

January, 2025

# Municipalities Under Pressure:

THE HUMAN AND FINANCIAL COST OF ONTARIO'S HOMELESSNESS CRISIS



# Today's Presentation

1. **Part 1: A New Look at Housing and Homelessness in Ontario**
  - Methodology and Definitions
  - Scale and Scope of the Crisis
  - Chronic Homelessness Trends
2. **Part 2: A 10-Year Perspective on Homelessness in Ontario**
  - Projected Growth in Homelessness by 2035
3. **Part 3: Investing in Solutions**
  - Scenario 1: Ending Chronic Homelessness (10-Year Plan)
  - Scenario 2: Addressing Encampments (3-Year Plan)
4. Discussion / Questions



# Part 1: A New Look at Housing and Homelessness in Ontario

**Purpose:** Create a clear baseline of homelessness in Ontario by collecting consistent data across all service managers.

## How:

A standardized template was used to gather and align data on homelessness, funding, and programs, addressing gaps with research and trend analysis when needed.



## Part 2: A Ten-Year Perspective on Homelessness in Ontario

**Purpose:** Forecast how homelessness will evolve over the next 10 years under different economic conditions.

### How:

Historical data (2016–2021) was used to model trends based on three scenarios: steady economy, economic growth, and economic downturn.



## Part 3: Investing in Solutions

**Purpose:** Identify what investments and resources are needed to address homelessness effectively.

### How:

Estimated future needs by analyzing demand from Part 2 and comparing it to the current capacity outlined in Part 1, focusing on sustainable housing solutions over emergency responses.





## Part 1

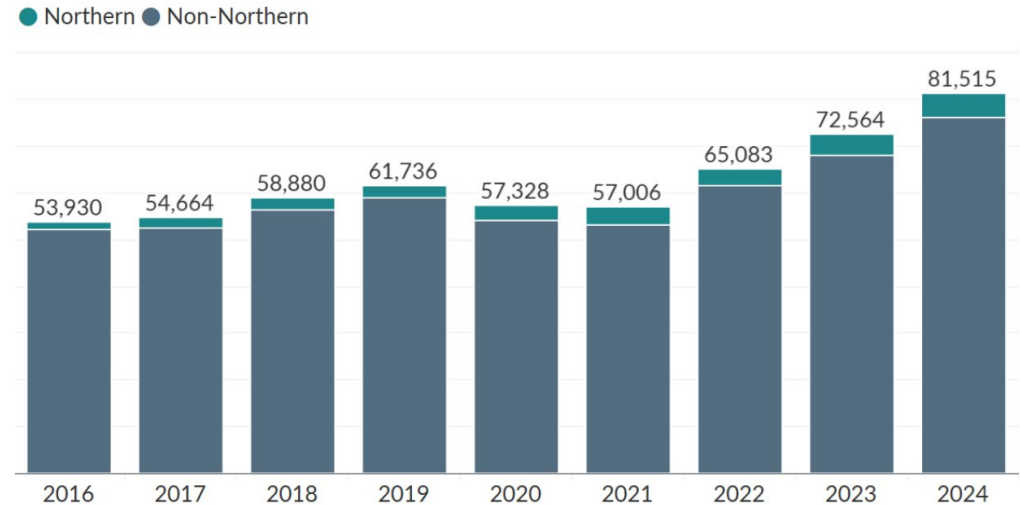
### A New Look at Housing and Homelessness in Ontario

## The Scale of the Crisis

- **81,515** people experienced homelessness in 2024—a **25% increase** since 2022.
- **41,512** people are chronically homeless, making **up 51%** of all cases—a tripling since 2022.
- **268,000** households are on waitlists for rent-geared-to-income housing, with average **wait times of 5 years**, reaching 20 years in some areas.

*Homelessness in Ontario has grown rapidly and become more entrenched, overwhelming the system and leaving too many people without pathways to stable housing.*

Figure 1: Estimated Number of People Experiencing Homelessness in Northern and Non-Northern Communities, Ontario, 2016–2024



### Adjusted

Missing values have been filled using additional research or statistical methods.

