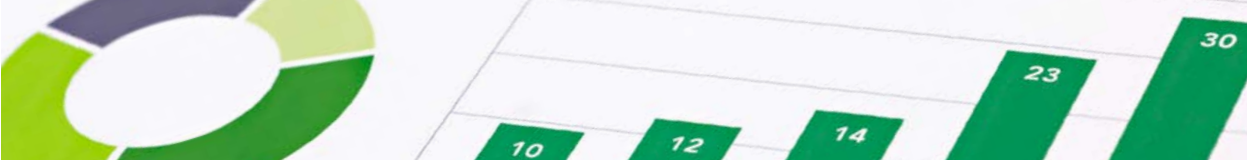


Peel Region

2025 Provincial Pre-Budget Submission



Introduction

Peel Region remains committed to working with the provincial government to safeguard critical frontline services for residents, support local businesses and find innovative solutions that continue driving Ontario forward.

Key challenges, such as housing-enabling infrastructure, combatting intimate partner violence, and health-related services like enhancing long-term care and paramedic support are shared priorities and recent increases in provincial funding for housing, long-term care, and childcare are contributing to Peel's reputation as a destination of choice. Whether it is newcomers drawn to the diversity of Peel's communities, residents starting a family, or businesses that want to expand — Peel continues to shine as one of Canada's most dynamic municipalities.

While these investments are important and welcome, decades of provincial funding shortfalls for health and human services, has significantly impacted both Peel and community health and social service agencies. Peel Region is partnering with Metamorphosis Network, a coalition of non-profit community agencies dedicated to ensuring that community services in Peel are fully funded, effective, and responsive to community needs.

Just as Peel Region is fully committed to addressing these challenges, we also continue working toward provincial housing targets, as it supports the building of nearly 246,000 much-needed housing units in Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga, which are critical in supporting the expected rapid growth in Peel over the coming decades.

Peel Region's 2025 Pre-Budget Submission includes several policy solutions outlining a collaborative approach to address the needs of Peel's residents that respects taxpayers while providing support to the community in a way that is compassionate and culturally appropriate.

Included in this submission are solutions that focus on:

- Addressing Peel's funding shortfalls
- Affordable housing solutions
- Infrastructure investments
- Mental health and addictions services
- Support for seniors
- Addressing the pressures of supporting asylum claimants
- Combatting intimate partner violence
- Enhancing the Early Years and Child Care workforce
- Efficient paramedics services



Summary of recommendations

Addressing Peel's funding shortfalls

- **Increase funding for provincially mandated programs** to keep pace with inflation and address existing deficits.
- **Retroactively address historic underfunding** for Peel's provincially mandated services.
- Provide support to municipalities through **updated revenue sources and collection tools**. (i.e., explore income-based tax revenues to municipalities for fairer distribution.)

Affordable housing solutions

- **Increase the supply of new affordable housing** in complete communities by providing funding to support the implementation of the Peel Community Housing Development Program to create the much-needed affordable rental housing and shelter facilities.
- Ensure the longevity of existing affordable housing by **providing state of good repair funding** to prevent loss of existing affordable housing and adapting to climate breakdown.
- **Support development of additional supportive housing** to meet the significant needs of the community – it is estimated less than 3 per cent of need is met across Peel.
- Offer more allocation-based funding for wrap-around supports to maximize housing stability.
- **Cost-match federal funding for the Community Encampment Response Plan (CERP)** under the Unsheltered Homeless and Encampments Initiative of \$13.4 million over two years.
- **Expand income and social programs** to assist with high carrying costs for housing.

Infrastructure investments

- Support **municipalities by compensating the shortfall in development charges** revenues due to legislative changes.
- **Increase capital funding and revise the funding formula** to account for rising construction costs critical to Peel's growing communities.

Mental health and addictions services

- Protect acute care capacity and support healthy communities through **targeted and innovative solutions**.

Supports for seniors

- Provide **sustainable investments** to strengthen critical long-term care support services.
- The Province should **support implementation of emotion-based care**, including retroactive funding that recognizes our leadership and early investment.
- **Provide \$4 million in funding** toward the expansion of Peel's Adult Day Services program, respite care and an integrated care clinic.
- **Increase base funding to \$13 million** in 2025 to ensure dental care is delivered to vulnerable seniors in Peel.

