



Tackling the Housing Gap for Ontarians with Developmental Disabilities

Ontarians living with developmental disabilities are experiencing a **housing crisis**.

Investing in developmental services housing will protect Ontario's most **vulnerable populations** from illness and death due to COVID-19.

Funding from the federal national housing strategy allows the Ontario government to address this need **without additional cost to the Province**.

We strongly recommend that the Ontario Government prioritize investment in housing for individuals with developmental disabilities by **earmarking 10% of the *National Housing Strategy* funding to this critical need over Phases 2 and 3, and requiring municipalities to commit accordingly.**

The Developmental Services Housing Sector

- Developmental services providers support individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities, but organizations in the sector **need investment**.
- Developmental services housing providers offer:
 - Safe, affordable, **community-based** housing options
 - **Employment** supports
 - **Social inclusion** for individuals with developmental disabilities
- Reena and Community Living Toronto are two Ontario developmental services providers who collectively support over 5,000 individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities.
 - There are many other developmental services providers who **lack funding** to maintain and expand services.



What are developmental disabilities?

- Development disabilities are characterized by **life-long** limitations in daily living and cognitive skills
 - *Ex. Down's Syndrome, autism, cerebral palsy and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.*
- In addition to the support of parents, guardians and families, individuals living with developmental disabilities depend on **specialized supports and care** to help them participate in their communities and live fulfilling lives
- Individuals with developmental disabilities are at **greater risk** from COVID-19 due to living in high risk settings and diminished community supports.



Individuals Living with Developmental Disabilities Need Appropriate Housing

- Ontario's provincial investment in developmental services housing has been virtually **frozen** for over a decade
- This is despite the **large and growing need**, driven by aging caregivers and changing complexity of existing cases



The Developmental Services Housing Gap in Ontario

Without affordable housing, people with developmental disabilities are forced to rely on **unsuitable** and **expensive** alternatives

10x longer

Wait times for a person with a developmental disability are **10x longer** compared to the average person seeking affordable housing

6%

Between 2014 and 2016, **only 6%** of adults on the housing waitlist received housing support

25 years earlier, 4.5x higher

Adults with developmental disabilities are admitted to LTC **25 years earlier**, at rates **4.5x higher** than average

18-30%

18-30% of chronic shelter users have a developmental disability

Adults Living with Developmental Disabilities are at High Risk for COVID-19

- Developmental services housing experienced **significantly fewer COVID-19 outbreaks** compared to similar environments like LTC and seniors' residences
- Developmental housing service providers are experiencing **exceptionally high numbers of calls** during the pandemic
 - Individuals at home have fewer community supports
 - Families impacted financially cannot provide the support necessary
 - Caregivers are struggling with chronic health issues and physical limitations
- As their family ages and loses their ability to support them, these individuals are put in settings where the risk of COVID-19 **increases dramatically**



Recommendation

Through the *National Housing Strategy*, a \$4.2 billion investment **by Ontario** using **federal government funding**, there is an opportunity to address past under-investment in DS housing.

The time for action is now: Phase 2 is set to launch in Spring 2022.

We strongly recommend that the Ontario Government prioritize investment in housing for individuals with developmental disabilities by **earmarking 10% of the *National Housing Strategy* funding to this critical need over Phases 2 and 3, and requiring municipalities to commit accordingly.**

How this investment will support individuals with developmental disabilities

- This **focused** investment using federal funds will:
 - **Build 2,400 units of housing** – at least 1,200 province-wide in each Phase of 2 & 3
 - **Maintain 12,691 existing units** housing those in need
 - **Repair 2,500** (20%) of these existing units to a good state of repair
- Local municipalities and developmental services agencies can **work together** to determine how these funds are best used locally.



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