

Shelter,
Support and

Housing
Administration

2022 Annual
Report

Land Acknowledgement for Toronto



We acknowledge that our work takes place on the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Williams Treaty signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands.



General Manager's Message



We continued to persevere in the face of uncertainty in 2022, with the emergence of the highly contagious Omicron variant early in the calendar year. We were also faced with one of the coldest winters we have experienced in many years, resulting in a record number of days in which our Warming Centres were open.

I am extremely proud of the way we all worked together to respond. From staff that were redeployed to front line roles, to those who kept the service system running at head office and our community partners, everyone played a role in helping to ensure we could continue to provide emergency shelter and support to those who needed it the most.

While Omicron cases began to subside as spring and summer drew near, demand for our services remained exceptionally high spurred by rising inflation rates, economic uncertainty, the opioid poisoning crisis and ongoing housing instability. The opening of the borders and crisis in Ukraine also meant more people needed our services than ever before.

In 2022, we provided shelter and support to more than 20,700 individuals, engaged with people living outside more than 17,000 times and helped more than 4,300 individuals move from the shelter system into permanent housing. We also worked with the Housing Secretariat to award more than \$32 million in grants to important community programs, such as daytime drop-ins, and eviction prevention and housing stability services.

Work to progress our Meeting in the Middle Strategy to address Indigenous homelessness continued, along with initiatives to support priority populations, including ongoing work to confront anti-Black racism.

There are so many people who need our support, and we are extremely grateful for our staff, community agencies and partners, who worked alongside us in 2022 to make a difference in the lives of those who are most vulnerable.

We have so much work to do and look forward to continuing our important work together.

Regards,

Gord Tanner

Shelter, Support and Housing Administration (SSHA)

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2022 Accomplishments

Increased capacity by adding 1,471 beds to the shelter system

Opened two new shelters, including the first dedicated shelter for 2SLGBTQ+ adults



Provided shelter and support to more than 20,700 unique individuals at City-run and -funded shelters, 24-hour respite sites, 24-hour women's drop-in programs and Warming Centres

Conducted more than 25,000 street outreach visits, engaging with individuals living outside more than 17,000 times



Assisted 4,385 people to move from the shelter system into permanent housing



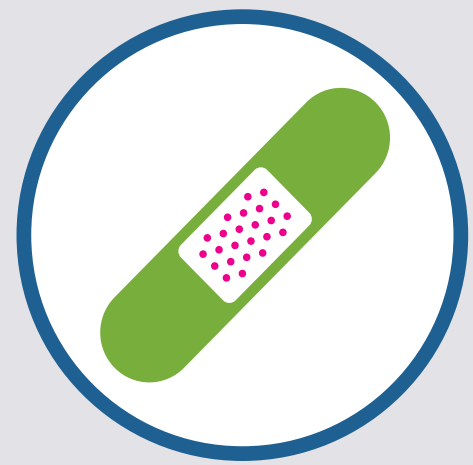
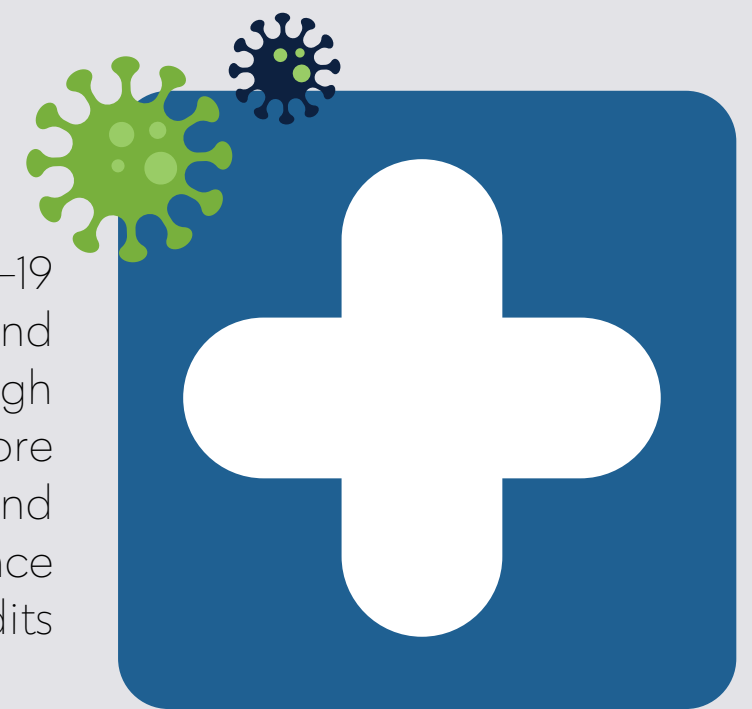
Provided shelter to approximately 5,180 refugee claimants and asylum seekers and worked to establish a dedicated refugee shelter system



Provided temporary accommodations and wrap-around supports to more than 200 households fleeing Ukraine

