

# MIKE HARRIS

MPP – Kitchener–Conestoga



MEDIA RELEASE

## Ontario Helps Create ShelterCare Centre in Waterloo

*Province investing \$8.5 million to support vulnerable people experiencing homelessness*

**EMBARGOED UNTIL JANUARY 12 AT 10 AM**

**NEWS**

January 12, 2022

WATERLOO — The Ontario government is providing \$8.5 million to help create a ShelterCare centre, to provide emergency housing and wraparound support services to people experiencing homelessness in Waterloo Region.

“With ShelterCare’s proven track record, it was a top priority of mine to secure this funding and assist House of Friendship’s ongoing work for the community,” said Mike Harris, MPP for Kitchener-Conestoga. “This capital investment will provide wraparound care and accommodation for the most vulnerable individuals in Waterloo Region.”

The funding is being delivered through the Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF) and will be used to help House of Friendship purchase and convert a former hotel into a 100-bed emergency housing centre that is expected to open by Spring 2022. Located at 190 Weber Street North, future residents will have access to meals and wraparound healthcare services, including mental health and addictions treatment services, and will be close to public transportation, schools and job opportunities.

“As Ontario responds to COVID-19 and the Omicron variant, our government knows that the key to helping people get back on their feet is ensuring they can access safe, stable housing,” said Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. “That is why we are making historic investments through the Social Services Relief Fund to help protect the most vulnerable members of our communities. With this \$8.5 million investment in a new ShelterCare centre, our government is making a significant, positive difference in the lives of Waterloo’s most vulnerable.”

As highlighted in [Ontario’s Action Plan: Protecting People’s Health and Our Economy](#), today’s announcement is part of the province’s \$1 billion Social Services Relief Fund to help municipalities and Indigenous program partners support vulnerable Ontarians, including those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. As one of the largest investments in affordable housing in Ontario’s history, this flexible funding can be used to create longer-term housing solutions and provide supports services so Ontarians can stay housed during the ongoing pandemic.

### Quotes

“At the Region of Waterloo, we believe our community thrives when everyone has a place to call home,” said Karen Redman, Chair, Region of Waterloo. “Thank you to the Government of Ontario for helping to address housing and homelessness in our community.”

“Homelessness is an urgent issue affecting over 1000 people in our region. House of Friendship’s innovative, compassionate, and proven ShelterCare model helps people get back on their feet and into permanent housing,” said Dave Jaworsky, Mayor of the City of Waterloo. “Investments like this from the province and others help provide the necessary aid to support our most vulnerable residents with this major step forward. I know our caring community will work together with House of Friendship team to make this as successful as possible.”

“We are thrilled to have a location where we will once again be able to provide the innovative ShelterCare model for people experiencing homelessness in Waterloo Region. This model provides 24/7 shelter, with onsite housing and health care supports to help individuals become healthier and housed. ShelterCare addresses the physical, mental and addiction health needs of those who are homeless while ensuring public and donor dollars lead to strong outcomes,” said Jessica Bondy, Housing Services Director at House of Friendship. “It has been a long and difficult journey to get to this point, and we’re so thankful to the province of Ontario for making this purchase possible. This location will provide some much-needed stability for both program participants and staff for the foreseeable future.”

“When you have no shelter, your immediate concern is survival. It’s not rehabilitation, or getting better, or getting back into society. It’s ‘where’s my next meal coming from, where am I sleeping tonight?’ There’s no opportunity, no opportunity whatsoever for growth or change,” said Collin, a former ShelterCare participant. “While staying at House of Friendship’s Shelter with its ShelterCare model, I’ve literally used every service, and it’s been really positive. Without this help, it would have been impossible for me to access all of the resources I did. Having them all in one place has helped me tremendously.”

### **QUICK FACTS**

- The Regional Municipality of Waterloo has been allocated over \$35 million through Ontario’s Social Services Relief Fund which is designed to help municipal service managers and Indigenous program administrators deliver critical services such as shelters, food banks, funding for rental arrears and housing.
- In 2020-21, the City of Waterloo was also allocated over \$3.6 million in [provincial COVID-19 financial relief funding for municipalities](#) and over \$6.5 million through the joint federal-provincial Safe Restart Agreement to help address ongoing COVID-19 operating costs, ensure the delivery of critical services and keep capital projects on track.
- Ontario has provided \$147 million to help expand access to the provincial mental health and addictions system in every community. This funding builds on the province’s \$176 million investment in the [Roadmap to Wellness](#), a comprehensive plan to build a fully connected mental health and addictions system across the province.

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

- Learn more about [affordable housing in Ontario](#) and find your local [service manager](#) to see what housing supports are available in your community.
- Read the [2021 Budget - Ontario’s Action Plan: Protecting People’s Health and Our Economy](#).
- [See how your organization can help fight COVID-19](#).
- [Visit Ontario’s website to learn more about how the province continues to protect the people of Ontario from COVID-19](#).
- Learn more about Ontario’s [Roadmap to Reopen](#), a three-step plan to safely and cautiously reopen the province and gradually lift public health measures

---

### **MEDIA CONTACTS**

Kasia Kaminska – Office of MPP Mike Harris  
[kasia.kaminska@pc.ola.org](mailto:kasia.kaminska@pc.ola.org)