

# Community Safety and Well-Being Plan

2021–2031



 Ottawa

# Table of contents

<b>1</b>	Message from the Mayor	<b>18</b>	Review process: Building on what works
<b>2</b>	Message from the City Manager	<b>19</b>	Key changes informed by the four-year review
<b>3</b>	Message from the Community Safety and Well-Being Advisory Chair	<b>22</b>	Community Safety and Well-Being Plan 2021–2031: Refined priorities and shared direction
<b>4</b>	Honouring statement	<b>26</b>	Discrimination, Marginalization and Racism
<b>5</b>	Advancing urban Indigenous well-being and safety	<b>28</b>	Financial Security and Poverty Reduction
<b>8</b>	Executive summary	<b>30</b>	Gender-Based Violence and Violence Against Women
<b>9</b>	Reaffirmed commitment to Truth and Reconciliation	<b>32</b>	Housing and Homelessness
<b>10</b>	Ottawa demographic snapshot	<b>34</b>	Neighbourhood Solutions and Community Safety
<b>12</b>	Community safety and well-being is shared across city strategies	<b>36</b>	Mental Well-Being
<b>13</b>	Provincial planning framework—guidance for local solutions	<b>38</b>	Youth Social Development
<b>15</b>	The first Community Safety and Well-Being Plan	<b>40</b>	Community safety and well-being—a municipal vision in action
<b>17</b>	Progress and achievements	<b>41</b>	Governance of the community safety and well-being plan
		<b>42</b>	Monitoring progress and measures of well-being
		<b>43</b>	Acknowledgments
		<b>44</b>	References





# Message from the Mayor

I want to thank everyone who shared their experiences, ideas, and perspectives during the consultations that shaped the revised Community Safety and Well-Being Plan. Your voices as residents, community partners, service providers, and City staff, were central to this work. Together, we've created a plan that reflects both the challenges we face and the strengths of our city.

Community safety and well-being is about people. It's about feeling safe in your neighbourhood, having access to the supports you need, having a sense of belonging and opportunity in Ottawa. This Plan recognizes that true safety is built not just through response, but through equity, collaboration, and proactive actions that tackle the root causes of risk.

Building a safer city means listening, working alongside communities, and collaborating with other levels of government and local partners to co-create solutions that respond to real needs and lived experiences.

This is an important step forward to continue building a safe, inclusive, and thriving Ottawa for every resident.



**Mark Sutcliffe**

Mayor of Ottawa

# Message from the City Manager

The review of the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan is a significant milestone and is a result of countless hours of work, highlighted by many people working together with the goal of improving our city—for everyone.

Investing in community safety and well-being remains a priority for the City of Ottawa. The reviewed Community Safety and Well-Being Plan provides a framework to align the work of multiple City departments, strategies, and investments, ensuring continued progress toward Council’s vision as outlined in the 2023–2026 City Strategic Plan.

The plan advances key priorities, including the Poverty Reduction Strategy and ANCHOR, strengthening prevention and improving access to services that support an inclusive, livable and affordable city. By addressing the root causes of risk, these initiatives help ensure all residents have the opportunity to thrive.

The factors influencing safety and well-being are increasingly interconnected and dynamic. Responding effectively requires working together as Team Ottawa, focusing on integration across programs and services, strong partnerships with community organizations, and alignment with other levels of government. The reviewed plan fulfills the City’s legislated responsibilities for community safety and well-being planning, while supporting provincial multi-sector efforts to address complex social challenges through collaboration and prevention.

I extend my appreciation to all City staff who have contributed to this initiative, as well as our community partners, for their dedication and professionalism. The CSWB Plan will continue to guide implementation and the long-term impact across the organization. To follow our progress, I encourage you to visit [ottawa.ca](https://ottawa.ca).



**Wendy Stephanson**  
City Manager



# Message from the Community Safety and Well-Being Advisory Chair

It is a privilege to serve as Chair of Ottawa’s Community Safety and Well-Being Advisory Committee and to work alongside dedicated community leaders, service providers, residents, and City staff who are deeply invested in building a safer, more equitable city. The Plan reflects the collective effort of many voices and experiences, and it is strongest because it has been shaped by those who live and work in our communities every day.

The Advisory Committee plays an ongoing role in supporting implementation, monitoring progress, and advocating for responsive, evidence-informed action on the CSWB priorities. Community safety and well-being is a shared responsibility, requiring collaboration across residents, community organizations, City departments, and all levels of government. By continuing to centre community voices and work together across sectors, this Plan offers a pathway toward lasting benefits for individuals, families, and neighbourhoods—and toward a city where people feel safe, connected, and supported to thrive.



**Dr. Claire Kendall (Chair)**

Community Safety and Well-Being  
Advisory Committee



## Honouring statement

Odàwàng kì ombàkonigàde ega wikàd kà mìgiwàniwang Màmìwinini Aishinàbe-wakì. Pimàdizìg Màmìwinini Anishinàbeg kàgìgekamìg kì abìg ondaje àking. Odanishinàbewiziwiniwà obimàdjiwowiniwà ogì nanegàdjichigàdànàwà nanàj ako nongom iyo abinàs. Kichi Odenaw Odàwàng okikàdjiyàwàn pimàdizin Màmìwinini Anishinàben kaye okikàdjìtònàwà iyo akì.

Ottawa is built on un-ceded Anishinabe Algonquin territory. The peoples of the Anishinabe Algonquin Nation have lived on this territory for millennia. Their culture and presence have nurtured and continue to nurture this land. The City of Ottawa honours the peoples and land of the Anishinabe Algonquin Nation. The City of Ottawa honours all First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples and their valuable past and present contributions to this land.



# Advancing urban Indigenous well-being and Safety

## Message from the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition

The Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition (OAC) has established a set of priorities, with the goals of addressing Indigenous community needs, enhancing Indigenous partners and advocacy, and promoting the visibility and engagement of the Ottawa Indigenous community.

The Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition recognizes that advancing these priorities requires meaningful,

mutually accountable partnerships that drive changes to policies, processes, and structures. These changes must address the systemic impacts of colonial racism and support Ottawa as a place of belonging for Indigenous peoples.

The City of Ottawa has been a valued partner in this work. The City's commitment to reconciliation and the investment in the work of the OAC and the urban Indigenous community has resulted in a number of significant supports for Ottawa urban Indigenous community.

## Delivering impact: Ongoing work

### Violence Against Women (VAW) Inuit Shelter

The City of Ottawa contributed the land for the Inuit Violence Against Women Shelter now under construction. This will be the first shelter built specifically for Inuit women and children south of Inuit Nunangat and will provide safe, temporary housing for up to 30 Inuit women and children fleeing violence.

The project responds to a critical gap in Indigenous women's shelter services in Ottawa. Minwaashin Lodge alone turns away approximately 300 women each year due to lack of capacity. Given the disproportionate rates of homelessness and premature death among Inuit in Ottawa, the City's commitment was a significant step toward addressing urgent needs.

### Indigenous Housing and Homelessness Strategy

The OAC's Indigenous Housing and Homelessness Strategy commits to creating 1,000 new homes for Indigenous people in Ottawa by 2034, through strong partnerships and Indigenous specific funding opportunities across all levels of government.

In its first year, 80 homes have been committed through partnerships with Parkdale United Church (10), Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services (60), and Sandy Hill Cooperative (10). The Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition's current priority, working with a private developer and the federal government is to create transitional housing.

This work is informed by research led by Indigenous community members and supported by City provided data, including the Point-in-Time Count. The OAC uses this evidence to guide policy and funding recommendations and participate in the City's Housing and Homelessness Leadership Table to support the Indigenous strategy alongside the City's 10-year plan.

