

THE REGIONAL
MUNICIPALITY OF
HALTON



2026 Federal Pre-Budget Consultation Submission to the Minister of Finance

September 4, 2026

Introduction

Halton Region is home to more than 666,000 residents and 13,300 businesses across four communities (the City of Burlington, the Town of Halton Hills, Town of Milton, and Town of Oakville) and is expected to grow to a population of 884,890 by 2051. With a growth rate of 8.8% between 2016 and 2021, Halton has seen the highest rate of growth across all upper- and single-tier municipalities in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) and is one of the fastest growing communities in Canada.

The Region is an effective upper-tier government responsible for delivering many essential programs and services, including providing high-quality drinking water, building housing-enabling infrastructure, delivering homelessness supports, operating long-term care homes, and administering public health and paramedic services. Fiscal responsibility and continuous improvement have remained a key driver for the Region, with Halton maintaining top credit ratings from S&P Global Ratings (AAA) since 2002 and Moody's Investors Service (Aaa) since 1989.

As Halton continues to experience rapid growth, a strong partnership with the Federal Government will support our shared goals of building resilient communities and ensuring affordability for residents. Budget 2026 presents an opportunity to work together to advance the following priority issues:



1. Providing Housing for Those with the Greatest Need



2. Partnering to Expand Affordable and High Quality Child Care



3. Addressing Climate Change and Supporting Resilient Communities

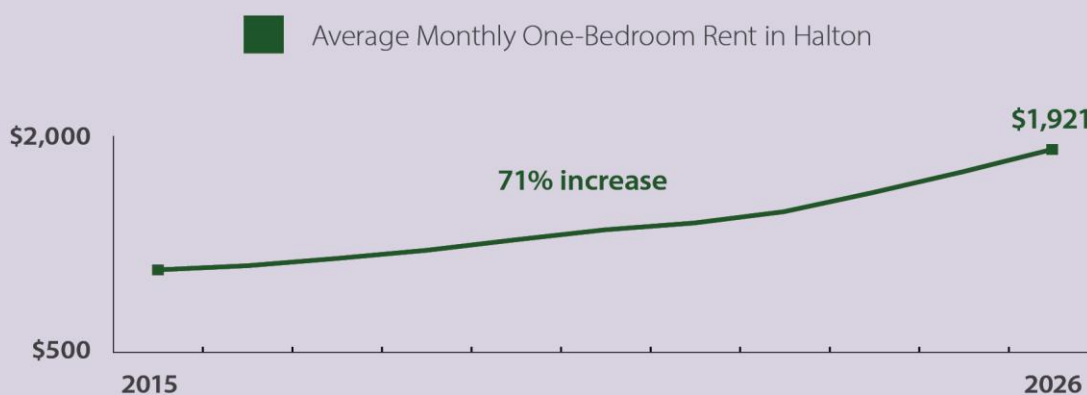
Providing Housing for Those with the Greatest Need

Halton appreciates the Federal Government's ongoing partnership and investment to help us deliver new assisted and supportive housing units for our community. Recently completed projects including 265 Kerr Street and 1258 Rebecca Street in Oakville demonstrate the significant impact we can achieve through partnership. Together, these two projects have provided 30 units of assisted housing and 36 units of supportive

housing, helping to address critical housing needs across Halton. Building on the success of these investments, Halton Region appreciates the Federal Government's recent initiatives to address the growing, national homelessness crisis, including the launch of Build Canada Homes (BCH). BCH is an important initiative that has the potential to drive significant and meaningful change across Canada by supporting communities in their efforts to provide housing for those with the greatest need.

Halton's average monthly rent is currently one of the highest in the Greater Toronto Area, leaving a growing number of households unable to afford private market rental housing. These high market rental costs, and the growing mental health and addictions crisis are increasing the demand for homelessness services and supports, including emergency shelter. **Since 2018, there has been an 185% increase in unsheltered homelessness in Halton.** In 2025, Halton Region conducted its fifth Point-in Time (PIT) Count to enumerate homelessness across the region, which indicated a 7% increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness compared to 2024.

There also continues to be significant demand for assisted housing in Halton for individuals and families unable to afford market rent. **All 5,608 existing assisted housing units in the Region are fully occupied, with 8,581 households on the wait list.** The significant unmet demand in the community for assisted housing continues to put increased pressure on the Region's housing programs and services, including the emergency shelter system.



Reducing these pressures requires sustained investment in assisted and supportive housing to reduce reliance on emergency shelters and other crisis services. Supportive housing is a cornerstone of Halton's homelessness response, by providing permanent housing alongside individualized onsite or community-based supports for people with the highest and most complex needs.

