

THE POWER OF ADVOCACY

INFO PACK

the ottawa
mission
more than a shelter

MISSION
/+1 POSSIBLE

Information, tools,
and resources to
effectively advocate
for homelessness
prevention and
affordable housing.

ABOUT US



The Ottawa Mission works with people experiencing homelessness and poverty to make a change in their lives.



Men, women and gender diverse folks welcome!



- Emergency Shelter
- Meals
- Clothing
- Primary, Dental, and Hospice Care
- Addictions and Trauma Care
- Mental Health Care
- Spiritual Care
- Permanent Supportive Housing
- Employment Support
- Job Training
- Food Truck Program
- Educational Support
- Tax and ID Clinics
- and growing...

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Mission Possible is a housing-focused advocacy initiative by The Ottawa Mission. It aims to address the systematic factors that contribute to homelessness in our city by providing meaningful opportunities to create change through action-driven events, tools and educational resources, and focused calls-to-action.

By empowering our community members, we aim to make a real impact in ending homelessness and creating a supportive and inclusive city for all.

ACTIONS + PROGRESS

- **Municipal election action (OCT 2022):** emailing candidates about their affordable housing and homelessness prevention priorities.
- **City of Ottawa budget action (FEB 2023):** protesting the stagnant municipal funding for affordable housing through an email and awareness campaign, as well as attending consultation sessions with city councillors.
- **Tours of The Ottawa Mission for new city councillors (MAR - APR 2023):** inviting councillors to explore our grounds and services, meet dedicated staff members, and listen to lived experiences.
- **Ontario provincial budget action (MAY 2023):** emailing MPPs to demand adequate funding for Ottawa's Homelessness Prevention Program.

THANKS TO YOUR SUPPORT, WE WERE SUCCESSFUL IN INCREASING THE ALLOCATION FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN THE 2023 MUNICIPAL BUDGET, AND THE ONTARIO PROVINCIAL BUDGET ALLOCATION FOR HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION!



HOMELESSNESS IN OTTAWA

In 2014, the City of Ottawa launched its 10-Year Homelessness Plan, which sought to achieve by 2024 that 40% savings in funding for emergency shelters, with savings reinvested into homelessness prevention and ensure that emergency shelter stays are 30 days or less.

Unfortunately, regardless of the efforts made under the plan, homelessness continued to worsen, reaching levels never seen before in Ottawa. In January 2020, Ottawa City Council unanimously declared a homelessness emergency.



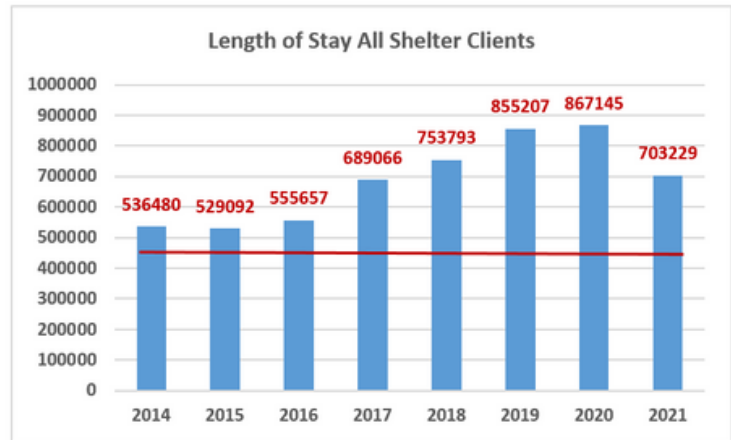
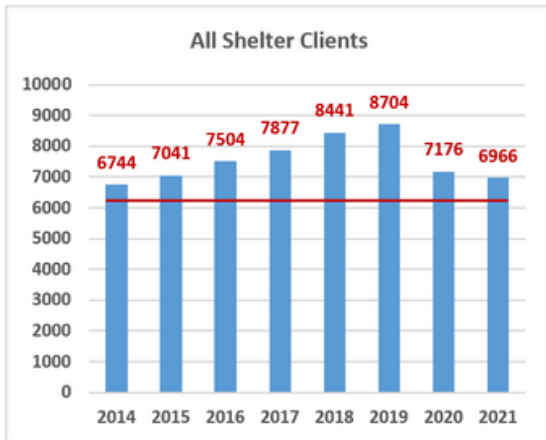
Later that year, the City released its new 10-year Plan, which called for:

- 5,700-8,500 affordable housing options in the form of new units and housing subsidies.
- Preservation of the existing affordable housing supply with no net loss of community housing.
- Unsheltered, chronic and Veteran's homelessness are eliminated.
- Overall homelessness, Indigenous homelessness, new people entering homelessness, and people returning to homelessness are reduced by 25%.