## The Importance of Rural Communities in Addressing Homelessness

Rural areas often lack critical resources like shelters, transitional housing, and specialized supports, forcing individuals to travel long distances or remain in unsafe conditions.

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Geographic isolation, lack of public transportation, and fewer health or substance-use services create significant challenges in accessing help.

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Hidden homelessness is more common in rural communities, where people may stay in overcrowded housing or with friends and family due to the lack of visible support systems.

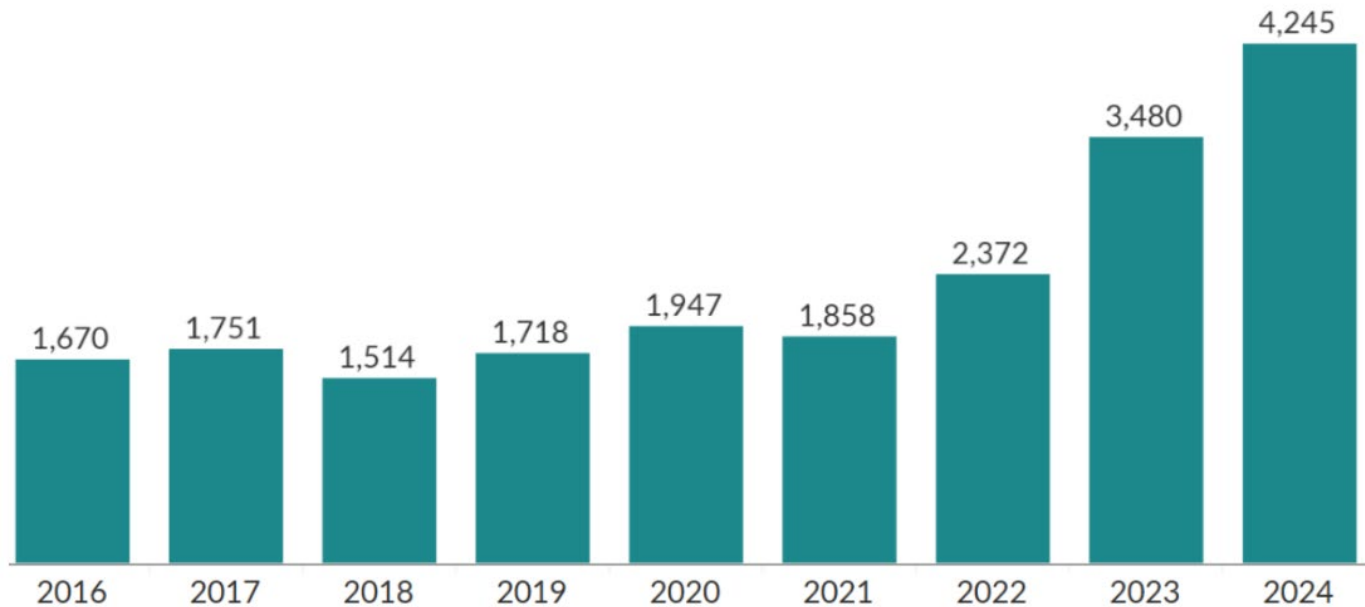
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Investment in tailored, community-specific programs for rural areas is essential. These include prevention initiatives, culturally safe supports, and better regional service coordination.