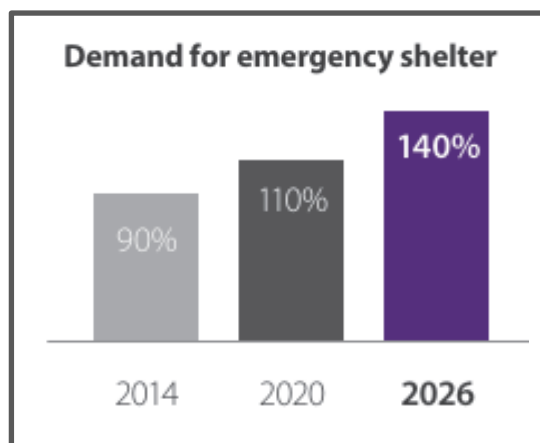
Evidence consistently demonstrates that supportive housing is one of the most effective interventions for preventing chronic and unsheltered homelessness while reducing demand on emergency shelters, healthcare, justice and other public systems.

A 2024 study commissioned by the Region found that a minimum of 165 additional dedicated supportive housing units are needed to meet demand and prevent further growth in emergency shelter use, unsheltered homelessness and encampments in Halton.

Reaching Home

The Reaching Home program has been instrumental in helping Halton Region respond to the growing scale and complexity of homelessness. Since its launch in 2019, the program has supported emergency shelter services, homelessness prevention initiatives, encampment outreach and investments in supportive housing. Halton Region has been allocated approximately \$5.27 million annually through Reaching Home for 2026-2027 and 2027-2028. While this investment has been critical in strengthening the local homelessness system, it has not kept pace with increasing demand.

Emergency shelters in Halton continue to operate at approximately 140% capacity, while unsheltered homelessness and the complexity of client needs continue to increase.



The uncertainty of program continuation beyond 2028 limits Halton's ability to make long-term strategic investments in homelessness prevention programs and supportive housing. The potential loss of Reaching Home funding would have a significant impact on the homelessness system in our community, particularly as the program approaches its end date during a period of significant local need. **As unsheltered homelessness in Halton continues to rise and the homelessness system continues to grow in complexity, making the Reaching Home program permanent and increasing current funding levels is essential in preventing higher emergency shelter use, street homelessness and encampments in our community.**

National Housing Strategy

Programs delivered through the National Housing Strategy, including the Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI), the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI),

and the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) are vital to Halton's ability to address growing housing needs and ensure Halton residents have access to and maintain affordable housing. Halton Region uses these programs to support the development of new assisted and supportive housing, preserve existing community housing stock, and provide Halton residents at-risk of homelessness with portable housing allowances. Through the NHS, Halton Region has been assigned a target of creating 55 new rent-assisted units for the 2026–2027 fiscal year which we are on track to deliver.

As the NHS agreement nears expiry in 2027-28, Halton Region strongly encourages the Federal and Provincial governments to renew the agreement or establish a successor funding program. Continuity of funding is critical to preserving affordable housing supports, preventing homelessness, and meeting growing community housing needs. Through COHB alone, direct assistance is provided to approximately 450 clients in Halton helping them maintain housing stability and prevent homelessness. **Any impact to NHS programs would have a direct and immediate impact on clients across Halton.**

Continued, predictable investment from senior levels of government through the NHS is essential to prevent disruption to critical housing initiatives and ensure Halton Region can meet the needs of residents who rely on stable and affordable housing and address the growing need for assisted and supportive housing.

Partnering to Deliver Assisted and Supportive Housing

Halton recently submitted an application to Build Canada Homes (BCH) that identifies six projects which would deliver 579 new housing units across Halton, including 420 assisted and supportive housing units:

- City View Supportive Housing, 21 units in the City of Burlington
- Allendale Building 1, up to 200 units in the Town of Milton
- Allendale Buildings 2 & 3, up to 266 units in the Town of Milton
- Regional Road 25, 47 units in the Town of Milton
- 363 Margaret Drive, 13 units in the Town of Oakville
- 284-314 Maurice Drive, 32 units in the Town of Oakville

Our BCH application portfolio builds on our proven successes and we are ready to leverage our experience in innovative housing delivery using modern methods of construction, energy efficient design, and delivering housing quickly and efficiently. More information about these projects can be found in Halton's portfolio of [Assisted Rental Housing Development Opportunities](#) alongside our other shovel ready and in-progress projects.

Halton has also partnered with Indwell and the City of Burlington to deliver 77 supportive housing units at 1022, 1028 and 1030 Waterdown Road in the City of Burlington and Indwell will be submitting this project to BCH for funding consideration in the coming weeks. Federal Government support is pivotal to help realize the significant impact this project can have on our community.

