who WE ARE

Founded in 1988, ONPHA is an independent association funded and directed by its members. We believe that secure, decent and affordable housing is a human right and fundamental social determinant of health. It has the power to change lives and is the foundation of vibrant and successful communities.

what WE DO

As advocates, we raise awareness of the critical role that affordable rental housing plays in Ontario. As capacity builders, we educate our members and offer them the training and resources they need to develop their skills and offer their tenants high-quality homes. As an association, we bring our members together and recognize and celebrate their diversity and the incredible work they do every day.

OUR members

ONPHA is home to more than 700 non-profit housing providers. From Windsor to Cornwall, Toronto to Thunder Bay, our members house more than 400,000 people in 163,000 homes in 220 Ontario communities. They are a critical part of the fabric of every community and provide decent, affordable homes to low and moderate income households. Many of our members provide specialized housing and support services for Ontarians who need help to enjoy a successful tenancy.
Last year, we started a conversation with members and stakeholders about ONPHA’s role in a changing sector. Those discussions inspired us and confirmed that ONPHA has a vital role to play in the evolution of the housing sector. But we, like our members, must adapt and evolve to meet the challenges ahead.

We heard that we’re on track, but need to do more. More to help members meet the needs of their tenant communities, boards of directors and assets. More to help our members prepare for an operating environment that will prioritize strategy, entrepreneurship and innovation instead of compliance with operating agreements and legislation. And, more to help educate the next generation of housing professional and volunteers.

Are we up to the challenge? You bet!

In The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference, Malcolm Gladwell writes:

“If you want to bring a fundamental change in people’s belief and behavior...you need to create a community around them, where those new beliefs can be practiced and expressed and nurtured.”

Members, service managers and other stakeholders told us that we create that community for Ontario’s non-profit housing sector. Our courses, conference, flexible training and other learning opportunities teach staff and volunteers the skills and expertise they need to operate, lead and transform non-profit organizations. Our research and advocacy projects drive policy change on the issues that most affect our members, equipping them to meet the needs of their communities.

Over the next three years, we’ll work with you and our partners to find new ways to fulfill our mandate and strengthen existing programs and services. ONPHA’s staff and Board of Directors will build upon our solid foundation to ensure that the association – your association – has the nimbleness, expertise and resources that it needs to continue to champion the sector and lead its transformation.

Ultimately, our goals remain the same as when ONPHA was formed in 1988. We bring the sector together, build staff and volunteer capacity, provide solutions to the challenges facing our members, and advocate for the tools and resources that members need to deliver excellent quality housing. We look forward to growing with our members to meet the challenges of today, tomorrow and the years ahead.

Warmest regards,

Meg McCallum
President, ONPHA

Sharad Kerur
Executive Director, ONPHA
Building a strong, sustainable future, ONPHA’s 2016-2019 strategic plan, sets out our strategy for adapting to these changes so that we can continue to offer our members the services and opportunities they need.

Where we’ve been
ONPHA was set up more than 25 years ago, when housing programs were created and funded by the federal and provincial governments. We were created by the sector to support our members and offer them the services they needed to provide good quality housing.

We must continue to change to support our members and meet their needs. Our sector is changing quickly, and we must change with it.

Where we are today
ONPHA is a strong champion of our members’ interests and a reliable and strategic partner with both local and provincial governments. Our strategic plan comes at a time when the provincial and federal governments are re-framing their commitment to affordable housing, with a shift to local housing and homelessness planning and service delivery.

The Ontario Government (also called the Province) has set a target to end chronic homelessness in 10 years, while it continues to develop a provincial poverty reduction strategy. The government has called upon its partners in the municipal, non-profit, and private sectors to work together toward that vision.

Today, Ontario’s 47 Consolidated Municipal Service Managers and District Social Services Administration Boards (collectively “service managers”) are playing a larger program development and policy-setting role in the housing system. To meet the needs of their communities, service managers are implementing new and innovative models of housing delivery. The relationships between the Province, service managers, housing providers and sector organizations are becoming increasingly complex.

