



— **OBCM** —

Ontario's Big City Mayors

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Solve the Crisis Campaign

About Ontario's Big City Mayors (OBCM)

- Ontario's Big City Mayors (OBCM) represents cities with populations of **100,000 or more**, providing a voice for big city mayors in policy and program decisions that impact Ontario cities.
- Collectively, Ontario's Big City Mayors represent nearly **70% of Ontario's population**.
- Through policy development, advocacy, discussion and partnerships, Ontario's Big City Mayors support strong and effective cities.



**Mayor Marianne Meed Ward,
Chair, City of Burlington**



In August 2024, OBCM launched **Solve the Crisis**, a project calling on the provincial government to take immediate action to address the **homelessness and mental health issues** in cities across Ontario.

Solve the Crisis:
A project of
Ontario's Big City
Mayors
www.solvethecrisis.ca

There's a **homelessness and mental health crisis** happening on our streets. Ontario's cities cannot solve it alone.



Tell the Government of Ontario to step up and help our cities **solve the humanitarian crisis.**

Please be sure to share specific details about how the crisis has affected you or the neighbourhoods, public spaces, and businesses where you live.

Send your letter

Name * Last Name *
Email Address * City
Postal Code *

Please enter a postal code to continue.

Subject:

Subject line:
Example: Time for the Government to solve the homelessness crisis
You can use this subject line or write your own

Signature (Elected Official),

Please share your thoughts here. If you need help, try the Key Messages on this page.

Your signature will automatically be added to your letter. You may leave the signature field blank if you wish to only add your name. All submissions will also include the following statement:

This letter was written as part of Ontario's Big City Mayors' **Solve the Crisis** Project. Together, we are calling on the provincial government to take immediate action on homelessness and mental health issues in cities across Ontario. The Government of Ontario must appoint a single ministry and minister to lead the province's response and create a municipal-provincial task force to direct resources and supports to our cities immediately.

Send It Now



What is the **Solve The Crisis** campaign?

- **Solve the Crisis** brought together OBCM members in a campaign to raise public, media, and government awareness of the **homelessness, mental health and addictions issues** our communities are facing.
- Solve the Crisis has changed the conversation about action needed from the provincial government.
- To be successful, this campaign must be sustained through the next provincial budget and election cycle and beyond.



What led to this Crisis?

- 1. Inadequate provincial and federal support:** Municipalities don't have the funding, resources or expertise to solve the mental health and addictions issues facing our communities alone. Ad hoc provincial and federal funding doesn't allow for long-term investment.
- 2. Encampment population is growing:** At last count, there were over 1,400 encampments in Ontario, and that figure is only rising.
- 3. Lack of provincial coordination:** There are 16 provincial ministries with responsibility for homelessness, mental health and addictions. We need a coordinated response between municipalities, the province and the federal government.
- 4. Safety concerns across Ontario:** Residents are avoiding public spaces or downtown businesses and have real concerns about safety and security in their local communities.



Solve the Crisis: By the numbers

1,978

Letters written with support from the public

15,073

Emails sent to Provincial and Federal Officials

112

Ridings where letters were submitted

222

Municipalities where letters were submitted

156

Unique Media Hits (Radio, TV and Digital)

Last updated September 27, 2024



Solve the Crisis: In the Media

'Huma
create
'We are struggling to solve the crisis'
Big City Mayors from Clarington to Burlington launch campaign
Ontario municipalities call on province to help solve encampment crisis
'Solve the crisis': Ontario municipalities call on province to help solve encampment crisis



Office of Mayor Josh Morgan @MavorMorgan · Aug 8
Ontario's Big City Mayors are we are seeing on our streets
Mayor Cam Guthrie @CamGuthrie

Ontario BIA Association (OBIAA) @OBIAA · Aug 20
Great meeting with Michelle Baker and Angela Trewartha of the Ontario Big City Mayors to support their 'Solve the Crisis' campaign on our Main Streets.

The @AMOPolicy conference has kicked off with meetings alongside Ministers @PaulCalandra & @KingaSurmaMPP for @ONBigCityMayors! We are pushing the #SolveTheCrisis campaign well & I'm thankful to these Ministers for listening to these conversations and concerns. @MariannMeedWard lead a wonderful press conference on the housing, homelessness and encampment issues and running into @RoweSantos who is a strong supporter of these matters has been great! Visit solvethecrisis.ca

