

MEMO / NOTE DE SERVICE

Information previously distributed / Information distribué auparavant

TO: Community Services Committee and Council

DESTINATAIRE : Comité des services communautaires et Conseil

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DATE: August 27, 2024

27 août 2024

FILE NUMBER: ACS2024-CSS-GEN-011

SUBJECT: Response to Motion No. CSC2023-01-05 - Update for Q3 & Q4 2023

OBJET : Réaction à la motion n° CSC2023-01-05 – Compte rendu pour le troisième et

le quatrième trimestres de 2023

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Information Previously Distributed (IPD) Memorandum is to provide a response to Community Services Committee and Council regarding Motion No. CSC2023-01-05, carried on February 28, 2023. In October 2023, staff provided an interim response to the motion which included data for the period of January to June 2023. This IPD provides data for all of 2023 and provides Committee and Council with an interim update to the annual Housing & Homelessness Services Progress Report thus keeping Committee and Council up to date on the housing and homelessness crisis.

As requested in the motion and using an anti-racism and women and gender equity lens, this memo includes:

- 1. The current number of families being housed in hotels and motels;
- 2. The number of families in family shelters;
- 3. The number of single youth, men and women in emergency shelters;
- 4. The cost of hotels:
- 5. The cost of emergency sheltering; and
- 6. The number of singles and families who have moved from shelters to permanent housing through rent-geared to income housing or with a housing subsidy.

BACKGROUND

Since 2017, Housing and Homelessness Services has produced a comprehensive annual report for both Council and the public. This report includes an overview of Housing and Homelessness Services updates and data, including homelessness data. The purpose of this report is to highlight successes, provide an overview of work in progress, and to identify trends in data over multiple years. The report also provides important information and insights that assist with future planning for Housing and Homelessness Services.

In January 2020, Ottawa City Council declared a housing and homelessness emergency and crisis, highlighting the need for more funding from all levels of government for both affordable housing and homelessness services. Almost immediately following this declaration, in March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic began significantly impacting the housing sector, particularly homelessness services.

Recognizing the need to reduce the burden on the emergency shelter system, the City of Ottawa collaborated with internal and external stakeholders to determine how to increase health and safety for people experiencing homelessness in Ottawa. The result was a collaborative effort to open City-operated isolation centres to provide medical care. Physical Distancing – Emergency Overflow Centres (PD-EOCs) were opened to provide more space and to limit the spread of COVID-19. These facilities have remained open since then, now acting as overflow for the single shelter system, as demand continues to outpace capacity in the system.

As of August 2024, there are still two PD-EOCs open in Ottawa: Bernard Grandmaître PD-EOC serving single men and Heron PD-EOC serving single adults of all genders. From January 2021 to December 2023 PD-EOC staff housed **568** people. Despite this effort, the inflow of people into homelessness continues and PD-EOC remain open as the existing shelter system cannot meet the demand for service and are continuously and regularly operating at or above capacity.

Prior to the pandemic, the single shelter sector was able to adapt to demand and open additional overflow shelter spaces and programming to add capacity. However, these options are no longer viable because overflow spaces were often temporarily set up in common spaces such as dining rooms. This is no longer advised from a public health and safety perspective. As such, PD-EOCs are still being used to ensure there is adequate space for single people experiencing homelessness in Ottawa.

The City of Ottawa's single and family shelter systems were at or near capacity prior to the pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic caused an overall decrease in the number of people accessing services in 2020 and 2021. Shelter system use has returned to prepandemic levels and is in fact seeing growth in demand by singles, particularly by newcomers. In 2022, on any given night there was an average of 15% of newcomer singles in the shelter system; in 2023 it was 31%. Currently, nearly **60%** of singles in the system are newcomers.

Housing and Homelessness Services continues to work to transition out PD-EOCs. The <u>Integrated Transition to Housing Strategy Update</u> was approved by Council on July 10, 2024. A further update on the winter response strategy will be brought to Committee and Council in Q4 2024.

The City of Ottawa's 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan 2020-2030 (the Plan) outlines key actions required to address family homelessness. Currently, the family shelter system continues to rely on overflow hotels, motels, and post-secondary residences to provide adequate capacity for families experiencing homelessness in Ottawa. Housing and Homelessness Services continues to explore permanent locations for families with the goal of reducing reliance on hotels, motels, and post-secondary residences. The Corkstown Transitional Housing Program was recently opened, which has increased the permanent bed capacity for families experiencing homelessness.