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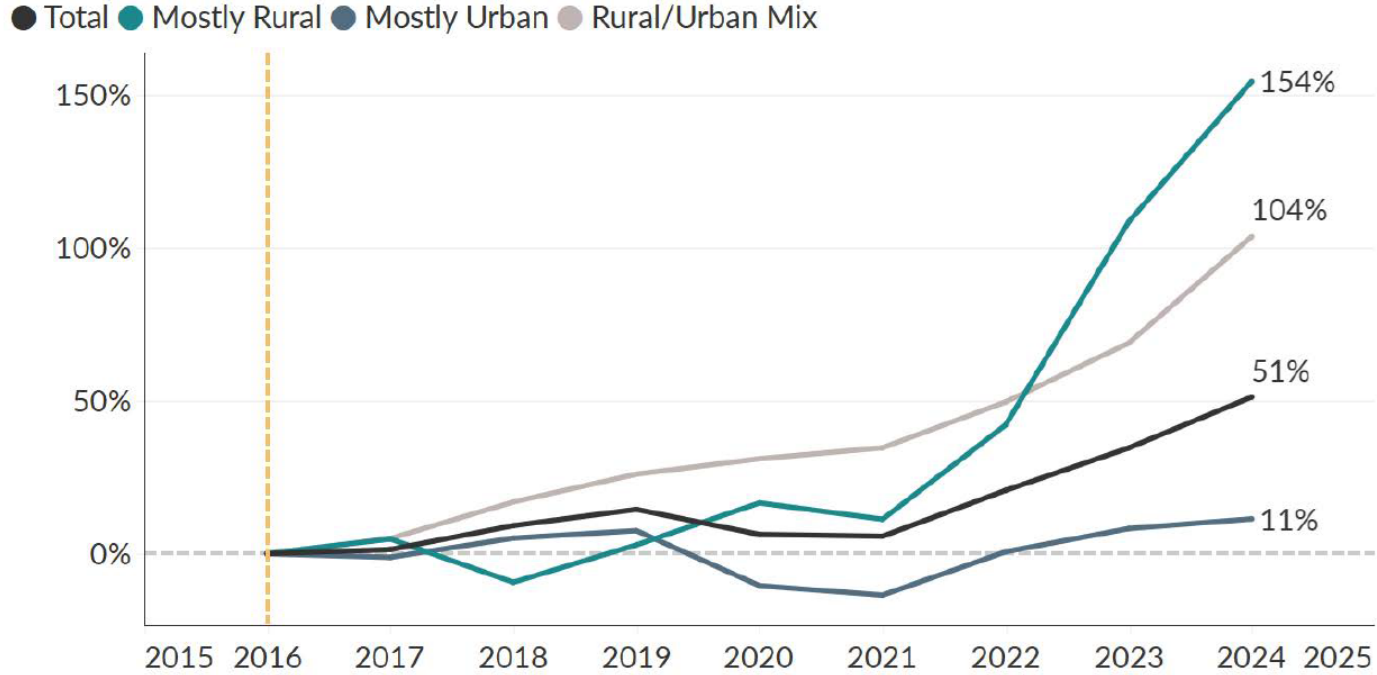
Figure 4: Estimated Number of People Experiencing Homelessness in Mostly Rural Communities, Ontario, 2016-2024



**Adjusted**

Missing values have been filled using additional research or statistical methods.

Figure 5: Percent Change in People Experiencing Homelessness from 2016, Mostly Rural, Rural/Urban Mix, and Mostly Urban Communities, Ontario, 2016-2024