Since the release of the new Plan, the number of people living in shelters and their total length of stay has declined. However, the number of people in shelters and their length of stay remains higher than what it was in 2014, and the number of people sleeping outside has almost doubled, rising from 5 to 9%.

HOMELESSNESS IN OTTAWA



In 2019, the City of Ottawa introduced an additional \$15 million of new money for new affordable housing. However, the fund remained at that level for 2020 - 2022, meaning its real value declined over time due to lack of increases to reflect inflation or population growth. After intensive lobbying in 2023, the City increased this envelope to \$16.5 million.

The Ottawa Mission had expressed our concern because in Ottawa:

- For every one unit of affordable rent built, seven are lost.
- Average rents increased over 14% in 2022, with one-bedroom apartments now costing about \$2,000.
- 10% of those in emergency shelters are employed and cannot afford these staggering rents.
- There are 10,000 people on Ottawa Community Housing's waiting list, many of whom wait for years.
- Over 200 people are estimated to be sleeping outside, which is a public health emergency.

Ottawa faces unique challenges in addressing homelessness, including:

- A significant catchment area including eastern Ontario and western Quebec.
- A large increase in the number of asylum seekers (63%), especially as compared to Toronto (18%).
- A disproportionate number of Indigenous clients, who are about 32% of the overall shelter population.

ADVOCACY GOALS AND PRIORITIES

Increase the supply of affordable and supportive housing

Address structural barriers to assistance

Protect communities that are most at risk of homelessness

Prevent people from becoming homeless

BAN DEMOVICTIONS AND RENOVICTIONS

Replace lost units. Support tenant relocation to similar units and rents in their neighbourhoods. Offer temporary accommodations and rent top-ups during construction. Provide 4 months notice. Adopt New Westminster's bylaw requiring landlords to provide tenants with temporary accommodation and allowing them to return to renovated units on the same terms.



scan or click to learn more about solutions!



ADVOCACY GOALS AND PRIORITIES

What are demovictions and renovictions?

Demovictions occur when landlords decide that they want to demolish an existing rental property and therefore current tenants have to move out. The reason offered by most landlords is that they want to build a higher structure with more density on the same footprint. Renovictions occur when landlords seek to evict tenants from their units by claiming they will complete major renovations.

Demovictions and renovictions in Ottawa

- There are currently about two dozen applications to the City of Ottawa to demolish existing properties. If they proceed, this will impact over 5,000 people who currently live in these properties.
- The largest demoviction occurred in the neighbourhood of Herongate, which evicted 180 families to make room for luxury rental properties.
- Neighbourhoods most at threat are Centretown and Sandy Hill (wards 12 and 14).

Why do we oppose them?

- They result in the loss of existing affordable housing with no guarantee that the people who live in these units will be able to find other affordable units. This increases their chances of being homeless.
- New buildings, additions to existing buildings and most new basement apartments occupied for the first time for residential purposes after November 15, 2018, are exempt from rent control. This is an incentive for landlords to demolish older buildings since rent controls will not apply to new builds.
- Ontario's Advocacy Centre for Tenants reported there has been a 294% increase in landlord applications to evict tenants for renovations or conversions at the province's Landlord and Tenant Board since 2015-16.
- Many units are occupied by vulnerable community members such as elderly people, people with disabilities, people living on low incomes, and others. They are particularly vulnerable to homelessness.

ADVOCACY GOALS AND PRIORITIES

What is New Westminster's renoviction bylaw?

In 2021, the B.C. Court of Appeal unanimously upheld a ruling in favour of a bylaw that protects tenants with a new, stronger process landlords must follow before doing any type of renovation. It provides tenants with temporary accommodation and allows them to return to renovated units on the same terms.



- Both the BC Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court of Canada have upheld this bylaw.
- The BC government has also made changes to the residential tenancy act to protect tenants against renovictions.
- In 2022, the City of Ottawa received a legal opinion from City staff stating that Ottawa did not need a bylaw similar to New Westminster's since already has some by-laws in place to deal with tenant issues, and the province is in the best position to regulate further protections for tenants.
- In April 2023, the Ontario government stated that it will enact legislation to protect tenants against renovictions



**HOWEVER,
RENOVICTIONS
AND
DEMOVICTIONS
CONTINUE TO
OCCUR IN OUR
COMMUNITY.**

ADVOCACY DO'S AND DON'TS

When engaging elected officials at all levels of government

DO

Introduce yourself.

Share the ward you live in.

Refer to facts and statistics.

Keep talking points short and firm.

Share why ending homelessness is important to you.

Thank your councilor for the opportunity to share your views.

DON'T

Advocate for any political party.

Request actions outside of your councilor's jurisdiction or scope.

Divert from your main speaking points.

Accept distractions.

Interrupt.

Doubt yourself.

REMEMBER
WE'RE HERE TO HELP

Reach out to
advocacy@ottawamission.com
for further support, enquiries,
collaborations, or advocacy
opportunities.