Recommendations for a National Action Plan on Housing and Homelessness, January 23, 2008

Recommendations and Roles

Recommendation	Federal Role	Provincial Role	Municipal Role
1. Housing a. All orders of government collaborate to develop National Housing Framework to build on past successes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ protect & preserve existing affordable housing ➤ increase affordable housing supply ➤ address affordability issues ➤ ensure funding for supports 	Take initiative & collaborate Provide multi year funding	Take initiative & collaborate Provide multi year funding	Take initiative & collaborate Identify needs & priorities Deliver & administer programs
b. Provide multi year funding to support National Housing Framework. Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ preserve existing affordable housing ➤ increased affordable housing supply ➤ rent geared to income subsidies ➤ support funding. 	Cost share RRAP and funding to repair existing social housing	Cost share funding to repair existing social housing MCSS & MOHLTC	Program delivery & administration
c. Allow program funding flexibility to respond to local needs & capacities	Allow flexibility	Allow flexibility	Administer funding based on current & emerging local needs
d. Affordability targets to reflect local market & social assistance rates	Consult on design of programs	Consult on design of programs	Identify needs and market constraints
2. Support to Access and Maintain Housing Stability a. Recognize housing stability as a determinant of health & a health priority	Health Canada	MOHLTC	Public Health
b. Collaboration between human service ministries	Service Canada, CMHC, Health and Corrections Canada	MMAH, MCSS, MOHLTC, MCYS, Corrections, Education	Social Services, Health, Planning and Housing

Recommendation (continued)	Federal Role	Provincial Role	Municipal Role
Support to Access and Maintain Housing Stability c. Interministerial planning and funding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ build on current project strengths ➤ address Ministry policies & practices ➤ resolve program conflicts ➤ change policies 	SCPI and HPI Correctional institutions discharge planning Remove barriers	Hostels to Homes, CHPP Correctional institutions & hospital discharge planning Remove barriers	Identify barriers
d. Multi year funding for local initiatives	Affirm & Enhance HPI	Affirm & Enhance CHPP	Continue to administer
e. Multi year funding for supports linked to housing		MCSS & MOHLTC	Make linkages & continue to administer
3. Sustaining income and Employment a. Address income issues to sustain housing affordability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ coordinate and increase the flexibility of income support initiatives 	National Child Benefit Increase OAS to cost of living Increase EI flexibility	MCSS/OW & MTCU skill development & employment Increase minimum wage Increase shelter allowances to reflect local market rents Continue to create employment incentives to aid departure from social assistance, including supports to employment Rent Bank Energy Bank Ontario Child Benefit	

Recommendation (continued)	Federal Role	Provincial Role	Municipal Role
4. Service System Capacity			
a. Affirm continuing municipal role as Service System Manager	Affirm role	Affirm role	Take responsibility
b. Support coordinated program delivery by Service System Manager	Multi year funding	Multi year funding	Coordinate delivery
c. Provide multi year funding to Service Managers to support the Service System Management role	Housing Framework Homelessness initiatives	Housing Framework Homelessness initiatives	Determine funding requirements Program delivery & administration Planning
d. Increase community capacity to end homelessness	Funding	Funding	Increase community awareness Overcome community resistance Involve community stakeholders in planning Engage local community in delivery Build capacity of consumers

Poverty Reduction and the Continuum of Housing and Support Services

The Ontario Cabinet Committee on Poverty Reduction, led by the Honourable Deb Matthews, Minister of Children and Youth Services, has committed to the development of a focused poverty reduction strategy by the end of 2008.

The 25 in 5 Network for Poverty Reduction recently called on the province to set hard targets and timelines in its 2009 poverty reduction strategy. The 25 in 5 principles for a strong poverty reduction strategy are:

- Good, sustaining jobs that lift working Ontarians out of poverty.
- Liveable incomes, that include those unable to work.
- Strong and supportive communities. That means affordable housing, child care, public education and community programs that help people connect.

The Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA) believes that ending homelessness by ensuring that every household has stable affordable housing is directly linked to a strong poverty reduction strategy. The strategy to end homelessness includes the same features as the strategy to reduce poverty. The OMSSA strategy to end homelessness further defines the strategy to achieve affordable housing and the supports needed to ensure that people do not lose their housing.

The Strategy to end homelessness addresses every aspect of the Continuum of Housing and Support Services illustrated in Appendix A attached.

Ontario Municipal Social Services Association Strategy to End Homelessness

A. Time to Act

The Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA) believes that a comprehensive system to end homelessness will foster the development of healthy vibrant communities across Ontario. Helping all communities to develop programs so that homelessness doesn't exist must be a critical part of Ontario's poverty reduction agenda. OMSSA believes that it is possible for every municipality to identify the extent of homelessness, to determine the factors contributing to homelessness and to coordinate a comprehensive system of mechanisms to end homelessness.

For many years, Ontario communities have responded effectively to the needs of people who are homeless by providing programs to "address" homelessness. Federal and Provincial governments have funded innovative municipal and community initiatives to address homelessness, facilitated local collaborations and funded the development of transitional housing. But now these programs are scheduled to end. By the spring of 2009, there will be no federal funding for affordable housing; repair and conversion of housing under the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program will cease and funding for local communities under the Homelessness Partnering Initiative will end.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) calls the current situation "A funding precipice", saying:

"The termination of these funding streams will seriously undermine efforts to attack the issue of homelessness and the associated problem of lack of affordable housing."²

OMSSA believes the time has come to "end" homelessness. This will mean a state in which no one sleeps outside on the street, in parks or in abandoned buildings, where people use shelters only in emergencies and where shelters are not, for anyone, a long term place of residence. Ending homelessness means ensuring that everyone has access to a permanent home in the community of their choice.

OMSSA is committed to working with other concerned stakeholders to end homelessness in Ontario. Ending homelessness requires a long term commitment from all orders of government to ensure sustainable funding and other resources for every community to implement innovative solutions. Ending homelessness requires the active collaboration of Ministries and Departments in all orders of government: Federal, Provincial and Municipal. It also requires the direct involvement of people and agencies in every local community. And to facilitate collaboration of all these players, Municipal Governments must reaffirm their leadership role as Service System Managers.