Supports for asylum claimants

- **Support critical wrap-around services** for asylum claimants. Settlement support for asylum claimants has had a demonstrable impact on this ongoing challenge.
- **Provide stable and predictable funding** that is essential to meet the rising demand and to foster the successful integration of asylum claimants into Peel communities.

Combatting intimate partner violence

- **The Province should collaborate, integrate services, and provide sustainable funding**, in order to create a more effective and unified approach to supporting victims and strengthening community resilience.

Enhancing the Early Years and Child Care workforce

- A robust child care program, contributing to Ontario's long-term competitiveness, will require **Provincial support for a compensation framework** for childhood educators.
- **Provide flexible, multi-year provincial funding** as a key component in reaching the goal of \$10 per day daycare.

Efficient paramedic services

- **Provide funding at a level that reflects the increase paramedic call volume growth** in order to support Peel Region's rapid population growth and aging population.
- **Provide sustainable and predictable funding** to ensure Community Paramedicine programs can grow.

Addressing Peel's Funding Shortfalls

While recognized for its financial stewardship, health and stability with 29 consecutive years of a AAA credit rating, Peel Region is facing significant challenges due to ongoing underfunding of provincially mandated health and human services.

With 1.6 million residents and significant growth projected, Peel faces mounting pressures: 69 per cent of its residents identify as racialized (the highest in the GTA), it has the second-lowest median household after-tax income in the GTA, and the population of non-permanent residents (NPR) has surged.

Between Q3 2021 and Q3 2024, it is estimated that the number of non-permanent residents in Peel more than doubled (up 129.5%)

Metamorphosis Network Analysis

An independent analysis by the Metamorphosis Network, a coalition of non-profit community agencies, has highlighted a critical funding disparity impacting Peel Region. Their comprehensive review of provincial funding across municipal services, grants to non-profit providers, school boards, and Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) estimates that Peel faces an annual funding shortfall of \$868 million. This amounts to approximately \$578 less per resident compared to other Ontario municipalities. Provincial support should match the rapid growth in Peel Region, and the resulting demand for services. The provincial government should engage with Metamorphosis Network and community service providers to review and address these shortfalls.

Funding Shortfalls for Peel Region’s Mandated Health and Human Services

Specific to Peel Region services, the following chart outlines the annual funding shortfall for mandated health and human services for 2025.

Service	Shortfall (Annual for 2025)	Risks if Shortfalls Are Not Addressed
Public Health	\$23.5 million	Reduced staff and services limit ability to meet community needs, mandates, and capacity to address short-term (e.g., communicable diseases) and long-term (e.g., diabetes prevention) priorities.
Long Term Care	\$7.2 million	Challenges in maintaining legislative compliance, decreased care quality, and insufficient service capacity to meet increasing care needs and complexity of residents.
Early Years and Child Care	\$4 million	Reduced administration funding, potential waitlists for essential programs, and loss of access for vulnerable children and families.

Filling the gap

Addressing Peel Region’s funding shortfalls is not just a matter of equity, it is essential for ensuring that vital services like public health, housing, paramedic services, and long-term care can meet the growing and emerging demands of today while preparing for long-term challenges.

It is unsustainable for Peel Region to make up the difference left by the provincial funding shortfall, particularly as Peel’s population grows and community needs become increasingly complex.

To address this, the Province should:

- Retroactively address historic underfunding for Peel’s provincially mandated services.
- Increase funding for provincially mandated programs to keep pace with inflation and address existing deficits.

Municipal Fiscal Sustainability

Ensuring municipal fiscal sustainability is essential to maintaining vital services for Peel's growing and diverse population. While there have been much appreciated marginal increases in provincial funding, in areas like housing, long-term care, and childcare, these have been insufficient to address the growing and complex needs of Peel's diverse population.

Modernizing revenue tools can help create a more equitable and sustainable funding model that supports Peel Region's long-term needs. On February 22, 2024, Regional Council passed a resolution in support of AMO's advocacy for a provincial-municipal review of revenues, costs and financial risks, and a detailed analysis on Ontario's infrastructure investment and service delivery needs.

As both AMO and Peel Region have previously stated, the land-based revenue tools available to municipalities, such as Property Taxes and Development Charges have not kept pace with technology-driven economic growth and/or present-day inflation.

The Province should:

- Engage municipalities and the federal government, to modernize revenue sources and collection tools. i.e., explore income-based tax revenues to municipalities for fairer distribution.
- Enhance grant program design to ensure adequate funding.

