



Peel Region's Advocacy Priorities

AMO

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 **Peel Region**

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Addressing underfunding for mandated services

Partnering for healthy, strong communities

Peel Region values its partnership with the Province of Ontario in delivering essential services that support residents at every stage of life. Peel appreciates the more than \$70 million annually in provincial funding received for Paramedic Services. The 2024/25 provincial funding for programs such as the \$6.5 million for the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program (OSDCP) and the \$7.6 million for Healthy Babies Healthy Children are great examples as these investments improve health outcomes, reduce illness, and generate strong returns, saving \$8 for every \$1 invested.

Peel Region also appreciates the \$65 million received for mandated Housing Services, including the Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP), Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI), and Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI), which provide vital supports for residents experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Addressing funding shortfalls

While these investments are valued, Peel's rapid growth and rising service demands have outpaced provincial funding, forcing Peel Region to rely heavily on property taxes and reserves to cover the gap.

Public Health

- An additional \$34.8 million in annual provincial funding is needed in 2025 to meet Peel Public Health operating needs.
- In 2024, Peel Region received \$6.5 million in OSDCP funding for 20,698 seniors, while York Region received \$11 million for 18,834 seniors. Joint efforts with provincial officials to access federal funding for the program are underway.

Housing Services

- Peel faces an \$86.3 million pressure in 2025 to address capital repair needs in Peel's community housing stock.
- In 2024, Peel Region funded 77% of housing operating costs and 87% of capital costs, with an average of 80% funded through local property taxes. This includes funding for programs such as HPP and COCHI/OPHI, and exceeds the contributions from the province (14%) and federal government (9%).

Unique pressures facing Peel Region

Extraordinary growth

- Population: 1.6 million, larger than 6 provinces; projected to reach 2.28 million by 2051.
- Home to over 200,000 businesses.

Non-permanent residents

- Increased from 23,000 (2016) to over 216,000 (2024).
- Often excluded from funding formulas despite urgent needs.

Rising costs and poverty

- Second-lowest after-tax median income in the GTA.
- Unemployment: 8.9% (vs. 7% Ontario); youth: 22.4%.
- Rents among highest in Ontario at \$2,400 for a 1-bedroom.

Public Health cost sharing

- Current provincial/regional split for public health funding stands at 48/52%, significantly lower than the 70/30 cost-sharing formula.

Addressing underfunding for mandated services

A renewed provincial partnership

Many municipalities like Peel are facing a community affordability crisis. Peel Region is committed to meeting shared goals on housing, health, and economic growth but requires the following key actions:

- **Address underfunding** of fast-growing communities in Ontario, like Peel.
- **Increase base funding** for mandated programs to reflect inflation, population growth, and growing service demand.
- **Modernize municipal revenue tools** by working with all levels of government to explore fairer, income-based taxation models and sustainable funding sources.
- **Reform and enhance grant programs** to ensure they are adequate, responsive, and aligned with actual service delivery costs.



Key takeaway

A renewed provincial partnership is essential to ensure that Peel Region can continue delivering vital services, support Ontario's growth, and maintain long-term financial sustainability.



Sustainable infrastructure solutions

Partnering to meet Peel's housing needs

Recent changes to the Development Charges (DC) regime and the introduction of a time-limited DC deferral and grant program to support provincial housing targets have resulted in significant funding shortfalls. While Peel Region is engaging in productive discussions with provincial officials to identify dedicated federal and provincial funding to offset these impacts, firm commitments are needed to avoid shifting the burden to property taxpayers and utility ratepayers, putting affordability and key infrastructure at risk.

Supporting provincial targets

Peel Region remains committed to meeting Ontario's housing targets; 113,000 units in Brampton, 13,000 in Caledon, and 120,000 in Mississauga, through its established capital program. Successful implementation of this program depends on strong collaboration with the province.

Recent provincial investments through the Housing-Enabling Water Systems Fund (\$35 million) and the Municipal Housing Infrastructure Fund (\$16.1 million) are appreciated.

Peel Region is working closely with the province to identify additional opportunities to address Peel's significant capital needs, including federal funding opportunities.

Peel Region is also working with the province to explore a new public utility model for water and wastewater servicing in Peel to support critical housing infrastructure.

Accelerated funding required

To meet local housing targets, Peel Region must accelerate new infrastructure required to support new housing. This requires an additional \$8.4 billion in DC-related funding in the 10-year Capital Plan (2025–2034), which is over and above the 2023 10-year plan. Without stable and predictable funding, infrastructure development will be delayed.