### Indigenous Women's Safety Table

Since the Indigenous Women's Safety Table was established in 2021, the City of Ottawa has been a committed partner supporting the four working groups: Police, Health, Residential Services, and Housing.

In addition to the Inuit VAW Shelter, key initiatives include the Family Healing Lodge for mothers and children, the Aging Out Initiative for youth leaving child welfare, training for the Ottawa Police Service, and public awareness efforts like Red Dress Day and the Tree of Hope initiative.

The City has engaged with Indigenous community members as partners in developing policy that can address systemic issues.

### Indigenous Well-Being Strategy

The Community Safety and Well-Being funding for Indigenous Well-being Workers addresses the link between housing instability and heightened risk following suicide, overdose, or significant loss—an issue identified through the OAC COVID19 research project and frontline experience.



Housing providers within OAC identified the need for onsite well-being supports and coordinated referrals to help tenants remain housed and stabilize their lives. This initiative also delivered four community grief workshops and supported the Inuit Synergy Group to share Ontario Coroner findings with the Inuit community regarding Inuit deaths in Ottawa.

### **Indigenous Employment Hub**

In 2025, the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition built on the success of two Indigenous Career Fairs and its co-chair role at the United Way Indigenous Employment Table to develop an Indigenous Employment Hub launching in 2026.

Finally, the City of Ottawa's most significant contribution for the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition has been to shift in the relationship with urban Indigenous community—in addition to supporting organizations to provide services to Indigenous community members the City has engaged with Indigenous community members as partners in developing policy that can address systemic issues and make the city of Ottawa a place of belonging for all Indigenous community members.

The Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition values its partnership with the City of Ottawa and recognizes the City's community safety and well-being investments as important supports for advancing the work of OAC and the well-being of urban Indigenous community members.

# Executive summary

Community safety and well-being is about creating conditions where all individuals and communities feel safe, supported and able to thrive. This approach recognizes that safety is not only the absence of crime or harm but also the presence of well-being, equity, opportunity and social cohesion. By addressing the social determinants of health—such as income, housing, education, discrimination, and access to services—a community safety and well-being approach works to prevent harm before it occurs and promotes inclusive, resilient communities.

Ottawa’s Community Safety and Well-Being Plan (the Plan) is a ten-year roadmap (2021–2031) designed to improve the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age. The Plan takes a long-term, multi-disciplinary approach to addressing complex social issues such as poverty, gender-based violence, mental health and substance use health, and barriers to affordable housing. By tackling root causes of these issues, the Plan aims to reduce harm and strengthen community resilience.

Community safety and well-being planning provides an evidence-based framework that enables governments and partners to work collaboratively to enhance safety and promote equity across diverse communities. Using a collective impact approach, the Plan identifies local risks to safety and well-being, sets clear priorities, and outlines coordinated actions to address them. This structured approach ensures efforts are aligned and resources are used effectively.

The four-year review of the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan reaffirms Ottawa’s commitment to creating safer and healthier communities. Required under the *Community Safety and Policing Act, 2021*, this review ensures accountability and continuous improvement. Since the Plan’s approval in 2021, Ottawa has experienced significant change. The review is an opportunity to reconnect with residents, businesses, community agencies, and people with lived and living experience of the risk factors identified in the Plan’s priorities. Input from over 1,000 residents and interest holders—representing diverse neighbourhoods, lived experiences, and sectors—affirmed that the priorities remain relevant and that there is strong support for coordinated system-level change.

The Plan considers long-term, multi-disciplinary efforts and investments to improve the social determinants of health.

The refreshed Plan builds on the original, remains evidence-based, and aligns with work already underway. It promotes equity, efficient use of resources, and solutions tailored to Ottawa’s diverse neighborhoods. Any revisions to the Plan were done to ensure continued progress toward a safer, more inclusive city for everyone.



## Reaffirmed commitment to Truth and Reconciliation

The City of Ottawa is committed to advancing truth and reconciliation. The Community Safety and Well-Being Plan seeks to reaffirm this commitment by centering Indigenous voices, rights, priorities, leadership and community in policies and programs for Indigenous peoples.

This refreshed plan creates an opportunity to strengthen relationships and establish a pathway to co-design solutions that respond to current and future community priorities.

The City reaffirms its commitment by working in partnership with the Algonquin Anishinabe Host Nation, urban Indigenous community, Indigenous organizations and Indigenous service providers. The Plan recognizes the unique histories, rights,

and lived experience of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples and acknowledges the ongoing impacts of colonialism. Guided by priorities of the Host Nation, urban Indigenous community, Indigenous service providers and best practices from other municipalities, the Community Safety and Well-Being Office will work to ensure sustainable and respectful engagement.

The Community Safety and Well-Being Plan supports reconciliation, self-determination, and culturally informed approaches to safety and well-being and will strengthen and maintain partnerships with Indigenous communities and organizations by actively participating and supporting their priorities.

# Ottawa demographic snapshot

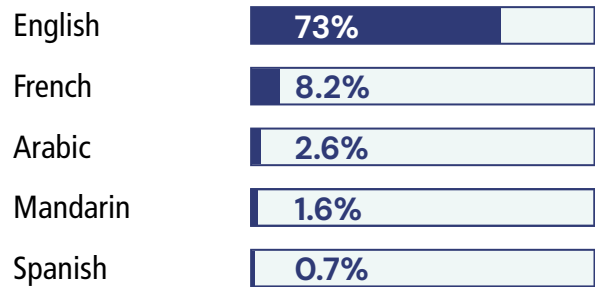
By the numbers<sup>1</sup>

## Total population & demographics

Population ..... **1,017,449**

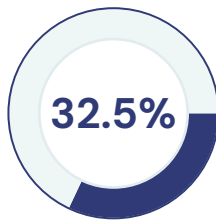
Average Age: **40.7**    Working Age (15 to 64): **66.7%**    Seniors (65+): **16.9%**

## Languages spoken most at home

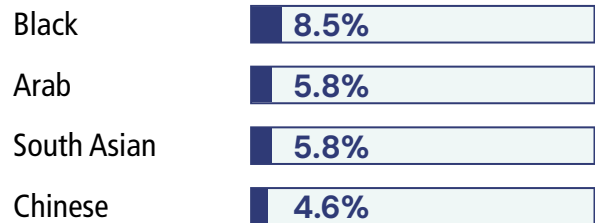


## Identity

Total visible minority population



## Racial identity



Indigenous identity

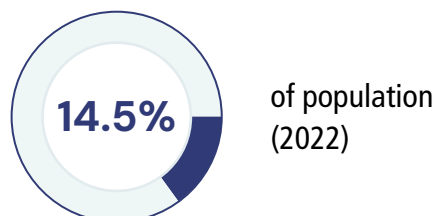
**4%**

This figure is informed by, and respectfully acknowledges, the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition's estimate that approximately **40,000** Indigenous people reside in Ottawa.

