Alliance to
End Homelessness
Ottawa



Annual Report

2023 - 2024



Land Acknowledgement:

Ottawa is located on unceded Algonquin, Anishnabek territory, and also the home of many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people.

Put simply, these lands were stolen from the traditional keepers for the purposes of settlers. Dispossession of land is just one form of ongoing colonization that has led to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people disproportionately experiencing homelessness. Research shows that Indigenous Peoples account for 20-50% of the total homeless population.

Statement of Reconciliation

We are grateful for the work of Métis scholar Jesse Thistle in defining homelessness as experienced by First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people. The 12 dimensions of Indigenous homelessness make clear the connection between historical and ongoing colonization and the over-representation of Indigenous people experiencing homelessness.

To truly have an impact on homelessness in our community, we must lead with this knowledge. Embracing Indigenous leadership and collaboration is crucial to ensuring the prevention, reduction, and ultimate end of homelessness.

We support the call for a fully-funded Indigenous Housing Strategy with an Indigenous-led governance structure.

This acknowledgment is a reminder of the responsibility we have to Indigenous Peoples and a commitment to reconciliation.

Chair's Message



Mayor Sutcliffe addresses participants at the Empathy Project simulation with City Councillors, January 2024

Ending Homelessness is possible.

This year the Alliance brought two officials from Finland's Y Foundation to Ottawa to share a simple message: ***give people quality, permanent housing, and ensure they receive the care and support they need.*** With this philosophy Finland has reduced homelessness from 18,000 people in 1987 to less than 3,700 people in 2022. Ottawa can do the same.

We're proud to have played a role in some exciting achievements in the City of Ottawa in the last year toward creating more, preserving the quality and stopping the loss of affordable housing. In March 2023, after seeing no increase in the affordable housing budget since 2014 - ***City Council DOUBLED the capital budget for affordable housing to $30 million dollars!*** This makes Ottawa a leader in the country for funding affordable housing from the City budget. Council also approved a vacant unit tax as a new source of revenue for affordable housing.

In January 2024, the Mayor and members of Council participated in the Alliance's Empathy Project to better understand the experience of someone experiencing homelessness and seeking to access services. Finally, over the last year we were pleased to work in partnership with the City of Ottawa on a pilot Rapid Rehousing Initiative that included an enhanced housing benefit. ***Together we were able to house 274 individuals.***

On the systems planning side, with funding from the Ottawa Community Foundation, we embarked on a project called ***Moving UPP!*** to develop a community perspective on the 'ideal state' of the pathway(s) from homelessness to housing in Ottawa. The collective impact project will support the collaboration of the Alliance and OSHN to map out the ideal state of the housing and homelessness system, and the steps needed to operationalize it. It will show us how the services of our individual member organizations should evolve, and how we can collaborate across the non-profit sector to realize much-needed system-level changes.

We also continued our work with the City and the sector on a new governance structure to drive strategic outcomes for reducing homelessness. We participated in the ***Interim Housing and***

Homelessness Leadership Table and helped set the vision, values, approach and terms of reference for the ***City Advisory Committee*** that will launch in fall 2024.

At the same time that we push for change, we acknowledge the pressures on the system: 2023 marked the highest numbers on record in Ottawa's shelter system; roughly ***10% of people in Ottawa's shelters are employed but can't find housing***; and ***Ottawa loses 31 affordable private market rentals to demolition or renovation for each new unit of purpose-built affordable housing built***. This makes our work all the more vital to ending homelessness.

I am grateful to work alongside you in this work. I am inspired by the dedication of our members, of the Alliance Board, staff and volunteers, and by the support of our partners and funders.

Together, we can end homelessness.

- Catharine Vandelinde

Remembering Lynne Browne



It was with great sadness that we learned that the first Executive Director of the Alliance, Lynne Browne, passed away suddenly at the end of October 2023. She was an incredible advocate for ending homelessness in our community and led the Alliance from being a Steering Committee to an organization putting the spotlight on Ottawa's growing homelessness challenge. Lynne was a force to be reckoned with and community partners recall her going toe to toe with politicians on a regular basis advocating for systems solutions to homelessness.