Affordable housing solutions

Partnering to meet Peel's Housing Needs

Peel Region, like all municipalities across Ontario, continues to face an urgent housing affordability crisis impacting residents across all income levels. For middle-income earners, high housing prices and rents are increasingly out of reach, while those with lower incomes struggle to find deeply affordable and supportive housing. The current housing situation is unsustainable, with significant gaps in supply and affordability and creating long-term consequences for families and the Province.

Addressing this issue requires not only increasing market housing supply but ensuring the use of housing for homes, strengthening the capacity of the community housing sector to support those in need, and enhancing income and social supports to ensure that all Peel residents have access to affordable, stable housing.

Meeting Core Housing Need in Peel

Core housing need in Peel affects approximately 97,000 households – nearly all tenants in Peel find themselves in core housing need, and a not insignificant number of homeowners. Currently, Peel Region can only meet 19 per cent of this need in the community, highlighting the urgency of the housing situation in Peel.

Relying solely on for-profit market housing would require a fivefold increase in provincial housing targets, underscoring the need for a comprehensive, multi-level government approach.

Addressing the Non-Market Housing Gap: Enhancing Service Manager Capacity

To close the affordable housing gap and meet the growing needs of Peel's residents, Regional Council has approved the implementation of the Peel Community Housing Development Program (PCHDP), and the housing development capacity building program for the non-profit sector. The PCHDP set a target of achieving 1,444 total units through 12 projects but requires additional capital funding of \$214 million.

This effort will help Peel's balance of affordable housing move closer to the OECD average of 7 per cent of housing supply, however, nearly an additional 32,000 units of affordable housing are required in the existing market to reach the OECD average share.

To address the full scale of the housing crisis, Peel requires increased provincial investments in both operational and capital funding to support existing and create the much-needed affordable supportive and rental housing and, shelter facilities. Strengthening the capacity of Housing Service Managers and the community housing sector is critical to delivering deeply affordable and supportive housing.

Addressing Peel's Encampment Crisis

Homelessness in Peel continues to escalate, straining emergency shelter systems and increasing street homelessness. In 2023, Peel's seven emergency shelters and two overflow hotels **served 4,315 households or 6,007 individuals**. Despite these efforts, shelters are operating well above capacity, relying heavily on overflow accommodations to meet demand.

From January to September 2024, Peel Outreach recorded:

- 194 encampment locations.
- Support for 3,831 non-unique individuals, a 111 per cent increase from 2023.
- Encampment residents face significant barriers to securing safe, affordable, and appropriate housing, especially in communities where services and supports are accessible.

Temporary measures, such as hotel and motel accommodations, provide immediate relief but are costly and unsustainable. These approaches divert resources from more effective long-term solutions, such as permanent supportive housing, portable housing subsidies, and deeply affordable housing, which are critical to addressing the root causes of homelessness.

At current funding levels, Peel Region cannot provide enough of the critical supports needed to meet the growing demand. Without significant investment, many individuals will remain unhoused or in precarious housing situations.

Provincial support for Community Encampment Response Plan

Peel Region submitted a Community Encampment Response Plan (CERP) to the federal government, for funding through the Unsheltered Homelessness and Encampments Initiative (UHEI). Peel Region has identified specific objectives and actions it is taking to support people experiencing unsheltered homelessness in the CERP.

Peel has identified three projects that meet the Last Mile Funding criteria for 'Ready-to-Build' projects as proposed by the Province. **These three projects, in partnership with non-profit providers, would deliver 160 units of supportive and affordable housing with an investment of \$31.8 million.**

Infrastructure investments

Partnering to meet Peel's Housing Needs

Peel Region is committed to supporting the Province's housing targets, which includes 113,000 units in Brampton, 13,000 in Caledon, and 120,000 in Mississauga. Achieving these targets requires effective collaboration with the Province to ensure that key housing-enabling infrastructure, such as water, wastewater, and roads, is adequately funded and delivered on schedule.

Peel Region appreciates recent provincial investments, such as the \$35 million grant from the Housing-Enabling Water Systems Fund. This funding will expand the G.E. Booth Water Resource Recovery Facility, supporting the development of nearly 47,000 housing units. While this funding is significant, it represents only a portion of what is required to meet Peel's infrastructure needs.

