



## City of Hamilton

# Report for Information

**To:** Chair and Members  
General Issues Committee

**Date:** April 15, 2026

**Report No:** HSC23076(b)

**Subject/Title:** 2025 Ending Chronic Homelessness Performance Update  
OUTSTANDING BUSINESS LIST ITEM

**Ward(s) Affected:** (City Wide)

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## Recommendations

- 1) That Report HSC23076(b) respecting 2025 Ending Chronic Homelessness Performance Update and attached appendices **BE RECEIVED** for information.
- 2) That the Outstanding Business List Item GIC-11/20/24-10.4, respecting the number of individuals that have transitioned out of tent encampments to social housing, residential care facilities, transitional housing, and shelter beds **BE CONSIDERED COMPLETE** and **REMOVED** from the listing.

## Key Facts

- This report provides the 2025 Ending Chronic Homelessness system performance results and includes expanded analysis of system investments, population trends, and program-level outcomes.

- Year-over-year variation in homelessness indicators continues, with persistent pressure in chronic homelessness reflecting broader housing affordability challenges and limited long-term supportive housing supply.
- Demand remains high across prevention, outreach, shelter, and housing-focused supports, with sustained use of emergency and low-barrier services. Housing-focused case management programs continue to support substantial numbers of individuals to secure and maintain more stable housing, with strong long-term housing stability outcomes overall.
- Expanded investments across the housing continuum, including shelter capacity, prevention supports, outreach, and supportive housing, have strengthened system response; however, structural funding and housing supply pressures continue to constrain progress toward ending chronic homelessness.
- From January 1 to June 30, 2025, 577 unique individuals were identified in the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System as experiencing unsheltered homelessness; of these, 222 accessed an emergency shelter or transitional living program at least once, and 27 were identified as moving into housing at least once during the reporting period.

## **Financial Considerations - N/A**

### **Background**

The City of Hamilton remains committed to ending chronic homelessness by building a system where homelessness is prevented wherever possible and, when it occurs, is brief and non-reoccurring.

On April 1, 2019, the Federal government launched Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy, which set a national target to reduce chronic homelessness by 50% by 2028. In collaboration with the Indigenous Homelessness Community Entity (Coalition of Hamilton Indigenous Leadership), the City of Hamilton produces an annual Community Homelessness Report assessing local progress toward this goal.

Hamilton's approach is also guided by the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan (currently under renewal), the Reaching Home Hamilton Community Plan 2024-2028, and funding agreements under the Provincial Homelessness Prevention Program. In April 2023, Council approved a motion to declare a state of emergency in the areas of Homelessness, Mental Health and Opioid Addiction, recognizing the escalating pressures facing the community and the local homeless-serving system. In addition to this declaration the City has also established the Housing Secretariat with a focus on the Housing Sustainability and Investment Roadmap pillars that are meant to create more affordable and supportive housing in Hamilton to support pathways out of homelessness. Through this work the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan will be a key companion document to the Housing Master Plan that is currently under development.

In March 2023, Council received Report HSC23021: Ending Chronic Homelessness, which outlined the current state of homelessness in Hamilton and identified investments and system changes required to address rising demand. The report committed to annual performance reporting. Since that time, Council has approved significant investments across the housing continuum to strengthen prevention, shelter, outreach, supportive housing, and system coordination efforts.

This report provides the Ending Chronic Homelessness system performance results up to December 2025, and builds on the commitments outlined in the 2023 Ending Chronic Homelessness report (HSC23021). Results are presented in aggregate across the homeless-serving sector and contain no personally identifying information. All data collection, management, and reporting are conducted in compliance with the Municipal Freedom of Information & Protection of Privacy Act.

## **Analysis**

### **Current State of Homelessness**

Data from the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) demonstrates that during the 2024-2025 fiscal year, 3,004 unique individuals were

homeless for at least one day in Hamilton. Of these, 1,287 unique individuals met the definition of experiencing chronic homelessness (individuals or families who are currently homeless and have been for 6 months or more in the past year or have had recurring experiences of homelessness).

While overall homelessness decreased slightly compared to the previous year, chronic homelessness continued to rise, indicating sustained challenges in supporting long-term housing stability and increasing pressure on high-acuity supports and services.

This trend is not unique to Hamilton and has been observed across Ontario. The Association of Municipalities of Ontario noted in its January 2026 report, *Municipalities Under Pressure: An Update on the Human and Financial Cost of Ontario's Homelessness Crisis*, that although public funding for housing and homelessness has nearly doubled since 2018, with municipalities increasing their contributions at a proportionally higher rate, the availability of affordable and supportive housing has not kept pace with demand, contributing to rising homelessness across the province.

