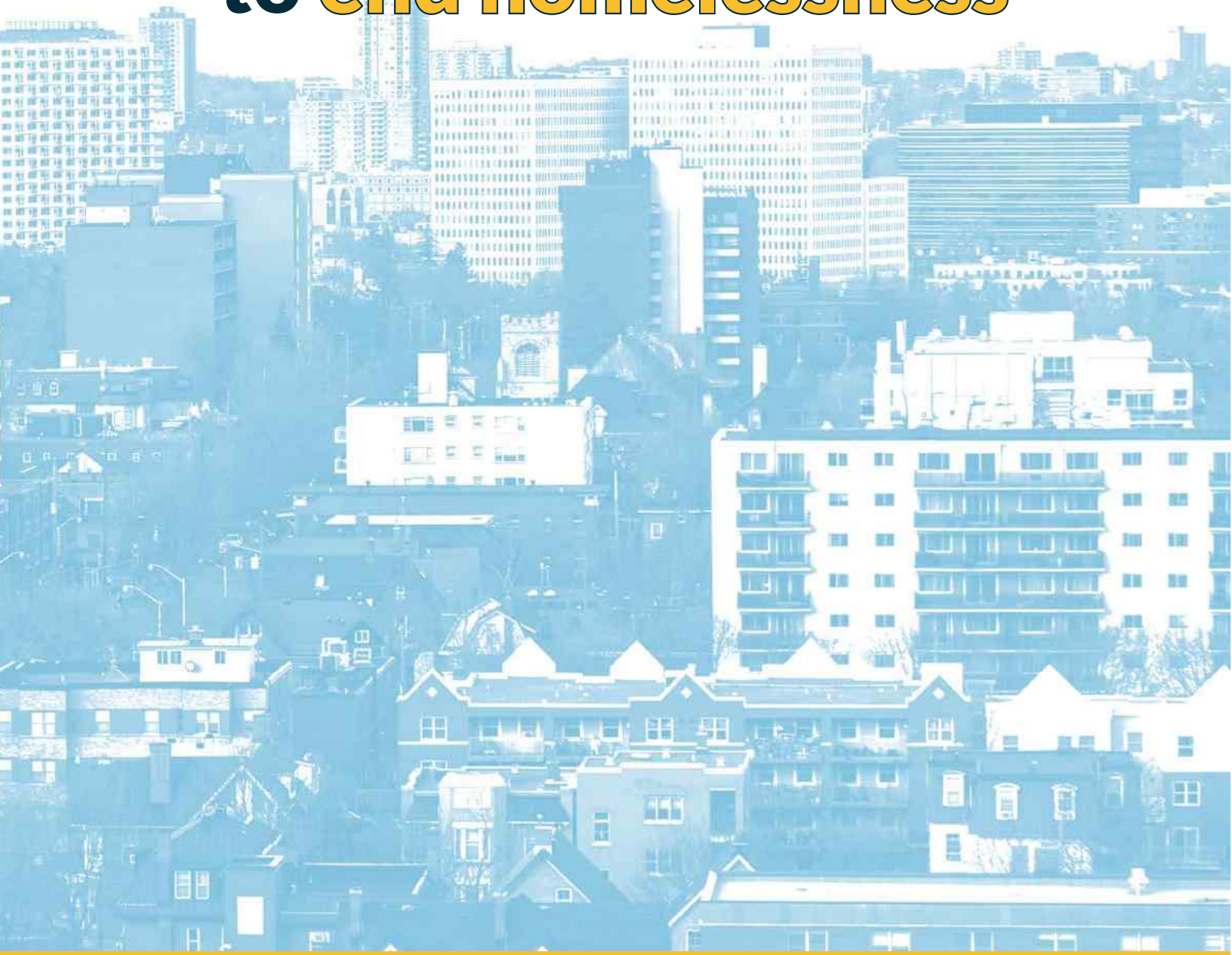