Halton Region greatly appreciates the opportunity to secure capital funding from the Federal Government through Build Canada Homes. Halton is committed to working with the Provincial Government to secure operating funding to support our projects submitted to BCH. Increased Federal coordination with the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Ministry of Health is also critical to help us fund the operating costs to support the delivery of new assisted and supportive housing units on a permanent, sustained basis. All levels of government play an important role in preventing homelessness and improving housing affordability. The homelessness system in Halton has become more complex and requires strong partnership across all levels of government.

Let's Work Together

The Federal Government can support Halton in delivering housing for those with the greatest need by:

- Providing increased, long-term and predictable capital and operating funding to support individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness with stable and affordable housing, including increasing funding provided through Reaching Home and making the program permanent
- Working with the Provincial Government on the renewal of the National Housing Strategy to ensure the continued flow of funding to enable municipalities, including Halton, to increase the supply of assisted and supportive housing, preserve existing housing stock and deliver affordability supports
- Increasing coordination across all three levels of government to address the homelessness, mental health and addictions crises including increasing collaboration with the Ontario Ministry of Health to fund new supportive housing units
- Partnering with us to get our portfolio of shovel-ready assisted and supportive housing properties built faster including partnering to deliver our portfolio of projects submitted to Build Canada Homes

Partnering to Expand Affordable and High Quality Child Care

Halton Region appreciates the Federal Government's leadership and continued commitment to the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) system. Recent initiatives including the investment of approximately \$5.4 billion over two years to support the CWELCC system across Canada and the one-year extension of the Canada-Ontario CWELCC agreement to March 2027 are helping to strengthen the early learning and child care sector while ensuring families continue to have access to affordable child care.

The CWELCC program is saving families across Canada up to \$11,255 per child annually,¹ with approximately 18,940 families across Halton Region benefitting from these substantial cost reductions. These savings are critical for Halton families who are struggling with high mortgage rates/rental costs and other rising household expenses. Access to safe, reliable, high quality and affordable child care enables parents and caregivers to enter and stay in the workforce, pursue higher education and contribute to Halton's labour market and economic competitiveness.

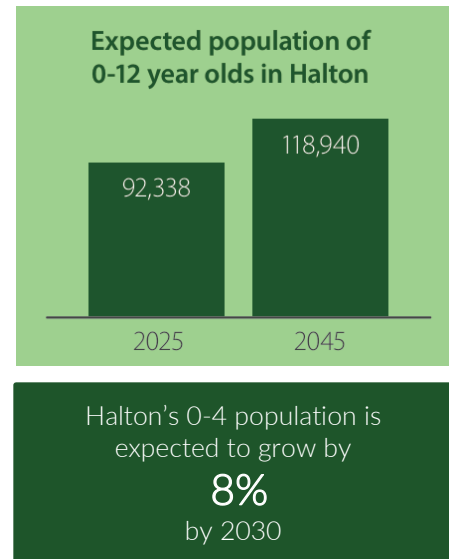
Over 17,000 new jobs have been created in Ontario's child care sector since 2019. Since 2019, the labour force participation rate for women aged 25-54 in Ontario also rose by two full percentage points. This shift, combined with more women moving from part-time to full-time work, added 81,500 full-time-equivalent workers to the provincial economy.²

A renewal of the Canada-Ontario CWELCC agreement beyond 2027 is essential to ensure that Halton families can continue to access affordable and high quality child care and benefit from the significant economic advantages it provides.

¹ Government of Canada, Minister of Jobs and Families announces new funding to maintain affordable early learning and child care in Canada," June 2026, <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/news/2026/06/minister-of-jobs-and-families-announces-new-funding-to-maintain-affordable-early-learning-and-child-care-in-canada.html>

² Jim Stanford, *Economic Benefits of Expanded Child Care Services in Ontario* (Vancouver: Centre for Future Work, 2026), <https://childcareontario.org/wp-content/uploads/Economic-Benefits-of-Expanded-Child-Care-Services-in-Ontario.pdf>

As one of the fastest growing communities in the country, Halton Region is facing significant demand for high quality and affordable child care. The need for additional CWELCC spaces for Halton families and child care operators is expected to continue as Halton grows. Halton has made significant progress enrolling children into the CWELCC program with 86% of operators enrolled to date, however, the waitlist in our community continues to grow and outpace available supply. The urgent renewal of the bilateral agreement would stabilize the CWELCC system and provide the certainty needed to sustain progress on system affordability and growth.



It is critical that any renewal of the bilateral CWELCC agreement include a commitment to improving affordability and continued system expansion to help meet growing demand in Halton and communities across Ontario.