There are several factors that are contributing to the increase in service demand for shelter and homelessness services for both families and singles, including:

- Lack of affordable housing: Rising market rents that continue to create
 affordability challenges for all households in Ottawa and limit available options for
 those in receipt of provincially-funding housing allowances which are based on the
 CMHC average market rent. These factors continue to make it more and more
 challenging for people experiencing homelessness to secure affordable housing.
- No standard basic income: Social Assistance (Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program) rates do not reflect the true and increasing cost of living.
- No future funding commitments for housing benefits from the Provincial and Federal governments: The City relies on the cost-shared Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB), but our funding was fully allocated by February 2024 with no new funding allocated for the current or future years.
- Limited future funding commitments for capital funding from the Provincial
 government for new supportive and affordable housing units. The City was
 successful through the recent Federal government's Housing Accelerator
 Funding, which was directed by City Council towards new units, however funding
 is still required from the Province for their share of the capital funding.
- Global migration: Contributing to unprecedented inflow into the shelter system, leading to demand exceeding capacity and continued need for PC-EOCs/overflow.
- **Complex Needs**: More complex client needs requiring additional mental health, addictions and social service supports to maintain housing.
- **Toxic drug supply:** A worsening opioid crisis in Canada and Ottawa; in 2022 there were 866 overdose emergency department visits with an increase to 1,290 visits in 2023 as reported by Ottawa Public Health.

DISCUSSION

Housing and Homelessness Services utilizes the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) to aggregate sector data. HIFIS is a federally owned and managed database and municipalities must use HIFIS or a comparable Homelessness Management Information System as a stipulation of receiving federal Reaching Home funding. The shelter system in Ottawa has used HIFIS since 1997 and since then has continuously worked toward improving data quality. In recent years, the City of Ottawa has expanded the use of HIFIS to include a wider spectrum of homelessness and housing service providers. There are currently 36 service providers in Ottawa using HIFIS and a further expansion planned for March 2025. These expansions will continue to improve the knowledge and data related to homelessness and housing in the City of Ottawa.

Data Limitations and Details

There are limitations to the data in HIFIS. The database itself is managed at the federal level, meaning that the City of Ottawa cannot unilaterally make changes to the system. Any changes to the functionality of the database requires consensus among municipalities and is subject to review by the federal government. As such, racialized data and detailed immigration status data is not available.

Additionally, homelessness overall is underrepresented in HIFIS because to have a profile in HIFIS, households must have interacted with an agency that uses HIFIS. While HIFIS does include both shelter system data and unsheltered data, it does not include data of those who are couch-surfing and/or precariously housed.

In categories where the total number of households being reported is less than five, the data is not being reported and a dash (—) will be displayed. This is standard practice to ensure anonymity of the households. It should also be noted that the totals in the charts below is not a sum of the remaining categories, as households may belong to more than one sub-category being reported. For example, a single person may identify as female, Indigenous, and a Veteran, and would therefore be included in all of these categories, as well as in the total for that table.

Definitions

Below are the standard definitions utilized by Housing and Homelessness Services when reviewing, compiling, and presenting data, ensuring consistency and data integrity.

Household Compositions

Family Unit	A family unit is comprised of two or more family members
Family Members	Each unique individual that is part of a family unit
Households	Either a family unit or a single individual
Household Members	Each unique individual that is part of a household
Rent-Geared-to-Income	Housing that is at a fixed address and where part of the
(RGI)/Subsidized	rent is subsidized/paid by government and the remaining
	rent is paid by the tenant based on a pre-determined
	formula, with households paying no more than 30 per
	cent of their income towards rent.
Housing Allowance	A sum of money that is provided to a household to go
	toward paying rent. Addresses are not fixed, and housing
	allowances are portable.
Supportive Housing	A type of housing that provides varying levels of onsite
	supports (e.g., medical, counselling, case management)
	that help people live independently. Generally geared
	toward single people, not families.
Private Market	A unit where an individual/family is paying full price.

Families in Family Shelters

The City of Ottawa's family shelter system is comprised of five facilities. Two of these facilities provide service to newcomer families only, while another provides service to young mothers with infant children. The remaining two facilities provide service to any families experiencing homelessness in Ottawa. The tables below show the use of the family shelter system from January to December 2023, providing the average number of family units in the system per night in each month of period.