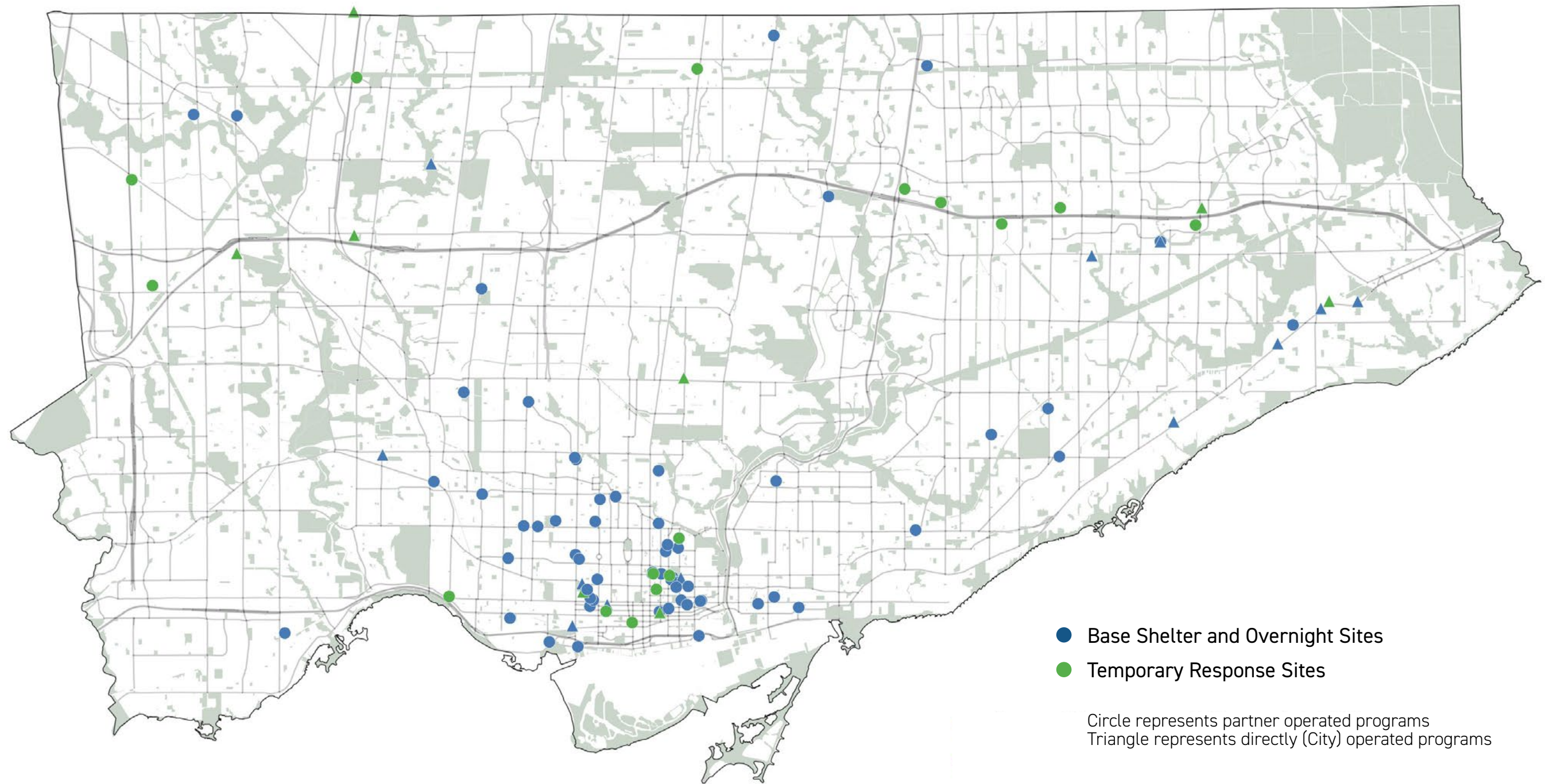


Maintained strong COVID-19 infection prevention and control measures through regular sector meetings, more than 325 training sessions and ongoing quality assurance visits and audits



Administered more than 6,900 doses of COVID-19 vaccine at more than 1,000 shelter, drop-in and encampment clinics

Shelter Services in Toronto



African Ancestral Acknowledgement

"The City of Toronto acknowledges all Treaty peoples – including those who came here as settlers – as migrants either in this generation or in generations past – and those of us who came here involuntarily, particularly those brought to these lands as a result of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and Slavery. We pay tribute to those ancestors of African origin and descent."

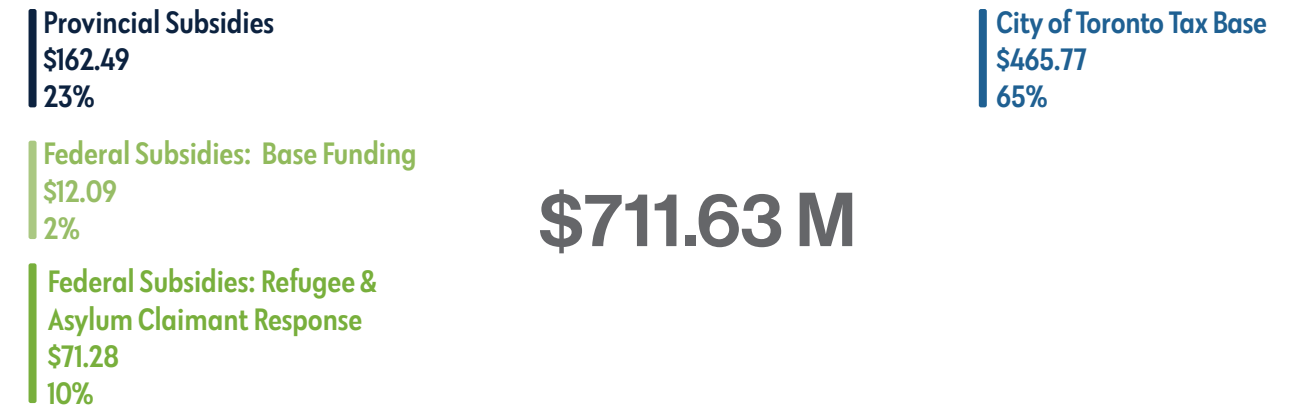
This painting was created by Carol Mc Donald, Manager, Women's Residence, to commemorate SSHA's Divisional Mentorship Program Pilot for Black Staff.

Financial Highlights

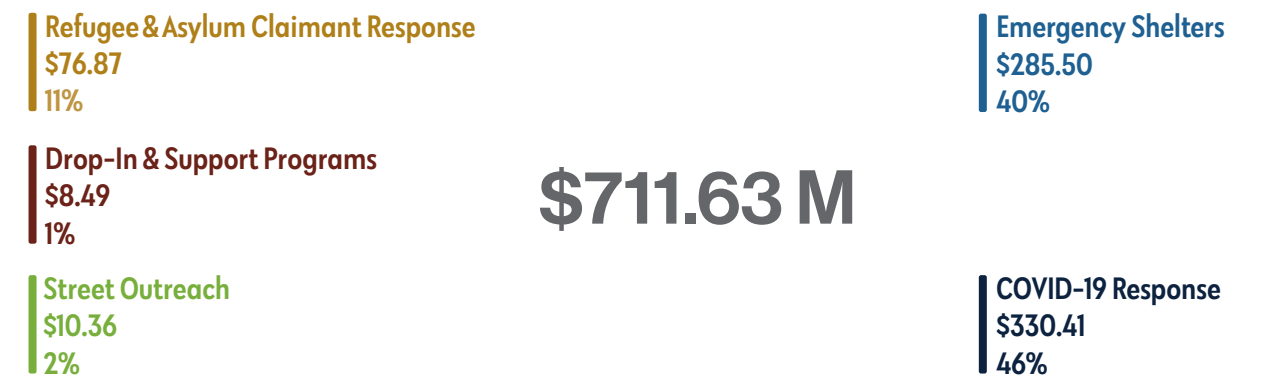
SSHA's City-approved 2022 Operating Budget was \$711 million. Our funding comes from a range of sources including the City's tax base, as well as contributions from the provincial and federal governments. These funds were used to support ongoing COVID-19 response, and provide important services to those experiencing homelessness through street outreach, daytime drop-in programs and more than 100 shelter locations across the city.

2022 Operating Budget

Where the money came from (in millions)



Where the money went (in millions)



Advancing Reconciliation

We continued to make progress towards implementing our [Meeting in the Middle Engagement Strategy and Action Plan](#) to address Indigenous homelessness, and support actions in the City's Reconciliation Action Plan.

To advance reconciliation through continual self-education and action, we hosted various events for staff leading up to and on National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

We continued to work closely with the Housing Secretariat in 2022 to develop and implement important equity-based programs and services. Together, we prioritized Indigenous projects in the open funding call. We also allocated \$8.67 million to Indigenous organizations, reaching our commitment to invest 20 per cent of grants funding to Indigenous-led projects administered by the Aboriginal Labour Force Development Circle. We worked together, along with the Toronto Indigenous Community Advisory Board (TICAB), to meet our goal of allocating 20 per cent of Canada-Ontario Housing Benefits (COHB) to Indigenous households, with a total of 315 households now receiving the rental affordability benefit in year three of the program.

In 2022, we worked with Indigenous partners to co-develop Indigenous training for the STARS (Service Triage, Assessment and Referral Support) common assessment tool, which is used to support providers and service users to navigate homelessness and housing services. As part of the Priority Access to Housing and Supports (PATHS) process, we also worked with TICAB to co-establish an equity target that 25 per cent of all supportive housing opportunities be matched to Indigenous people experiencing homelessness in Toronto.

Overall progress made on Meeting in the Middle commitments was assessed at our fourth Annual Gathering with senior leadership and TICAB held on November 28, 2022. Key priorities identified for 2023 were:

- Indigenous awareness training
- more co-creation of policies and programs
- sharing updates and outcomes from the City's reconciliation audit
- increased recruitment of Indigenous people at SSHA
- ensuring collaboration in our post-pandemic responses



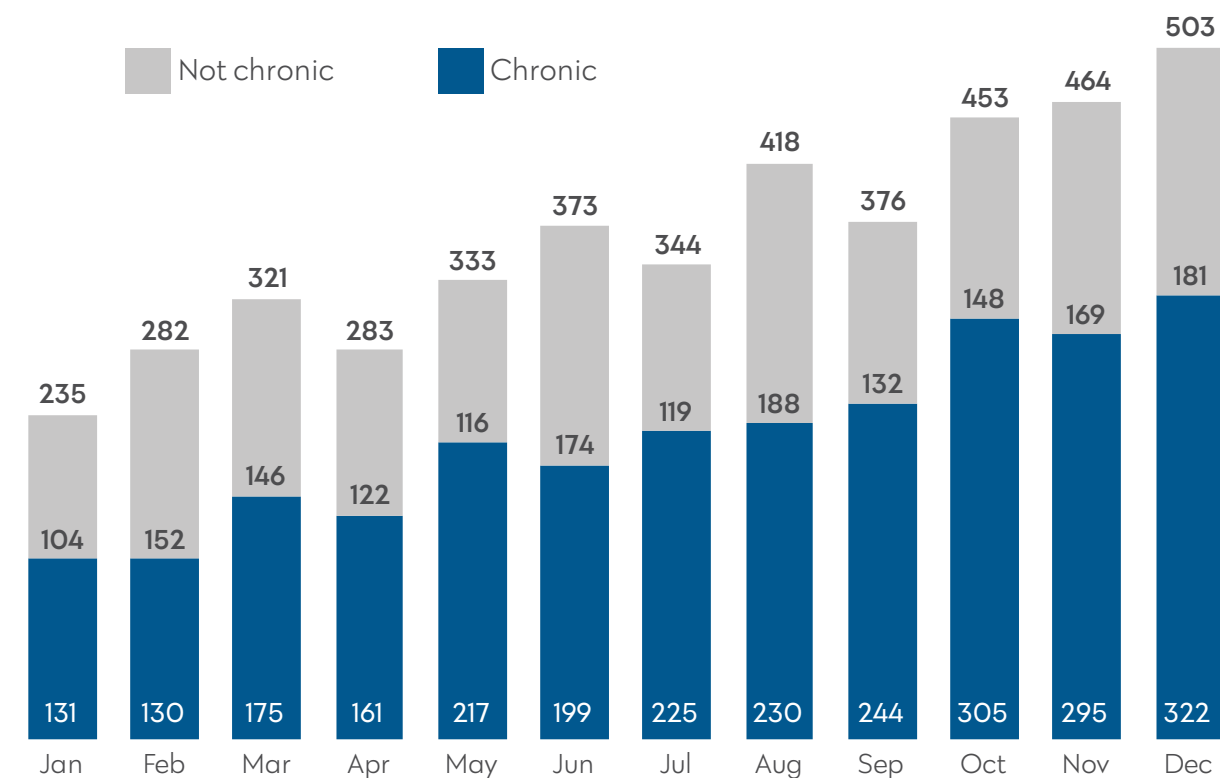
To mark National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, we formally changed the name of our largest meeting room from Golden Mile to Baawaam mowinnaan gaa ozhisaygin, an Ojibway name which translates to Dreams of Visions. This name was gifted to us by Elder Gary Sault, in consultation with Elder Grandmother Dorothy, based on a vision Elder Sault experienced and his wish for us to make our work dreams into visions.

Reducing Chronic Homelessness

We continued to advance a Housing First approach to reducing chronic homelessness by working with clients, staff, and shelter and housing partners to move as many people as possible into housing.

In 2022, 4,385 people experiencing homelessness moved from the shelter system into permanent housing.

People moved from shelter to permanent housing in 2022, by chronicity of homelessness



Housing counsellors at each shelter site worked with clients to understand their needs so that they could be connected with the most appropriate housing. In 2022, private rental units, often with support from the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) program, remained the leading pathway to housing.

Working closely with the Housing Secretariat, community partners and individuals experiencing homelessness, we also continued to implement our Coordinated Access approach to assess, prioritize, and connect people experiencing homelessness with Rent-Geared-to-Income and affordable and supportive housing opportunities.

In 2022, 550 households (745 individuals) were moved into Toronto Community Housing Corporation units with access to a follow-up support worker through the Rapid Rehousing Initiative. These units were fully furnished thanks to a partnership with the Furniture Bank. A further 335 households (392 individuals) secured housing through the PATHS (Priority Access to Housing and Supports) process, which connects individuals on the By Name List of people experiencing homelessness with supportive housing opportunities.

We undertook a number of initiatives in 2022 to better monitor and track housing outcomes from shelter. SSHA launched a new quarterly report that tracks monthly housing outcomes at each shelter site, in an accessible, visual format, to help shelter providers identify trends and support ongoing housing work. Staff also implemented new, monthly sector-wide meetings, which featured guest speakers, learning sessions and resource sharing to enhance awareness of pathways to housing and collaboration across the sector.

Focusing on Equity

Confronting anti-Black Racism

SSHA, with leadership from our Confronting anti-Black Racism (CABR) team, continued to build on its goal of supporting Black staff and clients by promoting equity within the division through collaboration, consultation and care.