## Food insecurity

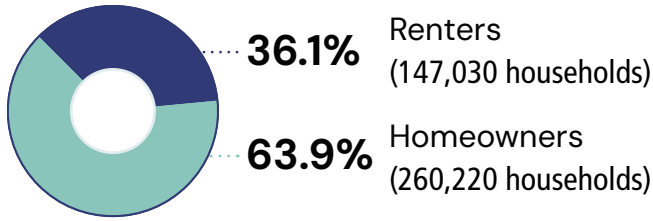
**23.7%** of households experienced food insecurity in 2023  
up from **14.8%** in 2022

## Low income rate





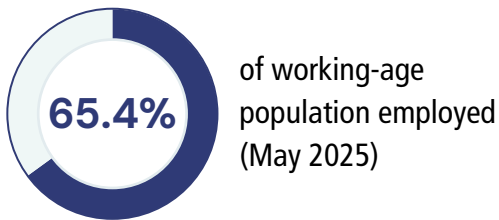
## Homeownership vs. renting



## Housing affordability

**20.1%**  
of households spend  
**30%+** on shelter costs

## Employment rate



## Educational attainment



## Quality of life (2025)

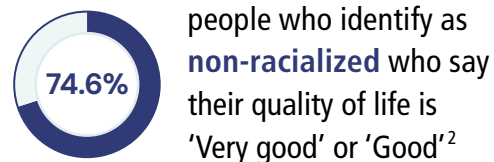
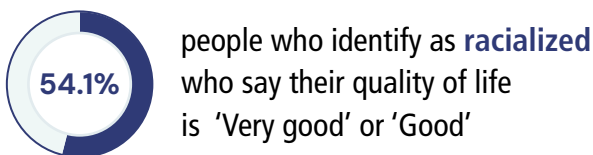
**67.5%** residents who rate their quality of life positively

Very Good ..... **26.1%**  
Good ..... **41.4%**

## Median household income

**\$102,000**

(Average: \$126,700)



# Community safety and well-being is shared across City strategies

Many City strategies play an active role in advancing community safety and well-being. This alignment demonstrates that work underway across corporate plans collectively contributes to a sustainable community where everyone is safe, able to meet basic needs, and has a sense of belonging, opportunities to participate

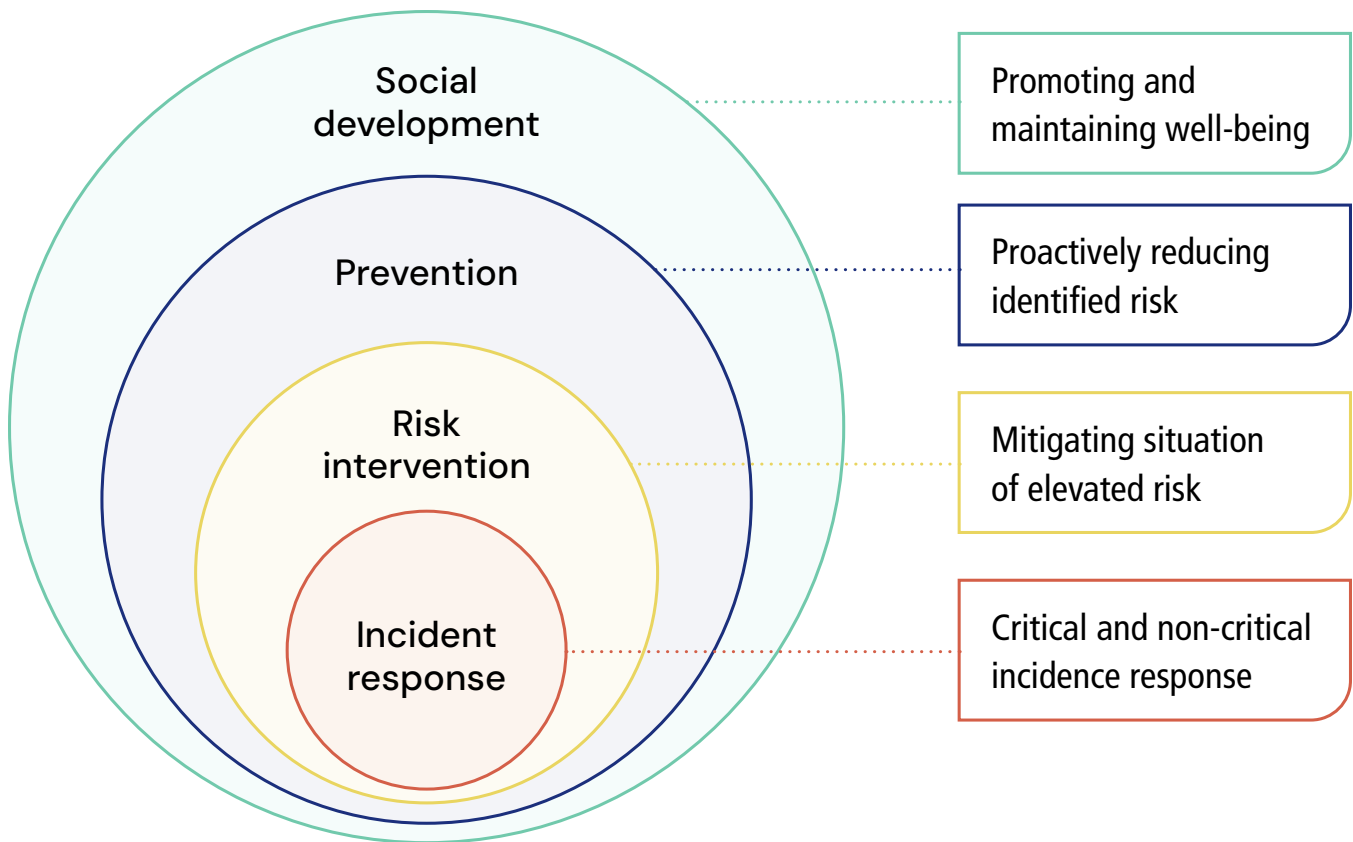
## The Community Safety and Well-Being Plan 2021–2031 aligns with and is supported by

- [10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan, 2020–2030](#)
- [Child Care and Early Years Services Systems Plan, 2025–2029](#)
- [City of Ottawa Municipal Accessibility Plan \(COMAP\), 2025–2029](#)
- [City of Ottawa Strategic Plan, 2023–2026](#)
- [Climate Ready Ottawa, 2025](#)
- [Community Funding Framework Policy Statements, 2026](#)
- [Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan, 2024](#)
- [Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Framework, 2025](#)
- [French Language Services \(FLS\) Operational Plan, 2025](#)
- [Official Plan](#)
- [Older Adult Plan, 2025–2030](#)
- [Ottawa Police Service Board Strategic Plan, 2024–2027](#)
- [Ottawa Public Health’s Strategic Plan, 2023–2027](#)
- [Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan, 2021–2031](#)
- [Poverty Reduction Strategy—RISE UP: A Collective Impact Approach to Reduce Poverty, 2025–2029](#)
- [Reconciliation Action Plan, 2018](#)
- [Road Safety Action Plan, 2019](#)
- [Solid Waste Master Plan, 2024](#)
- [Transportation Master Plan, 2025](#)



# Provincial planning framework— guidance for local solutions

The Ministry of the Solicitor General has developed a planning framework to help municipalities create effective plans that improve community safety and well-being. It takes a comprehensive approach that focuses on preventing harm before it happens and supporting communities to thrive.



The planning framework includes four levels of intervention that guide the development of the Plan, its implementation, and future direction:



### **Social development**

Addresses underlying causes of social issues through upstream approaches. This means addressing structural factors that shape the distribution of power and resources such as norms, values and policies.



### **Prevention**

Applies proactive strategies to known and identified risks that are likely to result in harm. These include addressing living conditions by intervening on the social determinants of health.



### **Risk intervention**

Identifies and responds to situations of elevated risk by addressing the immediate needs of people in crisis through the delivery of health and social services.



### **Incident response**

Requires intervention by first responders. This area represents what is traditionally thought of when referring to crime and safety and may involve emergency response from police, paramedics, and fire fighters.

Ottawa's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan works in collaboration with service providers to support action across the four levels of intervention while focusing collective efforts on social development, prevention and risk intervention. The City of Ottawa's approach incorporates a population health lens alongside with ministry-established levels of intervention, with the goal of reducing the need for incident response.

