



Ontario Alliance to **End Homelessness**

February 25, 2025

To: Nathaniel Erskine-Smith, Federal Minister of Housing, Infrastructure, and
Communities
Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario

CC: Dominic LeBlanc, Federal Minister of Finance
Paul Calandra, Ontario Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Peter Bethlenfalvy, Ontario Minister of Finance

Re: Funding to Address Rural and Remote Homelessness

Dear Minister Erskine-Smith and Premier Ford,

On behalf of the Ontario Alliance to End Homelessness, we urge you to increase funding for rural and remote communities in our province.

This week, a number of rural homelessness projects learned that their federal Reaching Home funding would not be renewed. With a mandate from the Regional Advisory Board to stretch the same \$4.1 million envelope to include not just programs but also capital investments, 13 of 25 previously funded projects will not be funded next year. This leaves several organizations making difficult cuts, and will result in critical support for adults, youth, and families facing homelessness ending abruptly. In short, people will lose their housing.

A [recent report](#) by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) revealed a staggering 154% increase in homelessness in rural communities, highlighting the need for urgent intervention. The report also shows a 51% increase in overall homelessness in Ontario. The link between these two numbers is clear - we cannot address homelessness effectively unless we invest in ending rural homelessness.

We need the provincial government to invest in permanent solutions to rural homelessness rather than temporary responses. Between all three levels of government, municipalities

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cover 51% of all homelessness funding while the provincial and federal governments split the remaining 49%. This is not only inequitable, it's impossible to sustain.

At a time when rural homelessness is skyrocketing, funding that is vital to addressing the unique challenges in our rural and remote communities is being effectively cut. Communities are seeing the results of this as the number of encampments and people sleeping outside increases. And the consequences can be deadly.

This is not the time to take away funds from one program in order to supplement another. This is the time to invest in permanent solutions across the spectrum including prevention and diversion, rapid re-housing initiatives, and building non-profit housing.

[Rural communities have been leaders in showing that reducing homelessness is possible.](#)

Armed with adequate funding, rural communities can continue to reduce homelessness. This in turn means that people are not forced to leave their communities to access services. There are solutions to homelessness and we urge the provincial and federal governments to invest in these.

The time for action is now. Our rural communities deserve the same attention and resources as urban centers. By investing in targeted efforts to end homelessness, we can make sure every Ontarian has a home.

Sincerely,



Jennifer van Gennip
Co-chair



Dominica McPherson
Co-chair



Kaite Burkholder Harris
Co-chair