Fewer resources, a growing need for affordable housing, and a focus on local housing and homelessness planning are changing Ontario’s social housing system.
In developing our strategic plan, we looked to the future of both the sector and our member communities. Here are some of the factors we considered:

**Factors affecting the future of the sector**

- Members’ operating agreements, mortgages and debentures have begun to expire, creating concerns about the financial sustainability of some organizations and opportunities for renewal and growth for others.

- With limited funding for new rent assistance programs, there is growing pressure to develop innovative programs that meet the needs of as many households as possible.

- Aging building stock and retiring staff and volunteers have turned members’ focus inward as they develop strategies for renewing aging assets, becoming more efficient and building the skills and organizational capacity they need operate in the future.

- Housing providers will need to become more sophisticated and strategic organizations, as their role evolves from the delivery of strictly defined programs to the operation of independent and entrepreneurial not-for-profit organizations.

- The combination of increased competition and members’ limited time and money will constrain sector organizations’ budgets and may reduce participation in sector activities.
Factors affecting our members’ communities

• Demand for affordable housing is growing. The cost of rental housing in most Ontario communities is rising, and the rate of turnover in rent-g geared-to-income-assisted housing has dropped.

• Tenants have a broad range of needs. Many rely on services provided by the community and health care sectors to live independently. Unfortunately, there are not enough services available to meet the province’s growing demand and housing providers are being forced to fill the service gap and respond to tenants’ support needs without additional resources.

• Our members must develop new business models because of these changes. New funding may focus on programs that target households instead of being delivered through non-profit housing providers.
ONPHA’S 2016-2019 STRATEGIC PLAN

key PRIORITIES

This strategic plan sets out a number of actions to support its members, the housing sector, and the organization. Those actions align under three key priorities established by the Board.

1. **Lead transformation in the non-profit housing sector**

   We will lead our members through housing system transformation and ensure that we are actively engaged with the Province and service managers on our members’ behalf.

2. **Strengthen ONPHA**

   We will develop a sustainability strategy to make sure that ONPHA continues to meet members’ needs. It will include plans for growing and retaining our membership, diversifying revenues and finding new ways to do business.

3. **Align the sector**

   There are many organizations, networks and partnerships working in the affordable housing sector. Having diverse voices and positions supports innovation and sparks debate. But, having multiple voices is confusing to housing providers, policy makers, elected officials and the public.

   ONPHA’s Board will approach provincial and national affordable housing sector organizations to discuss improving services to our shared audiences. We will promote a unified voice on critical issues facing the sector.
Our strategic plan is grounded in our mission, values and beliefs.

Our mission
ONPHA helps build vibrant, healthy and diverse communities for all Ontarians by supporting the non-profit housing sector. ONPHA promotes housing excellence, influences public policy and provides innovative solutions and opportunities.

We value
Accountability: We listen to our members and respond to their needs

Membership: We help our members share their experience

Leadership: We provide leadership in housing, and we help our members become strong leaders in their communities

Innovation towards excellence: We encourage innovation and challenge our own practices in the pursuit of excellence

Strategic partnerships: We create partnerships that benefit all partners

We believe
• Adequate and affordable housing is a basic human right – it is essential to the well-being of individuals, families, and communities across Ontario
• All Ontarians deserve a secure home at an affordable cost, with supports, in a community of their choice
• Non-profit housing organizations are a key element of healthy, safe, inclusive and economically sustainable communities
• Communities need flexibility to address local housing needs
• Government has a critical role to play in supporting and funding affordable housing
renewing OUR

STRATEGIC PLAN

To prepare *Building a strong, sustainable future*, we consulted members and stakeholders in 2015.

We heard from members through interviews, focus groups and a membership survey. We also talked to provincial and national sector organizations, private property management companies, service managers and the provincial government.

We learned more about the issues and opportunities facing the sector today. We have a better understanding of where the sector is going over the next five years, as operating agreements end and housing policy changes and decision-making is further concentrated at the local level.

We also asked members and stakeholders to evaluate ONPHA’s products and services in terms of their quality and value.