Lynne's dedication and passion for her work were truly inspiring. Throughout her tenure, she achieved significant milestones, including the incorporation of the Alliance as a non-profit organization. Her efforts in organizing the annual Community Forum, as well as publishing the annual report card on housing and homelessness in Ottawa, have left a lasting impact on our community. Not only was Lynne a tireless advocate for political change, but she also demonstrated an unwavering commitment to her role. Her dedication to the cause of ending homelessness was evident in her work, and her legacy will continue to inspire us all.

Lynne dedicated over 10 years of her life to the Alliance, leaving an indelible mark on the organization and the community we serve. We extend our deepest condolences to her husband Jim and the entire Browne family during this difficult time. Lynne's memory and contributions to this community will be remembered. We are sad to have lost such a wonderful advocate. She will be greatly missed by many.



Advocacy & Public Engagement

Blog:

On our blog, we published analyses of special topics in housing and homelessness, including its impact on Black communities, violence against women, veterans' homelessness, and truth and reconciliation.



Housing and Mental Health in Black Communities
Karen Umurerwa



Embracing Identity: The Bonds of the African Diaspora
Yetunde Amanda Ona



National Day of Remembrance & Action on Violence Against Women
Gail Gallagher



Veterans Homelessness on Rememberance Day
Maj (Retd) Mark MacDonald



National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
Gail Gallagher



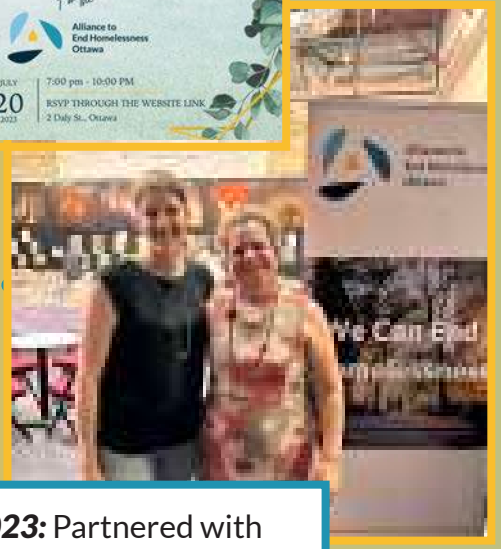
Ending Homelessness Starts With Non-Profit Housing
Sophia Kelly-Langer

Events & appearances:

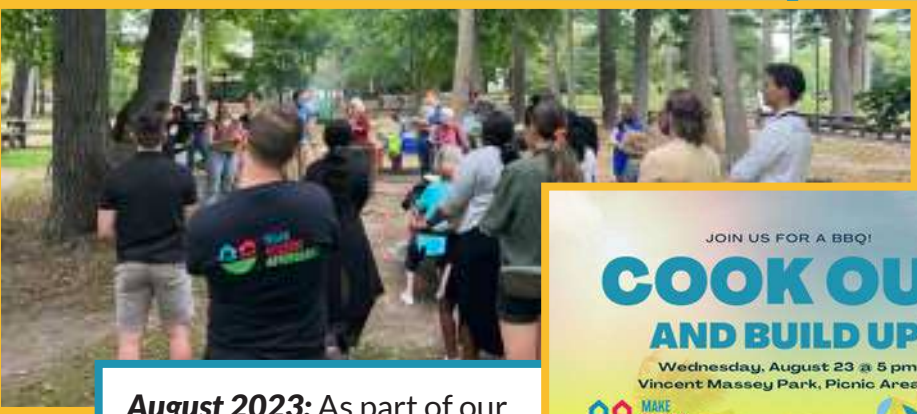


June 2023: City Building Summit 2023: BUILD UP OTTAWA!