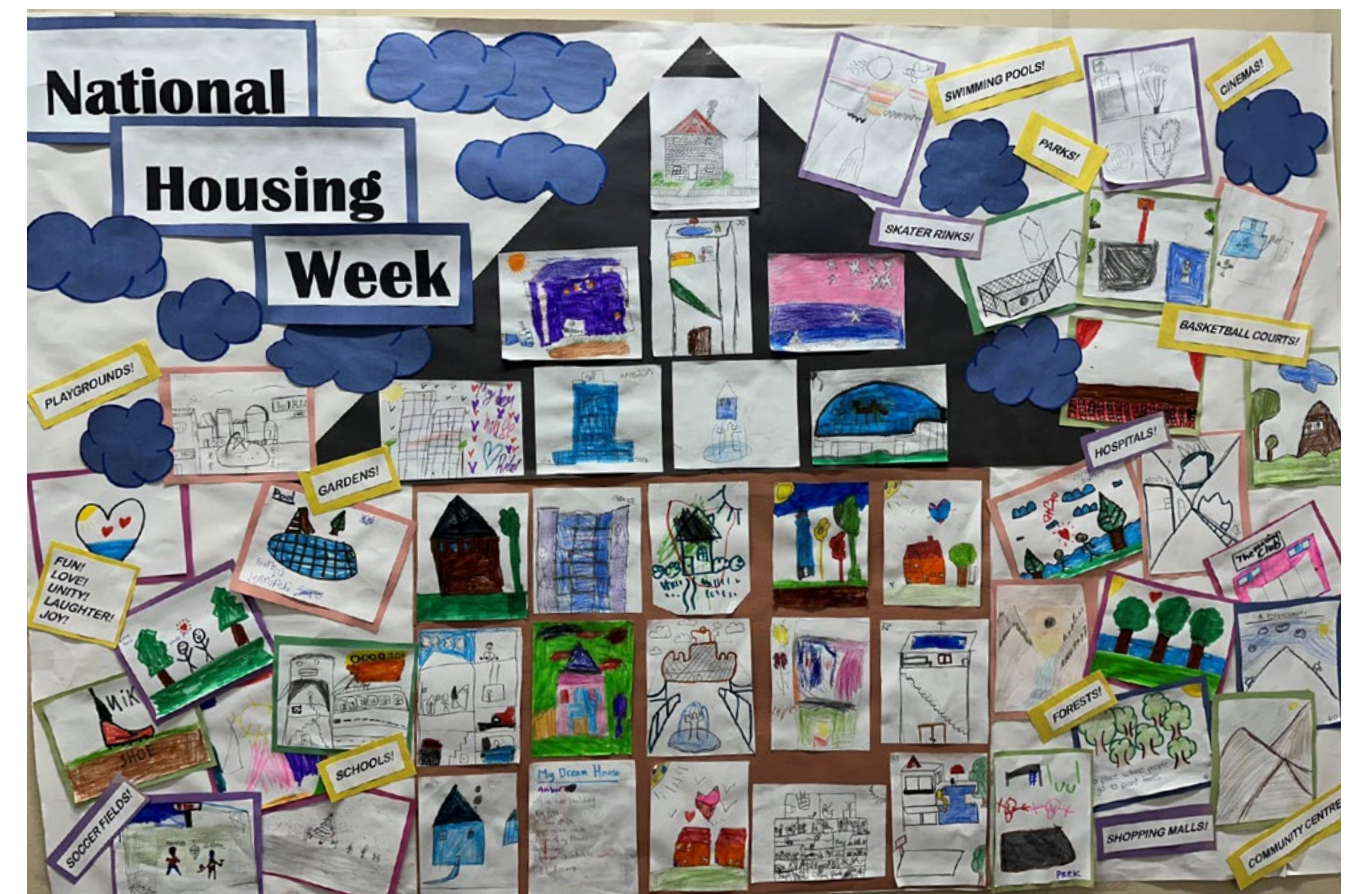
By engaging and including staff from across the division, we made progress in applying an anti-Black racism (ABR) lens to the 2023 budget process, including CABR scoring indicators for agencies receiving grants. Working together, we also:

- relaunched the Guidelines to Confronting Anti-Black Racism Initiated by Clients
- conducted comprehensive four-day Anti-Oppressive Psychotherapy Training for management staff across the division
- continued to promote discussions through Intentional Reflections related to confronting anti-Black racism in all regularly scheduled divisional meetings
- filled three dedicated positions to move forward the division's efforts to confront anti-Black racism
- created a more comprehensive plan to collaborate with our agency partners to advance CABR initiatives in 2023
- continued our divisional Mentorship Program for Black staff, providing approximately 200 Black staff in SSHA with the opportunity to support staff connection and development, enhance professional growth, and build professional and leadership skills

Implementing a Prioritization Policy and Monitoring Equity Based Outcomes

In 2022, we implemented the PATHS Prioritization Policy to support an equity-based approach to the distribution of housing throughout the sector. Developed in partnership with members of TICAB, Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness, and our Confronting anti-Black Racism unit, the policy uses an intersectional lens that considers populations most impacted by systemic factors that contribute to homelessness. This policy aims to provide a transparent and consistent process to determining which households are identified for available supportive housing, and supports SSHA's Homelessness Solutions Service Plan. Priority populations include: people experiencing chronic homelessness, Indigenous people, Black people, other racialized people, youth, seniors, 2SLGBTQ+ people and women.

To support PATHS and ongoing work to build equity-based programming and services, we enhanced our Shelter Management Information System to capture more robust demographic questions, such as Indigenous identity, racial identity, and refugee status.



Counsellors at the Toronto Plaza Hotel and Birkdale Residence shelters worked with children at their sites to create a vision board to showcase what housing means to them.

Delivering High Quality Services

Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic

At the beginning of 2022, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to greatly impact the shelter system with the emergence of the highly contagious Omicron variant. To respond to this threat, we worked closely with Toronto Public Health (TPH), staff and service providers to ensure rigorous infection prevention and control measures (IPAC) remained in place and were aligned with Ontario Ministry of Health guidance. This included distributing masks and rapid antigen tests to all shelter sites, including N95 masks. Between January and March 2022, we also redeployed more than 120 staff from across the corporation to support essential shelter operations, and introduced a Temporary Pandemic Wage Enhancement Program for direct-service workers in community agencies.

In 2022, we continued to operate our COVID-19 Isolation and Recovery site for people experiencing homelessness with complex health needs to isolate and recover. During outbreaks, we worked closely with each site and Toronto Public Health to ensure outbreak management plans were in place.