**ONPHA’S most valued SERVICES**

We asked members which services they valued most. They told us:

- **Networking** events like the conference and Regional Meetings
- Our quick responses on advocacy issues
- **Research** into sector needs and trends
- **Communications** and the information the entire sector needs
- Innovative and valuable professional development
critical SECTOR ISSUES

We identified four critical issues that ONPHA must respond to over the next three years:

1. How to work with the provincial and federal governments to ensure continued investments in non-profit housing.

2. How to secure the tools, funding and resources that housing providers need to build strong communities, and that tenants need to live independently in non-profit housing.

3. The need to work with other sector organizations to develop shared messages and advocacy approaches in order to best represent the needs of housing providers.

4. Helping members to prepare for the risks and opportunities that will arise as a result of the end of their operating agreements, mortgages and debentures and for other changes that will take place in the housing sector.
Over the next three years, we will focus on achieving the goals and objectives outlined in the four pillars of this strategic plan. We will prepare ONPHA and our members for the changes that are coming to the sector, while continuing to ensure the delivery of high-quality housing to non-profit housing tenants.

**Building sector excellence**

To help our members deliver excellent housing management, ONPHA will focus on both service and product improvements over the next three years.

**To do this, we will:**

- Use new models and technologies to modernize learning and increase member access and engagement across Ontario
- Expand and update educational resources to:
  - reflect the changing needs of the housing sector
  - broaden regional service delivery
  - support members in meeting complex tenant needs
  - encourage organizational development at both the board and staff levels
- Ensure that members have access to professional development/accreditation programs that teach staff and boards how to manage and transform organizations
- Lead the development and implementation of performance measurement standards in collaboration with sector stakeholders for housing organizations and the broader housing system
- Create new strategies, activities and tools to encourage peer learning and an exchange of ideas amongst members
CHAMPIONING THE NON-PROFIT HOUSING SECTOR

ONPHA will develop a strategic and responsive research, policy and advocacy agenda that is sensitive to emerging issues and that influences policy and funding programs that support members and their tenants.

To do this, we will:

- Develop an advocacy and research strategy that builds relationships with municipal and other stakeholders in the community, with measurable objectives reflecting sector priorities
- Identify opportunities to partner with private sector, government, provincial and national stakeholders on shared research priorities
- Develop a careful approach to issue-specific advocacy task forces that lets members and ONPHA staff respond quickly to emerging issues affecting the sector
- Improve communication to deepen member awareness of, and engagement with, ONPHA’s research and policy work
- Collaborate with government and other funders to develop programs that promote stable and successful tenancies in non-profit housing and prevent homelessness
Achieving a sustainable future

ONPHA will be an active and strategic participant in the transformation coming to Ontario’s housing system. We will support our members as they plan for the future needs of their organizations.

To do this, we will:

• Provide expertise, tools and resources to help members manage operational and tenant challenges

• Help members build effective long range asset, fiscal and strategic plans that focus on:
  • improving the condition of existing assets
  • renewing or disposing of assets that are no longer viable
  • planning for new assets to meet local needs

• Participate in the activities of provincial and national sector organizations to develop strategies and share resources

• Help members adopt more efficient and effective business models and strategies.

• Lead a dialogue across sector organizations to align our purpose and voice and to streamline services where it benefits the sector
Ensuring a strong ONPHA

ONPHA’s future depends on the decisions that we make today. To remain sustainable, we will identify ways to increase and retain our membership, diversify revenues and strengthen the corporation. That means we can continue to support members as they serve their communities.

To do this, we will:

• Develop a sustainability strategy for ONPHA that includes:
  • new and diversified revenue streams
  • cost and contribution targets
  • a review of business activities that sets financial performance targets for each business area

• Create a work environment that supports professional development and excellence

• Review our board and committee mandates to ensure that the association has the rights skills and structure it needs
“To bring a fundamental change in people’s belief and behavior...you need to create a community around them, where those new beliefs can be practiced and expressed and nurtured.”

-Malcolm Gladwell, The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference