



To: Economic and Community Development Committee

Date: June 9, 2026

Re: 2026.ED29.9 Progress Update on Drop-In Sector Stabilization Efforts

The Toronto Shelter Network (TSN) connects and supports Toronto's homelessness service providers and prioritizes working alongside people with lived experience of homelessness, ensuring their voices, insights, and needs shape how services are designed and delivered. Together, we support emergency shelters, respites, and women's 24-hour drop-ins across Toronto to more effectively meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness.

TSN is submitting this letter to express our support for the ongoing efforts to stabilize Toronto's daytime drop-in sector and to recognize the essential role these services play within the homelessness sector.

Daytime drop-ins are often the first place people turn when they need help. They provide low-barrier access to meals, showers, laundry facilities, referrals, social and recreational programming, harm reduction supports and connections to housing, health care, and many other community supports. They play a critical role in prevention, shelter diversion, and ongoing support.

At the same time, drop-ins also serve far more than individuals experiencing homelessness. They are vital community hubs that support seniors, low-income residents, people experiencing social isolation, individuals facing food insecurity, and other vulnerable individuals who rely on these spaces for connection, stability, and support.

As demand continues to grow and needs become increasingly complex, it is essential that daytime drop-ins have the resources necessary to continue delivering these services effectively. A more stable and flexible funding approach that recognizes the realities of drop-in service providers across the city must be established. Multi-year funding agreements, along with greater flexibility in the use of operational funding,

would help drop-ins plan more effectively, respond to rising community needs, and focus on delivering services rather than managing ongoing financial uncertainty.

We also support the development of core wage principles and a phased approach to improving compensation across the drop-in sector. Drop-in staff provide critical support to some of Toronto's most vulnerable residents while navigating increasingly complex challenges. Fair compensation, workforce retention, and staff wellness must be key components of any long-term stabilization strategy.

In addition, we strongly endorse efforts to further define and strengthen the role of daytime drop-ins within Toronto's homelessness sector. Drop-ins play a unique role in prevention, diversion, harm reduction, systems navigation, and connecting people to shelter, housing, health care, income supports, and community services.

We encourage continued work to strengthen referral pathways and collaboration between drop-ins, shelters, outreach teams, housing providers, health care partners, and other community services. A more coordinated and integrated system will help ensure people receive the right support at the right time while reducing pressures across the broader homelessness sector. As part of Toronto's shelter sector, we see firsthand how essential daytime drop-ins are to the functioning of the broader homelessness service system.

When drop-ins are under-resourced, the impacts are felt across the entire system. When drop-ins are stable and adequately supported, people can access help earlier, communities are stronger, and pressures on shelters, hospitals, and emergency services are reduced.

We appreciate the City's and sector's commitment to this work and encourage continued investment in the stabilization of the daytime drop-in sector. We look forward to continuing to work together to ensure these investments translate into meaningful improvements for the people we serve.

Sincerely,



Leslie Gash
Executive Director
Toronto Shelter Network

On behalf of the 33 organizations the form the Toronto Shelter Network