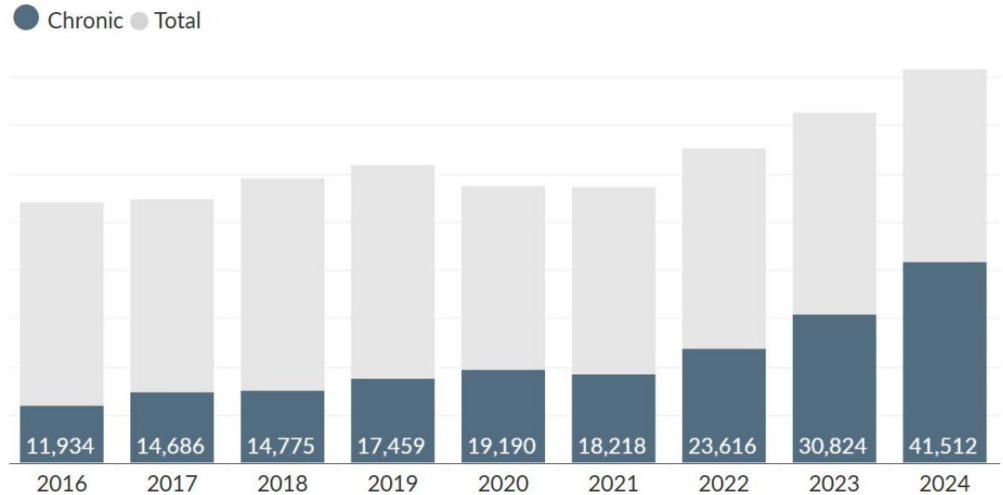
## Chronic Homelessness

# 41,512

people are chronically homeless in 2024—more than half of all homelessness cases.

Chronic homelessness has tripled since 2022, highlighting failures to provide stable exits from the system.

Figure 11: Estimated People Experiencing Chronic Homelessness Compared to Total Population Experiencing Homelessness, Ontario, 2016–2024

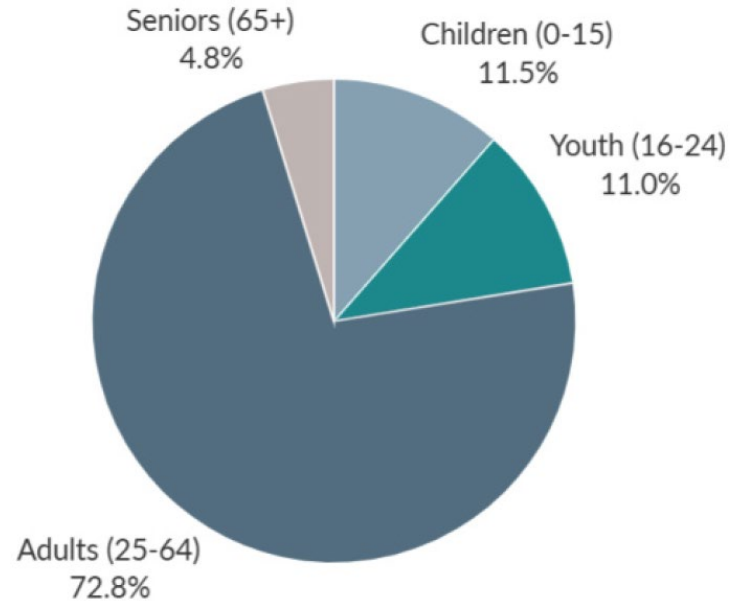


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of people experiencing chronic homelessness are children and youth.



**Unadjusted**

Figures are presented as reported, without adjustments for missing values.