Without predictable and reliable funding, Peel Region may face challenges in meeting the infrastructure demands of its growing communities.

Accelerated spending for housing targets

Accelerating the new infrastructure required to support new housing targets is straining Peel Region's cash flow. This can affect how much, and the timing of, housing enabling infrastructure spending. Without stable and predictable funding, capital infrastructure development will be delayed. To align with Provincial housing goals and support local commitments, Peel Region requires an additional \$8.4 billion for the DC component of its 10-year Capital Plan (2025–2034), which is needed over and above the 2023's 10-year plan, to support new local housing targets.

Development Charges

Further, changes to the DC Act, through Bill 23, have further widened the funding gap by reducing growth-related DC revenues. Appreciating that Bill 185 reversed some changes, Peel Region still anticipates a \$1.2 billion shortfall over the next 10 years.

To address this gap and avoid delays in critical infrastructure projects, a municipal compensation fund is required to help maintain the financial capacity needed to invest in infrastructure that supports housing targets and long-term growth.

Peel Region requires \$1.2 billion over 10 years to compensate the DC revenue shortfall.

State of Good Repair Funding

Peel Region is facing a \$4.3 billion capital infrastructure deficit over the next 20 years, just to maintain existing infrastructure. To cover this gap, property tax levies, and utility rate increases have been instituted.

Additional funding support to address rising needs for affordable housing, police, public health, shelters, and climate change, resulting from advanced growth targets.

Funding Design and Delivery

Stable, predictable, and adequate funding is critical to meeting Peel's infrastructure needs and supporting the Province's housing targets. Provincial collaboration is required to design funding programs that address these challenges and deliver sustainable solutions for Ontario's growing communities.

To ensure efficient infrastructure funding, **the provincial government should use allocation-based models aligned with municipal asset management plans.** This reduces costs by avoiding price fluctuations and contractor shortages linked to application-based funding.

Moving forward, new infrastructure programs should address the following:

- Provide funding for infrastructure costs (e.g., water, wastewater, transportation, and active transportation) in municipalities without mass transit operations to support planned transit services.
- Align various independent funding programs to avoid delays in interdependent infrastructure projects.
- Offer operating funding for projects that increase service costs.
- Streamline funding transfers, monitoring, and reporting to reduce delays.
- Provide allocation-based funding with realistic timelines, eliminating single-year spending constraints.
- Increase capital funding and adjust formulas to account for elevated construction costs due to inflation.

Mental health and addictions services

Peel Region appreciates the Province's commitment to enhance mental health and addictions (MHA) supports for communities, including Peel. As a long-standing priority in Peel, mental health and addictions has remained a critical issue in the local health system due to chronic underinvestment and inequitable funding, compared to provincial averages and comparable jurisdictions. The community MHA sector and investment in upstream prevention remains underfunded and cannot respond to the growing and changing community needs in Peel.

Address historical underfunding

As Peel's population continues to grow, the prevalence of MHA challenges continues to increase. This means that ongoing funding disparities continue to compound the effect of longstanding funding inequities, which impact Peel residents who are already struggling to access available supports in a timely manner.

To illustrate, this underfunding has consistently demonstrated the significant disparities facing Peel's community MHA providers:

- In 2021, adult MHA service providers received an average per capita funding of \$51.35 and \$35.94, respectively in comparison to Ontario's average of \$88.10 per capita.
- From 2017 to 2022, Central West and Mississauga Halton LHINs' average per capita community mental health and addictions (CMHA) funding was \$47.11 and \$35.93, respectively; both of which were lower than Ontario's average per capita CMHA funding (\$81.98).
- In 2022–23, child and youth MHA providers in Peel received average per capita funding of \$91.25 compared to the Ontario average at \$179.68.

The chronic underfunding of Peel's MHA services, along with other social supports, illustrates the need for the province to adopt a more reflective funding formula that considers population demographics, service needs and existing system challenges. The immediate implementation of a sustainable funding formula that responds to population needs will enable Peel's community MHA system providers to reduce wait times and waitlists, improve care options, and reduce the burden on the acute care system, including emergency departments visits.