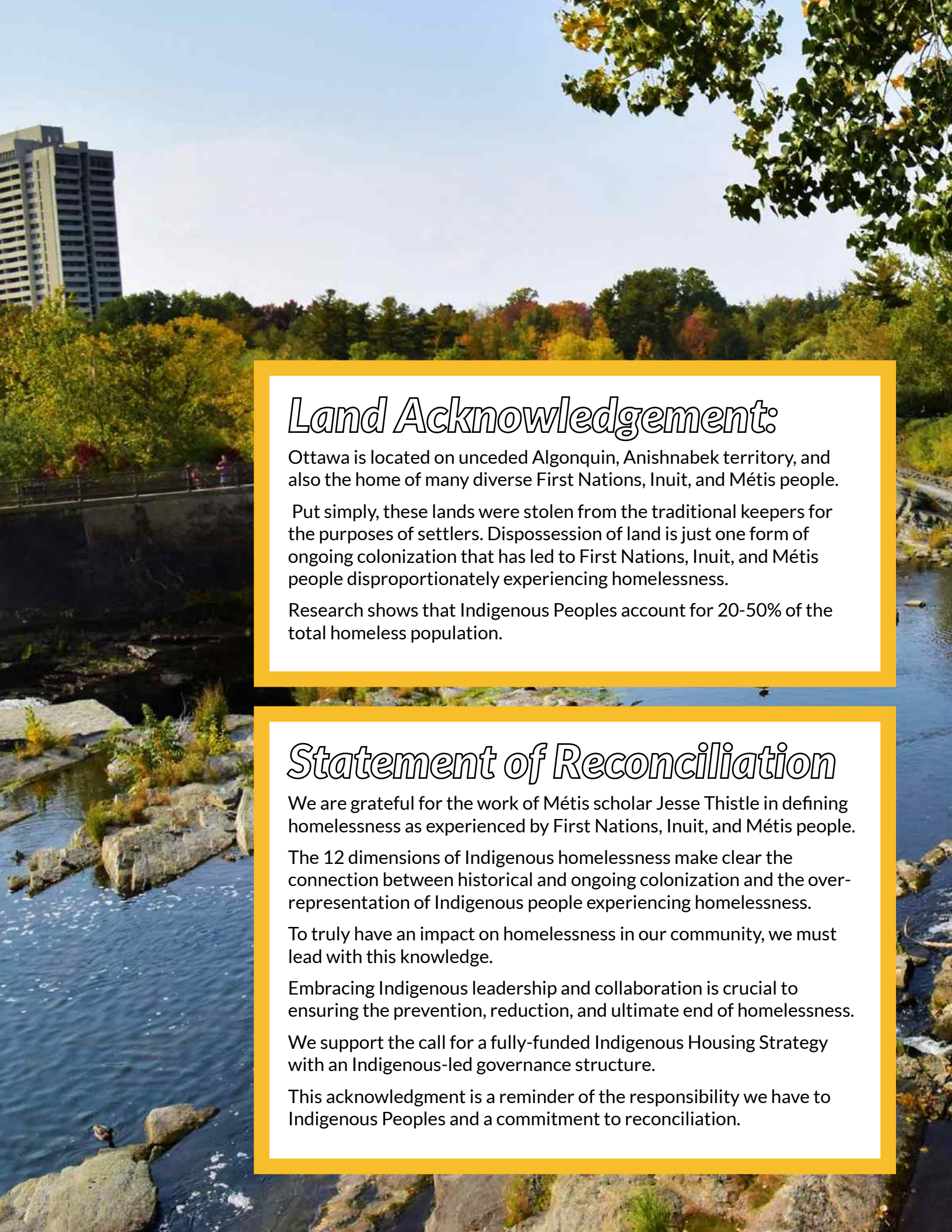
Alliance to
End Homelessness
Ottawa

