District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board

Conseil d'administration des services sociaux du district de Nipissing

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Municipalities Under Pressure: One Year Later – Northern Ontario Homelessness Update

Updated findings show rising pressures on housing, supports, and communities across the North

***North Bay, ON*:** The release of *Municipalities Under Pressure: One Year Later* builds directly on the landmark homelessness report published in January 2025 by the Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association (NOSDA), the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), and the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA). The updated findings show that homelessness is rising faster than housing supply, prevention initiatives, and support systems can respond, with Northern Ontario experiencing the most significant impacts.

From 2024 to 2025, homelessness in Northern Ontario increased by 37.3%, compared to 7.8% across the Province. Since 2021, homelessness in the North has increased by approximately 117.5%, more than double the provincial rate. While Northern Ontario represents 5% of Ontario's population, it now accounts for nearly 10% of all known homelessness in the Province.

In just one year, the number of people experiencing homelessness in Northern Ontario rose from 5,930 to 8,142, highlighting the widening gap between need and system capacity.

"One year after we warned that homelessness would continue to grow without sustained, coordinated action, the data confirms that Northern Ontario is now facing a deepening systems failure — with serious consequences for people, communities, and local economies," said Michelle Boileau, NOSDA Board Chair.

"The numbers are clear, and they match what we see every day in Nipissing District. When deeply affordable and supportive homes are limited, people stay homeless longer. That impacts residents, local businesses, and municipal budgets. DNSSAB is advancing housing solutions and prevention that keep people housed, and we are

calling on provincial and federal partners to work with us so the North can stabilize and grow," said Mark King, DNSSAB Board Chair.

Growing Housing Pressures Are Driving Long-Term Homelessness

The report confirms that homelessness in Northern Ontario is increasingly shaped by structural housing shortages, not short-term disruptions like job loss. Limited availability of deeply affordable, supportive, and community housing is restricting exits from homelessness and increasing the number of people remaining unhoused for longer periods.

In 2025, 13,104 households were on community housing waitlists in Northern Ontario, up from 8,467 in 2021, a more than 50% increase in just four years. These pressures are contributing to longer shelter stays, increased chronic homelessness, and rising system costs across health, emergency, and social services.

The impacts are also deeply inequitable. In the North, Indigenous homelessness increased by 22.7% from 2024 to 2025. Indigenous people account for 40.7% of homelessness in Northern Ontario, reflecting long-standing systemic barriers and the need for Indigenous-led, culturally appropriate housing and homelessness solutions developed in partnership with Indigenous communities.

Homelessness Is Also an Economic Issue

Beyond its human toll, homelessness is increasingly undermining community and economic stability across Northern Ontario. Municipalities are absorbing rising costs for emergency shelters, health care, public safety, and encampment responses, while housing shortages make it harder to attract and retain workers, support business growth, and sustain local economic development.

Persistent homelessness reduces labour market participation, strains municipal budgets, and diverts resources from infrastructure, housing supply, and community building investments that support long-term economic resilience.

Without changes to current system conditions, the report projects that homelessness in Northern Ontario will continue to rise through 2035, reaching approximately 16,900 people under steady economic conditions and more than 27,500 people in an economic downturn.

A Call for Coordinated, Housing-Led Action
The findings reinforce a key conclusion from last year's report: homelessness is not a temporary crisis, but the result of system-level gaps across housing, income, health, and social services. Managing emergency pressures alone will not reverse the trend.

Addressing homelessness at scale requires a housing-led, prevention-focused, and coordinated approach, with sustained investment in deeply affordable and supportive housing, stronger prevention and housing stability supports, and alignment across all orders of government.

"If we want to reduce homelessness, strengthen communities, and support economic growth in Northern Ontario, we must move beyond managing crisis conditions and invest in system capacity that delivers long-term housing stability. The cost of inaction — both human and economic — will only continue to grow," said Boileau.

"This update gives us a clearer understanding of what is driving homelessness in the North, and it reinforces what we hear from people every day. Behind these numbers are residents who want stability and a place to call home. Our priority at DNSSAB is to turn these findings into action by strengthening prevention, advocating for funding to expand housing with supports, and helping more people move out of homelessness for good," said King.

More Information on the NOSDA-AMO-OMSSA HelpSeeker Report:

- Municipalities Under Pressure One Year Later: An Update on the Human and Financial Cost of Ontario's Homelessness Crisis Full Report
- AMO Research Cover Document
- AMO Press Release
- Question and Answer Document

About NOSDA
The Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association (NOSDA) represents municipal service managers responsible for housing, homelessness, and social services across Northern Ontario, including DNSSAB. NOSDA advances evidence-based policy, sustainable funding, and coordinated, housing-led solutions that reflect the unique realities of northern, rural, and remote communities.

Learn more at nosda.net

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About DNSSAB

The District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board (DNSSAB) is the service delivery agency for essential human services to the residents of the Nipissing District. These include Ontario Works, Housing Services, Children's Services, and Paramedic Services. The jurisdiction of the DNSSAB covers a population of about 85,000 people, spread out over 17,000 square kilometers, 11 municipalities, two First Nations, and two unorganized areas – Nipissing North and Nipissing South. The Board is made up of 11 Municipal councillors and 1 elected representative for the Townships Without Municipal Organization. The Board members exercise powers, duties and responsibilities relating to the delivery of human services, while respecting the DSSAB Act and the Board's Procedural By-Laws and governance model. Shared responsibilities with the Province and municipalities are combined within the DNSSAB.

Learn more at dnssab.ca

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