Targeted, sustainable investments

Despite ongoing advocacy, existing disparities for those facing MHA challenges are amplified in Peel, where the rates of depression, anxiety, substance use-related harms, and opioid toxicity have increased. **These challenges emphasize the urgency and need for continued collaboration and sustainable funding (that moves beyond one-time, or time-limited funding allocations) from the provincial government.**

In Peel, approximately 1 in 3 Peel residents in need of MHA services can access them, with approximately 184,000 Peel residents, including over 60,000 children and youth facing a potential in necessary supports. These service gaps and long waitlists often push individuals to seek help during crises, contributing to the 19,953 emergency department visits in 2021 for mental health-related disorders among Peel residents. While investment in the acute and community MHA system will help to address these gaps, improved preventive and upstream investments are also critical to addressing the underlying causes of MHA challenges.

The burden of MHA is a direct result of underinvestment in preventative and upstream solutions that can address the underlying drivers of MHA challenges for individuals. This is why Peel Region would like to work with the Province to ensure that additional and targeted investment can support key solutions aimed at building community MHA sector capacity and strengthening upstream prevention for Peel's communities:

- A 24/7 crisis walk-in service to reduce burden on emergency departments and provide appropriate services for residents to navigate to.
- Stabilizing the health human resources within the community MHA sector (to account for inflation, lower salary grids compared to hospital-based health/service providers).
- Counselling programs and cognitive behavioural therapy for youth, especially MHA supports targeting transitional aged youth that are moving from child & youth supports to adult supports (18–25 years of age).
- Stepped care programs, to provide a system to deliver and monitor treatments based on intensity of need and reduce wait times for psychiatric supports
- Prioritizing investment in upstream & preventative public health programs like the Healthy Babies Healthy Children (HBHC) program is essential, as the \$2.2 million funding shortfall in Peel has led to reduced capacity to support families in addressing risks related to mental health, addiction, isolation and family violence.

Support innovative MHA solutions across the continuum

Investments from the provincial government, while appreciated, have not adequately addressed the scale and depth of the mental health and addictions crisis in Peel.

In response, community-led Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment (HART) Hub proposal was submitted in October 2024 in collaboration with 15 other service organizations. The proposal emphasizes the importance of supportive environments as a cornerstone for recovery by offering stable, secure environments coupled with integrated services. Peel Region is seeking a total of \$3.6 million for start-up costs and \$12.6 million annual operating costs for two proposed locations in Brampton and Mississauga.

Support for seniors

By 2041, one in five residents in Peel are expected to be 65 years and older—that is an additional 368,828 forecasted seniors. Seniors continue to be the fastest growing age group in Peel with the proportion of residents 85 years and older expected to triple between 2016 and 2041.

Peel Region continues to play a critical role in alleviating health system pressures and bridging the gap to care by delivering person-centred care and services, as the population of seniors in Peel grows. Central to these efforts are a focus on delivering emotion-based care at Peel’s five long-term care (LTC) homes, offering adult day and respite services to ensure seniors can age in place within the community, and exploring opportunities to increase access to integrated primary care and dental supports for seniors.

With the success of the Region’s programs and growing demand from an aging population, wait lists for Peel Regional services have continued to grow. There are currently more than 593 applications for in-person Adult Day Services (ADS) and more than 2,946 applications to Peel Region’s LTC homes.

Given the growth in demand, Peel Region is very supportive of the Province’s recent legislation and investments to enhance dementia supports and increase access to community and social programs that help seniors remain healthy in their communities. These directions are aligned with Peel Region’s own service needs and expand supports for community-based older adults and their caregivers through the Seniors Health and Wellness Village at Peel Manor.

Investment to strengthen LTC delivery

Transformative legislation to strengthen the delivery of LTC in the province, and associated mandated regulatory requirements, have required significant investments within Peel Region’s own LTC homes to ensure compliance and maintain high quality of care. Funding shortfalls have resulted from existing requirements under the Fixing Long-Term Care Act (FLTCA) and are expected from the Support for Seniors and Caregivers Act (SSCA), 2024.

Without comprehensive provincial funding, to support legislative changes, Peel Region continues covering funding gaps through property tax increases in order to make significant staffing investments that ensure compliance with the FLTCA (and potentially SSCA) and accompanying regulations and delivery of high-quality care.

The province's historical increases to funding in 2024–25 were an important step to strengthening LTC delivery. However, **base funding increases for LTC have not kept pace with inflation, addressed existing deficits, or the increased complexity of resident care needs.** The projected increase required to address the combined operating shortfall (resulting from both legislative compliance and base funding gaps) for Peel's five LTC homes in 2025 totals \$7.2 million, while the cumulative five-year funding shortfall (2020–2024) for Peel LTC is \$15.7 million. These gaps will require continued provincial investment for the LTC sector in the 2025–26 budget.

