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Dufferin County joins AMO in advocating for more provincial homelessness funding

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The County of Dufferin is sounding the alarm on data recently released by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) regarding homelessness in Ontario.

The number of homeless Ontarians has risen by 50 per cent since 2021, and increased by 8 per cent from 2024 to 2025, now up to nearly 85,000, according to AMO. That number is expected to double by 2035, or reach as high as 300,000 during an economic downturn.

Homelessness is hitting rural and northern communities the hardest, increasing by 30 per cent and 37 per cent, respectively, last year.

?While dedicated investments and actions have dealt with some large urban encampments, there are small and dispersed encampments across Ontario ? nearly 2,000 were reported in 2025 compared to 1,400 in 2024,? reads a press release from the County of Dufferin.

Dufferin had a total of 160 individuals and families experiencing homelessness at any point during 2024. In 2025, that number increased to 272, and the number of people experiencing chronic homelessness rose from 47 in 2024 to 60 in 2025.

?Dufferin County has made progress supporting its community but cannot solve the problem alone,? reads the county's press release. ?The crisis stems from decades of underinvestment in deeply affordable housing, income support and mental health and addictions treatment, combined with escalating economic pressures on communities.?

The release continues, ?Ontario is the only province where responsibility for social housing has been downloaded to municipalities. Municipal investment in housing and homelessness programs has grown significantly in recent years, totalling $2 billion in 2025.?

The County of Dufferin has joined AMO in urging the provincial and federal governments to better support homelessness solutions and address the root causes. The county and AMO are seeking significant, long-term action on affordable housing, mental health support, addiction services, and income supports.

?Dufferin County continues to support our most vulnerable community members and tackle the homelessness and housing crisis through our programs, services and advocacy, but we cannot do it alone. In Dufferin County and across Ontario, homelessness continues to rise,? said Dufferin County Warden Lisa Post.

?As stated by AMO, we must take a whole-of-government approach to ensure that each person in our community and our province has a safe, warm place to call home. Dufferin County Council joins AMO in calling on the federal and provincial governments for increased investment in housing and homelessness solutions. Together, municipalities can increase affordable and attainable housing options and advance community health and safety for communities across Ontario.?

AMO recommends that the Government of Ontario adopt a fundamentally new approach to homelessness that focuses on long-term housing solutions rather than temporary measures.

?To address chronic homelessness, an additional $11 billion over 10 years would focus on capital investments to develop more than 75,000 new affordable and supportive housing units, as well as increased funding on prevention efforts,? reads AMO's recommendations to the provincial government.

?To ensure that current encampment residents are quickly and appropriately housed, Ontario needs to invest an additional $2 billion over eight years,? AMO added.

The organization also recommends continued federal funding through the National Housing Strategy to maintain critical programs, such as the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit.

AMO's final recommendation was for collaboration among all levels of government to ensure that homelessness and housing dollars have the greatest impact. This includes coordinating data and outcomes across programs, connecting services, and tracking every dollar from investment to impact.