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For Immediate Release

Social Housing Waiting Lists Grow

Economy recovering, but urgent need for affordable housing remains

(Toronto) Almost 142,000 households are currently on waiting lists for social housing in Ontario, according to a report released today by the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association (ONPHA).

The *ONPHA 2010 Report on Waiting List Statistics for Ontario* shows that the number of active households waiting for social housing in the province grew from 129,253 to 141,635 between January 2009 and 2010 – an increase of almost ten percent in just one year.

“This is the most significant increase we have seen since we began collecting this data,” said Sharad Kerur, ONPHA’s Executive Director. “While the brunt of the recession may be over, families in Ontario are still struggling to find housing they can afford. In many communities, unemployment will remain a significant problem and we anticipate that waiting lists will only continue to grow in the years ahead.”

While the numbers are shocking, the reality on the ground is even more worrisome. The actual number of people in need is likely much higher than waiting list statistics suggest. Many households, discouraged by lengthy waiting times, walk away without completing an application. In the Region of Peel for example, families and singles can wait up to 21 years to be housed.

“Low-income families, singles and seniors are waiting years for adequate and affordable housing” said Keith Ward, President of ONPHA. “These households are in immediate need – they cannot wait five, ten or twenty years for help. How many people are leaving their communities, their friends and their families because they cannot afford housing? How many local economies will suffer if workers cannot live and work in the same place?”

The 2010 report found that while waiting times are increasing for all groups, seniors in a number of communities are waiting longer to access subsidized housing than in previous years. As Ontario’s population ages, more and more seniors will require access to community-based housing; unfortunately, many of those most in need will find the support they are counting on missing.



“Housing is the foundation of inclusive communities, strong economies and healthy families,” says Kerur. “Ontario faces a number of challenges in the years ahead. Developing new community-based affordable housing, and protecting existing social housing assets, is essential to meeting these challenges. Strong economies and strong communities walk hand in hand - we are hopeful that the Province’s Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy will provide real solutions for the hundreds of thousands of parents, children, seniors and singles waiting for an affordable home.”

For over 20 years, ONPHA has been the voice of non-profit housing in Ontario. Our 760 member organizations operate more than 160,000 non-profit housing units and provide housing for approximately 400,000 people such as the elderly, low-income families with children, the working poor, victims of violence and abuse, people living with developmental disabilities or mental illness and the homeless/hard-to-house.

A copy of the report and more information about ONPHA and non-profit housing can be found at: www.onpha.on.ca

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