Unique Family Units in Family Shelters Average Nightly Occupancy (January to June 2023)						
Jan Feb Mar Apr May Ju						Jun
Total Families	71	77	83	88	94	97
Newcomer Families	51	53	56	61	65	68
Sole Support Female-led Families	43	48	52	53	56	57
Indigenous Families	_	_	_	_	_	5

Unique Family Units in Family Shelters Average Nightly Occupancy (July to December 2023)						
Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec						Dec
Total Families	95	96	98	98	101	107
Newcomer Families	67	68	69	71	72	77
Sole Support Female-led Families	57	57	62	65	64	64
Indigenous Families	5	_	5			5

The above table shows an increase in the number of families accessing the family shelter system. This increase can be attributed to facilities returning to pre-COVID capacity levels, which was done cautiously and with the support of Ottawa Public Health. Additionally, the City-owned Carling Family Shelter has moved operations to Corkstown Transitional Housing Program, which has an overall larger capacity. When considering the overall capacity and demand for family shelter services across permanent and temporary facilities, use remained relatively steady in 2023.

Families in Overflow Hotels, Motels, and Post-Secondary Residences

The City of Ottawa relies on hotels, motels, and post-secondary residences to provide temporary emergency accommodation to families experiencing homelessness when the permanent family shelter system is at capacity. Currently, the City of Ottawa partners with approximately 25 hotel providers across the city to ensure there is adequate capacity for families.

The tables below detail the average number of families per night in an overflow hotel, motel, or post-secondary residence from January to December 2023. The average number of families at overflow sites decreased during this period. As noted in the previous section, permanent family shelter facilities slowly returned to pre-COVID capacity levels and added a new, larger facility. When taking into account both types of family facility options, the number of families requiring placement has remained relatively consistent in 2023.

Unique Family Units in Overflow Hotels, Motels & Post-Secondary Residences Average Nightly Occupancy (January to June 2023)						
Jan Feb Mar Apr May Ju						Jun
Total Families	327	323	312	299	276	275
Newcomer Families	193	190	184	176	160	156
Sole Support Female-led Families	185	187	181	171	158	162
Indigenous Families	13	11	11	9	8	5

Unique Family Units in Overflow Hotels, Motels & Post-Secondary Residences						
Average Nightly Occupancy (July to December 2023)						
	Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec					
Total Families	280	278	268	272	272	280
Newcomer Families	159	163	163	173	181	192
Sole Support Female-led Families	170	166	164	172	177	187
Indigenous Families	_	_	—	5	6	7

Singles in Single Shelter System

The City of Ottawa's single shelter system is comprised of seven permanent facilities, and as of the writing of this report there are still two Physical Distancing – Emergency Overflow Centres (PD-EOCs) in operation. The permanent facilities are operated by community agencies, while the PD-EOCs are operated by the City of Ottawa.

The single persons shelter sector provides service to adults and youth experiencing homelessness in Ottawa. Most single individuals accessing the shelter system receive

placement at a community shelter; however, in extenuating circumstances, the City of Ottawa may place a single adult at a hotel, motel, or post-secondary residence. The tables below detail the average number of singles accessing the shelter system, per night, from January to December 2023. The table includes the total number as well as several additional categories that include various additional groups.

From January to December 2023, the overall number of singles accessing the shelter system has increased. The primary driver of this change is the surge in the number of newcomers accessing the system, increasing from an average of 154 to 583 newcomers (or 279%) per night during this period. Housing and Homelessness Services continues to work with newcomer agencies to add capacity and supports for newcomers in the system. Additionally, there are two new facilities that will be opened in Q4 2024 (230 Queen Street and 1754 St. Joseph Boulevard). These two facilities will add over 200 spaces for singles, primarily newcomers. Housing and Homelessness Services is in regular communication with the federal and provincial governments to discuss the increase and possible solutions.

Unique Singles in Single Shelter System							
Average Nightly Occupancy (January to June 2023)							
	Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun						
Total	934	946	935	901	890	889	
Men	688	694	671	639	627	621	
Women	227	234	248	244	244	250	
Other Genders	17	17	16	16	18	17	
Youth (18 & under)	57	56	59	57	57	57	
Newcomers	154	170	170	179	188	202	
Indigenous	95	93	92	85	82	76	
Veterans	7	8	12	9	8	11	
Staying in Overflow Hotels, Motels, Post-Secondary Residences	41	39	38	40	43	43	