Working together for a city galvanized to end homelessness



Annual Report 2024/25



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.



Executive Director's Message

We haven't usually had an Executive Director's message in these reports. Usually, I'm happy to let the Chair sum up the year, but since this is the end of Catharine Vandelinde's time as the Alliance's chair, I'd be remiss if I didn't take a moment to thank her for her extraordinary work.

Under Catharine's leadership, the Alliance moved forward in leaps and bounds. In addition to her depth of knowledge and experience, I am always grateful for Catharine's wise, thoughtful, and kind approach to leadership. She works from a genuine conviction that we can and will end homelessness, and that we don't have to settle for simply managing it. Keeping the Alliance's eyes firmly fixed on this goal is one of Catharine's many vital contributions to shaping this organization's direction.

I would also like to give particular thanks to Meg McCallum, who stepped in as the Interim Executive Director during my parental leave and did an incredible job, guiding the organization through a lot of change.

I am constantly amazed and impressed by the work each of the Alliance's members do individually. Ottawa is very lucky to have such thoughtful and committed people and organizations. I am always grateful as well that each of our over 75 member organizations has chosen to commit some of their time and resources to realizing our shared vision of a city mobilized to end homelessness. We're getting there.

Kaite Burkholder Harris
Executive Director

In memoriam: Karen Green

We were deeply saddened by the sudden passing of Karen Green on January 10th, 2025.

Among many other community roles, she was the Relationship Coordinator for the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition (OAC) and the co-chair of the City of Ottawa Housing and Homelessness Governance Committee.

Mikki Adams, co-chair of the OAC, wrote these words in a tribute to Karen:

"Karen's remarkable legacy reminds us that even in absence, her courageous heart continues to beat within us. Let's honor her memory by finding the strength to persevere and keep shining. The profound impact of Karen's kindness and generosity will be a lasting testament to the incredible difference she made in the lives of those around her."



Chair's Message

This year, the Alliance officially celebrates its 15th anniversary!

The organization was formally incorporated in 2010, but as many of you know, the Alliance has existed in one form or another since the 1980s, and has a rich history of community-based advocacy and leadership for ending homelessness in Ottawa. Still, we've been reflecting on the Alliance's story this year, as the organization moves into a new phase.

Despite limited staff capacity, the Alliance has always been a trusted voice advocating on behalf of the sector. Even when the organization has only had a single staff member, we've always done big and bold things, like our Report Card On Ending Homelessness in Ottawa, the 20,000 Homes campaign, our annual Community Forum on Ending Homelessness, and A Way Home Ottawa - all possible because of the strength and dedication of our members.

Over the past few years, we have built the capacity we need for the big, system-level change needed to end homelessness: organizational infrastructure like the Expert Steering Team, the Empathy Project, relationships with government stakeholders at all levels of government, and formalizing our relationship with the City through the Housing and Homelessness Leadership Table.

Fundamentally, the reason that the Alliance has lasted since the 1980s is because our members are deeply committed both to their own missions, and to our shared vision of a city mobilized to end homelessness. It's our members' leadership and tenacity, their strong voice for advocacy, and their ability to keep their eyes on the big picture despite endless day-to-day challenges, that have led us to this moment.

While Ottawa's 2024 Point-in-Time count confirms the extent of the homelessness crisis in our community, big changes are underway. We are seeing some of the fruits of our collective labour in the success of the shelter diversion pilot program, the Enhanced Housing Allowance Benefit, and in our strong and collaborative relationship with the City. As we look back on our 2024-25 year in this report, we're also energized to keep moving and growing.