Sustaining emotion-based care in LTC home

As a sector leader, Peel Region was the first in Ontario to adopt the Butterfly Model of Care, one of several emotion-based approaches to dementia care. The Butterfly Model creates a home-like environment in which staff are empowered to engage residents in meaningful, person-centred ways by focusing on the individual needs, experiences, interests, hobbies and stories that have shaped residents' lives. Peel Region applauds the Province's recent announcement prioritizing dementia care within LTC homes. Provincial investments strengthening emotion-based models of care are an important step. Going forward, Peel Region requests provincial investment to support implementation, including retroactive funding that recognizes our leadership and early investment.

Supporting seniors in the community

With the recent provincial commitment to improve dementia care and supports for caregivers, Peel Region welcomes the opportunity to partner with the Province to ensure future investment supports expanded access to ADS, overnight respite services, and integrated primary care at the Seniors Health and Wellness Village at Peel Manor. **To provide wrap-around care to seniors with dementia and their caregivers, the Province should provide \$4 million in funding toward the expansion of Peel's ADS program, open an 8-bed overnight respite care centre, and provide specialized dementia care through an integrated care clinic.**

Peel Region provides the care needed to support aging in place by offering a suite of community support services. Peel Region's ADS programs (offered both in-person and virtually) play a significant role in delaying or eliminating the need for LTC and offer crucial respite to caregivers. Growing demand for ADS spaces (currently over 40,000 client visits in 2024) will require program expansion to ensure such supports are available for seniors and their caregivers.

Meeting demand for seniors dental care

Peel Region appreciates support from the provincial government for this critical program. Peel's Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program (OSDCP) currently serves approximately 19,500 seniors for routine care. However, overwhelming demand is leading to long waitlists with more than 7,000 seniors still not able to receive necessary dental services in Peel.

Leveraging provincial capital funding, Peel Region has three additional, newly constructed fixed clinic spaces, and is completing construction of a mobile dental bus. However, these spaces cannot be operationalized without base funding in 2025. As such, **the Province should increase base funding from the current \$6.5 million to \$13 million in 2025 to ensure sustainable dental care is delivered to vulnerable seniors in Peel without disruption.** This will enable Peel Region to use the newly built capacity to provide needed dental services to an additional 3,600 seniors per year.

Addressing the Pressures of Supporting Asylum Claimants in Peel Region

Peel Region continues to face significant and compounding pressures in providing essential services to asylum claimants. With an estimated one in asylum claimants relying on emergency shelters across Ontario and up to 1,300 new claimants arriving monthly, Peel Region faced an unprecedented strain, leaving it unable to adequately support both asylum claimants and local residents experiencing homelessness.

Sustainable Provincial Support for Wrap-around Services

Funding settlement support for asylum claimants is a defined provincial responsibility. The \$13 million time-limited provincial funding increase in 2023–2024 was a crucial intervention that enabled service providers to meet immediate needs. However, **with the funding having ended in December 2024 and no additional allocations announced for 2025, significant service gaps are inevitable.** Peel’s not-for-profit and settlement agencies have already signalled the potential for reduced capacity, staffing cuts, and diminished service delivery.

Settlement services are overwhelmed by high staff turnover, insufficient funding, and rising demand, particularly from asylum claimants in shelters. Housing and employment barriers, including systemic discrimination, high rental costs, and delays in essential documentation, further hinder asylum claimants’ ability to secure stability. The nonprofit sector is also under strain, facing increased demand and rising operational costs, putting many organizations at risk of closure. In addition, access to reliable legal support for asylum claims remains a major issue, with claimants often falling victim to fraud by untrustworthy advisors.

Need for multi-level government support

To address these challenges and ensure the continued integration and stability of asylum claimants the Province should consider the following measures:

Stable and Sustained Settlement Funding:

- Reinststate and expand provincial funding for settlement services to address the surge in demand.
- Provide multi-year funding commitments to enable agencies to build capacity and plan for long-term service delivery.

Enhanced Federal-Provincial Coordination:

- Strengthen collaboration between provincial and federal governments to align funding formulas and address gaps in service delivery for asylum claimants.
- Advocate for timely allocations from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to reflect current and projected asylum claimant volumes.