### **Recent Actions and Investments**

A healthy housing continuum aims to prevent homelessness wherever possible and ensure that if it occurs, experiences are brief and non-reoccurring through coordinated prevention, emergency response, housing stabilization and permanent housing solutions.

Since 2023, the City has expanded investments and policy responses across the housing continuum to address rising demand and complexity of needs. Key enhancements have included:

- expansion of shelter capacity by 80%, including 272 temporary spaces, inclusive of 80 outdoor, low-barrier spaces accommodating couples and pets;
- opening 97 supportive housing units at Dorothy Day Place and King William Flats;

- continued support for hotel overflow spaces for families, and the creation of mobile case management support for families experiencing homelessness supported in hotels;
- expansion of Intensive Case Management supports for those experiencing chronic homelessness;
- implementation of Rent Secure, a portable municipally funded housing benefit to bridge individuals experiencing homelessness to longer-term supports, and use of the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit to support those experiencing homelessness;
- enabling the opening of 43 transitional living spaces at the YMCA and enhancing supports available in the transitional living program at the YWCA;
- adoption of the Renovation Licence and Relocation By-Law, Rental Housing Demolition and Conversion By-Law, and the Safe Apartment Buildings Program, alongside the launch of the Tenant Support Program to reduce bad faith evictions, strengthen tenant rights education, prevent entry into homelessness, and support tenant engagement and coordination of community supports through initiatives such as the Community Research Table; and,
- enhancements to shelter diversion programs to improve performance and ensure access to diversion services in all permanently funded shelters.
- Regular updates to the City's Housing and Homelessness Dashboard that supports transparency and understanding of the current homelessness crisis. This includes updates related to the number of individual's who are actively experiencing homelessness, individuals housed through City funded programs, and other key data points.

In collaboration with the Coalition of Hamilton Indigenous Leadership and local Indigenous service providers, the City has also supported Indigenous-led programs including an Action Research on Chronic Homelessness project, embedding culturally grounded practices and Indigenous data governance principles into system coordination.

## 2025 System Performance Results

The following section outlines how these investments are reflected in system performance during the 2025 reporting period. The current performance results reflect continued routine system reporting and illustrate trends across the housing continuum. Appendix “A” to Report HSC23076(b) - Ending Chronic Homelessness Data Table provides a detailed breakdown of performance results. A reporting data dictionary outlining all the reporting definitions and data collection methods is available upon request. Key findings from the 2025 reporting period include:

- **Population-level results** show that the number of individuals experiencing homelessness at least once during the period decreased slightly compared to the previous year. However, the number of individuals identified as experiencing chronic homelessness increased, indicating ongoing challenges in maintaining consistent housing outflow and limited availability of long-term, appropriate housing options.
- **Prevention and early intervention** service activity remained high. From the launch of the Housing Emergency Fund in July 2024 until the end of 2025, the program supported 4027 households on social assistance (Ontario Works, Ontario Disability Support Program) and living with low income, with \$5.37M to support acquisition of affordable units via last month’s rent, and to remain in their units by addressing rental and utility arrears. Additionally, in 2025 the Tenant Support Program reached 3557 households with tenant engagement and legal support. The collective impacts are much higher when considering spouses and dependents.
- Service use within **drop-in programs** increased significantly in 2025, driven by sustained investment in day, evening, and overnight low-barrier services and the return of winter response programming. Drop-ins recorded over 160,000 basic needs interactions in 2025, underscoring their role as access points for indoor space, food, hygiene, and other supports, while also providing growing levels of housing support assistance.