Background and context

- DCs are Peel Region's main tool to fund infrastructure that enables housing development.
- Infrastructure investments must be made upfront, creating a timing gap between infrastructure costs and DC collection.
- To manage this, Peel Region relies on debt. \$1.36 billion in DC-related net debt is currently outstanding, with \$136 million in annual payments funded through DCs.
- Another \$5 billion in DC supported debt is projected between 2025–2034 to accommodate growth.
- New DC deferrals could cut revenues by \$300 million annually (2025–2026).
- A 50% residential DC discount could result in a permanent \$400 million loss, without funding from upper levels of government, which could shift costs to taxpayers.
- Increased funding for the expanded capital program is also required.

Sustainable infrastructure solutions

Funding design and delivery

Provincial and federal collaboration is essential to create funding programs that meet today's challenges and support sustainable growth in Ontario's communities. Allocation-based models aligned with municipal asset management plans help reduce costs by avoiding market fluctuations and contractor shortages tied to application-based funding.

To meet growth demands, infrastructure programs should:

- Provide stable funding to offset DC revenue losses.
- Preserve municipal discretion over DC incentives.
- Increase funding to reflect inflationary construction costs.
- Invest in infrastructure that supports transit services in non-transit municipalities.
- Align funding streams to avoid delays in interdependent projects.
- Offer operating funding for services with rising costs.
- Streamline transfers, monitoring, and reporting.
- Allow allocation-based, multi-year funding.



Key takeaway

A modernized, coordinated funding approach will help ensure Peel Region can build the infrastructure needed to support housing, growth, and livable communities.



Affordable housing solutions

Partnering to meet Peel's housing needs

Peel Region values recent provincial investments to help address Peel's housing affordability and homelessness crisis, including:

- \$30 million for emergency shelter, street outreach, and housing-focused case management to help those in crisis have immediate access to services they need.
- \$16.2 million to help residents remain housed by funding rent supplements, eviction prevention, and supportive housing which helps reduce long-term system pressures.
- \$2.3 million for housing administration which helps to deliver efficient program oversight, robust system planning, and better outcomes for residents across Peel.

While recent investments have helped, nearly 97,000 Peel households remain in core housing need, spending over 30% of their income on housing or living in unsafe, overcrowded, or unaffordable conditions. Further, with current resources, fewer than 1 in 5 households in need can access affordable housing assistance.

Meeting core housing need in Peel

Solving this crisis requires more than expanding market supply. Analysis shows that restoring affordability through the private market alone would require a fivefold increase in provincial housing targets — an unrealistic goal as developers across Ontario already struggle to meet current targets.

To help close the gap, Peel Region has launched two key initiatives:

- The Peel Community Housing Development Program (PCHDP), delivering 1,444 new units across 12 projects.
- A Non-Profit Sector Capacity Building Program, aimed at strengthening long-term development and delivery capacity.

Further, 32,000 additional affordable units are needed to reach the OECD benchmark of 7% non-market housing. In addition, while over 2,300 households have received Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit support since 2020, Peel Region faces a \$86.3 million pressure annually to prevent the loss of existing community housing.



Peel's housing situation and challenges

- Peel Housing is the third largest provider of community housing in Ontario. Much of this housing stock was downloaded by the province in 2001 without the necessary long-term funding to support its ongoing maintenance.
- In 2024, Peel Region funded close to 80% of all housing costs from property taxes. This is unsustainable, placing undue pressure on the municipal tax base.



Affordable housing solutions

Peel Region requires sustained investment for capital, operating, and supportive programs including:

- \$86.3 million annually for repairs and to preserve aging housing infrastructure.
- Investment for the PCHDP to deliver new affordable rental housing and shelter spaces.
- Increasing the provincial cost-share of operating costs beyond 13% to support Peel Region's investments, currently at 81%.
- Strengthening Service Managers and non-profit housing providers capacity to meet rising demand.
- Expanding income and social supports to make it easier to carry high housing costs.
- Ensuring homes are lived in by reducing their use for speculative investment.



Encampment response

The 2024 Point-in-Time Count shows:

- 93% increase in homelessness in Peel since 2021, with encampments up 111%.
- Shelters remain over capacity, serving over 8,600 people in 2024, while outreach supported 3,831 individuals across 194 encampments by September 2024.
- Permanent housing remains far more cost-effective than relying on shelters.



Key takeaway

Peel Region will continue to partner with the province to develop and deliver lasting housing solutions.



Support high-quality care for seniors

Recognizing support from the Province of Ontario

Peel plays a critical role in alleviating health system pressures and bridging the gap by delivering person-centred care and services, as the seniors' population grows. Including the following provincial investments:

- Over \$1 million through the Local Priorities Fund supporting seniors with complex needs and reducing hospital pressures.
- Base funding for the first Transitional Behavioural Support Unit in the Central West Region.
- Support through the Ministry of Long-Term Care for a Community Access to Long-Term Care (LTC) pilot program.