## **Public health approach/ social determinants of health**

Ottawa's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan recognizes how important factors like income, housing, education, discrimination, and access to services are to people's safety and well-being. These factors are called the social determinants of health.

Opportunities to live a healthy and safe life are not experienced equally by everyone in Ottawa. Some people face unjust barriers because of social or systemic rules that benefit some groups more than others. The Community Safety and Well-Being Plan recognizes these inequalities and works to close the gaps.



# The first Community Safety and Well-Being Plan

The City of Ottawa’s first Community Safety and Well-Being Plan began in 2019 with a commitment to collaboration and inclusion. Recognizing the need for a coordinated approach to address complex social challenges, the City launched a two-phased engagement process that brought together residents, community organizations, service providers and institutional partners to shape priorities and goals. This collaborative foundation ensured the Plan reflected community voices and addressed systemic issues.

The engagement process focused on listening to diverse perspectives and understanding the lived experiences of those most affected by systemic barriers and safety concerns. More than 1,500 individuals, community partners, and sector leaders contributed to identifying six key areas of community risk that could be addressed through coordinated social development, prevention, and risk interventions.

In October 2021, Ottawa City Council approved the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan, formalizing the City’s commitment to advancing systemic change through strength-based action. To support implementation, the Community Safety and Well-Being Office was established as a backbone to the Plan, following a collective impact approach. The Office leads and coordinates efforts across sectors, supports community partners, and ensures accountability through funding administration, strategic and policy support, governance, and performance measurement structures.

The first plan identified seven priority areas for action—issues residents identified as most urgent:

- 1 Discrimination, Marginalization and Racism
- 2 Financial Security and Poverty Reduction
- 3 Gender-Based Violence and Violence Against Women
- 4 Housing
- 5 Integrated and Simpler Systems
- 6 Mental Well-Being
- 7 Youth Social Development (added in 2024)

In 2024, following City Council direction, Crime Prevention Ottawa was integrated into the Community Safety and Well-Being Office, and a Youth Social Development priority was added to strengthen crime prevention and expand youth-focused initiatives.

To advance these priorities, the Community Safety and Well-Being Office received a \$2.6 million municipal budget in 2021 to fund community-led initiatives to improve conditions in which people live and thrive, including \$550,000 to support community led research to develop a culturally appropriate, mental health and substance use crisis response prototype. In 2023, the Office secured \$6 million over three years through Public Safety Canada’s Building Safer Communities Fund to support the Priority Neighbourhood Youth Initiative, partnering with local organizations to deliver culturally responsive and community-based youth programs aimed at preventing street violence. Additional investments included \$16.6 million over three years (2024–2027) from the Ministry of the Solicitor General for the Downtown Safety Outreach Partnership and the Alternate Neighbourhood Crisis Response (ANCHOR), and another \$4 million in funding was secured from Health Canada’s Emergency Treatment Fund to expand harm reduction efforts and create

inclusive, supportive environments downtown. Since 2021, the CSWB Office has been able to secure and leverage over \$26 million from other levels of government to advance community led action across priorities. These provincial and federal investments, combined with municipal funding and strategic direction, equal over \$40 million invested into upstream prevention and system-level change.

By 2025, the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan had launched, Ottawa’s first Poverty Reduction Strategy and Ottawa’s first safer crisis response model—ANCHOR—reflecting its ability to drive system solutions and respond to changing community needs. To support ongoing growth, the Community Safety and Well-Being Office improved alignment of community funding opportunities, increased cross-department collaboration for equitable access to programs, and established a clear system for measuring progress supported by strong governance. The CSWB Plan continues to enhance data driven decision making in partnership with the Social Policy, Research and Analytics team and through partnerships with [CityStudio Ottawa](#), which connects students, faculty, and City staff to tackle local challenges. These actions ensure the Plan remains responsive, evidence-based, and sustainable.





## Progress and achievements

Over the past four years, the City of Ottawa partnered with the community to make meaningful progress and lay a strong foundation for long-term change. While many programs and funding streams from the first Community Safety and Well-Being Plan are still in early stages of implementation and evaluation, the City has already taken significant steps forward. In the next four years, we will expand successful initiatives, strengthen accountability, and continue improving systems for lasting impact.

### Key achievements

- Developed Ottawa's Poverty Reduction Strategy, creating a coordinated approach to address financial insecurity.
- Launched the Alternate Neighbourhood Crisis Response (ANCHOR), providing non-police interventions for mental health and substance use crises in Centretown.
- Built capacity in the gender-based violence sector and youth-serving sectors.
- Secured and aligned \$26 million from other levels of government, enhancing local prevention and intervention efforts.
- Improved cross-sector collaboration and data use, enabling evidence-based planning and better targeting of resources where they are needed most.

**This early impact demonstrates Ottawa's commitment to systemic change and community-led solutions.**

# Review process: Building on what works

The City of Ottawa's first four-year review of the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan builds on what is working by examining current priorities, strategies, and outcomes to ensure they remain data-driven and aligned with community-identified needs. This review is informed by data analysis, engagement findings, input from key partners and community groups, and a focus on interconnections across City strategies—all to guide meaningful, coordinated action toward a safer, healthier, more inclusive Ottawa.

## Summary of data sources used to inform review

Ottawa's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan review was informed by multiple sources to ensure the revised plan reflects both current realities and future needs.

### Community insights

Feedback from residents, service providers, community organizations, and individuals with lived and living experience has been central to identifying strengths, gaps, and opportunities for improvement. These insights were drawn from public engagement sessions, community reports, and delegations.

### Data analysis

Quantitative and qualitative data—including perceptions and indicators of well-being, local statistics, and trends—has been analyzed to provide a clear picture of an Ottawa specific context. This evidence base supports informed decision-making.

### Policy alignment

Through engagement and consultation with City staff and sector leaders, the review was used as an opportunity to strengthen existing initiatives and partnerships, avoid duplication, and use evaluation findings to scale what works and drive meaningful progress.

This process ensured the plan maintains momentum and reflects both evidence-based insights and the lived experiences of Ottawa residents, creating a plan that is responsive to local needs and priorities.



# Key changes informed by the four-year review

## Introduction of a two-year action planning cycle

To improve accountability and adaptability, the Plan will adopt a two-year action cycle. This approach allows for ongoing reflection, course correction, and responsiveness to emerging needs while recognizing that priorities address long-term challenges.

## Reframing one of the plan goals to reflect community-driven solutions

The goal previously titled *Integrated and Simpler Systems* will be renamed *Neighbourhood Solutions and Community Safety*. This change reflects a commitment to inclusive, locally responsive approaches that address root causes and improve outcomes. Internal system integration efforts will continue across all priorities.

These changes strengthen collaboration, responsiveness, and alignment with community needs without disrupting current actions. They ensure the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan remains relevant and impactful.



## What we have learned—how community insights support plan review

The first Community Safety and Well-Being Plan priorities remain relevant and urgent, particularly in the areas of housing, mental health, and substance use health. Safety, affordability, and equitable access to services were highlighted as ongoing challenges.

### Residents highlighted a need for support in these areas:

Non-emergency and proactive safety interventions

Solutions that build on local strengths and involve residents in leading place-based solutions

Initiatives that make services easier to navigate, encourage collaboration, and reduce duplication

Initiatives that ensure Indigenous self-determination and explicitly include racialized, low-income, and other equity-deserving groups in design and implementation





## Resident public survey and targeted engagement— who we heard from

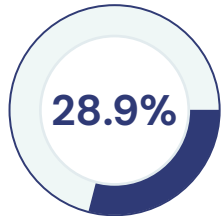
**1,041** residents completed the survey  
across all **24** wards

Participation was city-wide, with responses captured from all wards. **Downtown** and **inner-urban** wards accounted for a **significant portion** of responses.

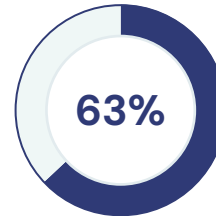
**100+**

Individuals participated in **4** engagement sessions, including residents, people with lived experience, members of resident associations, local businesses, and representatives from community-based social service agencies.

Respondents



65 and older



Identified as women

### 2025 public survey findings

**Top priorities ranked highest across all groups in the survey**

Housing.....**83%**

Mental well-being.....**82%**

Financial security.....**78%**

Housing and mental well-being were ranked highest across all groups in the survey.

Financial security was a close third, reflecting affordability pressures reported citywide.

**64%** Most residents feel safe in their daily lives

Housing and mental well-being and financial security emerged as the most urgent priorities across every ward and demographic group.

Residents see these issues not just as social concerns, but as the foundations of safety itself.



# Community Safety and Well-Being Plan 2021–2031: Refined priorities and shared direction



## Vision mission and guiding principles

### Vision

A sustainable community where everyone is safe, has a sense of belonging, opportunities to participate, and where individuals and families are able to meet their needs for education, health care, food, housing, income, and social and cultural expression.

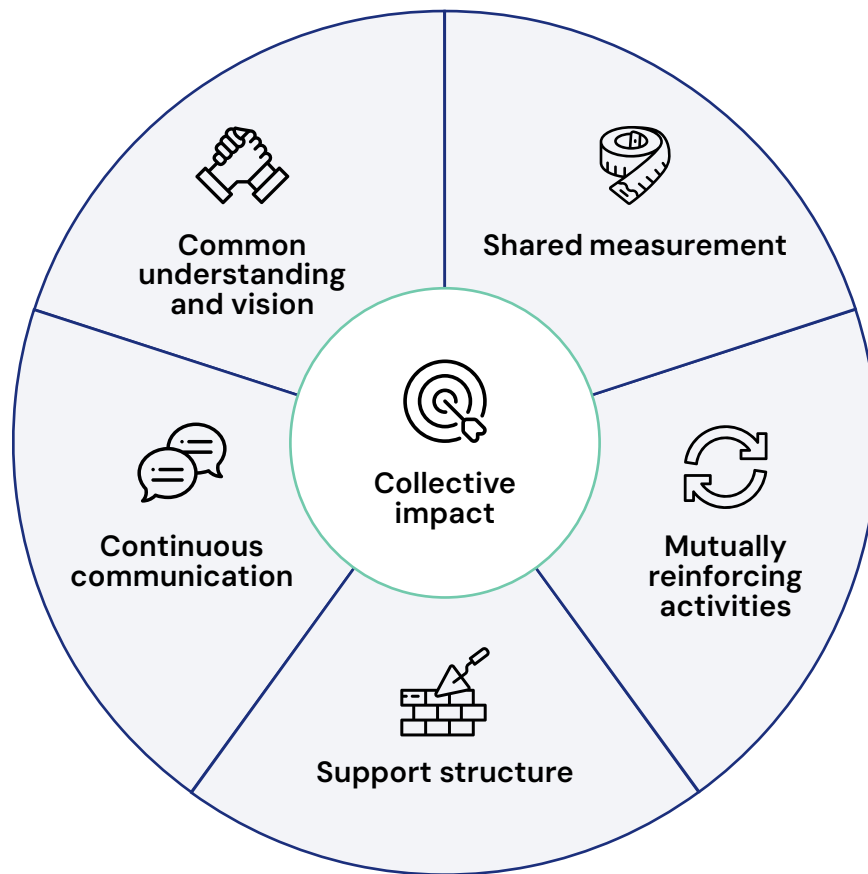
### Mission

Together, we will build a meaningful and inclusive plan based on shared goals for the safety and well-being of all communities in Ottawa.

### Guiding principles

- Collaboration
- Inclusion
- Collective impact
- Innovation
- Community
- Integrity
- Evidence-informed





## Collective impact approach

The City of Ottawa’s Community Safety and Well-Being Plan is a city-wide plan rooted in a collective impact approach and built on multi-sector collaboration to address complex, interconnected challenges such as mental health, substance use, poverty, housing instability, and systemic inequities.

The Plan represents a long-term journey to guide coordinated action and sustained investment through to 2031. It will be structured around two-year action planning cycles, that prioritize

targeted community-led actions that align with shared priorities. Using the principles of collective impact—common agenda, shared measurement, mutually reinforcing activities, and continuous communications—the Plan ensures sustained coordination and accountability across sectors.

The Plan ensures sustained coordination and accountability across sectors.



## Priorities at a glance



### **Discrimination, Marginalization and Racism**

Goal: Ensure principles of decolonization, equity, and intersectionality are embedded in the work under all CSWBP priorities.

### **Financial Security and Poverty Reduction**

Goal: People living in poverty or at risk of poverty will be better able to access benefits, experience job security, participate in economic growth, access necessary services, and purchase food.

### **Gender-Based Violence and Violence Against Women**

Goal: Create a city where everyone is engaged and committed to taking action to prevent gender-based violence and violence against women; where every survivor in Ottawa can access and benefit from services, supports and mechanisms for reporting violence.

### **Housing and Homelessness**

Goal: A community where everyone has access to the housing and supports they need to thrive.

### **Neighbourhood Solutions and Community Safety**

Goal: Improve coordination across services by streamlining access, aligning funding, and using shared data to create responsive and placed based solutions.

### **Mental Well-Being**

Goal: Improve stigma free access to mental well-being crisis and non-crisis substance use supports and services.

### **Youth Social Development**

Goal: To improve well-being so every young person can reach their full potential by making sure youth have access to services, opportunities, and a meaningful voice in decisions that affect their lives.



## Discrimination, Marginalization and Racism

Addressing discrimination, marginalization and racism is a priority of the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan that intersects with all the other priorities. Experiences of discrimination, marginalization and racism can affect all aspects of someone's life and place them at greater risk of harm. Understanding how the risk of harm varies for different groups of people will guide the City of Ottawa in its work to close those gaps and improve community safety. The Plan mainstreams an intersectional equity lens throughout all its priorities and applies it at all stages and levels of analysis and work.



## By the numbers—local data (Ottawa specific)

- Among the 7,612 traffic stops in 2023, Black drivers were stopped at 2.6× and Middle Eastern drivers at 2.9× the rate expected by population share.<sup>3</sup>
- Based on a 2025 survey of 1,007 residents, only 54.1 per cent of racialized respondents rated their quality of life as “Very good” or “Good,” compared to 74.6 per cent of non-racialized residents. This gap highlights significant inequities in how different communities experience the conditions that support well-being.<sup>4</sup>

## What we learned from 2025 engagements

- The findings show that safety and well-being are not experienced equally.
- Racialized and Indigenous residents consistently report lower safety and well-being, placing greater emphasis on discrimination, affordability, and barriers in navigating fragmented services. These divides demonstrate that a one-size-fits-all approach will not succeed; solutions must be place-based, equity-driven, and rights-based.

## Delivering impact: Ongoing work



### Commitment to sociodemographic data

Advanced the collection and use of disaggregated sociodemographic data to better understand community needs, identify disparities, and inform equitable service delivery.



### Equity in design—continuous learning and adaptation

Developed and implemented structured equity frameworks to guide policy, planning, and program development, embedding equity into the design and delivery of services.



