



**The Alliance to End Homelessness Ottawa**  
**L'Alliance pour mettre un terme à l'itinérance d'Ottawa**  
[www.endhomelessnessottawa.ca](http://www.endhomelessnessottawa.ca)

**CITY OF OTTAWA PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING ON NOVEMBER 13, 2012**  
**ALLIANCE TO END HOMELESSNESS SUBMISSION ON DRAFT 2013 OPERATING AND CAPITAL BUDGETS**

The Alliance to End Homelessness Ottawa (ATEH) is a non-profit group with 42 member organizations. ATEH is asking the Planning Committee to include in its recommendations for the final 2013 Budget a request that the final Budget maintain essential services for low-income residents that will otherwise be eliminated because of provincial government service reductions and cutbacks. We are urging all Councillors to support this.

ATEH recognises that the Planning Committee helped the Community and Protective Services make up the \$15M to deal with provincial changes: it contributed the \$1M Home Ownership component and \$1M of the \$14M Housing and Homelessness Investment was shifted to maintain benefits to secure and retain housing. The ATEH concern is covering at least the remaining \$2.5M. We understand there is also some community concern on what was lost to achieve the 15M.

**ATEH Board agrees with Councillors that the Province of Ontario is responsible for this budget dilemma but sees only two appropriate responses.**

**FIRST, do no harm.** To act on this principle Council would cover the \$2.5M to protect the most vulnerable in our community from service erosion. This can be done by adding to the budget while still keeping it under a 2.5% increase or by reducing expenditures proportionally across committees' budgets.

- **ATEH asks that the committee to consider three glaring examples of service that will be cut:** (1) assistance to pay for a funeral service (only help with the cost to bury or cremate someone will remain); (2) assistance with the over-the-counter cost of respiratory supplies; and (3) help with traveling expenses for something like attending a parent's out of town funeral. *Veterans who die in our community will not be the only ones treated shabbily if this service erosion goes forward.*
- **Removing a last-resort option to apply for help** with unexpected expenses like these will definitely have an impact of people's ability to stay housed. It may take a few months but it is not hard to see why people with absolutely no room in their budget can end up at a much more costly shelter.

**THE SECOND appropriate response ATEH suggests is a highly visible demonstration that the City of Ottawa is serious about advocacy.** Local MPPs need to see in their own community a public reaction on behalf of low income people in Ottawa.

**TIME TO JOIN FORCES!** As we see it the answer lies in stepping-up advocacy. ATEH asks itself how we can work with Council on advocacy efforts. The City and the Alliance could hold joint press conference to put pressure on the province or hold a public debate between Council members, local MPPs and the Alliance. The quieter forms of municipal advocacy undertaken so far have not and will not hold back the relentless move to have municipalities bear the brunt of provincial or federal changes.

**Our city cannot sustain absorbing critical funding for necessary services.** In this situation, while the city is in the midst of managing the provincial upload dollars through Council's Strategic Initiatives, the Province blindsides Ottawa by the changing criteria for Discretionary Benefits and ending the Community Start-up Benefit. *What will be next?*

**AVOID UNDERMINING the Planning Committee's affordable housing efforts.** This committee play a critical and fundamental role in the work to end homelessness. Approving measures that leave out \$2.5M in services will add to the number of individuals and families who become homeless.

ATEH's data analysis shows that between 2004 and 2011 our community was not able to make significant gains in ending homelessness.

- The majority of individuals and families who become homeless in any given year do indeed find housing; it may take longer than ever now but then unfortunately another cohort ends up in dire straits. Ottawa's Council's significant achievements in housing and services and those of community agencies keep us from losing ground.
- Low incomes have not kept pace with rents that are too high or with food that is too expensive; there has been far too little new affordable housing stock.

**PROVINCIAL AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS need to do more not less for our community to reduce homelessness.** ATEH calls on the Planning Committee to show leadership. Its efforts will not be unscathed if service erosion happens at the same time as improvements in affordable housing go forward in the 2013 City Budget.

**ATEH's Open Letter to all Council Committee Members follows.**

---

**Executive Director: Lynne Browne**

171 George Street, Ottawa, ON K1N 5W5 – Tel: 613-241-1573, ext. 314, [lynnebrowne@endhomelessnessottawa.ca](mailto:lynnebrowne@endhomelessnessottawa.ca)



**The Alliance to End Homelessness**  
**L'Alliance pour mettre un terme à l'itinérance**  
[www.endhomelessnessottawa.ca](http://www.endhomelessnessottawa.ca)

**OPEN LETTER to the City of Ottawa Council**

November 8, 2012

**The Alliance to End Homelessness (ATEH) in Ottawa is urging all Ottawa Councillors and their Committees to come up with a final 2013 Budget at the Council Meeting on November 28<sup>th</sup> that maintains essential services to low-income residents that will otherwise be eliminated because of provincial government service reductions and cutbacks.**

The ATEH board (Steering Committee) applauds the members of the Community and Protective Services Committee for proposing a CPS Budget that includes \$15M to cover the cost of the majority of 2012 benefits at risk – quite an achievement for just one department – but a further \$2.5M needs to be found through the other City Committees. On November 15<sup>th</sup> ATEH will urge CPS to bring a motion to City Council proposing a final Ottawa Budget that will maintain the existing range of services covered under discretionary benefits either through a city budget increase of 2.2% or by reducing expenditures in other departments.

These discretionary services have been helping people deal with unexpected expenses while maintaining their housing and warding off homelessness, or helping them set up a place of their own as they move back into the community after being homeless.

**Only \$2.5M is needed, a change of one-tenth of one percent in the total Ottawa Budget.**

The Province of Ontario has created serious problems for our municipality but with just a bit more funding the City of Ottawa can hold the line, keep things from getting worse, and allow Ottawa residents struggling on low incomes to maintain their dignity and the opportunity for success.

**As it stands, the Ottawa Budget includes some very difficult changes for individuals and families on low incomes.** One of the main causes of homelessness is unexpected, unplanned expenses such as paying for a funeral service. Under the proposed Budget cuts, **community members with a low income will no longer be able to apply for help with funeral service expenses.** *Imagine explaining to a mother or father who has just lost a child that the City can no longer help cover the cost of a service, only the cost of the actual burial or cremation.* To be sure, families will still hold a service to grieve their loved one but the full cost of a service will have to come out of rent or food money. People on minimum wage, OW, ODSP or even OAS/GIS have no extra money for such expenses. This not only puts a family at risk of becoming homeless, but a burden like this can translate into the need for more affordable housing, add more applicants to the housing registry, and require more funding for emergency shelters and increase the use of hospital ERs.

**In addition to funeral services, another area the City of Ottawa will no longer cover as of January 1<sup>st</sup> is respiratory supplies. There will also be reduced funds available for financial assistance with vision and dental care or for furniture items people may need to move out of a homeless shelter into a place of their own.** *(The full list of cuts and service reductions is below.)*

Increasing the total Budget increase for the City Of Ottawa by one-tenth of one percent up to 2.2% would cover these service cuts and reductions. Councillors on the CPS Committee have done a valiant job in finding most of what the province no longer provides. **Now it is up to all other Councillors and their Committees to act and find the remaining 2.5M.**

---

**Executive Director: Lynne Browne**

171 George Street, Ottawa, ON K1N 5W5 – Tel: 613-241-1573, ext. 314, [lynnebrowne@endhomelessnessottawa.ca](mailto:lynnebrowne@endhomelessnessottawa.ca)



# The Alliance to End Homelessness

## L'Alliance pour mettre un terme à l'itinérance

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

**Maintaining these services reflects both a commitment to dignity for low income constituents and to protecting tax payers from other costly housing and health expenditures.**

Keep in mind that the Province of Ontario expanded eligibility for these discretionary funds. Unfortunately this is a good idea that comes with an inadequate funding envelope. Even with the \$2.5 M covered by Ottawa, the province is expecting municipalities to serve more people than ever with 50% less funding and that is an impossible task.

Be assured that ATEH is asking Ottawa's Members of Provincial Parliament to restore full amount of the provincial funds. It is also asking the people of Ottawa to urge Councillors to pass a Budget that will maintain the existing range of services into 2013 even if there is less funding from the province.

Lynne Browne

*Executive Director*

*Alliance to End Homelessness Ottawa*

---

### **In 2013 proposed City Of Ottawa Budget, community members with a low income will no longer be able to apply for help with:**

- Funeral services (*only funds for cremations and burials will continue*)
- Respiratory supplies, air conditioners, vaporizers
- Funds for food or clothing above the maximum basic allowance amounts set by the Province
- Non-health related travel benefits (*i.e., a parent's funeral in another community*)
- Enhanced items formerly funded through the Provincial Assistive Devices Program (ADP)\* including prosthetics, mobility aids and hearing aids will not be covered under discretionary benefits.

### **In 2013 the proposed Budget will include less money to help those applying for help with:**

- Dental services, dentures **(13% cut)**
- Eyeglasses for adults **(23% cut)**
- Cultural interpretation **(22% cut)**
- Furniture to help set up after being homeless **(3% cut)**

### **People living in poverty in City of Ottawa:**

The Ottawa Social Planning Council, using data from Statistics Canada "Low Income Cut-Off" (LICO), reports that approximately **15% of the population (130,000 individuals)** lived in poverty in City of Ottawa (2005). By 2011, Ottawa's total population was 883,391.