Other items of note undertaken in 2022 include:

- holding COVID-19 webinars every 2-4 weeks, in collaboration with health experts, to ensure all shelter sites were aware of up-to-date public health guidance, resources and available supplies
- investing \$7.7 million in HVAC upgrades to improve ventilation at City-owned facilities
- conducting more than 820 quality assurance site visits to ensure adherence to COVID-19 protocols
- engaging IPAC experts Practice Health Check, who conducted more than 325 IPAC training sessions for close to 2,400 staff, and undertook more than 135 IPAC audits
- administering more than 6,900 COVID-19 vaccinations to staff and individuals experiencing homelessness at shelters, drop-in programs and community-based clinics



In 2022, staff at the Isolation and Recovery site provided expert care to 95 people with suspected COVID-19 and more than 660 people who tested positive.

Homelessness Health Services Framework

In 2022, we continued to develop the Homelessness Health Services Framework (HHSF), which coordinates existing tools and resources, leverages new and existing partnerships, and outlines an approach to coordinated health services, supporting three streams of care (primary care, harm reduction and mental health case management) across the homelessness service system.

Through work on the framework and implementation plan, it was identified that engagement with sector partners was required to inform the framework's further development and success.

Between October and December 2022, more than 150 people representing a variety of different groups and perspectives participated. Engagement sessions were held with management and frontline staff at homelessness and health service organizations, people with lived and living experience of homelessness, and equity deserving groups. A final engagement report summarizing the feedback and key considerations for operationalizing the framework will be completed in 2023.

A related process is underway to document the services that Indigenous organizations in the homelessness and health sectors in Toronto have been providing to Indigenous people experiencing homelessness for many years. The framework will serve as a tool for system level and strategic planning.

Homelessness Health Services Web Portal

As part of the HHSF, we collaborated with Inner City Health Associates (ICHA), Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre, and Ontario Health to develop the [Homelessness Health Services Web Portal](#). The portal is a strategic resource that allows service providers and system planners to easily identify health services that are available at different sites throughout the City and identify service gaps. Using this tool, viewers can easily filter and locate the following on a map:

- City and non-City run shelters, drop-in and transitional housing, along with basic demographic details
- Sub regional Ontario Health Team boundaries
- Health centres, primary care providers and hospitals
- Consumption and treatment services
- Sites with enhanced harm reduction supports
- Primary care supports embedded in shelter sites
- Mental health and case management services

The tool is hosted on ICHA's website, which also hosts pathways for requesting services and a feedback form for making edits to map profiles.

Harm Reduction

Building on partnerships with Toronto Public Health, ICHA, Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre, The Neighbourhood Group and other community harm reduction providers, we continued to work with shelter operators to support access and connection to harm reduction supports and services in 2022. Using City data that tracks the number of opioid overdoses occurring in shelters, we were able to identify where high numbers of overdoses occur and target harm reduction supports and resources. A key highlight of this work in 2022 was the opening of two additional overdose prevention sites at high-needs shelters. These services were visited over 500 times, providing low barrier, safe spaces for individuals to use under the supervision of trained staff rather than using alone in unsafe or hidden spaces. The sites also work to connect those using the services with other health and social services.



The Seaton House Overdose Prevention Site – or SHOPS – hosted clients, community partners and harm reduction advocates at an event on George Street to mark International Overdose Awareness Day. The day, recognized annually on August 31, highlights the ongoing impact of the drug poisoning crisis and honours those who have been lost to overdose. SHOPS opened in June 2022.

Street Outreach Services

In 2022, Streets to Homes outreach staff and community agency partners continued to conduct outreach, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to connect with people staying outdoors. Staff worked to establish trusting relationships, address immediate health and safety needs, and provide connections to wrap-around and client-centred case management supports.

To help with this work, in 2022, we invested an additional \$1.18 million to hire 15 additional street outreach counsellors to help those living outside find and maintain permanent housing. Staff worked to help those we serve obtain ID – often a barrier to accessing critical supports – and access other services like physical and mental health care resources. Streets to Homes staff also worked to support those living outside to successfully transition to safe and supportive indoor settings.

2022 Streets to Homes outreach summary

25,034

total site visits

17,163

engagements with individuals living outside

9,403

individuals who accepted services

274

individuals successfully housed



Samuel

Weighed down by rental arrears, Samuel was struggling to find the right home in the right place that met his needs. Carrying debt meant that he didn't meet the criteria for certain programs, leaving him with fewer options for support. Samuel connected with Streets to Homes, where he met Kamrun, who supported him by advocating with Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). Together they were able to clear his debts and begin the process of finding a home.

It wasn't easy to find a place in the neighbourhood he needed to stay in, as budget constraints and landlord expectations made it challenging. Despite these obstacles, Samuel did not give up, and was able to secure a bachelor apartment in his neighbourhood through the City's Rapid Rehousing Initiative.

Electra

For over a decade Electra moved from friends' couches to shared accommodations. As a two-spirited Metis individual, she often felt uncomfortable where she was staying, which took a heavy toll on her mental health.

Out of options, Electra decided to move into a park. It was there that she connected with the Streets to Homes team, who worked alongside her to help her find a home. Now stably housed, Electra can fully express her creativity and connect meaningfully with her community. She is taking steps to rebuild her life and considering continuing her nursing education to help care for others.



COVID-19 Transition and Relocation Plan

At the beginning of 2022, there were 27 temporary shelter sites, which made up 40 per cent of total spaces in the City's shelter system and provided shelter to approximately 3,200 people each night.

In April 2022, City Council approved our COVID-19 Shelter Transition and Relocation Plan, which recommended a thoughtful, phased approach to transition out of the temporary shelter sites established during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure physical distancing in the shelter system. A sudden reversal of spaces was not recommended as it would cause significant disruption to the vital services and those who rely on them. Consideration was also given to the ongoing high demand for shelter services.

City Council approved extending the majority of the temporary shelters until at least April 2023, with up to five sites closing in 2022 based on ongoing negotiations with landlords.

The City was unable to extend leases at 195 Princes' Boulevard, 1684 Queen Street East, 45 The Esplanade and 30 Norfinch Drive as the landlords indicated they would resume their regular operations. In each case, we worked collaboratively with service providers to develop individual relocation plans, which included transition to permanent housing, as much as possible, or moves to other available shelter sites. For 30 Norfinch Drive in particular, we worked with The Salvation Army to relocate clients to a new site they leased at the end of 2022.

In 2022, the City purchased the property at 65 Dundas Street East for conversion into permanent affordable and supportive homes. Starting in September 2022, the shelter program at this location began a phased closure to accommodate conversion of the building to housing. The full closure of the program is expected in summer 2024.

We were asked to report back to Council in early 2023 with an update on Phase 1 of the Transition and Relocation Plan work and recommended next steps for Phase 2. To inform this, we launched an engagement process led by an external consultant, BGM Strategy Group. Together, we collected input from homelessness service providers, frontline staff, people experiencing homelessness, including those staying at temporary hotel sites, and health and harm reduction partners.