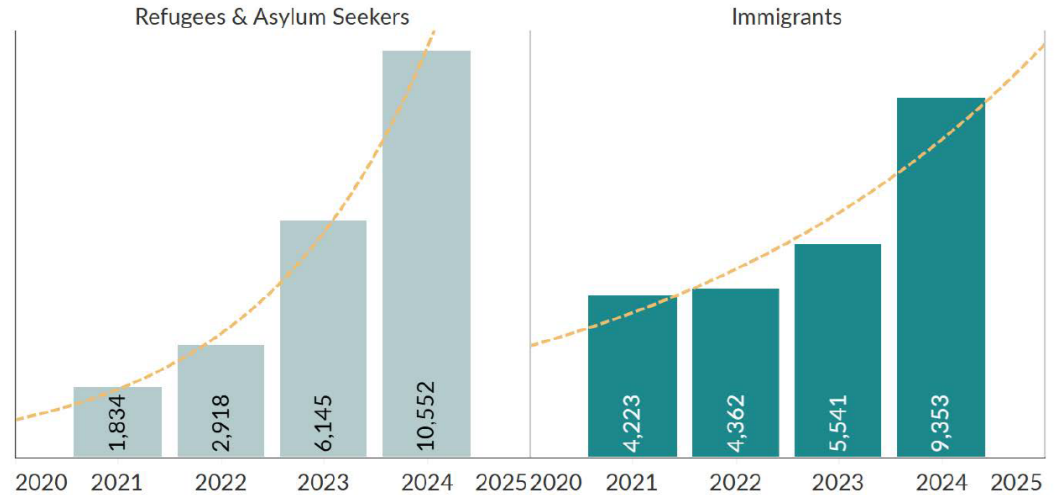
## Indigenous Homelessness

- **4,418 Indigenous** people were reported as chronically homeless in 2024, representing **10.6% of cases** despite making up only 2.9% of Ontario's population.
- Indigenous homelessness is likely **underreported** due to systemic barriers, including a lack of culturally safe spaces and mistrust of data systems.
- **Regional disparities** are significant—Indigenous people account for **44.6% of chronic homelessness in northern regions** compared to 13.8% in non-northern areas, with some regions exceeding 50% representation.

## Refugee and Asylum Seeker Homelessness

**10,552 refugees and asylum seekers were chronically homeless in 2024** — a 475% increase since 2021, highlighting critical gaps in housing and integration supports.

Figure 15: Estimated Annual Chronic Homelessness Among Refugees, Asylum Seekers, and Immigrants, Ontario, 2020-2025

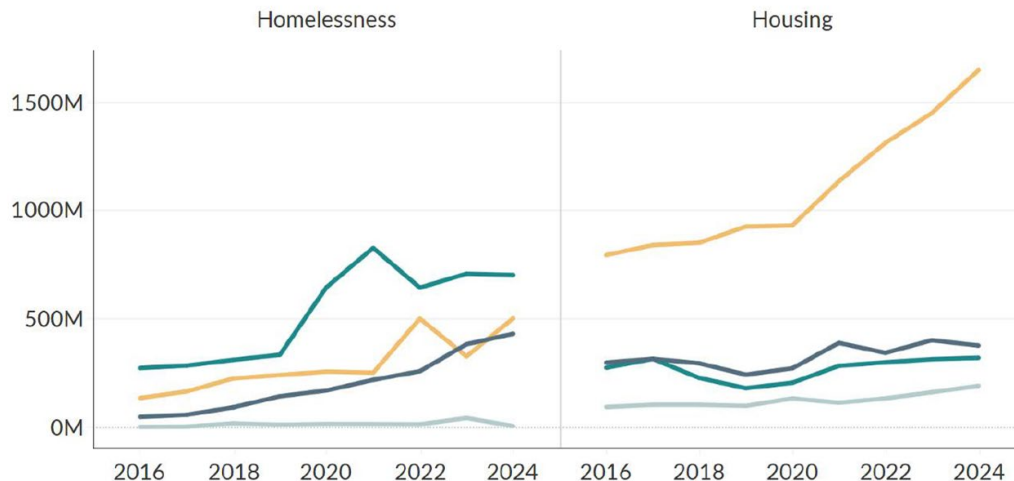


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Missing values have been filled using additional research or statistical methods.

Figure 27: Funding Trends for Homelessness and Housing Programs by Source (Federal, Provincial, Municipal, Other), Ontario, 2016-2024

● Federal ● Provincial ● Municipal ● Other



## Funding Trends for Housing and Homelessness

Between **2016** and **2024**, total estimated funding for housing and homelessness programs in Ontario more than **doubled**, rising from **\$1.9 billion** to **\$4.1 billion**, based on data submitted by service managers.

### Adjusted

Missing values have been filled using additional research or statistical methods.