[Explore the City of Ottawa's Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Framework, 2025](#)



## Financial Security and Poverty Reduction

Addressing poverty is a core priority of the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan and a critical factor influencing multiple dimensions of community well-being. Poverty is driven by complex and interrelated pathways, and its impacts are felt immediately and over time. A city-wide Poverty Reduction Strategy is now in place to ensure that future work is more equitable, impactful, and sustainable. Guided by this strategy, the Plan will continue to address both the root causes and immediate effects of poverty and food insecurity, with a focus on reducing harm and promoting long-term well-being.

### By the numbers—local data (Ottawa specific)

- In 2020, the poverty rate for Indigenous people in Ottawa (11.2 per cent) and racialized residents (12.6 per cent) was at least double that of non-racialized residents (5.7 per cent).<sup>5,6</sup>
- The percentage of people in Ottawa who said it was 'Very difficult' or 'Difficult' to meet their household's financial needs in the past 12 months increased steadily from 16.3 per cent in 2021 to 29.4 per cent in 2024.<sup>7</sup>



- The percentage of food insecure households in Ottawa has increased from 14.8 per cent in 2022 to 25.7 per cent in 2024.<sup>8</sup>
- In 2024, over 1 in 4 households (25.7 per cent) experienced food insecurity. This is an increase from 2023, in which under 1 in 4 households (23.7 per cent) experienced food insecurity.<sup>9</sup>



[Read RISE UP: A Collective Impact Approach to Reduce Poverty 2025–2029](#)

## What we learned from 2025 engagements

- Across all wards and demographic groups, financial security emerged as one of the most urgent priorities, identified by 78 per cent of engaged participants during public engagement.

## Delivering impact: Ongoing work



### Roadmap for change—RISE UP: City of Ottawa Poverty Reduction Strategy

The City is leading a coordinated, cross-sectoral approach to reduce poverty, with measurable outcomes and community leadership.



### Improved food security—2025 Food Security Symposium

Hosted a milestone event to elevate community voices and shape a resilient, inclusive municipal food policy that addresses food insecurity to identify areas for future action.



### Increased access to government benefits through strategic investment

Provided targeted funding to enhance tax clinic coordination in Ottawa, enabling more residents to access critical income supports and financial entitlements.



### Established the Poverty Reduction Strategy Advisory Committee to drive action

Launched a multi-sectoral advisory body to champion equity-focused initiatives, monitor progress, and ensure sustained momentum in poverty reduction efforts.



## Gender-Based Violence and Violence Against Women

Gender-based violence continues to be a serious and urgent issue affecting community safety and well-being. Even with greater awareness of gender inequality, women and gender-diverse people are still far more likely to experience harm. These risks come from long-standing discrimination, social and economic inequalities, and unequal access to power and resources. Gender-based violence both reflects and reinforces these wider inequalities.



## By the numbers—local data (Ottawa Specific)

- 6,636 Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) incidents were reported in 2024; with an average of 18 calls for service related to IPV incidents per day. 79 per cent identified as female and 76 per cent were between the ages of 18 to 45 years old.<sup>10</sup>
- In 2024, Ottawa is the first police service in Canada to use the term femicide to describe the killing of a woman or girl. Ottawa Police Service reported three femicides in Ottawa in 2024.<sup>11</sup>

## What we learned from 2025 engagement

- Public engagement findings from the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan reveal that gender-based violence is a top priority for the community, with 75 per cent of participants identifying it as a critical issue.
- Gender-based violence and discrimination are especially emphasized by women and racialized groups.

## Delivering impact: Ongoing work



### Mapped system—GBV/VAW forum and scoping study

Hosted the first high-level, systematic study of Ottawa's GBV sector, including organizations that interact with and support survivors. This foundational research in addition to wide spectrum engagements with residents and community actors, provided critical insights into service gaps, sector strengths, and opportunities for coordinated action.



### Developed a GBV/VAW 3-year action plan

Co-created a strategic roadmap towards an Ottawa where survivors receive compassionate, culturally safe, and coordinated support, and systems focus on preventing violence rather than only reacting after harm.



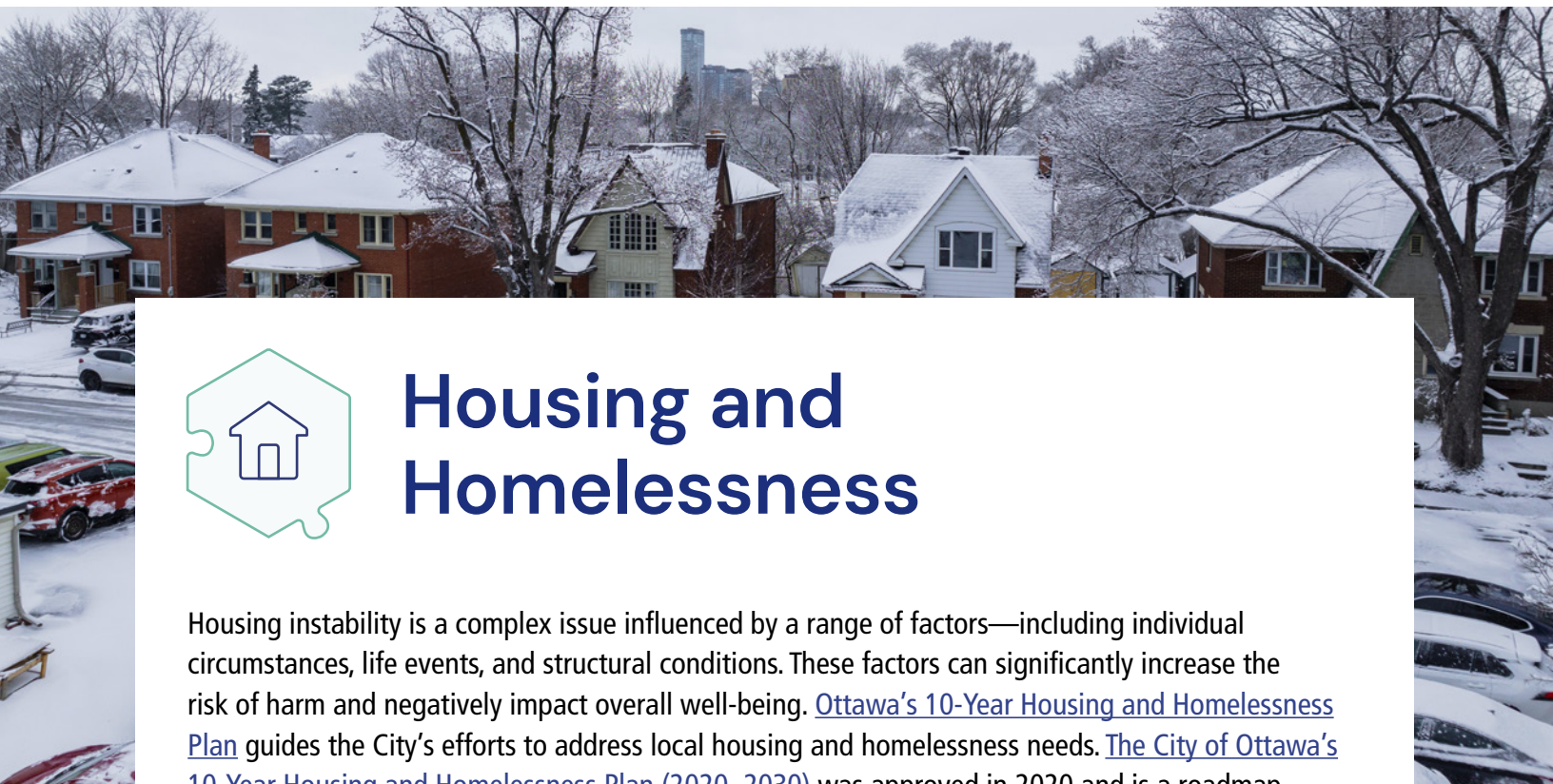
### Established a GBV/VAW advisory group

Formed a dedicated advisory group composed of sector experts, community leaders, and lived experience representatives to guide the development and implementation of GBV-related actions within the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan.