Client outcomes from all temporary sites closed in 2022

	Housing	Shelter Referral/ Self-Referral	Unknown Location	Health or Correctional Facility	Deceased
Number of People	124	524	151	25	6
Percentage	14.9%	63.1%	18.2%	3%	0.7%

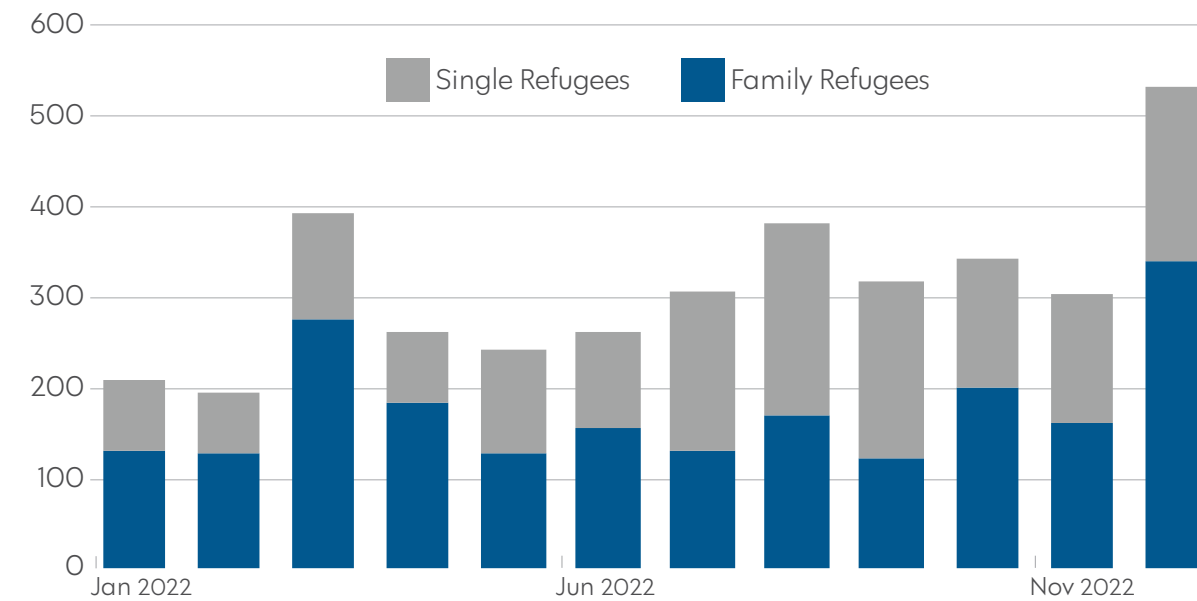
Supporting Refugees and Asylum Seekers

We continued to experience a notable increase in refugee claimants and/or asylum seekers needing temporary accommodations, with the number in shelters growing by more than 2,000 people per night in 2022. To respond to this demand, we began work to establish a distinct refugee shelter system that operates in parallel to the existing base shelter system. These programs provide specialized services to help refugees build new lives for themselves and their families. By supporting refugees and asylum seekers to move to these new programs, we also free up space in the base shelter system to meet ongoing demand.

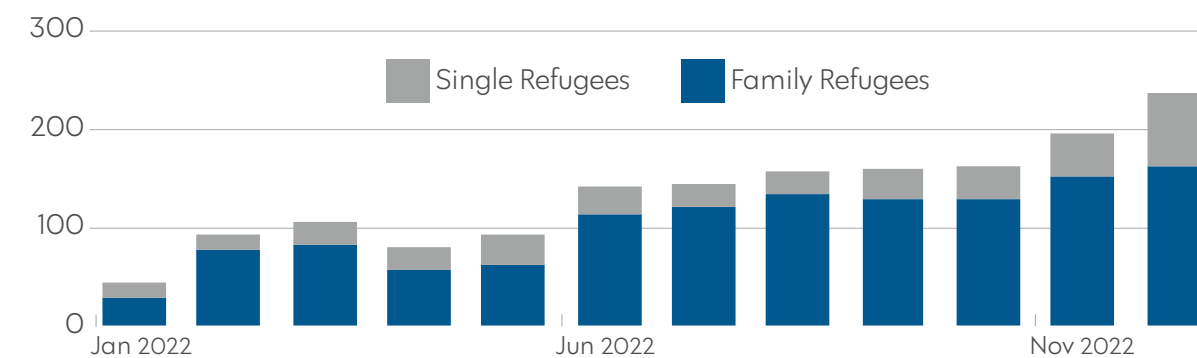


Throughout 2022, we worked closely and provided funding to community-based refugee service providers to manage these programs, including COSTI Immigrant Services, Sojourn House, Christie Welcome Centre, Toronto Community Hostels, Homes First Society, and Red Cross. We also provided funding to the Coalition of four Houses Refugee Housing Hub, led by the FCJ Refugee Centre, to support its shelter diversion program, which offers settlement services and support. This program helped to divert over 900 individuals from entering shelters in 2022.

Monthly new refugee claimant and/or asylum seeker arrivals in the shelter system in 2022



Monthly refugee claimant and/or asylum seekers moved to housing in 2022



Ukrainian Arrivals

In addition to support for refugees and/or asylum seekers, we worked collaboratively with the Toronto Newcomer Office to provide emergency shelter for individuals fleeing the ongoing crisis in Ukraine. Working together, we established a temporary hotel run by the Toronto Red Cross, which provided support to more than 130 individuals from 70 households in 2022. Along with emergency accommodations, meals and other basic needs, staff provided interpretation services, child and youth programming, transportation assistance, and other important wrap-around supports, such as settlement services, referrals, and workshops on employment, housing and childcare.

