

the Rapid Housing Initiative, the National Housing Co-investment Fund, and the Rental Housing Finance Initiative. The City should aggressively and pro-actively seek access to these additional funds – encouraging and supporting community non-profits as well as the City’s own housing corporation to access this pool of funding. Most federal programs require and reward partnerships, so minimal City contributions should be strategically allocated to maximize leverage of federal funding (e.g., rather than allocate \$5 million to a single new project – allocate across several projects to secure more federal funds). *The recent Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) can be an effective program in helping to expand the stock of permanent supportive housing, so this program – Hamilton has received funding for 45 units today.*

Insufficient funding for Housing Benefit/rental assistance - the review noted that most households in core need simply lack sufficient income and their affordability challenge can be addressed via providing additional income via a rental allowance. Insufficient benefit levels for those of OW/ODSP seeking to exit insecure housing or homelessness also constrain options to secure stable housing. While the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit is scheduled to ramp up and can help further expansion in such allowances is needed. For many facing affordability challenges, improving labour market skills and consequently income can enable individuals to gradually reduce dependency of the rental assistance, thereby freeing up funds to be reallocated anew recipients.

Restructuring existing social housing subsidy

The issue of very low maximum rents for OW/ODSP beneficiaries living in social housing creates significant consequences, in particular in causing city subsidy to cross subsidize provincial welfare budgets. Reform of the current regulations as well as strategies to avoid and circumvent this impact can help retain City funds to be redeployed to expand housing allowances to assist in removing households with affordability challenges only from the waiting list.