- The **Housing-Focused Street Outreach** program continued to serve individuals living unsheltered, with increases in both basic needs and housing-focused interactions. Overall, results point to sustained and intensive engagement with individuals in encampments and other outdoor locations.
- Demand for **emergency shelter** remains significant. Each quarter, more than 1,000 unique individuals were provided a City funded bed or room, and adult and youth sector occupancy rates frequently exceeded 90%. Additional temporary beds and the phased opening of the Temporary Barton Tiffany Shelter increased overall capacity throughout the reporting period. Consistent high occupancy rates demonstrate the need for these additional spaces and increased outflow options from shelter.
- **Transitional housing programs** served 70 to 130 unique individuals each quarter with increased capacity and program choice generated through new funding for the YMCA Transitional Living Program. Housing placement outcomes remained modest, with an average of 11% of participants moving to stable housing each quarter. Average occupancy is 72%, mostly reflecting the staggered opening of the newly funded programming.
- **Housing-focused case management** (Rapid Rehousing and Intensive Case Management) maintained strong placement outcomes in 2025, with just over 40% of participants securing housing (198 through RRH and 183 through ICM). Twelve-month housing stability rates remained high, though they declined modestly compared to 2024 (RRH: 78% in 2025, down from 86%; ICM: 63%, down from 70%). Both programs also experienced increases in returns to homelessness (RRH: 6%; ICM: 10%), suggesting growing client complexity and housing market pressures. The introduction of the Rent Secure housing allowance is expected to further strengthen housing stability outcomes.
- **Permanent supportive housing** demonstrated the strongest housing stability outcomes in the system, with very few returns to homelessness among tenants housed during the reporting period (5 out of 118 individuals in 2025). This continues to demonstrate the effectiveness of long-term, wrap-around supportive

housing for people who require sustained, individualized support to remain housed.

The measures presented reflect point-in-time results. Transitions to housing are not always linear, particularly for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness, living unsheltered, or presenting with high-acuity needs. Individuals may cycle through services multiple times before achieving sustained housing stability, and service engagement may be interrupted by health-related or justice system interactions.

Program performance results may not account for differences in agency practices, client acuity and complexity, prioritization and referral processes, housing availability, reasons for service, discharge reasons, or discharge timing – all of which directly influence program outcomes.

Hamilton continues to allocate a minimum of 20% of federal homelessness funding to Indigenous-led housing and homelessness responses through the Indigenous Community Entity. Indigenous Peoples are prioritized across housing supports in recognition of the systemic factors contributing to their overrepresentation among those experiencing homelessness.

Individuals served during this reporting period often present with complex and co-occurring needs, including mental health, substance use, and physical health challenges. These factors influence service trajectories and housing stability outcomes and underscore the importance of integrated housing and healthcare responses.

### **Persistent Gaps and Challenges**

While investments have expanded services and supports across the housing continuum and strengthened system capacity, much of this expansion has been driven by increased municipal investment. Despite these efforts, several structural pressures continue to impact progress toward reducing chronic homelessness. Key challenges include:

- Funding sustainability risks: temporary funding is currently supporting hotel overflow and case management, mobile case management supports, expanded

shelter capacity and transitional housing creating uncertainty for short-and long-term service capacity.

- Limited supportive housing supply and operational funding: while capital investments are advancing new supportive housing units through the Housing Secretariat Project Stream, sustainable operating funding from upper levels of government will be required to ensure long-term viability and appropriate support levels.
- Sustained shelter system pressure: high occupancy rates, particularly for low-barrier spaces and accommodations for couples, and pet-owners, indicate continued demand for permanent housing supports.
- Complex and co-occurring needs: many individuals experiencing chronic homelessness were identified as having complex needs and co-occurring health needs, including healthcare integration needs.
- Broader system-level factors: housing affordability pressures, limited rental supply, and social assistance rates that do not align with market conditions continue to constrain housing stability outcomes and increase demand across the system.

Addressing these structural pressures will require sustained and increased investment to expand housing and support capacity, strengthened intergovernmental collaboration, deeper integration across housing, healthcare, mental health, addictions, and justice systems, and continued system monitoring and evaluation to support redesign efforts aimed at achieving both short- and long-term reductions in chronic homelessness.

### **Unsheltered Homelessness to Shelter or Housing**

During the six-month reporting period from January 1 to June 30, 2025, 577 unique individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness were identified in the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS). Of these, 249 individuals transitioned to emergency shelter, transitional or permanent housing, while 326 unique individuals had no recorded exits from unsheltered homelessness during the reporting period. During the same time period, 91 unique individuals returned to unsheltered

homelessness, and 484 unique individuals had no recorded returns to unsheltered homelessness during the reporting period.

### **Next Steps**

Continued efforts across the homeless-serving system will focus on strengthening performance, service coordination, and accountability. Ongoing development of Coordinated Access, improvements to data integrity, and performance monitoring will support alignment of services with demonstrated need, responsiveness to evolving pressures within the local housing continuum of supports, and alignment with applicable provincial and federal policy, funding, and reporting requirements.