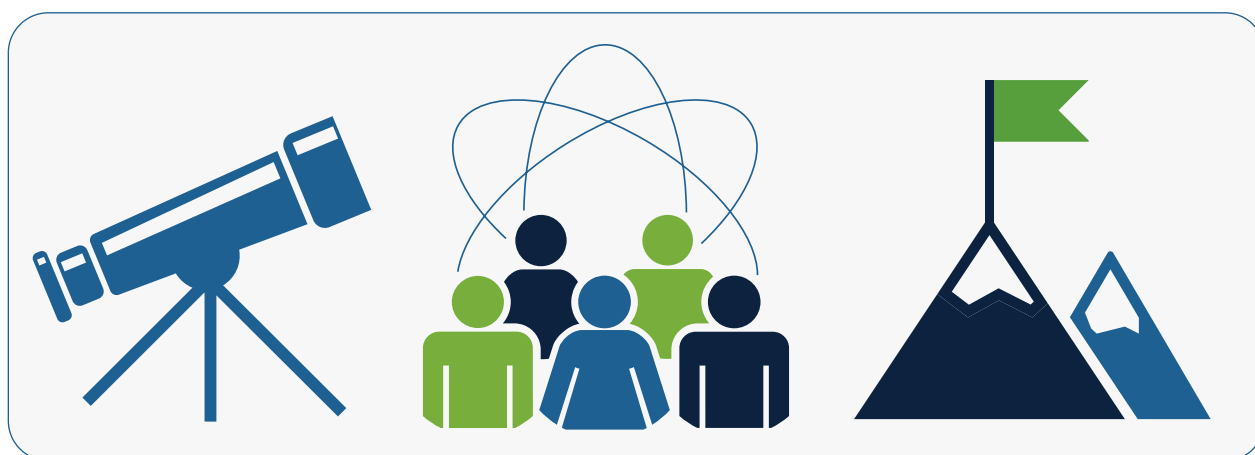


Developing an Integrated Systems Response

Re-defining our Division's Focus

To support City Council's priorities and continue to advance service delivery, staff who manage social and affordable housing programs that were part of Shelter, Support and Housing Administration moved to the Housing Secretariat in 2022. This move was done to centralize funding and oversight of social housing in Toronto under the Housing Secretariat, enabling SSHA to focus on the delivery of homelessness services. We continue to work closely with our colleagues in the Housing Secretariat to ensure that the residents we serve are supported throughout their journey as we work to achieve our shared goal of ending chronic homelessness by helping our clients to become stably housed.

In 2023, we will embark on a project to re-define SSHA's vision, mission and mandate to reflect this change and the work of our staff and partners.



Engaging with Service Users and People with Lived Experience

Throughout 2022 we worked to advance several client-centered initiatives and increase mechanisms for meaningful engagement with people with lived experience of homelessness (PWLE) and service users.

In 2022, our Quality Assurance Team resumed Client Satisfaction Surveys, collecting surveys from more than 600 clients across the shelter system. The survey asked clients for their feedback in five categories: ease of access, food, staff, housing and other supports, and facilities. This initiative aimed to amplify the voices of service users and will allow us to make continuous improvements in client-centred service delivery and system planning through data-based evidence.

Other key initiatives to support policy development and service planning in 2022, included:

- establishing a PWLE harm reduction advisory group and including them in the design, operation and evaluation of harm reduction services
- leading consultations with peer workers with lived experience of homelessness to create the Homelessness Health Services Framework
- working with the Toronto Shelter Network on peer vaccine engagement initiatives and supporting the delivery of health promotion across the shelter system
- partnering with the Toronto Shelter Network to survey people staying in temporary shelters to inform phase 2 of the COVID-19 Shelter Transition and Relocation Plan
- consulting with Black service users on their experiences using shelter services to update the Toronto Shelter Standards with an anti-Black racism lens in 2023
- creating safe spaces within women's and family shelters for women of African descent by establishing a Black women and family shelters advisory group
- collecting feedback from service users to inform the development of a shelter service user advisory group

Grants Open Call and Funding Process

In 2022, working with the Housing Secretariat, we completed an open call for grant funding to community organizations that deliver homelessness and housing services that help advance our Homelessness Solutions Service Plan and the City's HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan.

In total, \$32.9 million was awarded, providing grants to successful projects from October 1, 2022 to March 31, 2025. A breakdown by funding categories is:

Project Category	2022 funding (\$ million)
Housing Access	\$4
Street Outreach	\$2.9
Homelessness Prevention	\$2.5
Housing Focused Client Supports	\$15.7
Housing Focused System Supports	\$2.8
Daytime Drop Ins	\$5
TOTAL	\$32.9

We also allocated \$8.67 million to the Indigenous Funding Stream, fulfilling our commitment to invest 20 per cent of the total grant funding in Indigenous-led projects, which is administered by our partners at the Aboriginal Labour Force Development Circle (ALFDC).



Expanding Shelter Capacity

In 2022, we continued to respond to significant and increasing demand for shelter services by adding new spaces to the shelter system.

The 2021/2022 winter season was exceptionally cold, leading to the activation of Warming Centres for a total of 104 days (between November 15, 2021 and April 15, 2022). In early January 2022, we also worked quickly with our partners in the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division to open two temporary 24-hour respite sites in community centres. Staff and shelter providers across the sector also opened their doors, providing additional temporary contingency spaces in areas not used for sleeping, such as common areas.

We also celebrated the opening of two new shelter sites in 2022:

- 705 Progress Avenue, which provides shelter services and wrap-around supports to more than 60 men experiencing homelessness
- Toronto's first transitional shelter for 2SLGBTQ+ adults, operated by our partners at Homes First Society and supported by The 519

In the fall of 2022, to respond to occupancy pressures and increased demand moving into the winter months, we began to introduce a safe and moderate increase in capacity to the base shelter system, as approved by City Council in April 2022. We worked with staff and our service providers to build custom plans by shelter sites, adjusting bed separation from 2 metres laterally to 1.25 metres through a phased approach that maintained existing public health and rigorous infection prevention and control measures. Warming Centres were activated again in December 2022 as Toronto dealt with a storm over the holiday season.

Shelter system occupancy increased by 22% over 2022





In May 2022, our staff and Indigenous Knowledge Keeper Mike Ormsby, joined elected officials and members of the community to celebrate the official opening of 705 Progress Ave., a new shelter for men experiencing homelessness.

Strengthening and Modernizing the Sector

Enhancing Data and the Shelter Management Information System

Throughout the year, we continued our commitment to data-informed decision making, collaboration, and transparency by making the following data sets available on the City's public facing website:

- [Daily Shelter & Overnight Service Usage](#)
- [Shelter System Flow](#) data on who is entering and leaving the shelter system
- [Overdoses in Homelessness Services Settings](#)
- [Deaths of Shelter Residents](#)

In July 2022, we began to post [Central Intake data related to system demands](#). Updated monthly, the new data tracks the number of calls handled, as well as the number of callers that received a shelter referral and individuals that could not be matched to a shelter space.

Over the course of 2022, we also significantly modernized the Shelter Management Information System (SMIS) by:

- developing a new housing module to better support clients to find and secure housing
- enhancing the Intake module, so that staff can more effectively record quality client data and conduct intake
- enhancing room/bed management functionality to more effectively track occupancy/vacancy in real-time
- enhancing reporting capabilities, including client-level reports, a daily By Name List of individuals experiencing homelessness, and the reporting of occupancies and housing outcomes
- improving the user-authentication process for agency staff, allowing for significantly more flexible access to SMIS, enhanced security practices, and reduced downtime

Information and Privacy Review

Work continued in 2022 to better understand and define the data collected by SSHA and how it can be used to advance our shared goals with the creation of a SMIS Information Sharing Working Group. The Group met weekly to inventory and map all data points collected in SMIS, engage with corporate partners to discuss shared projects, and create a Project Primer that outlines information that could potentially be shared. A Senior Privacy & Information Specialist was hired in SSHA to serve as a divisional resource on Information Management and Privacy Protection. The Specialist will work closely with Legal Services and the City's records retention and Corporate Information Management team to review legislation and legal authorities, and strengthen policies.

