



2022 summary report: Supportive housing services in Northern Ontario

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See full report: https://athomeinthenorth.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/SupportiveHousingServicesinNorthernOntario_11_17_2022.pdf

A comprehensive inventory of housing services in Northern Ontario has found “systemic fragmentation and lack of coordination within Ontario’s health, support services and affordable housing sectors” for individuals experiencing homelessness and seniors in Northern Ontario.

“While there exists a relatively diverse range of supportive housing services in the municipalities of Ontario’s Near North and its major urban hubs, there are substantial geographic gaps affecting First Nations communities and other rural and remote municipalities in Ontario’s Far North,” says the report by Olivia Hivon of the Supportive Housing, Programs and Services Research Direction of At Home in the North.

“There is a need for more general emergency housing, particularly in the Far North.”

The study also found a lack of intermediary services bridging the gap between emergency shelters and permanent stable housing, with only two transitional housing facilities, located in North Bay and Sudbury.

“This is revealing of the systemic fragmentation and lack of coordination within Ontario’s health, support services and affordable housing sectors, which forces both people experiencing homelessness and seniors to navigate discrete service systems in order to have their needs met.”



The report notes that transitional housing is very necessary in areas where there is an inadequate supply of affordable housing.

“The lack of transitional and affordable supportive housing facilities across Northern Ontario is therefore a major barrier to addressing and eliminating homelessness, since permanent and stable housing with supports are key to reducing homelessness and achieving housing stability.”

On a positive note, the report says: “Overall, the prevalence of aging at home programs in Northern Ontario is growing, as a direct result of Ontario’s Aging at Home Strategy. These initiatives respond to the desire of seniors to age in “familiar settings” rather than accessing the “more costly, and often inappropriate, care” received in hospitals and long-term care facilities.”

“While these aging at home programs, in conjunction with the current available supportive housing facilities for seniors, provide critical support to this aging demographic across Northern Ontario, there are several weaknesses in the distribution of services across this region,” the report concludes.