Municipal governments are committed to their role as key front line responders in ending homelessness. Municipalities define the needs at the community level, develop the plans to end homelessness and mobilize agencies, community groups and private sector partners to work

² Federation of Canadian Municipalities: Sustaining the Momentum: Recommendations for a National Action Plan on Housing and Homelessness, Ottawa, January 23, 2008.

alongside municipal staff to address the daily needs of people experiencing homelessness and those at risk of becoming homeless.

As FCM says in their call for a National Action Plan on Housing and Homelessness: “Canada’s municipal governments have proven themselves ready and willing to fund, deliver and manage locally appropriate strategies and programs, but lack the fiscal capacity to respond effectively to the issues of homelessness and housing affordability.”

This is particularly true in Ontario. With resources from all levels of government, Ontario communities have achieved tremendous success in the past few years. People have moved from homelessness to permanent housing. Progress is being made. The momentum must continue. Ontario communities require policy commitments, coordinated planning and sustained funding over a number of years to continue and to expand the work that has been done. Without it, we face a return to crisis management.

B. The Experience of Homelessness

Ernie was once a successful businessman with a family and a nice house. Years of drinking and mental health issues took all that away and he spiraled downward to the street. Now Ernie sleeps in downtown doorways most nights and in church basements on the coldest nights of the year.

Ernie is the familiar face of homelessness in major urban centres in Ontario, a visible reminder that substance use and health issues can mean the difference between prosperity and poverty. Perhaps lesser known are some of the other faces of homelessness:

Josie and Manuel are staying with Manuel’s sister Maria right now, but they have to leave in a couple of days because there is no room for them in the two bedroom apartment where Maria lives with her two children. Maria can’t really afford to feed them anymore either, so they are trying to persuade their friend Bob to let them sleep on his couch for a few days until they find a job and can get a place of their own. Josie and Manuel are new to Canada and looking to get a start. But it’s hard to find work when you don’t speak the language well and have no local experience.

Josie and Manuel are less visible and may, by some definitions, not be called homeless. But, like Ernie, they have fallen out of the system and do not have a safe and stable place to call home. They are just one small step away from being on the street or in a shelter.

Angela is a young mother, worried that she and her son Trevor will soon have to find another place again. They have a small apartment for now but the rent is \$700 a month and Angela is only making \$8 an hour. After she pays for the bus to get to work and pays her friend a bit to take care of Trevor after school, she barely has enough to pay the rent and buy food. A couple of times she has been late paying and the landlord tells her that if she is late again he will kick her out.

Angela clearly has housing and would not be considered homeless by most people. At the same time it is clear to see that Angela and Trevor are at risk of becoming homeless, all it will take is another late rent payment or a minor financial crisis.

Susan is single, in her mid-forties, and has multiple sclerosis. Her only income is a long-term disability pension. She pays 60% of her gross income for rent and utilities. Susan has been unable to work for the past 8 years. Susan has found it extremely difficult to find affordable housing that is accessible with her wheelchair. Recently, she was finally able to move out of a building that had no accessibility features to a better building. However, she has experienced harassment from the superintendent in the new building, who has told her she should move somewhere else.

Erica is in her mid-fifties and is severely disabled by cerebral palsy. Erica lives with her parents; they are in their late eighties and provide most of the care that Erica needs, with some assistance from the Community Care Access Centre. Erica's parents are burnt out and at their wits end in caring for their daughter. However, they haven't been able to find housing that is appropriate for Erica's needs. She could move into a nursing home, but Erica would prefer to live in a place where she can take care of herself and be as independent as possible. Erica has applied for help to pay for attendant care but has been told that funding for support services for people with physical disabilities is limited in her community. What will happen when Erica's parents pass away, or if they become incapacitated and Erica is left alone. Where will she live then?

Both Susan and Erica are at risk of becoming homeless because they live in poverty due to the inadequacy of living allowances for people living with a disability.

When Tyler's parents discovered that he is gay they told him to leave, they didn't want to have anything to do with him. At first Tyler was able to stay with friends for a few days but now he is sleeping in the park when the weather is warm or staying in the shelter. Since he is over 16, Tyler is not eligible for support through Children's Aid. He would like to go back to school, but it's hard without a permanent place.

Youth (age 16-24) make up a large portion of shelter users (e.g. 25% in Waterloo Region). The adult shelter system is often not able to address the unique needs of young people.

These snapshots provide a glimpse of how homelessness affects people in a range of circumstances. The responses to their needs must be as diverse as these situations.

i. The Definition of Homelessness

The people in these stories can all be described as homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. OMSSA has identified the term homeless to apply to people in the following three types of situations:

- Absolutely homeless: People who sleep in indoor or outdoor public places not intended for habitation (e.g. streets, parks, abandoned buildings, stairwells, doorways, cars, or under bridges);
- Lacking permanent housing: People who live in temporary accommodation not meant for long-term housing. Examples include: emergency shelters, hospitals, time-limited transitional housing programs, residential treatment programs or withdrawal management centres and more informal arrangements such as staying with family, friends, or acquaintances; and
- At risk of homelessness: Households whose current housing is unaffordable, unsafe, overcrowded, insecure, inappropriate or inadequately maintained; it also refers to situations where the person lacks supports to maintain housing stability (e.g. activities of daily living, life skills training, conflict resolution).

ii. Degrees of Homelessness

In addition to these different aspects of homelessness, OMSSA recognizes that there are different degrees of homelessness:

- One-time homelessness: Usually the result of an unexpected event (e.g. family breakdown, eviction, employment loss, natural disaster, house fire); people may have social and economic resources to draw on to avoid becoming homeless again.
- Episodic homelessness: Periods of housing stability interspersed with periods of housing instability and homelessness.
- Persistent homelessness³: Can include a variety of possible characteristics:
 - person has experienced homelessness for a long time (often greater than one year) with a pattern of cycling in and out of hospitals or correctional facilities between periods of living on the street or in emergency shelters;
 - homelessness has become the new “normal”; skills are oriented to survival on the streets rather than to living in housing; and/or
 - extensive use of emergency services or a large number of disconnections from services.