Housing Services Division will continue to review and improve the annual reporting cycle to Council with focused development aimed at identifying performance measures that begin to shift toward demonstrating client outcomes and incorporate the voice of those with lived or living experience as well as considering the application of an equity lens. The 2026 data improvement plan includes implementation of the following:

- **Implementation of a new Data Sharing Partnership Agreement and client consent process**
  - Timeline: Q3 2026
  - Includes revisions to the HIFIS data sharing agreements and client consent processes to ensure they are aligned with best practices and clearly identify the roles and responsibilities of Coordinated Access and HIFIS participating partners and the uses of client information collected in HIFIS.
- **Expand the coverage of HIFIS to include prevention and diversion programs**
  - Timeline: Q2 2026
  - Several programs offering City-funded prevention and diversion/ early intervention supports will be onboarded onto HIFIS to improve program performance results and assessments.

- **Ongoing HIFIS data quality and reporting improvements**
  - Timeline: 2026 and ongoing
  - To improve the completeness, and accuracy of information contained within the HIFIS database overall the City of Hamilton continues to implement a proactive data validation and verification program and provide scheduled annual training opportunities. Expanded and improved reporting capabilities are being explored as part of a Housing Service Division Data Strategy.

Further updates will be provided through Council reporting and the 2025–2035 Housing and Homelessness Action Plan, which establishes the long-term strategic direction for the Housing Services Division. The Action Plan will include specific actions aligned with core priorities, with a practical focus on measurable goals and system-level outcomes. Developed through multi-partner collaboration and community engagement, the Plan reflects the voices of people with lived and living experience and includes measurable outcomes to guide and track progress over the next decade.

Ongoing system planning and performance monitoring, undertaken in partnership with community providers and sector partners, will continue to align with federal Reaching Home requirements and broader provincial and federal accountability frameworks, with a sustained focus on homelessness reduction, prevention, limiting returns to homelessness, and addressing chronic and Indigenous homelessness within the local context.

## **Alternatives - N/A**

## **Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities**

These recommendations advance Council Priority #2: Safe and Thriving Neighbourhoods, Outcome 2.1: Increase the supply of affordable and supportive housing and reduce chronic homelessness.

These performance results represent an ongoing commitment to sector-wide results reporting as the Housing Services Division continues to work towards comprehensive program performance measurement within the homeless-serving sector. Performance measurement fosters transparency and is essential to understand the effectiveness of interventions, as well as a community's overall progress towards reducing homelessness.

## Previous Reports Submitted

- [HSC23076\(a\): 2024 Ending Chronic Homelessness Performance Update, April 9, 2025](#)
- [HSC23076: 2023 Ending Chronic Homelessness Performance Update \(Q1 and Q2\), December 6, 2023](#)
- [HSC23041: Addressing the Needs of Unsheltered Individuals and those Relying on Hamilton's Emergency Shelter System, August 14, 2023](#)
- [HSC23021: Ending Chronic Homelessness, March 23, 2023](#)

## Consultation

The results have been provided or reviewed and confirmed by representatives from the individual reporting programs and/or organizations through email communications, the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) Super User Group, and virtual question and answer sessions. See Appendix "B" to Report HSC23076(b) – Ending Chronic Homelessness Consultations for a list of programs engaged for this reporting and engagement opportunities provided by the City of Hamilton.

The monitoring measure definitions are in alignment with data reporting best practices and consistent with Reaching Home Results reporting and homelessness data reporting approaches in other municipalities.

The expertise of people with living experience is invaluable to shaping programs, facilities, and policies in the emergency shelter sector. Positive client outcomes are a

critical accountability measure, but more than that, people with living experience know how the system works, they know what their needs are, and experience the system at work every day. They can bring to light perspectives that may be unknown or unknowable at the staff or senior leadership level. Future reporting will endeavour to bring this perspective into identifying meaningful measures and the interpretation of the results.

## **Appendices and Schedules Attached**

- Appendix A: 2025 Ending Chronic Homelessness Performance Update Data Tables
- Appendix B: 2025 Ending Chronic Homelessness Performance Update Consultation

### **Prepared by:**

- Katrice Carson, Senior Project Manager, Housing Services Division, Healthy and Safe Communities
- James O'Brien, Manager, Housing Services Division, Healthy and Safe Communities
- Jessica Reeve, Senior Policy Analyst, Housing Services Division, Healthy and Safe Communities
- Greg Tedesco, Manager, Housing Services Division, Healthy and Safe Communities

### **Submitted and Recommended by:**

- Michelle Baird, Director – Housing Services Division, Healthy and Safe Communities