## Part 2

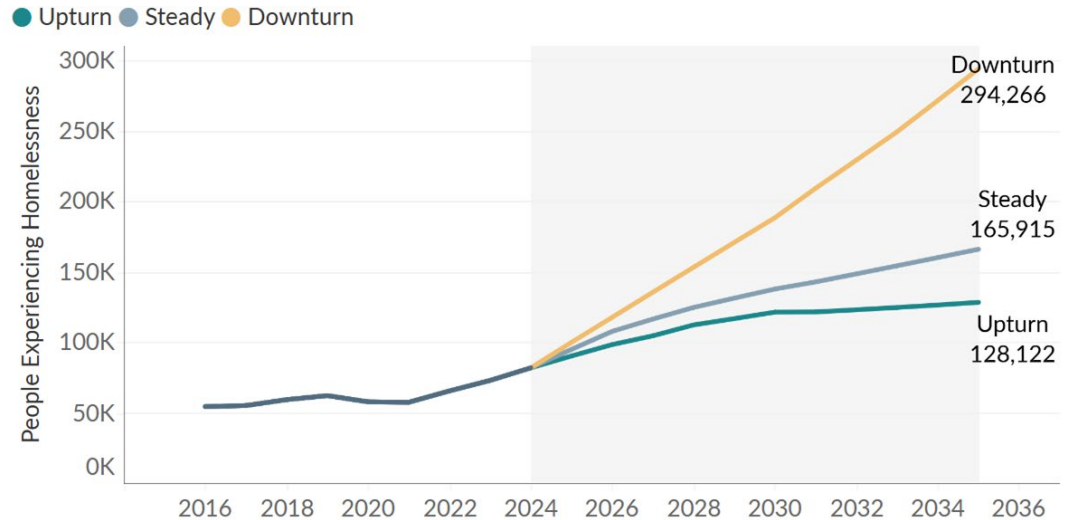
A Ten-Year Perspective on  
Homelessness in Ontario



## Projected Growth in Homelessness

These projections are novel, made possible through unprecedented data contributions from service managers across Ontario.

Figure 31: Projections of People Experiencing Homelessness Under Different Scenarios, Ontario, 2016–2035





## Part 3

### Investing in Solutions

# Projection Modelling and Limitations

Projection modeling estimates the resources and investments needed to address homelessness under two distinct approaches:

## Scenario 1:

### Ending Chronic Homelessness

Achieving "functional zero" for chronic homelessness through long-term systemic investments in housing and support.

## Scenario 2:

### Addressing Encampments

Providing immediate relief for people living in encampments while stabilizing individuals and offering housing solutions.

## Key Assumptions and Limitations

Projections are based on data from Ontario's 47 service managers and focus on what is achievable within current housing and homelessness systems.

**Exclusions:** Certain programs, like health-funded housing, are not included.

### Assumptions:

- Models rely on system improvements, such as better prevention, improved placements, and reduced inefficiencies.
- Province-wide averages are used, which may not account for regional differences.
- Stable policies and economic conditions are assumed; disruptions (e.g., recessions) could affect outcomes.

## Scenario 1: Ending Chronic Homelessness—Goals and Investments

A teal-colored map of the state of Massachusetts is shown. Overlaid on the map is the text "\$11 billion" in a large, bold, black font.

**\$11 billion**

over 10 years to achieve functional zero chronic homelessness.

- Build 75,050 net new housing spaces, including:
  - Supportive housing for high-needs populations.
  - Transitional housing to move people out of shelters.
  - Affordable housing to stabilize low-income households.
- Expand prevention programs to reduce inflows into homelessness and support long-term exits.
- Focus on system optimization to improve placements, reduce gaps, and prioritize housing stability over emergency responses.

## Scenario 2: Addressing Encampments — Goals and Investments

- **\$2 billion over 3 years to provide immediate relief for people living in encampments and experiencing visible homelessness.**
- **Build 5,700 new housing spaces to stabilize individuals quickly.**
- **Transition 8,443 people from encampments into permanent housing with supports.**
- **Focus on urgent needs while laying the foundation for longer-term solutions through housing supply growth and wraparound services.**

*\* Includes 5 additional years of continued supports to maintain housing stability and prevent returns to homelessness.*