July 2023: Partnered with the Classic Theatre Festival for a fundraising event.

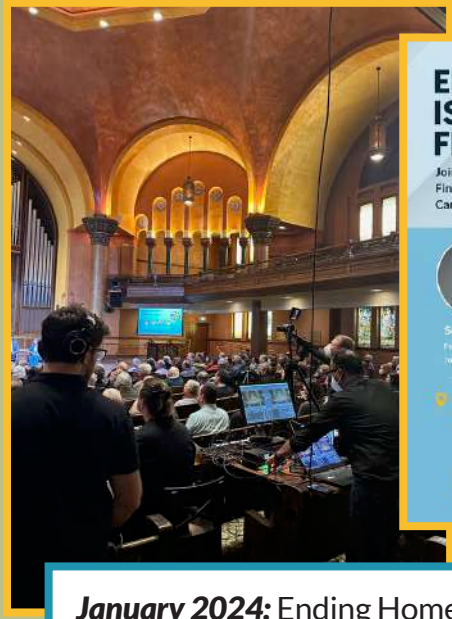


August 2023: As part of our Starts With Home campaign, Make Housing Affordable and the Alliance hosted a BBQ to bring together housing advocates from different communities.





October 2023: We were the non-profit partner for the Ottawa Beer Festival. We raised almost $2,500 from this partner event!





January 2024: Ending Homelessness is Possible: Lessons from Finland. Catherine Cullen, host of CBC's The House moderated a conversation with Finland's Y-Foundation CEO Ojankoski Teija and Head of International Affairs, Juha Kahila, who have led the way in Finland's progress towards ending homelessness, with Federal Housing Minister, Sean Fraser, and Jocelyn Formsma, Board Chair of the National Indigenous Collaborative Housing Inc. (NICHI). Over 300 people attended in person, and the event was streamed over 2,600 times.

January 2024: Empathy Project simulation with City Councillors.





February 2024: "How to Leverage Community Finance for Affordable Housing" with Satyameet Singh from Tapestry Community Capital

March 2024: Empathy Project End Homelessness St. John's



March 2024: Event with Cahdco, the Ottawa Community Land Trust, and the Co-operative Housing Federation Canada about the support they provide for co-ops and an inspring new co-operative housing project in Toronto.

Campaigns

Spring 2023: #OttawaNeedsMore
Within 24 hours of Mayor Mark Sutcliffe announcing that the City was forming an Emergency Shelter Crisis Taskforce to address the unprecedented demand that our shelter system is facing, the Alliance developed a campaign calling on the federal government to respond with $30 million dollars for immediate support. Together we sent ***842*** letters to the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, and Minister of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship.

Get Non-Profit Housing into the Federal Budget!
A campaign urging the federal government to increase investments in non-profit housing for the 2024 federal budget and double Canada's non-profit housing stock.







Radio

The Alliance made ***65*** radio appearances this year, on CBC London, CBC Sudbury, CBC All In A Day, CBC Radio-Canada, City News, CFRA Morning Rush, CFRA Ottawa at Work, the Kristy Cameron Show, and the Sam LaPrade Show.

"What I've found, consistently, is that action doesn't happen when you present the best argument, and the facts and figures. Action happens when people feel it in their gut."

- Kaite Burkholder Harris, speaking to CBC's Allan Neal about the impact of th Empathy Project.

Media & News

Between April 1, 2023, and March 31, 2024, the Alliance was quoted in ***47 news stories***, and published ***2 op-eds***.