### Leveraged resources for community-led solutions

Mobilized investments and aligned City resources to support innovative, community-driven initiatives. This includes funding projects, enhancing service coordination, and amplifying the voices of grassroots organizations.



## Housing and Homelessness

Housing instability is a complex issue influenced by a range of factors—including individual circumstances, life events, and structural conditions. These factors can significantly increase the risk of harm and negatively impact overall well-being. [Ottawa’s 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan](#) guides the City’s efforts to address local housing and homelessness needs. [The City of Ottawa’s 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan \(2020–2030\)](#) was approved in 2020 and is a roadmap that guides coordinated efforts to strengthen the housing and homelessness system for individuals and families in need. The 10-Year Plan is being refreshed in 2026 to ensure it remains relevant and responsive to evolving priorities. Recognizing this, the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan prioritizes community and municipal led interventions that reduce the risk of housing instability and its associated harms, emphasizing the need for stable, supportive housing and wraparound services that address the broader needs of individuals and families.

### By the numbers—local data (Ottawa Specific)

- The 2024 Point-in-Time Count recorded 2,952 people, not including dependents, experiencing homelessness. Inflow into homelessness continues to outpace exits into permanent housing, resulting in shelter system occupancy averaging 81.3 per cent above permanent bed capacity—based on average nightly occupancy for the full year 2024.<sup>12</sup>
- In 2021, 27 per cent of households in core housing need were homeowners, while 73 per cent were renters.<sup>13</sup>
- Intersecting structural barriers—such as age, gender, and income—are deepening vulnerability in Ottawa’s housing market, particularly for older adults, single-parent families, and low-income households.
  - 9.5 per cent of adults aged 65+ live on low incomes, often dependent on fixed incomes that don’t keep pace with rising housing costs, increasing vulnerability to housing instability.



- Single-parent households—up 25.1 per cent since 2006—face heightened financial strain, within Ottawa, single-parent households increased 25.1 per cent since 2006. Nationally, 26 per cent of single-parent households live in low income compared to 6.7 per cent of two-parent families; the gendered nature of this issue disproportionately affects women, especially those fleeing violence.<sup>14</sup>
- » 25 per cent of women-led single-parent households in Ottawa are living in Core Housing Need.
- » 11 per cent of Point in Time respondents said that conflict with a spouse/partner was a reason for their most recent housing loss.

## What we learned from 2025 engagement

- Engagement findings show that housing is the top priority for the community, with 83 per cent of participants identifying it as a critical issue.
- Residents and community associations described a heightened sense of stress and insecurity linked to housing instability, and uncertainty about service responsiveness.
- Clear desire for access to stable and supportive housing, paired with wraparound services that address the broader social, health, and economic needs of individuals and families experiencing housing insecurity.

## Delivering impact: Ongoing work



### Strengthened data systems

Enhanced the City's capacity to collect, analyze, and apply housing-related data to inform decision-making. This includes integrating data from multiple sources to better understand housing needs, trends, and service gaps.



### Housing focus in community safety and well-being work

Embedded housing stability and access across Community Safety and Well-Being initiatives, including:

- Housing supports linked to mental health and substance use outreach and crisis services
- Increasing financial security to improve housing affordability
- Advance strategies to remove barriers to housing access and strengthen measures that prevent housing loss



# Neighbourhood Solutions and Community Safety

Neighbourhood Solutions and Community Safety is a priority because safety and well-being risks vary by community and require locally driven responses. This priority advances coordinated, integrated services that build on community strengths, develop local capacity, and elevate resident leadership. By improving service access through simpler navigation and strong system integration, this approach addresses root causes, strengthens belonging, and improves equitable outcomes.

## Geographically based inequity

Social equity takes shape differently depending on the environments in which people live. Neighbourhood conditions can either enhance or limit the opportunities available, as well as influence the overall health and well-being of residents. By applying the [Neighbourhood Equity Index \(NEI\)](#) and [Ottawa Neighbourhood Study](#), alongside a range of data methods, we can better identify, understand, and respond to inequities at the neighbourhood level in Ottawa.

## By the numbers—local data (Ottawa specific)

Information about public perceptions of crime and safety is routinely collected across Canadian cities. In 2025, the percentage of residents who believed that crime levels in their community had increased in the past five years was similar in Ottawa (63%), Toronto (64%), and Edmonton (61%). However, Ottawa residents were more likely to feel somewhat or very safe when walking alone in their community after dark (83%) compared to people in Edmonton (70%) and Toronto (74%).



## Delivering impact: Ongoing work

### Simplified referral and intake processes

Piloted initiatives to reduce administrative burden and improve client experience through streamlined referral and intake procedures.

### Downtown Safety Outreach Partnership (DSOP)

Focused on outreach and harm reduction in Ottawa's downtown core, supporting marginalized populations through co-designed coordinated, trauma-informed interventions.

### Priority neighbourhoods and Community Development Framework

Supported long-term, community-led development leadership in priority neighbourhoods through capacity building, local leadership, and integrated service delivery.

### Collaborated to prevent crisis—situation tables

Facilitated place-based rapid, collaborative responses to individuals at acutely elevated risk by bringing together multiple service providers to coordinate supports.

### Renewed focus on older adults—Older Adult Plan 2025–2030

Co-developed the Older Adult Plan to improve information access, expand programs and services, foster inclusion and integrate age-friendly features across the community.

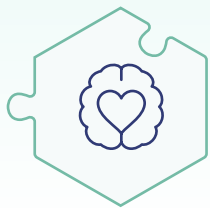
### Priority neighbourhoods and equitable access

The Integrated Neighbourhood Services Team improves equitable access to programs and services for youth and residents in priority neighbourhoods through coordinated, cross-departmental solutions.

## What we learned from 2025 engagement

- Residents place high value on easier, coordinated access, with 65 per cent rating integrated systems very or extremely important.
- Residents, businesses, agencies, and people with lived experience all described confusion about how to access services and inconsistent follow-up once referrals were made.

### [Read the Older Adult Plan](#)



## Mental Well-Being

Mental Well-Being underpins people’s ability to pursue interests, feel fulfilled, and experience belonging. This priority advances strategies that address the social determinants of mental well-being by improving access to supports and services, reducing stigma, and preventing the need for crisis-driven responses. By focusing on early support and inclusive systems, the Plan reduces reliance on emergency and justice responses and improves outcomes for people with mental health and substance use health challenges.



## By the numbers—local data (Ottawa specific)

- Overall, the percentage of residents reporting 'Excellent' mental health decreased between 2021/2022 and 2024:<sup>15</sup>
  - **Total population:** 19.9 per cent to 15.9 per cent
    - » **Men:** 21.5 per cent to 17.3 per cent
    - » **Women:** 18.3 per cent to 14.4 per cent
    - » **Racialized:** 26.0 per cent to 21.5 per cent
    - » **Non-racialized:** 17.8 per cent to 13.4 per cent
- The rate of emergency department visits for mental health or substance use conditions in Ottawa has decreased steadily since 2021 from 1,559 visits per 100,000 residents to 1,310 visits per 100,000 residents in 2024.<sup>16</sup>
- Overall, the trend in the rate of self-harm related visits to emergency departments in Ottawa increased between 2010 and 2024 from 103 to 145 visits per 100,000 residents. In 2024, females aged 15 to 24 had the highest rate of self-harm related visits at 817 visits per 100,000 residents compared to 175 visits per 100,000 residents among males in the same age group.<sup>17</sup>



Get to know ANCHOR

## What we learned from 2025 engagement

- Mental well-being emerged as a top priority among participants, with 82 per cent identifying it as a key area of concern and focus during the consultation process.
- Across the survey and engagement sessions, participants consistently identified mental health supports and substance use and addictions services as the most urgent community needs, highlighting these areas as top priorities for action.
- Overdoses, untreated mental health challenges, and gaps in crisis supports were raised in every engagement session. Survey results reinforced this concern, with residents observing that mental well-being and open substance use are worsening in their neighbourhoods.