Each experience of homelessness has different causes, different needs and different solutions. Yet they are all damaging to those who experience them and costly to the community.

³ Report of the Ad-Hoc Working group on Persistent Homelessness in Waterloo Region; September 2007, Region of Waterloo Social Services.

iii. Factors that contribute to homelessness

“Homelessness is not only a housing problem but it is always a housing problem.”⁴ The shortage of adequate, affordable housing means that someone will be homeless; other circumstances determine which person will be homeless. Therefore, any strategy to end homelessness must include both measures to ensure an adequate supply of affordable housing and measures to address the circumstances which cause particular individuals and families to become homeless. All of these factors must be addressed to prevent people from becoming homeless.

Among the circumstances that can contribute to homelessness, poverty is the most pervasive. Although there will be other factors that threaten housing stability, people living in poverty often have less ability to call on other resources to avoid homelessness.

The broadly accepted measure of affordability in housing is 30% of gross income paid for housing. A single person working full time at Ontario’s minimum wage of \$8.75 per hour (effective March 31, 2008) would pay more than 40% of income to rent a bachelor apartment in most communities.⁵ A family with two income earners may be better off; a one bedroom apartment can be rented for slightly less than 30% of income, but if the household includes children and requires 2 or 3 bedrooms, the rent consumes more than 30% of income.

On the other hand, families receiving public assistance can generally not find housing that is affordable based on the amount provided for shelter costs. A single person on Ontario Works (OW) receives \$349 for shelter. This is less than the \$450 that it usually costs for a room without cooking facilities, while the cost of a bachelor apartment is in excess of the total OW allowance including basic needs. The situation is similar for all household sizes. For example, the City of Toronto reports that 66% of all households receiving OW pay rents in excess of the OW shelter allowance.⁶

If a household is in receipt of Ontario Disability Support Payments (ODSP) they have more money available for shelter but still fall short of the amount required to be able to afford rent. A single person’s shelter allowance is \$445, which is barely enough for a single room, while a two person household will receive \$700 compared to the cost of a one bedroom apartment, which can range from \$800 to \$900, depending on the community.

Another broad systemic factor that can contribute to homelessness is discrimination. Whether it is due to racism, the stigma of mental illness or other forms of prejudice, discrimination can contribute to homelessness by reducing the ability of the household to access needed resources, including employment and adequate housing.

A large number of the people that experience homelessness live with mental illness. Various studies have found the prevalence of mental illness among people who are homeless to be higher than in the general population (between 30%⁷ and 67%⁸) “Depression is the mental illness most

⁴ Dr. David Hulchanski, From the Report of the Mayor’s Homelessness Action Task Force, Taking Responsibility for Homelessness: An Action Plan for Toronto, City of Toronto 1999.

⁵ In Ottawa, with an average rent of \$643 the proportion is 42%; in Toronto, with a rent of \$726, the proportion is 48%

⁶ City of Toronto, Quick Facts 2006, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration.

⁷ Taking Responsibility for Homelessness, 1999

reported, understandable given the extent of unfortunate circumstances in these people's lives.”⁹ However, only a small proportion cite mental illness as the reason that they became homeless, referring instead to poverty and the scarcity of affordable housing.

As well as systemic factors, there are a number of other circumstances that can contribute to a particular person or household becoming homeless. This can include substance use, physical illness or disability, family violence, unemployment, family breakdown, eviction, natural disaster, house fire and deinstitutionalization.

iv. **The Cost of Homelessness**

As OMSSA has reported in previous studies looking at the value of social investments,¹⁰ homelessness and unstable housing lead to significant costs to society, while stable housing can contribute to social and economic health. The salient points from these studies are included below.

Key Messages

- An investment in adequate, affordable, stable housing actually reduces costs and improves the effectiveness of:
 - Social services
 - Health care, and
 - Education.

- Adequate, stable housing is an essential contributor to:
 - Individual and family physical and emotional health,
 - Positive educational outcomes for children and adults, and
 - Improved labour force participation.

Key Findings

- The greater the incidence of housing inadequacy, instability and unaffordability, the greater the use of emergency and social services.¹¹ Increased use of these services is costly and can contribute to restricted access and increased wait times.

- Individuals and families who have stable, affordable housing through housing subsidies leave social assistance for employment more frequently and have higher income outcomes than similar social assistance recipients who did not have housing subsidies. This finding is evident even when they experience higher barriers to employment than the group who did not access the subsidies.¹²

⁸ Mental Health Policy Research Group, “Mental illness and pathways into homelessness: proceedings and recommendations”, Toronto 1998, on line:

http://www.camh.net/hsrcu/html_documents/pathways_proceedings.html

⁹ Dr. Don Wasylenki, in “Mental illness and pathways into homelessness” Toronto 1998

¹⁰ Demonstrating the Value of Social Investments: A Resource Document for OMSSA members, OMSSA 2005

¹¹ Carter, Tom and Chesya Polevychok, “Housing is Good Social Policy”, Canadian Policy Research Network, 2004 www.cprn.org

¹² Rafferty-Zedlewski, Sheila, “The Importance of Housing Benefits to Welfare Success”, The Urban Institute – The Brookings Institution, 2002 www.brookings.edu

- Adults receiving social assistance that live in subsidized housing had twice the rate of employment gains as similar people living in the private housing market.¹³
- Numerous changes for children in housing, care or school arrangements are negatively associated with competencies and educational achievements as evidenced by lower math scores, more grade failures, poorer receptive vocabulary scores and more behavioural problems. These results were independent of low income and socio-economic characteristics.¹⁴
- It is more difficult to measure the long term emotional impact on children and adults of the trauma of lives interrupted by displacement and instability. Statistically significant relationships are found between housing quality and the socio-emotional health of Canadian children, even when other factors such as income and educational levels of parents are controlled.¹⁵
- Instability and chronic homelessness contribute to early death. Homeless persons have a mortality rate of 2 to 10 times higher than the general population.