Shelter Audit and Recommendations

In July 2022, the City's Auditor General brought forward an audit on emergency shelters that outlined 27 recommendations to strengthen our division's case management and oversight and management of our agreements with hotel vendors.

We welcomed the recommendations from the Auditor General, seeing this as an opportunity for continuous service improvement and to strengthen our collaboration with other City divisions. We developed a workplan, identified resources to fully implement the recommendations and continue to report on this work.

To improve case management, in 2022, we improved SMIS to produce housing outcome reports, and track regular performance metrics against key indicators. We also developed important resources to help staff and clients better navigate housing opportunities, and continued implementation of our new STARS (Service Triage, Assessment, and Referral Support) common assessment tool, with 70 per cent of all active clients in Toronto shelters having completed the assessment by the end of 2022.

To strengthen oversight of hotel operations, we engaged with Corporate Real Estate Management to enlist their expertise in identifying and securing locations for shelter services, and began to outline roles and responsibilities to support this work.



The Mayor of Toronto declared January 24-30, 2022, Emergency Shelter and Homelessness Service Worker Appreciation Week. To start the week, the CN Tower was lit blue and white in recognition.

Organizational and Employee Development

In 2022, to support and celebrate the development, diversity and strengths of staff, we launched a divisional recognition program, Excellence in SSHA (EISSHA). Through EISSHA, we recognized 25 individuals/teams and programs for their outstanding work, and 30 staff with the General Manager's Lifetime Achievement Award, recognizing individuals with 25 or more years of service to SSHA. EISSHA was developed as part of a broader organizational development strategy and employee engagement initiatives.

Staff Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy

SSHA recognizes the psychological and emotional impacts staff have been experiencing responding to COVID-19, the drug poisoning crisis, racial injustices and ongoing heavy demand for shelter services. For this reason, in 2022, we established a Mental Health Support Working Group and undertook two specific initiatives to better understand the impacts on staff and the resources, programs and models that could best support their wellbeing. We hired two external consultants to help us with this work.

Through research on best practices, as well as an extensive staff engagement process that included focus groups, surveys, meetings and site visits, Circle Point Wellness created a comprehensive report of findings and recommendations that we will be working to implement in 2023. Led by the Toronto Shelter Network, we also worked together to develop a grief and loss support model for staff across the homelessness sector.

The graphic is titled "Health & Safety" in a white, cursive font on a dark blue vertical bar. To the right of the title is a 2x2 grid of icons: a green first aid kit, a blue clipboard with a checklist, a green warning sign with an exclamation mark, and a green hand holding a heart. To the right of the grid is a dark blue silhouette of a person wearing a green hard hat.



We celebrate and recognize the contributions of staff from across the division for the work they do each day to build a culture of excellence.





Looking Forward

While demand for shelter space continues to rise, we will maintain our focus on providing shelter and wrap-around supports to those in need and ensuring homelessness is rare, brief and non-recurring. This will include actions to strengthen and stabilize the shelter system by continuing to focus on transition and relocation planning. In addition, our work to support refugees and asylum seekers will be a priority. We will also launch our new Capital Infrastructure Strategy and aim to bolster workforce capacity and resilience to ensure we are well-equipped to meet the needs of our clients. A summary of this work can be found below.

COVID-19 Transition and Relocation Plan

Work to support our phased, gradual transition from temporary COVID-19 shelter sites will continue in 2023, with a focus on housing, maintaining shelter capacity and monitoring key performance indicators. In the first quarter of 2023, we will report back to Council with an update on Phase 1 of the Transition and Relocation Plan and recommendations to inform Phase 2 to take place in 2023 and the first part of 2024. This may include the closing of some sites, based on the outcome of ongoing negotiations with landlords. As sites are decommissioned, we will work collaboratively with site operators and clients to develop relocation plans that match clients with permanent housing, as much as possible, or space in the shelter system that meets their individual needs. Updates to the City's Temporary Shelter Transition & Relocation Plan will be posted to the City website at [Toronto.ca/physicaldistancingshelters](https://toronto.ca/physicaldistancingshelters).

Refugee and Asylum Seeker Supports

To meet the continued surge of refugees and asylum seekers looking for emergency shelter, we will continue to develop and implement the dedicated refugee-specific shelter system, as directed by City Council in 2022. In addition, we will focus on collaborating with regional partners in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) to initiate a coordinated regional response for asylum seekers. A coordinated approach will help to alleviate some of the pressures municipalities face and streamline access to services for asylum seekers and housing opportunities across the GTHA.

Capital Infrastructure Strategy

In 2023, we will launch and work to implement our Capital Infrastructure Strategy (CIS), which builds upon SSHA's mission to ensure there is shelter space for people experiencing homelessness in Toronto. The CIS provides an overview of capital spending to meet division-wide priorities over a three-year period, the acquisition of fleet, a security plan, a procurement plan, an annualized winter plan, the management of assets, major renovations, a shelter portfolio review, and state-of-good-repair plan. The CIS will help tell a comprehensive story of how we will transition from an emergency-focused COVID-19 response to a long-term proactive approach to capital planning. It will also incorporate findings from the City Council-approved HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan, SafeTO, SSHA's Homelessness Solutions Service Plan, and the City of Toronto's Corporate Strategic Plan. To help inform the development of the strategy, in 2022, we held 18 engagement sessions with staff from across SSHA and other divisions and agencies. We also met with our shelter agency partners and the Toronto Indigenous Community Advisory Board.

Workforce Capacity and Resilience

Over the past few years the collective resilience of SSHA has been tested through our response to COVID-19 and the ongoing, high demand for shelter that we continue to experience. In our 2023 submitted budget, we included \$7 million to support our partner agencies to ensure they can continue to deliver and enhance their important shelter programs and services. In 2023, we will also bolster our workforce capacity through the implementation of organizational development programs and initiatives. This will include a focus on projects that support staff psychological wellbeing, safety and resilience. In addition, we will continue to focus on organizational development initiatives that provide more learning opportunities and increase employee engagement, professional development, and retention in order to reinforce a positive and resilient workplace culture.

We hope our reflections of 2022 helped illustrate how important our work is and the impact it is making each and every day in the lives of those experiencing homelessness. We look forward to continuing to work together - side by side - to advance our shared goals in 2023.