## Delivering impact: Ongoing work



### System change—Alternate Neighbourhood Crisis Response

Delivered integrated, trauma-informed outreach and support to individuals experiencing mental health and substance use health crisis in Centretown. These efforts improved access to care, reduced crisis escalation, and offered alternatives to traditional emergency response models.



## Youth Social Development

The Youth Social Development priority will advance positive social environments and programs to help youth reach their full potential. Informed by leading research, promising practices, and community engagement, this priority supports youth well-being by strengthening protective factors, building skills and connections, and addressing challenges early to improve long-term safety and outcomes.

Photo credit: Charmarque Mahamud



## By the numbers—local data (Ottawa Specific)

- The overall percentage of youth Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET) increased from 9.7 per cent in 2023 to 11.8 per cent in 2024. Over the same time period, youth NEET increased for both racialized (10.9 per cent to 11.5 per cent) and non-racialized (8.8 per cent to 12.1 per cent) populations.

## What we learned from 2025 engagement

- Survey results show strong community support for prevention and belonging, with 70 per cent of respondents rating youth social development as very or extremely important.
- Many participants stressed that youth need safe spaces, prevention programs, and mentors.



[Stay involved in building a better future for youth](#)

## Delivering impact: Ongoing work



### Priority Neighbourhood Youth Initiative

Through the Priority Neighbourhood Youth Initiative, local programs engage at-risk youth with mentorship, life skills training, arts, sports, and educational activities tailored to their needs.



### Youth in focus—corporate alignment

Through Crime Prevention Ottawa integration, the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan will elevate youth social development as a strategic and corporate priority. This commitment will guide cross-departmental collaboration, resource allocation, and targeted interventions that foster belonging, resilience, and opportunity for young people—particularly in priority neighbourhoods and among equity-deserving groups.



### Youth-led engagement and forum

Youth-led consultations and a citywide forum amplified young voices to help shape actions in four key areas—education, recreation and culture, employment, and mental health—marking a major milestone in advancing Ottawa’s Youth Social Development priority.



# Community safety and well-being—a municipal vision in action

The Community Safety and Well-Being Plan is a city-wide roadmap that helps everyone work together on complex social issues. It aligns priorities across governments, service providers, and community partners so resources and responses are coordinated.

## Strategic planning and funding

The Plan brings municipal programs, community services, and partner organizations together around shared goals. For community organizations, it provides a formal way to highlight needs and make sure their voices are heard. It can also serve as a guide to strengthen funding coordination for targeted investments.

## Collaboration and networking

The plan encourages organizations from different sectors to work together. This creates opportunities to build relationships and develop joint initiatives that address complex community needs.

## Data informed decision making and evaluation

Community organizations can use the Plan's indicators and priorities to guide reporting and measure outcomes. The Plan also provides access to city-wide data trends and custom sets that smaller organizations may not have, supporting evidence-based decisions. For example, Statistic Canada custom data sets are available on the **Well-Being in Ottawa** dashboard, which can be used for local planning and advocacy.

## Municipal policy

The plan gives communities a voice in shaping municipal policy. For example, the Poverty Reduction Strategy integrated a "food lens" into decision-making to ensure policies reflect residents' lived realities and promote equitable access to resources.



# Governance of the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan

The Community Safety and Well-Being Office leads the implementation of the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan, supported by strategic guidance from the [Community Safety and Well-Being Advisory Committee](#) and sector expertise from the Community Leadership Action Tables—ensuring coordinated, community-driven governance and action.

## Community Safety and Well-Being Advisory Committee

The Community Safety and Well-Being Plan is guided by a dedicated Advisory Committee, established in accordance with the legislated requirements outlined in the *Community Safety and Policing Act*, 2019.

This committee includes representatives from key sectors such as health, education, community services, law enforcement, and local government. In addition, City Council has appointed key members with lived and living experience. In addition to fulfilling its legislated role, the Advisory Committee guides the strategic direction of the Plan, ensuring that the Plan reflects community needs and drives coordinated, meaningful action across Ottawa.

The Advisory Committee's members include representatives from the following organizations:

- Big Brothers Big Sisters of Ottawa
- Canadian Centre for Women's Empowerment
- Children's Aid Society of Ottawa
- Community and Social Services Department, City of Ottawa
- Conseil des écoles catholiques du Centre-Est

- Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition
- Ottawa Coalition of Business Improvement Areas
- Ottawa Health Team
- Ottawa Police Service
- Ottawa Police Service Board
- Ottawa Public Health
- Public Members
- University of Ottawa

## Community leadership action tables

Consistent with research on collective impact initiatives, action requires a collaborative model which identifies accountabilities of the partners. Leadership tables have accountability not only to each other but also to their home organizations and to the community for achieving outcomes. As a backbone at the City of Ottawa, the Community Safety and Well-Being Office, has multiple layers of accountabilities in driving the collective efforts forward. Community Leadership Action Tables have been established to provide a strong community voice.

# Monitoring progress and measures of well-being



A monitoring and evaluation framework has been established to ensure successful implementation and continuous improvement of the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan.

## This framework:

- Tracks progress in key areas to support evidence-based decisions
- Uses performance indicators aligned with the Plan's priorities and objectives
- Engages community partners to gather feedback and measure impact
- Adapts to respond to new needs, risks, and opportunities

An annual public report will share progress, celebrate successes, and guide adjustments to strengthen community safety and well-being.

## Well-Being in Ottawa dashboard

The [Well-Being in Ottawa dashboard](#), provides important context by showing how health, safety, and socio-economic data inform strategic decisions. It is not intended to assess individual project performance; rather, it ensures that planning and resource allocation are guided by evidence-based insights to support long-term community well-being.



## Acknowledgments

Building safe and healthy communities is everyone's responsibility. The success of the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan depends on collaboration with community partners and residents.

This Plan provides a model that strengthens our ability to respond to issues in a coordinated way and builds on many successful efforts that promote safety and well-being in Ottawa.

Since the Plan was first approved, we have achieved significant progress together. These accomplishments show what is possible when we work as one community. Yet, there is still more to do. By continuing to collaborate, innovate, and act, we can build an Ottawa where every resident feels safe and supported.

The City of Ottawa thanks the Community Safety and Well-Being Advisory Committee for their leadership and strategic advice in implementing and reviewing the Plan. We greatly appreciate their dedication, thoughtful input, and guidance.

We also extend our heartfelt gratitude to residents, community partners, and City staff for their passion, expertise, and commitment. Their feedback during engagement activities was essential to this review.

We are deeply grateful for everyone's contributions. Together, we are building an Ottawa where everyone feels safe, has a sense of belonging, and access to opportunities—where individuals and families can meet their needs for education, health care, food, housing, income, and social and cultural expression. Thank you for sharing this journey.

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**Community Safety and Well-Being**  
Sécurité et bien-être dans les collectivités

**Community and Social Services**  
Services sociaux et communautaires

**City of Ottawa**  
Ville d'Ottawa

[cswb/sbec@ottawa.ca](mailto:cswb/sbec@ottawa.ca)

