

March 8, 2022

AMO Policy Update – Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program, New PTSD Rehabilitation Centre for First Responders, *Getting Ontario Connected Act, 2022*, and AMO Statement on Ukraine

Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program

The provincial government is consolidating three programs into a new [Homelessness Prevention Program](#). It combines the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative, Home for Good, and the Strong Communities Rent Supplement Program into one. The change will provide more flexibility for municipal service managers to prevent homelessness and decreased administrative reporting burden. An annual funding increase of \$25 million is also being added.

AMO asked in the pre-budget submission for increase in funding to address homelessness. AMO continues to advocate to the government to co-develop a comprehensive [action plan](#) with municipalities and District Social Service Administration Boards to end homelessness in Ontario.

Funding for a New PTSD Rehabilitation Centre for First Responders

The Ontario government announced a \$1 million dollar investment in the Runnymede Healthcare Centre's First Responders Post-Traumatic Stress Injury Rehabilitation Treatment and Assessment Centre. The new treatment centre would provide a comprehensive mental health rehabilitation program to first responders affected by work-related stress or trauma, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). It is expected to provide specialized services like assessments, intensive treatment and aftercare, as well as high quality care to first responders in need of substance use treatment. Other expected services include virtual care and 24/7 crisis support, as well as peer and navigation support towards recovery.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the mental health challenges first responders face and enhanced the need to provide services that meet their unique needs. Peel Region has allocated 26 acres to support the future site of one of the new

residential treatment facilities. Ontario is working with Runnymede Healthcare Centre to finalize the early stages of planning, including identifying programming, operational space, and funding needs. As part of this, work is underway to assess how else the project can help to address existing gaps in care, as well as the growing need for unique and targeted mental health and addictions supports for first responders.

The *Getting Ontario Connected Act, 2022*

Yesterday the province [announced](#) new [legislation](#) to help make it easier and faster to build high-speed internet infrastructure across the province. The legislation, if passed, would reduce delays to help meet the government's commitment to connect every community with access to high-speed internet by the end of 2025. Municipal governments are encouraged to review the legislation as it proposes changes to two Acts.

The legislation, if passed, would [amend](#) the *Building Broadband Faster Act, 2021* to set required service standards, require information sharing through new Broadband One Window platform, and ensure organizations that own utility infrastructure near a designated high-speed internet project provide timely access to infrastructure data.

Timelines for approval of requests to access municipal rights-of-way for construction are also included in the proposed legislation. It would also amend the *Ontario Underground Infrastructure Notification System Act, 2012* to make it faster and easier for construction and infrastructure projects to obtain underground infrastructure location information (e.g., locates).

AMO Statement on Ukrainian Conflict

Municipal governments in every part of Ontario stand with the people of Ukraine in the face of unconscionable tragedy, invasion, and war. AMO has compiled a list of [ways that municipalities and individuals can help](#).

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