Halton Region strongly supports the Federal and Provincial Governments' efforts to achieve a longer-term agreement beyond the current 2027 CWELCC extension, ensuring stability for Halton families. These ongoing partnerships are pivotal to meet the growing demand for affordable, high quality child care spaces in the Halton community and to sustain the positive progress made to date.

Let's Work Together

The Federal Government can support Halton in expanding affordable and high quality child care by:

- Working with the Provincial Government to urgently renew the Canada-Ontario CWELCC agreement beyond 2027
- Ensuring that the renewal of the Canada-Ontario CWELCC agreement:
 - Sustains progress made to date
 - Increases affordability for parents
 - Builds a more sustainable system, with sufficient funding and flexibility to support continued system expansion to meet growing demand

Addressing Climate Change and Supporting Resilient Communities

The need for continued action on climate change from all levels of government is clear. The Region, its residents and businesses continue to be impacted by severe weather events such as floods, high winds, tornadoes, ice storms and extreme heat and cold days. These events pose significant risk to the Region's infrastructure, economy and the health, safety and quality of life of residents. **By the 2080s, it is projected that Halton will have a hottest day temperature of approximately 40 degrees celsius.**

In the fall of 2023, Halton Regional Council endorsed the Region's 2023-2026 Corporate Climate Action Plan which is the foundation that guides Halton's work to accelerate its climate response and includes the corporate net zero target of 2045.

In July 2024, Halton Region experienced five consecutive intense rainfall events, resulting in 100 to 220 mm of total rainfall in isolated areas throughout the region contributing to 1,897 basement flooding incidents. Of the reported flooding, roughly 54 per cent were related to the stormwater-induced wastewater system surcharges, with the remainder being directly flooded by stormwater.

Halton Region continues to make significant investments in wastewater infrastructure and flood mitigation. In 2015, Halton established a Region-Wide Basement Flooding Mitigation Program to improve community resiliency and reduce the risk of basement flooding due to stormwater induced wastewater system surcharge. In 2025, the Region introduced enhancements to the program which include expanded flow monitoring and field investigations, increased homeowner subsidies, targeted outreach to high-risk communities, new educational resources, stronger alignment with municipal processes, and enhanced collaboration with local partners to coordinate flood mitigation strategies.

The Region has invested over \$78 million in the Basement Flooding Mitigation Program which is focused on reducing public and private sources of excessive inflow and infiltration water from entering the Region's wastewater system and also supports adaptive measures to deal with more frequent and intense storms. This includes \$10.4 million in subsidies provided to residents between 2015 and July 2024 through the Basement Flooding Prevention Subsidy Program to support private-side mitigation measures as well as an additional \$1.8 million in resident subsidies following the July 2024 storms until the end of 2025.

Halton is committed to further strengthening wastewater system resiliency and is investing additional funding to support these efforts. The Region's 2026 Operating Budget

includes an **additional \$1.3 million investment, representing a 0.5 per cent rate increase, to fund the enhancements to the Basement Flooding Mitigation Program.** In addition, Halton continues to invest significantly in state-of-good-repair projects directly targeting wastewater system performance and basement flooding. Federal funding support is essential to help us deliver these ambitious programs and better protect residents and businesses from the impacts of severe weather events.

As outlined by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), municipalities build and maintain 60% of the core public infrastructure that supports communities across Canada including water, wastewater and roads. **Long-term predictable sources of funding are required from the Provincial and Federal Governments to invest in climate action, including aging infrastructure and adaptation measures for communities to prepare and respond to climate change.** This must include the expansion of federal funding programs such as the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund. FCM estimates that for every \$1B invested in disaster mitigation, there is \$6B in avoided costs.

Let's Work Together

The Federal Government can help Halton address climate change and support a resilient Halton community by:

- Providing long-term, sustainable funding for municipal climate adaptation efforts to support resilient communities, including funding to support the Region's Basement Flooding Mitigation Program.
- Expanding federal funding programs such as the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund (DMAF) with dedicated streams for natural infrastructure, flood resilience, extreme heat mitigation and climate-resilient municipal infrastructure.
- Increasing direct municipal access to climate adaptation, resilience, and emissions reduction funding through programs such as FCM's Green Municipal Fund to help strengthen community and corporate resilience, reduce climate risks, enhance biodiversity, and accelerate progress toward net-zero emissions

Conclusion

Working together, Halton Region and the Federal Government have taken some key steps forward on priority issues, and there is much more to be done. A continued strong, collaborative partnership with the Federal Government is critical to a successful and growing Halton community now, and into the future. Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to provide input into the 2026 Federal Budget. For more information about Halton's advocacy priorities, please visit **halton.ca/advocacy**.