Unique Singles in Single Shelter System							
Average Nightly Occupancy (July to December 2023)							
	Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov De						
Total	900	935	953	980	1050	1178	
Men	620	637	651	670	711	803	
Women	264	281	288	299	329	364	
Other Genders	15	17	14	9	9	10	
Youth (18 & under)	60	72	71	65	63	59	
Newcomers	249	308	363	452	518	583	
Indigenous	66	68	59	51	53	65	
Veterans	14	14	13	10	11	12	
Staying in Overflow Hotels, Motels, Post-Secondary Residences	45	54	49	50	46	42	

Cost of Hotels, Motels, and Post-Secondary Residences

The City of Ottawa partners with approximately 25 hotels, motels, and post-secondary residences. The number of contracts varies seasonally, as some facilities, namely post-secondary residences, are not available year-round. The City of Ottawa also regularly explores options to expand capacity given the consistent and growing demand for placement for families experiencing homelessness.

In 2023, the cost of temporarily housing homeless families in overflow hotels, motels, and post-secondary residences was \$13,507,344. This amount may be subject to changes, as providers and/or City staff may need to retroactively adjust billing statements.

Cost of Emergency Sheltering

The City of Ottawa partners with eight community agencies who operate 11 facilities to provide temporary emergency accommodation to singles and families who are experiencing homelessness in the City of Ottawa. These agencies receive a contracted, fixed funding amount to operate these facilities. In addition, the City of Ottawa owns and operates a family shelter. These facilities constitute the permanent shelter system in Ottawa.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Ottawa has opened and closed various Physical Distancing - Emergency Overflow Centres (PD-EOCs) to reduce capacity in the single shelter system and to ensure client safety. Now, PD-EOCs are filling a capacity gap in the single shelter system and currently there are two PD-EOCs in operation, one serving single adult men and one serving single adults of all genders.

Category	2023 Total Costs
Single Adult Shelter System	\$13,925,426
Family Shelter System*	\$7,011,777
Youth Shelter System	\$754,106
TOTAL	\$21,691,309

^{*}Excludes hotel, motel, post-secondary residence costs noted in above section

The above funding amounts represent the costs associated with City-operated facilities (Carling Family Shelter and the PD-EOCs) as well as the contracts with community agencies who operate the shelter system in Ottawa. In addition to the above outlined operating costs, the single adult shelter system also received \$1,189,350 in 2023 to fund 15 Shelter-to-Housing Case Manager positions; these workers support clients to find housing. The funding provided to community agencies does not cover full operating costs and agencies supplement their funding with fundraising and funding from other sources (if/when available).

Families Housed from Shelter System

The tables below display the number of families who exited the shelter system and moved into various types of housing, along with the average and median length of stay in each category. There are additional categories also presented including newcomer families, sole support female-led families and Indigenous families.

In all categories, the median length of stay is shorter than the average length, meaning there are some families that are staying for very long periods of time and raising the average length of stay. Length of stay in shelter varies for a number of reasons including but not limited to: the size of the family, document readiness of the family, availability of affordable units (including subsidized units), whether or not the family has a priority on the Centralized Waiting List, and family income.

Families Housed (January to June 2023) Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI)/Subsidized Housing						
Families Average Median Housed Length of Stay Length of Sta						
Total Families	100	210 days	197 days			
Newcomer Families	59	215 days	213 days			
Sole Support Female-led Families	66	202 days	178 days			
Indigenous Families	5	308 days	197 days			

Families Housed (July to December 2023) Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI)/Subsidized Housing							
	Families Average Median						
	Housed Length of Stay Length of Stay						
Total Families	98	267 days	259 days				
Newcomer Families	55	280 days	259 days				
Sole Support Female-led Families	66	263 days	267 days				
Indigenous Families	_	_	_				

Families Housed (January to June 2023) Housing Allowance						
Families Average Median						
	Housed	Length of Stay	Length of Stay			
Total Families	54	185 days	161 days			
Newcomer Families	29	179 days	145 days			
Sole Support Female-led Families	36	181 days	156 days			
Indigenous Families	_	_	_			

Families Housed (July to December 2023) Housing Allowance						
Families Average Median Housed Length of Stay Length of Sta						
Total Families	73	215 days	181 days			
Newcomer Families	52	202 days	182 days			
Sole Support Female-led Families	36	210 days	176 days			
Indigenous Families	_	_	_			

Families Housed (January to June 2023) Private Market					
Families Average Median Housed Length of Stay Length of Stay					
Total Families 23 163 days 134 days					
Newcomer Families	21	168 days	146 days		
Sole Support Female-led Families	10	195 days	173 days		
ndigenous Families — — — —					

Families Housed (July to December 2023) Private Market				
Families Average Median				
Housed Length of Stay Length of Stay				
Total Families	48	166 days	116 days	
Newcomer Families	33	159 days	114 days	
Sole Support Female-led Families	23	166 days	125 days	
Indigenous Families		_	_	

Singles Housed from Shelter System

The tables below display the number of singles who exited the shelter system and moved into various types of housing, along with the average and median length of stay in each category. There are several additional categories also displayed, further breaking down the data.