An Ottawa study on deaths of homeless people demonstrated that homeless women lived an average of 39 years and homeless men 52 years compared to average life expectancy in the general population of 81 and 75 years, respectively. (None of the deaths were due to exposure and only a small number died as a result of violence.)¹⁶

- Studies examining the cost to taxpayers of homelessness have found that it costs no more to provide stable supportive housing than to provide a bed in an emergency shelter and that the quality of life and prospects for independence are significantly better.¹⁷
- Research from the City of Toronto shows that a “Housing First” policy for people experiencing homelessness is a life-changing strategy, which also profoundly impacts on service management, as well as on the health, addictions, emergency services and criminal justice systems. A study of 88 formerly homeless individuals housed through Toronto’s Streets to Homes program showed dramatic changes as a result of the program:¹⁸
 - 91% of clients reported that their life had improved and 82% reported a more positive outlook for the future.

¹³ Centre for Budget and Policy Priorities, “Research Evidence Suggests that Housing Subsidies Can Help Long-term Welfare Recipients Find and Retain Work”, 2000
www.cbpp.org

¹⁴ Kohan, Dafna and Clyde Hertzman and Michele Wiens, “Environmental Changes and Children’s Competencies”, Applied Research Branch, Social Development, Canada, 1998 www.sdc.gc.ca

¹⁵ CMHC, “Housing Quality and Children’s Socio-emotional Health: 2003 www.cmhc.ca

¹⁶ Gurgus-Yonger, Manal and Vivien Runnels and Tim Aubry, “A Study of the Deaths of Persons Who Are Homeless in Ottawa – A social and Health Investigation”, Saint Paul University and Centre for Research on Community Services, University of Ottawa, 2003 www.socialscience.uottawa.ca/crcs/eng/

¹⁷ Costs of Responding to Homelessness in Ottawa: Pro-Active versus Reactive Responses, Focus Consulting report for City of Ottawa, October 2007. Note that comparison of the cost per night shows that a shelter bed is much more expensive; this study takes into consideration the usage rate.

¹⁸ City of Toronto. "What Housing First Means to People: Results of Streets to Homes 2007 Post-Occupancy Research" City of Toronto, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, 2007

- The long term impacts are great, including: 36% seeking volunteer opportunities; 31% finding or seeking employment and 27% planning for their education;
- 49% had reduced their alcohol use, with 17% quitting entirely, while 73% had decreased their use of other substances, with 31% quitting completely.
- There were improvements in all 8 quality of life indicators measured.
- People used fewer emergency health resources, including a 38% reduction in ambulance use, 40% decrease in emergency room use, and 25% reduction in individuals requiring a hospital stay.
- At the same time, individuals were making use of routine medical services more frequently, including a 32% increase in use of family doctors and 71% increase in use of psychiatrists.
- From the criminal justice perspective, there was a 75% decrease in police facilitated detox admissions and 56% decrease in arrests.

Significant effort has been undertaken to qualify and quantify the impact of homelessness on individuals, families and communities. The data underlines the need for a systemic model that focuses on ending homelessness.

C. A Service System Strategy to End Homelessness

A systems approach to ensuring affordable, sustainable housing outcomes for Ontario citizens recognizes that people experiencing homelessness have a range of needs, which change as the person interacts with the system. It provides a means to integrate the resources and programs to enable people experiencing homelessness to move from homelessness to housing stability.

This section outlines the OMSSA vision of the Service System to End Homelessness in Ontario, including:

- i. *Objectives to End Homelessness*
- ii. *Principles for a Service System to End Homelessness*
- iii. *Barriers to Meeting Needs of People for Stable Housing*
- iv. *Types of Responses to Homelessness*
- v. *Current Roles in Addressing Homelessness*
- vi. *Service System Planning*

i. Objectives to End Homelessness

In developing a service system to end homelessness, there are five key objectives that must be met. These provide the context within which specific responses are developed.

- To ensure that supports are provided to meet basic needs to sustain life and ensure physical well being¹⁹
- To end street homelessness
- To end the use of shelters for long term housing

¹⁹ While this objective does not actually contribute to ending homelessness, it is included because sustaining life is fundamental to any systems approach.

- To ensure access to permanent affordable housing with supports
- To ensure housing stability (prevent homelessness and help people maintain housing)

ii. Principles for a Service System to End Homelessness

- Housing is a fundamental human need: everyone has a right to safe, affordable and permanent housing.
- Client-centered: for each experience of homelessness there are unique causes, unique circumstances and unique solutions. Ending homelessness must focus on one person at a time. The system must include mechanisms to determine the needs of each individual and to provide responses appropriate to the needs of that individual, recognizing that needs may change over time.
- Individual choice: people must be empowered to make informed decisions and choices by receiving information about a range of service models and resources.
- Capacity building: the system must enhance individual and family resources to access long term, appropriate, affordable housing and achieve independence.
- Respect and dignity: the service system must recognize the diversity of people in need and enhance the dignity of the individual.
- Responsiveness: the service system must include mechanisms for ongoing monitoring and measurement of outcomes (both for clients and for the system) and provide for adjustment based on success and client choice.
- Flexibility: the service system must be able to adapt to individual needs, rather than requiring the person to adapt to the system. As well, the system must be able to change over time as client needs and system needs emerge and change.
- Integrated: the service system must ensure that initiatives to address the multiple needs of people experiencing homelessness are connected and coordinated.
- Harm reduction: the service system must enable people to make informed choices, while working to optimize health and well being.
- Professionalism: the service system must recognize the value of skilled and expert staff, providing training and skill development to enhance their ability to meet the needs of people that are homeless.
- Efficiency: the service system must ensure that services are delivered in an effective and timely manner.
- Accountability: the service system must be accountable to the citizens of the municipality and to the funders.

iii. Barriers to Meeting Needs of People for Stable Housing

There are a variety of circumstances that lead to a particular person or family becoming homeless. At the same time, the fundamental cause of homelessness is the inability of a household to access and sustain stable housing.

The specific needs of individuals that have contributed to their homelessness or which present barriers to overcoming homelessness can provide the context for particular responses. A strategy to end homelessness must recognize three key categories of need related to housing stability: appropriate housing, income and support. To maintain long-term housing the individual or household must meet their needs in each of these areas.