Targeted Supports for Housing and Employment:

- Increase funding for housing supports and implement measures to address discrimination against asylum claimants in the rental market.
- Accelerate processing times for work permits and Social Insurance Numbers to facilitate faster transitions to employment.

Capacity Building for Nonprofits:

- Provide dedicated funding to support the operational stability of nonprofits serving equity-deserving groups, including asylum claimants.
- Invest in workforce development initiatives to address staffing and retention challenges in the sector.

Prioritizing these measures in the 2025 provincial budget will help support the sustainability of services for asylum claimants and the broader newcomer community. Stable and predictable funding is essential to meet the rising demand and to foster the successful integration of asylum claimants into our communities.

Combatting Intimate Partner Violence

Family violence (FV), gender-based violence (GBV), and intimate partner violence (IPV) are escalating in Peel, presenting significant health, social, and criminal justice challenges. The escalation of these incidences in Peel also result in profound implications for community safety and well-being. Addressing these challenges requires a coordinated provincial response and Peel Region continues advocating for FV/GBV/IPV to be declared an epidemic in Ontario. As such, establishing a comprehensive legislative framework is an effective tool to address systemic gaps. By fostering collaboration, integrating services, and ensuring sustainable funding, the Province can create a more effective and unified approach to supporting victims and strengthening community resilience.

A Growing Crisis in Peel

In Brampton and Mississauga, nearly 80 per cent of victims in 2022 were women, and Caledon experienced a nearly 30 per cent increase in IPV and FV disputes from 2020 to 2023.

While police data offers valuable insight, numerous incidents go unreported, concealing the full extent of the issue. These trends highlight the urgent need for systemic change to address the root causes and impacts of FV/GBV/IPV in Peel.

Peel Region supports the Province in declaring FV/GBV/IPV an epidemic in Ontario and urges the implementation of a comprehensive provincial framework which should address the current fragmented system and improve support for victims by:

- Facilitating collaboration across sectors and levels of government.
- Enhancing service integration at the local level.
- Streamlining navigation of referral pathways and resources.
- Establishing predictable and sustainable funding for service delivery.

Building Capacity and Stability

To effectively support victims and their families, **the Province must prioritize enhanced sector capacity and stable operational funding.** Key areas of investment include:

- **Emergency and Transitional Housing:** Peel's shelter system is over capacity, and new facilities, such as Armagh House, reach full occupancy almost immediately. Increased funding is critical to expand emergency and transitional housing options for victims escaping violence.

- **Integrated Services:** Sustainable funding is needed to reduce fragmentation and enhance healthcare, housing, and legal supports.

Partnering with Peel Region

Peel Region is committed to working with the Province to address the FV/GBV/IPV crisis. Collaborative initiatives, such as OntarioSTANDS and the Break the Silence campaign, demonstrate the potential for impactful change.

Provincial funding and improved service integration will empower Peel and its partners to provide consistent, life-saving support to victims and their families.

Investing in these solutions will not only enhance community safety, but also prevent tragic outcomes, ensuring that victims have the resources they need to rebuild their lives.

Enhancing the Early Years and Child Care workforce

The significance of the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC), which aims to reduce the cost of child care in Ontario to an average of \$10 per day by 2025–2026 cannot be overstated.

This initiative represents a significant step forward in making child care more affordable and accessible for families in Peel, and across Ontario, and it underscores the commitment of all levels of government to support working families and early childhood development.

Accessible, affordable, quality licensed child care supports the economy, advances early learning in children and can reduce poverty in lower income families. As CWELCC continues to improve affordability, demand for licensed child care will continue to increase.

Despite the positive impact of this agreement, there are certain aspects that require immediate attention to ensure its full potential is realized.

Implement a compensation framework

The Province should implement a compensation framework for early years and child care staff that is comparable to Designated Early Childhood Educators (DECE) in the school board sector and also acknowledges both years of service and qualifications.

In order to ensure Ontario remains competitive, while also meeting child care demand in Peel, the provincial government should address the following challenges:

- A wage cost differential between experienced RECE and those newly entering the workforce is causing wage costs pressures for providers and inequities amongst staff.
- The current RECE wage floor (\$23.86 per hour in 2024) is low compared to the GTA living wage of \$25.05, and to DECE employed by school boards.
- The Provincial Workforce Strategy excludes support for additional benefits that would increase job satisfaction and incentivize individuals to work in the child care sector

Provide adequate, flexible, multi-year funding

Provide adequate, flexible, multi-year funding to address local recruitment challenges through the implementation of high impact initiatives to attract and retain the Early Years and Child Care Workforce.