The median length of stay is lower than the average length of stay in almost all cases, except for one instance where they are the same. As with families, this is indicative of a small number of individuals who remain in the shelter system for a long time, increasing the overall average.

Singles Housed (January to June 2023) Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI)/Subsidized Housing				
Singles Average Med				
	Housed	Length of Stay	Length of Stay	
Total	76	101 days	74 days	
Men	25	91 days	54 days	
Women	46	99 days	74 days	
Other Genders	5	168 days	197 days	
Youth	18	136 days	106 days	
Newcomers	27	128 days	78 days	
Indigenous	7	86 days	86 days	
Veterans	_	_	_	

Singles Housed (July to December 2023) Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI)/Subsidized Housing				
Singles Average Med Housed Length of Stay Length				
Total	87	181 days	119 days	
Men	31	164 days	86 days	
Women	50	202 days	127 days	
Other Genders	6	92 days	54 days	
Youth	17	136 days	127 days	
Newcomers	33	216 days	155 days	
Indigenous	7	122 days	126 days	
Veterans	0	_	_	

Singles Housed (January to June 2023) Housing Allowance				
Singles Average Medi Housed Length of Stay Length of				
Total	35	106 days	69 days	
Men	18	98 days	53 days	
Women	17	116 days	106 days	
Other Genders	0	_	_	
Youth	_	_	_	
Newcomers	14	113 days	64 days	
Indigenous	0	_	_	
Veterans	0	_	_	

Singles Housed (July to December 2023) Housing Allowance			
	Median Length of Stay		
Total	63	99 days	64 days
Men	22	190 days	98 days
Women	41	52 days	29 days
Other Genders	0	_	_
Youth	5	301 days	270 days
Newcomers	42	48 days	29 days
Indigenous		_	_
Veterans	0	_	_

Singles Housed (January to June 2023) Supportive Housing					
Singles Average Median Housed Length of Stay Length of					
Total	94	84 days	40 days		
Men	34	53 days	13 days		
Women	55	79 days	48 days		
Other Genders	5	348 days	99 days		
Youth	_	_	_		
Newcomers	33	53 days	35 days		
Indigenous	13	68 days	10 days		
Veterans	0	_	_		

Singles Housed (July to December 2023) Supportive Housing			
	Median Length of Stay		
Total	121	55 days	31 days
Men	38	86 days	68 days
Women	76	40 days	25 days
Other Genders	5	117 days	133 days
Youth	21	99 days	85 days
Newcomers	54	50 days	39 days
Indigenous	6	110 days	61 days
Veterans	_	_	_

Singles Housed (January to June 2023) Private Market					
Singles Average Media Housed Length of Stay Length o					
Total	57	108 days	39 days		
Men	41	106 days	30 days		
Women	14	109 days	101 days		
Other Genders	_	_	_		
Youth	_	_	_		
Newcomers	20	81 days	40 days		
Indigenous	_	_	_		
Veterans	_	_	_		

Singles Housed (July to December 2023) Private Market				
	Median Length of Stay			
Total	84	91 days	67 days	
Men	62	97 days	77 days	
Women	22	74 days	37 days	
Other Genders	0	_	_	
Youth	_	_	_	
Newcomers	55	93 days	83 days	
Indigenous	_	_	_	
Veterans	_	_	_	

NEXT STEPS

Housing and Homelessness Services will continue to provide timely updates on the above data to Committee and Council. Staff will also explore the possibility of developing an online dashboard with real-time data, which will allow Committee and Council to have the most current information available at any time. Additionally, staff will continue to work with internal and external stakeholders to increase the quality and consistency of the data with the goal of providing the most accurate data for decision-making and policy formulation.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

- City of Ottawa's 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan 2020-2030
- Temporary Emergency Accommodations Dashboard
- 2023 Progress Report
- Integrated Transition to Housing Strategy Update

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