

2026 Ontario Pre-Budget Submission: OAEH

Suggestion 1

Brief description:

Provide stable funding for the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) and expand its availability, recognizing it as one of Ontario's most effective and evidence-based tools for helping people exit homelessness, prevent returns to homelessness, and remain stably housed.

Suggestion 2

Brief description:

Strengthen and sustain investment in homelessness prevention and diversion approaches that reduce inflow into emergency shelters and prevent people from becoming chronically homeless.

Suggestion 3

Brief description:

Invest in housing-focused solutions, including deeply affordable and supportive housing and housing-focused outreach, to reduce reliance on costly emergency responses such as shelters, hospitals, and the justice system.

Summary / Elaboration Section

The OAEH urges the Government of Ontario to prioritize stable funding for the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) in the 2026 Budget.

COHB is one of the most effective tools available to help people exit the homelessness system into stable housing. Providing portable, rent-based assistance, COHB allows people to secure housing in their communities, reduces pressure on emergency shelters, and supports long-term housing stability. When paired with appropriate supports, housing benefits like COHB help prevent returns to homelessness and reduce the need for costly emergency interventions.



Ontario Alliance to **End Homelessness**

Ontario is facing an unprecedented housing and homelessness crisis. Rents continue to rise far faster than incomes, shelters across the province are operating at or beyond capacity, and encampments are increasingly a concern. New AMO data shows that 85,000 Ontarians were homeless in 2025, growing more than 8% since the release of their original report one year ago.

Once people enter the homelessness system, the longer they remain unhoused, the more trauma they experience and the greater their need for intensive supports to recover and stabilize. Prevention and rapid exits from homelessness are both more humane and more cost-effective.

Housing-focused solutions work. The evidence is clear that it is far less expensive to support someone in housing than to respond through shelters, hospitals, or the justice system. Expanding investment in COHB, prevention and diversion, and housing solutions, including deeply affordable and supportive housing and housing-focused outreach, allows Ontario to reduce visible homelessness, improve community well-being, and relieve pressure on health, emergency, and municipal systems.

Municipalities cannot solve homelessness alone. Ontario's leadership – through sustained funding, policy alignment, and coordination – is essential to scaling solutions that are proven, effective, and grounded in housing as the foundation for health and stability.

Attachments:

OAEH 1-pager