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JANUARY 9, 2025

New report highlights staggering growth in homelessness across Northern Ontario

Report reveals 204% surge in homelessness since 2016 in the North, calls for urgent \$11-billion investment to achieve functional zero chronic homelessness by 2035

The Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association (NOSDA), in collaboration with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA), has partnered with HelpSeeker to release a groundbreaking report on Ontario's homelessness crisis.

The report, "[Municipalities Under Pressure: The Human and Financial Cost of Ontario's Homelessness Crisis](#)," quantifies the current and projected scope of homelessness, outlines the financial investments needed to achieve functional zero chronic homelessness by 2035, and identifies the funding gap across all levels of government.

"It is deeply concerning that homelessness has increased by 204% in Northern Ontario and that it could increase to 26,663 people by 2035. The impacts on our communities have been devastating. Municipalities cannot face this alone. We need all orders of government to step up and make real commitments to end chronic homelessness across the province. We need decisive action, now." - Michelle Boileau, NOSDA Chair and Mayor, City of Timmins

"Today, we stand at a pivotal moment in Northern Ontario as we confront the heartbreaking reality of a 204% increase in homelessness since 2016. This staggering rise not only highlights the urgent need for immediate action but also reveals the profound human cost of inaction within our communities. It is essential that we secure the \$11 billion investment required to achieve functional zero chronic homelessness by 2035, ensuring that everyone in our communities has a safe and stable place to call home. By investing in our communities now, we can prevent homelessness from escalating and provide critical support to those who need it most." - Mark King, DNSSAB Chair

Key findings for Northern Ontario are alarming:

- Known homelessness has surged by 204% since 2016, increasing from 1,771 people to 5,377 in 2024.
- Without significant government investment, homelessness in the region could climb to between 10,674 and 26,633 people by 2035.
- The challenges in Northern Ontario are amplified by geographic isolation, limited public transportation, inadequate infrastructure, and systemic inequities, including the overrepresentation of Indigenous populations in homelessness.



While Northern Ontario has seen steeper proportional increases, other regions in Ontario are also grappling with severe growth:

- Known homelessness outside Northern Ontario has risen by 46% since 2016, from 52,032 people to 76,140 in 2024.
- Projections estimate homelessness outside the North could rise to 117,448-267,633 people by 2035, depending on economic conditions and policy interventions.

The report models a 10-year investment scenario to achieve functional zero chronic homelessness across the province. This scenario requires:

- \$11 billion over 10 years: \$7.7 billion for one-time capital investments and \$329 million annually for operational costs.

Additionally, the report explores solutions for addressing the pressing issue of encampments through a fixed investment scenario:

- \$2 billion in targeted funding: \$810 million for one-time capital investments and \$151 million annually for operations.

Recognizing the unique challenges of Northern Ontario, the report recommends allocating up to 20 per cent of these investments to address regional capacity gaps, infrastructure deficits, and the disproportionate impact on Indigenous populations.

About NOSDA:

The Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association was formed to develop a co-operative and collaborative approach with municipalities and municipal organizations, to facilitate the consolidated municipal delivery of services in Northern Ontario. NOSDA is intended to create a political forum for reviewing and developing both policies and program delivery issues from a Northern perspective.

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