A lack of new funding to support building the workforce will Peel Region's ability to continuously implement initiatives, such as job fairs and tuition support for targeted diploma programs, that address current local recruitment and retention challenges related to CWELCC expansion. Peel requires multi-year, predictable funding to continue to develop and implement responsive initiatives to grow our Early Years and child care workforce.

Responsive ECE Education Programs aimed at supporting Staff Working in the Sector

The Province should develop and fund education pathways for those individuals currently working in the sector and who are looking to advance in their ECE career.

Research has shown that over 39 per cent of non-program staff working in the sector are interested in becoming ECEs, however they are faced with financial barriers and inflexible training options that prevent them from enrolling in ECE programs while they continue to work.

Impacts of the Reduction in Administrative Funding

The reduction in administrative funding will create a shortfall for Peel which will have significant impacts on our ability to support and maintain service levels for important programs such as CWELCC, special needs resourcing supports and child care subsidy, resulting in potential waitlists for these programs.

In 2021, the provincial government began its phased implementation of changes to the child care administration cost share approach for Early Years and Child Care funding.

Prior to this change, the Region of Peel provided a mandatory contribution of approximately \$2.0 million to child care administration, with the remaining cost being covered by provincial and federal funding.

In 2025, the Region of Peel anticipates it will need to contribute \$8 million toward child care administration, which is approximately \$5.9 million above what the Region of Peel contributed prior to the administration funding changes.

The Province should reverse this reduction in order to support Peel Region efforts to continue to provide families with access to safe, inclusive and affordable child care.

Efficient paramedic services

Peel's rapid population growth, compounded by an aging population, chronic health conditions, and increasing needs of vulnerable populations (unattached patients, mental health and addictions) continues to drive growth in 911 calls for ambulance. Peel Paramedics' 2024 call volume is estimated to have increased by almost 5.4 per cent above the 2023 volume.

Each year, Peel Region is required to add additional ambulance crews to its service in response to increasing demands. Peel Paramedics is also adapting its services with health system partners to improve efficiency and patient access to the right care through innovations to prevent avoidable 911 calls and diversion of low-acuity patients.

While Peel Region appreciates the recent increase in the Land Ambulance Services Grant, **Peel needs a funding model that responds to current resource requirements just to maintain service levels and reflect annual inflation.**

Currently, the provincial share of land ambulance funding is calculated based on the previous year approved budget. This funding lag means Peel Region must draw from the property tax funded reserves to maintain service levels and keep our residents safe. Over the past five years, Peel has filled this gap through almost \$10 million from property tax-funded reserves.

The Province should revise the funding methodology to ensure municipalities receive funding based on the current-year approved budget. This adjustment would provide financial certainty and reduce Peel Region's reliance on property taxes to finance these critical health services.

Sustainable Funding for Community Paramedicine

In an effort to continue developing upstream approaches to care, Paramedic Services has enhanced its Community Paramedicine (CP) programs. Since 2018, Peel's CP programs have been assessing and connecting older adults to the community-based services and supports needed to enable aging in place and alleviate pressure on hospital emergency departments and LTC beds.

Peel Region appreciates the extension of Ministry of Long-Term Care's funding to the Community Paramedicine for Long-Term Care (CPLTC) program until 2026. However, **sustainable and predictable funding is needed to ensure CP programs can grow and meet the needs of other populations with unmet needs and placing pressure on the health system.**

One example of innovation has been Peel Region's proposal to the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions to enhance the CP program to address an urgent need to support vulnerable populations. Submitted in September

2024, this proposal envisions CP-led clinics in Peel shelters, and enhancement clinical capacity of our mobile outreach teams in high-need areas. The proposal addresses critical gaps for individuals experiencing homelessness, precarious housing, or mental health and addiction challenges. If supported by the Province, this Paramedic-led service would integrate seamlessly with existing health, housing, and social services.

Peel is committed to working with the Province to ensure Paramedic Services meet the needs of our growing and diverse community. Support from the provincial government will strengthen our ability to respond to a growing population, support vulnerable residents, and ease pressures of our health system partners across the continuum of care.