Ottawa Citizen
May 3, 2023



CTV News
Sept. 5, 2023



CBC News
Oct 27, 2023



CBC News
Nov 30, 2023



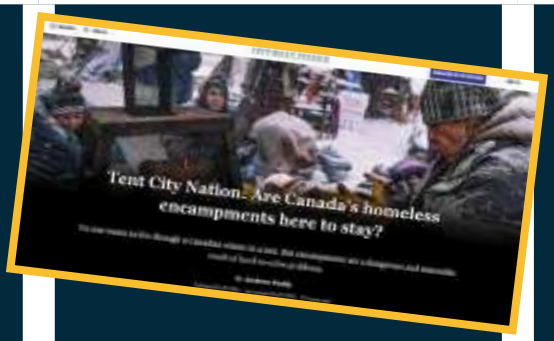
CBC News
Jan 4, 2024



Aylmer Bulletin
February 7, 2024



St. Catharines Standard
Feb. 23, 2024



Ottawa Citizen
Feb 23, 2024



Waterloo Chronicle
February 24, 2024



Deputations

The Alliance presented ***4 deputations*** this year.

We also presented with Dr. Carolyn Whitzman at **Ontario's Pre-Budget Submission Panel**, about using our resources for housing and supports, instead of more crisis responses.

Deputation at Planning and Housing Committee | Budget 2024

"We know that the only way to truly end homelessness and tackle the housing crisis in our community is through non-profit housing. This will be the most cost-effective use of our resources to create truly affordable units in perpetuity. The private market simply cannot deliver the level of affordability needed to ensure everyone is housed in a sustainable way."

Deputation at Community Services Committee | Budget 2024

"Prevention work through organizations that see people precariously housed, stabilizing people in their current housing, smarter discharge planning from provincial systems - there are a lot of opportunities upstream to prevent homelessness in the first place. As well, rapid re-housing is a critical part of ensuring that people do not get stuck in the system and experience worse and worse outcomes."

Deputation at the Joint Finance & Planning Committee

"We cannot continue to separate the housing and homelessness crisis from decisions like Lansdowne where we have a choice to invest in long-term solutions, using the City resources we have."

Deputation at the Finance and Corporate Services Committee

"This new opportunity for supportive housing at 1245 Kilborn Avenue is an exciting and smart investment. Local supportive housing providers report seeing over 90% success in people staying housed long-term through supportive housing. It is a key step on the road to ending homelessness."

"It's time to take a breath, build a plan, and come up with better solutions."

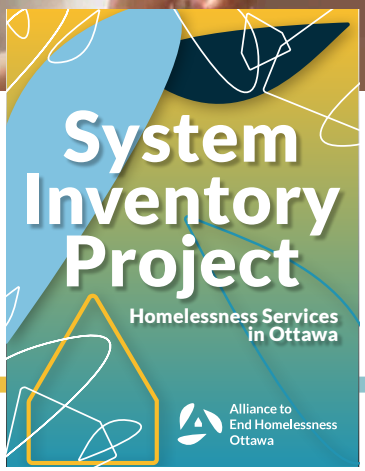
- Kaite Burkholder Harris

Research





On May 1, 2023, we launched **Our City Starts With Home: Scaling Up Non-Profit Housing in Ottawa**. The report is intended to be a "how to" for the City of Ottawa to increase new non-profit housing, using the tools and levers available, and identifies what's needed from other levels of government to make it happen. We hosted a launch event at City Hall, before bringing the report to the Planning and Housing Committee on May 3rd.



The Alliance completed its ***System Inventory*** project, capturing a snapshot of the system at each step of the homelessness spectrum, from prevention, to response, to permanent housing.

Katrina Landon, our Master of Social Work placement student, wrote a ***submission to the Federal Housing Advocate review panel*** on the financialization of housing - where housing becomes an economic asset to accrue wealth, rather than a basic human right. These review panels act as a new accountability mechanism under the National Housing Strategy Act to support the realization of the right to housing by bringing recommendations forward to Parliament.

Our submission highlights how public land sold to for-profit housing developers means that we lose the opportunity for long-term affordable, non-profit housing, based on the recommendations in the Scaling Up Non-Profit Housing report.

We completed the second phase of the Moving UPP project: the environmental scan. The consultants met with ***25 local thought leaders*** to discuss potential solution areas and build trust in the process. Interviews included perspectives from shelters, transitional housing providers, supportive and affordable housing providers, youth-serving organizations, a 2SLGBTQ+ serving organization, and a mental health organization. A survey of ***62 front-line staff*** provided additional insights by identifying how the sector might improve various points in client pathways through the housing and homelessness sector. The survey covered service promotion, referrals, intake, and service delivery.

System Change

Housing and Homelessness Leadership Table

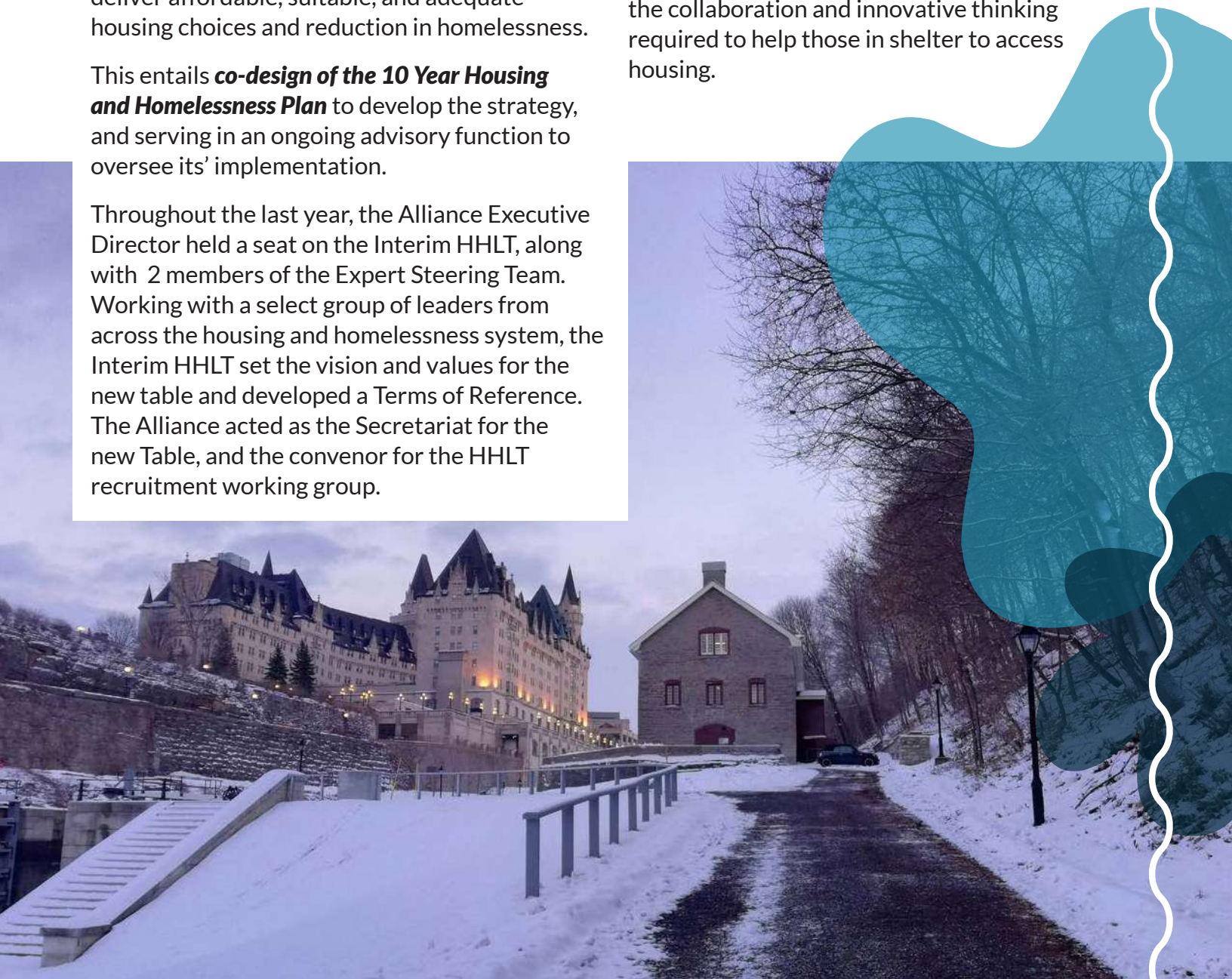
The Housing and Homelessness Leadership Table (HHLT) has been developed by the City of Ottawa's Housing Services and the housing and homelessness sector in a co-design process over the last two years. It will function as an Advisory Committee as approved by City Council with a mission to plan, design, and oversee the ongoing implementation of an integrated housing and homelessness system and related sectors to deliver affordable, suitable, and adequate housing choices and reduction in homelessness.

This entails ***co-design of the 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan*** to develop the strategy, and serving in an ongoing advisory function to oversee its' implementation.

Throughout the last year, the Alliance Executive Director held a seat on the Interim HHLT, along with 2 members of the Expert Steering Team. Working with a select group of leaders from across the housing and homelessness system, the Interim HHLT set the vision and values for the new table and developed a Terms of Reference. The Alliance acted as the Secretariat for the new Table, and the convenor for the HHLT recruitment working group.

Rapid Rehousing Initiative

In response to concerns about the rise in shelter numbers and the ongoing need for Physical Distancing Centres, the Interim HHLT proposed the creation of a Rapid Rehousing Initiative (RRI) that ran from October 2023 to May 2024. Co-led by the Alliance and the City of Ottawa, the RRI focused on housing individuals staying in Ottawa's overflow shelters. ***274 people*** were housed during the project period, half of which accessed permanent housing thanks to an enhanced subsidy prototype. The RRI highlights the collaboration and innovative thinking required to help those in shelter to access housing.



Expert Steering Team

Since its creation in 2021, the Expert Steering Team (EST) has been a vital part of the work of the Alliance. The EST works from a systems-level perspective, using their diverse expertise to ensure all aspects of the Alliance are centering on lived experience.

They offer expertise to membership and the community to help reduce, prevent, and end homelessness.

This year, highlights included:

- The Federal Housing Advocate launched a formal review of encampments in Canada to address the human rights crisis happening across the country. The Expert Steering Team worked with the Advocate to gain ***testimonials from people dwelling in encampments*** in Ottawa.
- Two members of the EST were part of the team that co-created the new City Advisory Committee, the ***Housing and Homelessness Leadership Table***, setting the mission, values and terms of reference.
- Two EST members joined the ***City of Ottawa's Community Advisory Board***, while others continue work in rural homelessness, veterans' homelessness, and newcomer homelessness tables.
- The EST sent representatives to the ***Halifax Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness conference***, and three EST members joined the host committee in preparation for the Ottawa conference.
- The EST continues to lead the ***Empathy Project***, bringing it to new heights locally and nationally this year.
- The EST consulted on work done by Carleton University, the University of Guelph, CMHC, O Strategies Consulting, the Ottawa Food Bank, Operation Come Home, and more.
- New ***workshops and training sessions*** were developed and presented to educational spaces ranging from 5th grade classrooms to graduate programs, and EST webinars were held to those within the sector.
- The team co-designed, set the scope for, and worked heavily on the ***Moving UPP*** project, including conducting interviews and creating an annotated bibliography.
- The EST held an ***environmental scan*** of other lived experience teams nationally, and has used this data to help position themselves within the broader system more effectively.
- The EST has been working on a ***toolkit*** which, when complete, can be used as a resource to support other organizations in meaningful lived experience engagement.





Stock photography credits: Cover and pg. 14 photos by charliewarl on Unsplash. Pg. 2 photo by Sichen Xiang on Unsplash. Pg. 5 photo by Samantha Hare on Unsplash. Pg. 12 photo by Juan A. Muñoz M on Unsplash.

We could not do the critical work of advocacy and pushing for system-level change in our community without the incredible support of our agency members and funders. We also have a growing number of individual members and are grateful for their engagement and support.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to this work.

We can prevent, reduce,
and end homelessness together.

Alliance Board of Directors 2023-2024

- ***Catharine Vandelinde*** - Chair
  Options Bytown Non-Profit Housing Corporation
- ***Tyler Fainstat*** - Vice Chair
  John Howard Society
- ***Susan Farrell*** - Secretary
  Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA Ottawa)
- ***Mark MacAulay*** - Treasurer
  Ottawa Salus
- ***Tamara Chipperfield***
  Pinecrest Queensway CHC
- ***Melany Chrétien***
  Ottawa Community Housing
- ***Pete Cranston***
  Community Member
- ***Sarah Davis***
  Cornerstone Housing for Women
- ***Darren Graham***
  Youth Services Bureau
- ***Nathalie Maione***
  Action Logement
- ***Kesha Mukobelwa***
  Community Member
- ***Allan Reesor-McDowell***
  Matthew House
- ***Rachel Robinson***
  Belong Ottawa
- ***Peter Tilley***
  The Ottawa Mission

United Way East Ontario
OTTAWA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
Maytree Poverty • Rights • Change
maclaren corlett LAWYERS EST. 1873
Funded by the Government of Canada's Community Services Recovery Fund | Canada

Our Member Organizations

Action-Logement / Action-Housing • Anglican Diocese of Ottawa - Community Ministries • Belong Ottawa / Centre 454 / St. Luke's Table / The Well • Bruce House • Cahdco • Caldwell Family Centre • Canadian Mental Health Association – Ottawa Branch • Capital City Mission • Capital Rainbow Refuge • Carlington Community Health Centre • Carty House • Causeway Work Centre • Centre 507 • Centre des services communautaires / Vanier Community Service Centre • Centre for Research on • Educational and Community Services, University of Ottawa • Centretown Churches Social Action Committee (CSAC) • Centretown Citizens Ottawa Corporation (CCOC) • Centretown Community Health Centre • Cooperative Housing Association of Eastern Ontario (CHASEO) • Cornerstone Housing for Women • Council on Aging • Daybreak Housing • Eastern Ottawa Community Resource Centre / Centre de ressources de l'est d'Ottawa • Elizabeth Fry Society of Ottawa • Ellwood House • FAM Network • Gloucester Housing Corporation • Helping With Furniture • Housing Help • Interval House • Jewish Family Services (JFS) • John Howard Society of Ottawa (JHS) • Just Food • LiveWorkPlay • Lowertown Community Resource Centre • Matthew House • Minwaashin Lodge • Montfort Renaissance Inc. • Multifaith Housing Initiative (MHI) • Nepean Housing • OMRA • Operation Come Home • Options Housing • Orléans-Cumberland Community Resource Centre / Centre de ressources communautaires Orléans-Cumberland • Ottawa Community Housing (OCH) • Ottawa Food Bank (OFB) • Ottawa Inner City Health • Ottawa Innercity Ministries (OIM) • Ottawa Pastoral Counselling Centre • Ottawa Salus Corporation • PAL Ottawa • Parkdale United Church • Pinecrest-Queensway Community Health Centre • Project Upstream • Refugee Ministry Office • Restoring Hope Ministries • Rideau-Rockcliffe Community Resource Centre • Royal Ottawa Health Care Group (ROH) • Shepherds of Good Hope • Social Housing Registry of Ottawa • Somerset West Community Health Centre • South-East Ottawa Community Health Centre • The Ottawa Mission • The Salvation Army Ottawa Booth Centre • Upstream Ottawa • Veterans House Canada • Wabano Centre For Aboriginal Health • Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre • YMCA-YWCA, National Capital Region • Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa • Youturn Youth Support Service •