Stable and adequate housing

- Need: The household must be able to access appropriate housing²⁰
- Barrier: Despite commitment of significant resources by all orders of government in the past few years, the waiting lists for affordable housing continue to be long and many households continue to live in inadequate or unaffordable housing

Adequate income to meet the cost of housing and other basic needs

- Need: The household must have sufficient income for housing and basic needs.
- Barrier: Housing allowances provided by Ontario Works and ODSP are significantly lower than average market rents in all communities
- Barrier: In all Ontario communities the income from employment required to pay average market rents exceeds minimum wages²¹

Support to maintain housing and to address life issues that contribute to homelessness

- Need: The household must have the opportunity to access supports, both formal and informal as needed, including physical and mental health care with special consideration for those known to be at increased risk of homelessness – people living with mental illness, people with addictions, newcomers, aboriginal people, children, families, youth, older adults, lesbian, gay, bi-sexual & transgendered individuals and victims of domestic violence
- Barrier: Support funding is often tied to a specific diagnosis; many people experiencing homelessness require support but do not have a specific diagnosis
- Barrier: People lack the skills and knowledge to access information, resources and services

iv. Approaches to Preventing and Ending Homelessness

A service system to end homelessness will include approaches to the needs of people who are at risk of homelessness as well as those who are currently homeless.

While the service system to end homelessness must emphasize access to housing, it must often address basic needs (i.e. food, clothing, shelter) as a first step. At the same time, the “Housing First” approach is based on rejection of the historic notion that an individual that has experienced homelessness must go through a process of stabilization before they can move to permanent

²⁰ Appropriate housing can mean housing that is: affordable, physically and geographically accessible, adequately maintained, suitable size, safe, and continuous through security of tenure.

²¹ Minimum Housing Wage, 2006: Housing Continues to Move Out of Reach for Minimum Wage Workers, Focus Consulting study for Canadian Housing and Renewal Association, January 2007

housing. The “Housing First” approach is based on the belief that people moving into permanent housing immediately can achieve stability if they receive appropriate support to maintain their housing.

The service system can include a range of approaches to address the diverse needs of people who are at different stages in their journey, recognizing that needs change for each individual over time. The approaches can be categorized in a number of ways; the following illustrates the breadth and interconnectedness of the approaches:

A. Prevention of Homelessness

- Enhanced access to affordable housing
- Eviction prevention
- Pre employment skills development and sustainable employment
- Adequate income
- Health promotion and treatment of illness
- Support to address life issues which contribute to risk of homelessness (e.g. domestic violence, mental illness, substance use)

B. Meeting immediate basic needs to sustain life and ensure physical well being

- Shelter from the elements (including cooling and warming centres)
- Food
- Emergency shelter
- Clothing
- Personal safety and security
- Primary health care
- Basic income
- Crisis support
- Overcoming social isolation

C. Case management

- Assessing immediate and longer term needs
- Assessing the capacity of the person
- Developing a services plan
- Referral
- Follow up

D. Housing help

- Assessing current housing situation and needs
- Assisting person to access appropriate housing
- Fast tracking to housing
- Providing practical assistance to overcome barriers to access to housing

E. Providing affordable housing

- Transitional housing
- Permanent affordable housing with supports
- Permanent affordable independent housing

F. Ongoing support

- Support to sustain housing
- Case management
- Conflict resolution, life skills
- Trusteeship

These approaches or services can be provided or delivered to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness using a range of models or mechanisms. Most models deliver more than one kind of service. A healthy service system includes a variety of service delivery models to meet the full range of needs, including:

- Outreach Programs
- Emergency Shelters (including Out of the Cold)
- Social Housing and other forms of Affordable Housing
- Supportive/supported Housing

vi. Current Roles in Addressing Homelessness

All orders of government and many community leaders have taken steps to respond to homelessness and the lack of stable housing.

Municipal governments have long been responsible for administering the social assistance and shelter systems in their communities; they also contribute to the funding of these programs. The 1998 Provincial Task Force on Homelessness recognized that services for people who are homeless were variable and fragmented and acknowledged that “municipalities are the level of government best suited to act as the manager of the system of services for homeless people. They are in an ideal position to assess local needs, plan and set priorities, allocate resources and integrate services.”²²

In response to the Task Force report, the Government of Ontario designated municipalities as the local service system manager for homelessness. Subsequently, the Social Housing Reform Act (2000) designated Consolidated Municipal Service Managers as the service managers for administration of social housing programs.

In designating municipal governments as service system managers for homelessness, the Province affirmed, however, that “all levels of government share responsibility for removing barriers to the creation of additional rental accommodation and in fostering more creative approaches to its development.” In addition, the Province identified that: “Long term solutions to homelessness cannot be compartmentalized between the provincial and municipal levels, they must be coordinated. To build the capacity of municipalities to act as the service system manager for homelessness, the Province must establish province-wide outcomes, address its program “silos” and provide more flexible support to municipalities.”²³

The *Provincial Government* has provided resources for a number of mechanisms to address the needs of people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness, including:

- Shelter allowances (OW/ODSP)
- Emergency shelters / hostels

²² Report of the Provincial Task Force on Homelessness, October 1998

²³ Report of the Provincial Task Force on Homelessness, October 1998

- Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program (CHPP)
- Provincial Rent Bank Program (ended in 2007)
- Energy Fund
- Community Health Centres
- Housing with support services (including Domiciliary Hostels, Habitat Services, Homes for Special Care, Mental Health Homelessness Initiative and other housing with support services for people with developmental disabilities, severe mental illness, physical disabilities and head injuries)

The *Provincial Government* participates with the Federal Government in the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program. This program will come to an end in 2009.

The *Federal Government* established a National Homelessness Initiative and has provided funding for community initiatives to address homelessness. From 1999 to 2007, the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) provided funding to many Ontario communities to develop a wide range of program and service interventions to respond to homelessness. More recently, the Homelessness Partnering Initiative (HPI) has continued to provide resources in this area. HPI is also scheduled to end in March 2009.

The Federal Government delegated responsibility to local communities for determining needs and priorities and allocating federal homelessness funding. In some cases, this is the Municipality, while in others it is the United Way, a Social Planning Council or another “community entity”.