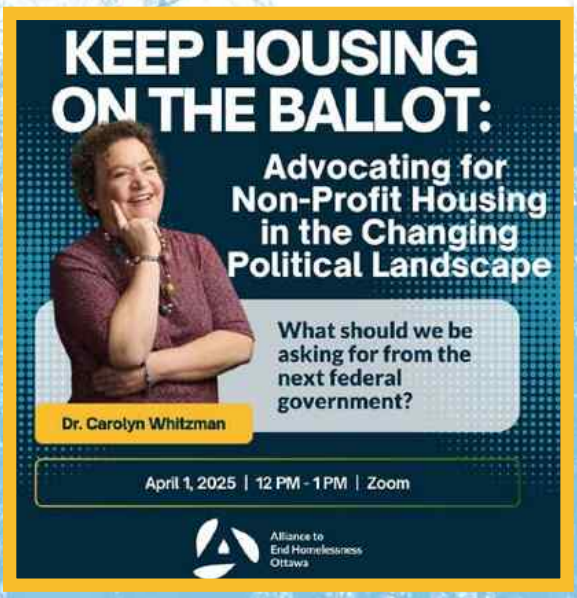
It's been a pleasure to serve the Alliance as Board Chair for the past four years. I stayed on for a second term to bolster the organization through its personnel changes, but I will be stepping down as Chair with confidence that the Alliance is strong and ready for its next chapter.

Catharine Vandelinde
Board Chair



Advocacy & Public Engagement

The Alliance continued to be a strong voice for our members and community this year.







Federal election

During Canada's federal election, we coordinated with aligned organizations to keep housing and homelessness part of the conversation, and made sure that people knew that you still can and should vote if you're homeless. We organized "Keep Housing on the Ballot: Advocating for Non-Profit Housing in the Changing Political Landscape" with Dr. Carolyn Whitzman to help our members think through how to work with the incoming administration.

Fairness for Ottawa & Solve the Crisis

We took part in the "Fairness for Ottawa" campaign led by Mayor Sutcliffe calling for Ottawa to receive more equitable funding from other levels of government, and the "Solve the Crisis" campaign led by Ontario's big city mayors, which asked the province to "appoint a responsible ministry and Minister with the appropriate funding and powers as a single point of contact to address the full spectrum of housing needs as well as mental health, addictions and wrap around supports." Learn more about our involvement in these campaigns.

Supervised consumption sites

On August 20, 2024, the Province of Ontario announced that they would prohibit supervised consumption sites within 200 metres of a school or childcare facility. This caused 10 of Ontario's 23 supervised consumption sites to close, including the program at Somerset West Community Health Centre in Ottawa, a member of the Alliance. We spoke out in support of the vital work of supervised consumption sites.

Ontario election

In the lead-up to the February 2025 Ontario election, the Alliance created key messages and graphics to encourage Ontarians to vote, and to vote with housing and homelessness in mind.

Events & appearances:

We were proud to support the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness' 2024 National Conference on Ending Homelessness, which was in Ottawa this year. During the conference, we presented several sessions including "Effective tools and resources for addressing rural homelessness," "Centring Lived Experience in Governance, Policy and Program Design," and "Rapid Rehousing Strategies and Community Asset Mapping."

We were also honoured that Kaite Burkholder Harris received Ottawa Tourism's Think Ottawa 2024 Market Leadership Award in the National Events category for helping Ottawa host the conference.

We continued to collaborate with Cahdco, the Ottawa Community Land Trust, and other allied organizations to organize what we've now begun calling the "Building Ottawa" sessions:

- **May 1, 2024:** Federal Budget 2024 & Affordable Housing
- **June 5, 2024:** Building Green: How do affordable housing and sustainable building practices align?
- **October 2, 2024:** Acquisitions: Another tool to preserve and expand community-owned affordable housing
- **November 22, 2024:** How will the 2025 City budget meet Ottawa's housing needs & foster equity?

Alliance staff also took place in a wide range of other community events. Some highlights included:

- **June 5, 2024:** Youth Symposium on Exploring Community-Driven Systems Change for Black & Racialized Youth in Ottawa, with the Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses' Child & Youth Network
- **October 16, 2024:** Community gathering for Neha, the National Housing Council review panel on the right to safe, adequate and affordable housing for women, Two Spirit, and gender-diverse people.
- **November 21, 2024:** Synapcity Sessions: Community Housing Solutions










Sign up for the National Right to Housing Network Newsletter here!
Sign up for the Alliance to End Homelessness Ottawa Newsletter here!





Media & News

Between April 1, 2024, and March 31, 2025, the Alliance was quoted in **32** news stories.

Deputations

The Alliance presented six deputations this year:

June 17, 2024 House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities	**November 6, 2024** City of Ottawa joint Finance and Planning and Housing Committee On the Housing Services Long Range Financial Plan 2025 - 2030	**November 20, 2024** Ottawa City Council On the City's proposed 2025 budget
November 26, 2024 City of Ottawa Community Services Committee On the City's proposed 2025 budget	**January 14, 2025** City of Ottawa Planning Committee On the proposed municipal renoviction bylaw	**February 5, 2025** City of Ottawa Planning and Housing Committee On a motion to amend the comprehensive zoning bylaw to permit shelters in all urban zones.

"The crisis of homelessness we are experiencing is not inevitable and it is solvable. Across the country and around the world communities are reducing homelessness and even ending it altogether. The secret lies in targeting resources toward permanent solutions, and committing to the change process required to go from managing the crisis through emergency responses to solving the crisis of homelessness."

- from our November 6 deputation

OTTAWA CITIZEN

Deachman: Ottawa's community centres are no place to house refugees

More than 200 people are sheltered — with little privacy or dignity — in two community centres, which are now off limits to Ottawa residents. That's why the city is planning to erect "Sprung" structures.



Inside the Heron Road Community Centre, the gym is currently used for refugees and newcomers, meaning it is closed for community use. PHOTO BY CITY OF OTTAWA

OTTAWA CITIZEN

Housing in former federal office buildings can revitalize Ottawa neighbourhoods

Affordability and supply have become an enormous crisis for Parliament and city hall, but more vacant federal government office buildings bring with them opportunity, too.



The building at 70 Colombine Driveway is one of five Tunney's Pasture buildings contained in the Canada Land Bank. PHOTO BY TONY CALDWELL /POSTMEDIA

CTV NEWS

Ottawa | News

'It shows how out of touch the premier is': Reaction to Doug Ford's encampment comments

By Jack Richardson

Published: September 24, 2024 at 6:16PM EDT



Ontario Premier Doug Ford speaking at a news conference in Port Colborne, Ont. Sept. 24, 2024. (CP24)

CBC LISTEN

All in a Day

with Alan Neal



Ottawa's draft budget includes increased investments towards housing — 13 mins

Nov. 15, 2024

CAPITAL CURRENT

Home / News / Ottawa / Ottawa to press ahead with study of anti-renoviction bylaw



(Photo © Taylor Hatter)

Affordability

Ottawa to press ahead with study of anti-renoviction bylaw

By Emma Stuart-Kiss , January 24, 2025

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Ottawa

City says it can't meet affordable housing targets without more help

Another $155M needed per year to meet goals, councillors told

Elyse Skura · CBC News · Posted: Nov 06, 2024 6:54 PM EST | Last Updated: November 13, 2024



Ottawa's long-term plans for creating new affordable housing will require much more funding from the federal and provincial governments, city staff say. (Spencer Colby/The Canadian Press)

Research

Moving UPP

The Alliance completed Moving UPP - a project to improve our community's housing and homelessness services by clarifying sector roles & responsibilities, integrating service pathways from housing precarity to secure re-housing, and establishing a locally-controlled framework for change.

Three actionable solutions emerged from the project:

- enhancing shelter diversion,
- fostering shared ownership in digital projects, and
- increasing sector collaboration and coordination.







Starts with Home: Developing an Acquisition Framework and Policy: Options and considerations

With the federal government having announced its intention to launch the Canada Rental Protection Fund and the City of Ottawa considering its own Acquisition Strategy, the Alliance commissioned a report by Steve Pomeroy. Recognizing that acquisitions are a vital strategy to stem the loss of existing affordable homes, this report created a road map for the City of Ottawa to add acquisitions into the mix with its existing affordable housing program.

DASH - Decisions in Affordable and Social Housing

Effective decision-making around social and affordable housing investments and policy requires comprehensive, system-level data. For such data to be useful, it must be pulled together from various sources to provide a meaningful picture of housing needs at local, regional, and national levels.

The DASH project envisions an open data solution that integrates existing databases on social housing needs, shelter system users, and available housing stock to improve how decisions are made around housing priorities.

DASH is being collaboratively created by a group of researchers from the University of Ottawa, representing engineering, information systems, social sciences and health sciences with the Alliance as its main community partner.

Shelter Diversion pilot project

In 2024, the Interim Housing & Homelessness Leadership Table supported the development of a pilot project to divert new clients accessing shelter to safe and appropriate housing.

Working with the Shepherds of Good Hope and Lethby Consulting, the Alliance has played a key role in designing the evaluation framework and in sharing the approach and lessons learned with shelters across the city.

System Change

Housing and Homelessness Leadership Table

The HHLT is an umbrella group co-led between the City and leaders from across the housing and homelessness sector focused on a system-wide strategy to end homelessness in Ottawa.

Our mission is to plan, design, and oversee the ongoing implementation of an integrated housing & homelessness system and related sectors to deliver affordable, suitable, and adequate housing choices and reductions in homelessness.

The Housing and Homelessness Leadership Table launched in late 2024. The Alliance acts as the Secretariat and community-based resource. Kaite serves as co-chair. Two members of the Expert Steering Team sit as lived experts at the Table.

Expert Steering Team

The Expert Steering Team (EST) is dedicated to bringing their strengths, skills, and experience to the homelessness sector to help prevent, reduce and end homelessness. Each member of the team has been personally impacted by homelessness and poverty, and they share what they have learned to make meaningful change in Ottawa. They come from a variety of backgrounds and experiences and can offer insight on a variety of subjects such as: system navigation, coordinated access, youth homelessness, Indigenous issues, substance use, the newcomer experience, family homelessness, 2SLGBTQ+ issues and others.

In the past year, the EST has worked with groups including adult high school students, members of the Housing and Homelessness Leadership Table, the Government of Canada, and a number of local community agencies and coalitions. Following the completion of a two year grant focused on meaningful lived experience engagement provided by the Maytree Foundation, the EST was invited to train Maytree's own staff on meaningful lived experience engagement.

The EST were able to plan, host, and evaluate focus groups with clients, creating an environment for people with lived experience to reflect amongst themselves on what works (and doesn't work).

Another community agency reached out to the EST for information on starting their own lived experience engagement program, and the EST was able to provide guidance, best practices, and access to materials like skills matrixes and job descriptions.



The EST is currently building on this work by developing a new training and education program at the Alliance. They will be creating written and recorded best practice materials, and digital and live trainings and workshops: stay tuned!

Here is some of what we've heard from clients who have worked with the EST:

"Your training is in my opinion one of the most beneficial additions to our training program from last year. We encountered no incidents [of crises resulting in negative outcomes or police response] last year, and had several students use the resources such as 3-1-1 that you shared during the training. Because of its success, I now consider it a requirement for our training program."

"It was a very heartfelt presentation and the message was clean and concise."

"Both facilitators did a fine job explaining the causes of homelessness and how to help, if needed, patiently. I thought it was a sensitive and heartfelt presentation. I'm glad it was added to the training since it's an incredibly important topic that often gets ignored."



Empathy Project

The Empathy Project is an immersive learning experience designed to offer firsthand insight into the challenges people facing poverty encounter while seeking housing, employment, legal aid, food and income support.

In the 2024-2025 fiscal year, we held 5 Empathy Project events. Approximately 300 people took part, with an additional 60 volunteers trained and working across all 5 events.

Over 200 University of Ottawa Medicine and Pharmacy students participated in Empathy Project sessions, with 90% them indicating they are strongly committed to applying what they learned at the Empathy Project to their future work.



We also delivered an Empathy Project to the Ottawa Catholic School Board (OCSB), with a focus on working with youth whose families are experiencing poverty and homelessness. For this event, we worked with the Youth Services Bureau and Operation Come Home, our first opportunity to deliver The Empathy Project with member agency leaders co-facilitating with us. Partnering with member agencies made the experience even more impactful, as agency leaders were able to really help participants understand the system challenges that people face as they navigate the homelessness system. All OCSB participants indicated they would recommend an empathy project to a colleague

Feedback we've received from Empathy Project participants has included:

"The whole morning was meaningful and so powerful. The way it was facilitated was so impactful. Being able to actually participate is nothing close to those that are homeless experience, but seeing the hoops, being shut down consistently really was beyond eye-opening and so saddening."

"It was challenging emotionally but it felt like a safe environment to be vulnerable in."

"Be easy on the person, hard on the system."



Alliance Board of Directors 2024-2025

- Catharine Vandelinde - Chair
  Options Housing
- Susan Farrell - Vice Chair
  Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA Ottawa)
- Stephen Bartolo - Secretary
  Shepherds of Good Hope
- Mark MacAulay - Treasurer
  Ottawa Salus
- Tamara Chipperfield
  Pinecrest Queensway CHC
- Pete Cranston
  Community Member
- Darren Graham
  Youth Services Bureau
- Rachel Robinson
  Community Member
- Peter Tilley
  The Ottawa Mission

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.

Funders

United Way East Ontario

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OTTAWA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

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Our Member Organizations

Action-Housing • Anglican Diocese Ottawa (ADO) • Arts Ottawa • Belong Ottawa - The Well (ADO) • Belong Ottawa- St. Luke's Table (ADO) • Bruce House • Cahdco • Canadian Hard of Hearing Association • Carlington Community Health Centre • Carty House • Catholic Centre for Immigrants Ottawa • Centretown Citizens Ottawa Corporation (CCOC) • Centre 454 (ADO) • Centre 507 • Vanier Community Services Centre • Centretown Community Health Centre • Centretown Churches Social Action Committee (CSAC) • Canadian Mental Health Association, Ottawa Branch • Cooperative Housing Association of Eastern Ontario (CHASEO) • Cornerstone Housing for Women (ADO) • The Council on Aging of Ottawa • Daybreak Housing • Eastern Ottawa Community Resource Centre (EORC) • Elizabeth Fry Society of Ottawa • Ellwood House • FAM Network • Habitat for Humanity Greater Ottawa • Harmony House • Helping With Furniture • Housing Help • Interval House • iSisters Technology Mentoring • John Howard Society of Ottawa • Just Food • Lowertown Community Resource • Matthew House Ottawa • Matthew Perry House • Minwaashin Lodge • Montfort Renaissance • Multifaith Housing Initiative • Nepean Housing Corporation • OMRA • Operation Come Home • Options Housing • Orléans-Cumberland Community Resource Centre • Ottawa Community Benefits Network • Ottawa Community Housing • Ottawa Food Bank • Ottawa Inner City Health • Ottawa Innercity Ministries • Ottawa Mission • Ottawa Pastoral Counselling Centre (ADO) • Ottawa Salus • PAL Ottawa • Parkdale United Church • Pinecrest-Queensway Community Health Centre • Refugee Ministry Office (ADO) • Restoring Hope • Rideau-Rockcliffe Community Resource Centre • Salvation Army Booth Centre • South-East Ottawa Community Health Centre • Shepherds of Good Hope • Social Housing Registry of Ottawa • omerset West Community Health Centre • Stepstone House • The Royal • The Voice of our Seniors • Veterans House Canada • Wabano Centre For Aboriginal Health • Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre • YMCA of the National Capital Region • Youth Services Bureau • Youturn Youth Support Services •