Supporting the 'Solve the Crisis' Campaign: A Call for Collective Action



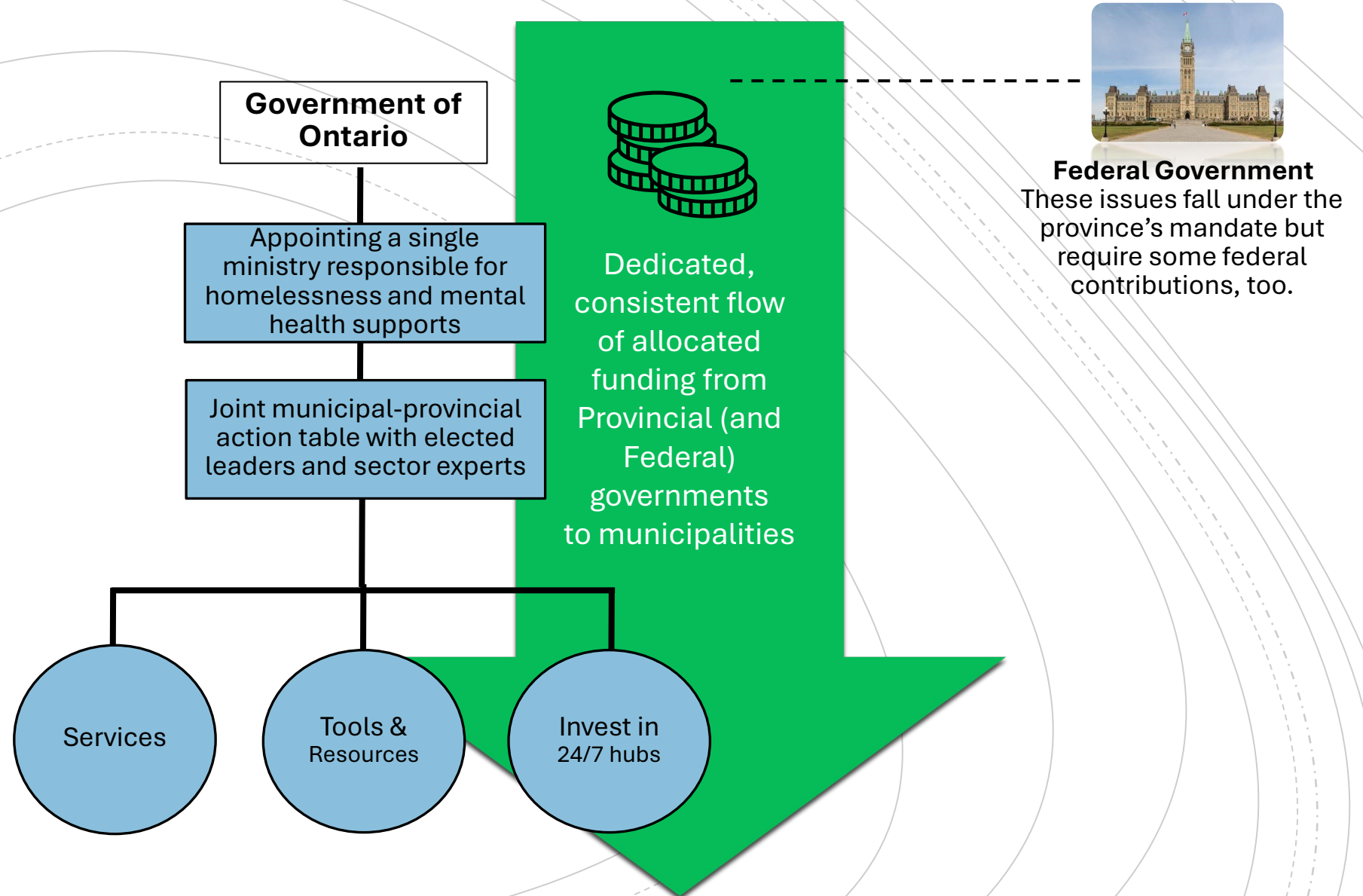
What do we need to Solve the Crisis?

Our asks are simple...

1. **Appoint a responsible ministry** and Minister with the appropriate funding and powers as a single point of contact to address the full spectrum of housing needs as well as mental health, addictions and wrap around supports.
2. **Create an action table** with sector representatives including municipalities, health care leaders, first responders, community services, the business community, and the tourism industry to develop an Ontario Action Plan.
3. **Provide municipalities with tools and resources**, to transition those in encampments to more appropriate supports, including treatment and recovery programs, when deemed necessary.
4. **Commit to funding services** our unhoused population needs, community by community, to fill in gaps in the system.
5. **Invest in 24/7 Community Hubs / Crisis Centres** to relieve pressure on emergency centres and first responders.



How It Should Work to Solve the Crisis



How can you help?

- ✓ **Visit [solvethecrisis.ca](https://www.solve-the-crisis.ca).** Fill out the form to write directly to the Premier, your MPP, and key cabinet ministers. Please personalize the letter with your own experiences and thoughts.
- ✓ **Share Solve the Crisis with your networks.** Share the campaign on [Facebook](#), [X \(Twitter\)](#), and by [email](#) with everyone in your networks. Neighbours, community organizations, businesses – we all have a stake in solving this.



Next steps

- ✓ **Talk to provincial officials** and ask the Ontario Government to take action now to support municipalities on the ground to solve the crisis.
- ✓ **Put forward and back motions at municipal councils** calling on higher levels of government to take immediate action to fund our asks.
- ✓ **Do (coordinated) media events.** Proclaim a municipal Day of Action on Homelessness and coordinate with other municipalities to raise public and media awareness.
- ✓ **Reach out to sector organizations** in your community to endorse and spread the word about SolveTheCrisis.ca.



There is hope!

- Combining mental health and addiction services with supportive housing is a proven solution in municipalities across the province:
 - **Homes First Toronto:** Reported on 530 residents who were successfully transitioned to permanent housing in 2023.
 - **House of Hope London:** ER visits by supportive housing residents dropped by 74 per cent over the same period in 2022.
- More affordable housing options and increasing access to mental health and addictions care are priorities for all levels of government.
- We need the province and federal government to come to table and work with municipalities to implement solutions that will help our communities and residents thrive.



Contact OBCM

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