The *non-profit sector* plays a major role in responding to homelessness. Historically, churches and community based organizations assumed responsibility for developing responses to the needs of people in their communities. With increased commitment of resources by governments, the non-profit sector often continues to deliver services on the ground. With their intimate knowledge of the community and their ability to leverage volunteer energy and charitable resources, community based groups are well positioned for service delivery.

The *private sector* also contributes to the range of approaches in local communities. Their involvement through fund raising, in kind donations, individual and agency mentoring projects, as well as providing planning and other capacity building resources, helps strengthen local approaches to homelessness.

In addition to government subsidies to enhance affordability, a National Housing Framework can include measures to improve the ability of the non profit and private sectors to provide affordable housing through market based initiatives. These measures can include federal and provincial tax policy measures and provincial legislation and other planning tools to facilitate inclusionary zoning and promote affordability in housing. They can also include municipal facilitation of forms of housing that are intrinsically affordable, such as secondary suites, rooming houses and single room occupancy units.

vii. Service System Planning

Approaches to prevent and end homelessness are interconnected. A comprehensive and appropriate balance of approaches is required to address the diverse and changing needs of each person who experiences homelessness. Service System Managers must determine the range and mix of

approaches which is appropriate in their community and the most effective service delivery model to deliver these approaches.

Questions that must be answered to determine the appropriate balance of approaches and service delivery models include:

- What are the demographics? The needs and capacities of the community's homeless population?
- What resources are available in the community (e.g. the supply of affordable housing, the rental vacancy rate, employment opportunities)?
- What is required to achieve a matching of needs and resources (e.g. how long will it take to put in place supportive housing)?
- What other options are available for the interim?
- Do local agencies have the capacity to deliver the approaches.

The local community plan will depend on the answers to these questions and may vary over time.

D. Features of an Effective Service System to End Homelessness

Accessibility

People must be able to access the service system through a number of entry points (service delivery models). However, at present many points of access to the homelessness service system are not services which are primarily focused on ending homelessness and may not be familiar with the service system (e.g. public health, physicians, schools).

Flexibility

The system must be flexible to address emerging needs and to allow for creative approaches to local needs.

Initiatives to address homelessness tend to be limited to particular approaches. For example, many municipalities provide emergency shelter but may not provide housing. Although it is less costly, both in direct costs and in broader health and economic costs, for a person to be in permanent housing than in a shelter, funding for shelters can not normally be redirected to housing. The innovative provincial Hostels to Homes pilot is demonstrating the benefit of funding flexibility by allowing a hostel per diem equivalency to be used to enable movement of chronic shelter users into permanent housing.

Coordination

A Service System must be able to coordinate complementary resources to support one another; however, it can often be extremely challenging to access the resources. For example, many people that have experienced long term homelessness require support to sustain housing and, ultimately, to achieve independence, yet allocation of funding to develop new affordable housing is rarely coordinated with essential support funding.

Homelessness initiatives like the federal Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) (now Homelessness Partnering Initiative - HPI) and the provincial Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program (CHPP) have been able to overcome some of the internal barriers within the federal and provincial orders of government and have enabled municipalities and community agencies to develop more comprehensive approaches. These programs have, however, been limited to resources specifically designated for homelessness interventions.

The Service System must include a comprehensive system of approaches which address the full range of community needs. Even where the resources are available, the responsibility for providing these different resources can fall within the mandate of different government ministries and departments.

Where service delivery involves a multidisciplinary spectrum of approaches and funding from multiple funders there is the potential for duplication of administrative and reporting requirements. At the same time, there may also be gaps in the resources required to address the full spectrum of needs.

The limited scope of some government programs does not enable multidisciplinary service delivery models. For example, the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC) funds mental health outreach workers to work with people diagnosed with a mental illness. At the same time, municipalities fund multidisciplinary outreach workers to work with people who are experiencing homelessness, some of whom have mental health issues but do not have formal diagnoses. This can lead to an uncoordinated approach and duplication of effort.

Comprehensiveness

The Service System to End Homelessness must be broader than programs and services specifically defined as homelessness programs. In addition to programs funded by the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) provincially and those funded by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and Service Canada federally, the service system must include other Ministries and Departments.

The service system must recognize that housing stability is a key determinant of health and that ending homelessness must be a primary health priority: "Housing is the Best Medicine". It is essential that health authorities, including the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC) and Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) participate actively in identifying barriers in the health care system which contribute to homelessness and providing resources to support people to maintain stable housing.

One example of how health policy can contribute to homelessness is the lack of drug benefits for low income families. Families will often sacrifice food for themselves and redirect funds from paying the rent to buy medication for their children. This can lead to housing loss as well as further illness and loss of income.

There is also a requirement for enhanced discharge planning to ensure that people leaving correctional institutions and hospitals have a place to go and do not end up homeless. Hospitals often discharge people with direction for bed rest or Home Care during a period of recovery. These instructions can be difficult to follow for a person that is experiencing homelessness. Appropriate discharge planning is essential for people leaving hospitals who are experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness.

Communities in which there are correctional facilities report that prisoners are often released into the community on Friday afternoons with few financial resources. Unless these released prisoners find their way to the Ontario Works office very quickly and the office is able to respond quickly the people will be without funds and forced to spend the weekend in an emergency shelter. In addition to the emotional impact on the newly released prisoner, there are program costs that could have

been avoided through closer collaboration in development of policies and practices. This situation is preventable. For example, in some communities the John Howard Society has been funded to assume responsibility for discharge planning and to provide support to prisoners after discharge.

E. Comprehensive Service System Management

To achieve the objective of ending homelessness across Ontario, the current service system management approach should be affirmed and enhanced, with the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager or District Social Services Administration Board in each area being confirmed by all orders of government as the comprehensive Service System Manager for Homelessness and Housing.

In September 2007, in collaboration with the Service Manager Housing Network, OMSSA released a paper on Human Services Integration²⁴ which encourages municipalities to embrace their role as service system managers and to work toward integration of human services as a way to improve the services provided to people in our communities: “Integration suggests that services are being coordinated and managed, that the web of relationships which connect them is recognized and taken into account when decisions are made, and that it all exists for some purpose, that purpose being positive change for people receiving services and for the communities in which they live.”²⁵

The renewed model of service system integration will reaffirm the commitment to bring an end to homelessness. It will recognize the complementary role of the service manager in the areas of income maintenance, public health and housing. As well, it will recognize the requirement to include in the service system certain programs and policies that are not now managed directly by municipalities (e.g. Health, Corrections and Education).

i. How Service System Management Works

Service System Managers have direct control of some resources and interventions while, for others, they must work to influence the priorities and decisions of other funders and service providers so that they complement the service system.

Service System Management will include roles in three key areas: Planning, Resource Allocation and Accountability. Service System Managers will carry out research and assess needs, establish objectives, and set goals which will ensure that people in the community are adequately housed. They will establish priorities and work with local community leaders to ensure that the service system has the appropriate responses in place to meet those priorities. They will deploy resources, both within municipal departments and through community based agencies. Finally, they will evaluate the effectiveness of responses and allocate resources to ensure the efficient use of resources and their accountability to other orders of government.

Service System Management will include the following key features:

A. Responsiveness to the needs and priorities of each community

²⁴ A Guide to Thinking About Human Services Integration, OMSSA and the Service Manager Housing Network, September 2007

²⁵ Guide to Thinking About Human Services Integration, p.17

- Ongoing community wide needs assessment
 - Coordinated approach to priority setting
 - Collaborative development of community plans to end homelessness
 - Flexible service delivery to respond to the unique circumstances of each community in the context of the priorities and outcome targets of funders
- B. Coordinated allocation of resources for improved efficiency
- Ongoing research, monitoring and evaluation
 - An opportunity to provide sound information about needs and best practices to enable funders to establish priorities
 - Allocation of resources to enable an integrated local service system
 - Enhanced accountability to the public for allocation of resources to respond to community needs
- C. Improved delivery of services to those in need
- Client-centred processes to identify needs
 - A comprehensive service delivery system, designed to avoid overlap and gaps in responses
- D. Improved performance by service delivery agents
- Enhanced communication from service users to identify needs and feedback on responses
 - Enhanced coordination between service deliverers
 - Ongoing monitoring, evaluation and improvement of responses
 - Enhanced sharing of best practices and learning among service deliverers
 - Ongoing professional development and training for service deliverers
 - Enhanced accountability for use of public resources in accordance with outcomes defined by all orders of government
- E. Increased community awareness and responsibility for ending homelessness
- Coordinated approach to public education and community engagement
 - Greater clarity about needs and responses

ii. Collaboration for Successful Service System Management

The Service System Manager will be responsible to assess the needs and capacities of the community, to design an appropriate service system, to seek resources from a range of sources, including all orders of government, and to allocate resources to support the service system.

The Federal and Provincial governments can establish ongoing sustainable funding agreements with individual Service System Managers. Based on a local service system developed in the context of province-wide and nation-wide priorities, the funding agreement will identify the resources to be allocated and program targets to be achieved. Service System Managers will be accountable to the Federal and Provincial governments for the effective and efficient use of those resources.

Service System Managers will provide the leadership and the coordination. But they can not do it alone. They will facilitate active collaboration of people from across the community. They will

develop mechanisms to engage a range of organizations: members of faith communities, local service providers, charitable foundations, the United Way, and the business community to work with the Service System Manager to determine the needs of the community and to design a service system which incorporates the appropriate mix of program responses for that community.

Service System Managers will establish and sustain community engagement and accountability mechanisms which reflect local circumstances, including community advisory panels and funders' forums as well as mechanisms to engage consumers of homelessness services.

The Service System Manager will work with Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs), the local United Way, foundations, other funders and the private sector to ensure that their efforts complement and enhance the service system. Where possible, these funders will allocate resources to the Service System Manager to be directed to address community needs. Where this is not possible, the Service System Manager will work with the funder to ensure that the allocation of resources by the funder is coordinated with and informed by sound knowledge of community needs, capacities and priorities.

Service System Managers must have adequate resources to ensure the success of this collaboration and to guarantee effective facilitation of the service system. Currently, the cost of administration and planning is borne to a significant extent by Service Managers with some allowance from federal and provincial governments under certain programs (e.g. varying amounts under HPI).

F. Recommendations

Preamble

The Ontario Cabinet Committee on Poverty Reduction, led by the Honourable Deb Matthews, Minister of Children and Youth Services, has committed to the development of a focused poverty reduction strategy by the end of 2008. The Premier says: "We want everyone in Ontario to have the opportunity to succeed."

Yet, people who do not have affordable and stable housing do not have the opportunity to succeed. Homelessness and unstable housing impose huge costs both on people who experience homelessness and on all of society, while stable housing contributes to social and economic health. Ending homelessness must be a central part of Ontario's poverty reduction agenda.

Ending homelessness in Ontario will require participation of all three orders of government and key community stakeholders:

Municipal Governments must reaffirm their leadership role as Service System Managers. This will involve defining needs at the community level, developing plans to end homelessness and mobilizing agencies, community groups and private sector partners to work alongside municipal staff to address the daily needs of people experiencing homelessness and those at risk of becoming homeless.

The Federal and Provincial Governments must ensure that resources are available to sustain these local initiatives and to build on the successes of the past, in social service programs, in housing programs and in dedicated homelessness initiatives. There is an immediate urgency for these governments to act by:

- Extending funding for programs scheduled to end in early 2009, including the federal Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program, the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program, the Homelessness Partnering Strategy, and the Provincial Rent Bank Program for which funding ended in 2007
- Committing to permanent and sustainable funding for programs designed to end homelessness in every community and to meet the costs incurred by municipal service managers to plan and coordinate program delivery
- Directly engaging municipal service managers in the definition of needs and the design of program solutions
- Committing to active collaboration between Ministries and Departments within each order of government and between the different orders of government to ensure coordination, seamless service delivery and to avoid gaps

The specific recommendations which follow focus on four areas: Housing, Support to Access and Maintain Housing Stability, Income and Employment Support and Service System Capacity.

Recommendations

1. Housing

OMSSA's housing recommendations complement those set out recently by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Big City Mayors Caucus.²⁶

- a. *All orders of government collaborate to develop a National Housing Framework which will build on the successes of the past few years, including:*
 - *protect and preserve the existing affordable housing stock*
 - *increase the supply of affordable housing*
 - *address affordability issues for adequate housing*
 - *support people to maintain their housing*
- b. *Provide multi year funding for the National Housing Framework, including:*
 - *funding to preserve existing affordable housing stock (e.g. continuation of funding for federal Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program)*
 - *increased supply of affordable housing*
 - *rent geared to income subsidies to enhance affordability*
 - *funding for complementary supports linked to housing*
- c. *Allow flexibility in use of program funding to respond to local needs and capacities*
- d. *Ensure that affordability targets in new affordable housing supply programs reflect local market conditions and are consistent with provincial social assistance rates*

2. Support to Access and Maintain Housing Stability

- a. *Recognize that housing stability is a key determinant of health and that ending homelessness must be a health priority*
- b. *Commit to collaboration between human service ministries*
- c. *Commit to interministerial planning, including*
 - *addressing Ministry policies and practices which can contribute to homelessness (e.g. discharge planning from correctional institutions and hospitals)*
 - *resolving program conflicts which can be a barrier to ending homelessness*
 - *changing policies that are barriers to accessing affordable long term housing with support*
- d. *Commit to multi year funding to continue local initiatives to end homelessness, including:*
 - *addressing basic needs of people who are homeless*
 - *helping people experiencing homelessness to move into housing and to retain their housing*
 - *helping people experiencing homelessness to access health services, skills and employment training*

²⁶ Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Big City Mayors' Caucus, Sustaining the Momentum: Recommendations for a National Action Plan on Housing and Homelessness, January 23, 2008

- *supporting people that are at risk of homelessness to retain affordable housing*
- *building on strengths of current projects (e.g. funding flexibility of provincial Hostels to Homes initiative)*

e. *Provide multi year funding for complementary supports linked to affordable housing*

3. Sustaining Income and Employment

a. *Address income issues to sustain housing affordability by:*

- *increasing social assistance shelter allowances to match local housing market rents with 100% provincial dollars*
- *coordinating and increasing the flexibility of income support initiatives (e.g. Rent Bank, National Child Benefit, Ontario Child Benefit)*
- *increasing Old Age Security rates to reflect the real cost of living*
- *increasing the flexibility of the Employment Insurance program*
- *increasing minimum wage*
- *eliminating disincentives to employment in social assistance programs*
- *enhancing programs that provide skill development and preparation for employment*

4. Service System Capacity

a. *Affirm the continuing role of municipal governments as the Service System Manager for Homelessness*

b. *Affirm the Service System Manager model for coordinated program delivery at the municipal level based on the following principles:*

- *integration of planning and delivery of human services*
- *local planning and resource allocation*
- *administrative simplicity and streamlined reporting requirements*
- *maximum flexibility to respond to local community needs within national and provincial priorities*
- *monitoring, evaluation and research at all levels of planning and service delivery to ensure program effectiveness and responsiveness*

c. *Provide resources to enable Service Managers to implement the Service System Management role, including:*

- *multi year funding for Housing Framework*
- *multi year funding for homelessness initiatives*
- *multi year funding for planning and administration*

d. *Increase community capacity to end homelessness by:*

- *increasing community awareness of the complex issues of homelessness*
- *overcoming community resistance to location of affordable and supportive housing*
- *involving community stakeholders in planning for the service system*
- *engaging local community based organizations in delivery of programs and services*
- *building the capacity for community participation by people that have direct personal experience of homelessness*

Appendix A - Continuum of Housing and Support Services

Housing	Street	Emergency Shelters	Transitional Housing	Supportive Housing	Community Based Affordable Housing	Private Market Housing
<i>National Housing Framework</i>	<i>Streets to Homes</i>	<i>Preserve existing stock</i>	<i>Preserve existing housing</i> <i>Increase supply</i>	<i>Preserve existing housing</i> <i>Increase supply</i>	<i>Preserve existing housing</i> <i>Increase supply</i>	<i>Preserve existing housing</i>
Support Services	Outreach	Support to Access Housing		Support to Maintain Housing Stability	Maintain Housing	Sustaining Income & Employment
	<i>Basic needs</i>	<i>Discharge Planning</i>	<i>Hostels to Homes</i>		<i>Address Affordability</i>	<i>Address Affordability</i>
	<i>Access health service</i>				<i>Funding for Supports</i>	<i>Address income issues</i>
Other Human Services						Supports to Employment
		<i>Skill Development & Employment Training</i>				<i>Education & Training</i> <i>Adequate Child Care</i>

Sustained and Supported by Service System Capacity and Community Capacity

Appendix B
Members of OMSSA Task Force to Develop a Strategy to End Homelessness

<p>Constance Woloschuk, Chair Manager, Residential and Support Services Housing Branch Community and Protective Services City of Ottawa</p>	
<p>Bob Barraclough Director of Operations District of Nipissing</p> <p>Phil Brown General Manager Shelter Support and Housing Administration City of Toronto</p> <p>Bob Knight Director, Health and Social Services City of Kawartha Lakes</p> <p>Marie Morrison Manager, Social Planning Social Services Regional Municipality of Waterloo</p> <p>Sue Ritchie Manager, Community Programs Unit Human Services Department Regional Municipality of Peel</p>	<p>Goldie Barth Special Services Manager County of Wellington Social Services</p> <p>Cheryl Hitchen Manager, Applicant Services and Community Programs Administration Community and Family Services Department City of Kingston</p> <p>Mary Menzies Acting Director, Housing Services Regional Municipality of Durham</p> <p>Sally Pincock Housing Initiatives Coordinator Housing Division Social and Community Services Department Regional Municipality of Halton</p> <p>Tona Robis Director, Social Services Social Services Division, South District City of Toronto</p>
Staff	
<p>Kira Heineck Executive Director Ontario Municipal Social Services Association</p>	<p>Tom Boreskie Communications Manager Ontario Municipal Social Services Association</p>
Facilitator and Author	
<p>Paul Dowling Consultant</p>	