Supporting seniors in long term care

Peel provides roughly 40% of operating costs for its 5 LTC homes, offsetting provincial funding gaps. This reflects our commitment to safe, dignified, and responsive care. However, inflation continues to strain the system despite 2025 budget increases.

Financial pressures have grown due to the underfunded implementation of the Fixing Long-Term Care Act (FLTCA). While intended to improve service delivery, its costs exceed provincial estimates, and Peel has invested heavily in compliance, quality management, and training.

Adult Day Services and respite

Expanding wrap-around supports is critical to easing caregiver stress and delaying LTC placement. Peel welcomes a \$40 million investment through the Support for Seniors and Caregivers Act, however, sustained and enhanced funding is needed to meet rising and complex needs.

Emotion-based care

Peel values emotion-based care as essential to high-quality dementia care. Recent provincial commitments — including a dementia care framework and proposed amendments requiring dementia care programs in all LTC homes — signals strong momentum.



Dental care for seniors

The Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program (OSDCP) in Peel has a waitlist of 5,900 seniors. Peel Region is working with provincial officials to access funding through the federal dental program to address growing demand for services.

Fund innovative and person-centred care

Solutions to support seniors

Peel faces a widening gap between demand and available funding to provide critical services for seniors. Support from the province is needed in the following areas:

- Ensure sustainable funding for LTC by addressing inflation-related provincial shortfalls and full compliance with the FLTCA to close a \$7.1 million gap.
- Contribute \$1.58 million toward expansion of Peel's Adult Day Services program and \$1.04 million for an 8-bed respite care centre.
- Policy, funding, and evaluation frameworks for emotion-based care that enable spread and reduce barriers to implementation.
- Continued support for OSDCP in Peel to address growing waitlists for seniors. This could be achieved through innovative approaches to access federal funding.



Key takeaway:

Provincial efforts are improving life for seniors and caregivers, and Peel is committed to working with the province on sustainable, long-term solutions.



Strengthening community-based mental health and addictions care

Partnering to make a difference

Provincial investments are making a meaningful difference to improve mental health and addiction (MHA) issues in Peel. This includes support through the **Wellness Response Assistance Program** and for a new **HART Hub**, with \$1.3 million earmarked for supportive housing services.

However, a significant and growing gap remains between service capacity and demand attributed to chronic underfunding.

The absence of a funding formula that accounts for Peel's rapid population growth and increasingly complex MHA challenges is leading to considerable pressure on acute care for community-based MHA services. To address this challenge, Peel Region needs targeted and sustainable funding that matches the scale and complexity of local need.

Targeted, upstream and sustainable investments

Peel Region appreciates the significant investments made to address community needs, including more than \$70 million annually for Paramedic Services, however, the need for resources continues to grow.

The province should prioritize and increase investment in upstream preventative community-based solutions that address MHA early — before crises occur.

One initiative that would help alleviate pressures is Peel's proposed Community Paramedicine MHA pilot program, which:

- targets individuals experiencing homelessness or who are precariously housed.
- eases the burden on emergency room departments while increasing access to specialized care.
- supports early intervention by community paramedics, combining shelter-based and mobile outreach approaches, integrated with existing community health, housing, and social services for vulnerable residents in Peel.

Provincial investment in upstream mental health and addictions supports such as this pilot is critical to strengthening community-based capacity to deliver preventative programming that improves health outcomes.



MHA pressures in Peel:

- Emergency department visits for MHA-related disorders rose to 19,216 in 2023, up 5% from 2022.
- More than 1,650 children and youth in Peel are on waitlists for core services.
- Wait times for services, such as counselling and intensive treatment, are almost 2 years.
- Between 2019 and 2024, Peel Paramedics responded to over 32,000 mental health related 911 calls. The highest proportion of these calls was from young adults aged 20 to 29 years (25.7%).
- In the same timeframe, Peel Paramedics responded to over 22,000 addictions/substance related 911 calls. The highest proportion of these calls was from those aged 30 to 39 years (24.6%).



Strengthening community-based mental health and addictions care

Mental health and addictions solutions

Population-based funding

Provincial funding that is based on population size and demographics, with adjustments for socioeconomic and geographic factors and inflation, is urgently needed in Peel.

Additional capacity

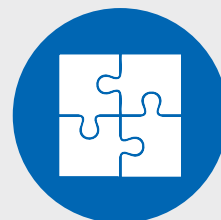
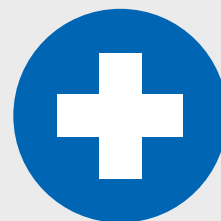
Funding to increase community-based mental health and addictions capacity supports upstream preventative supports that can decrease pressure on acute care.

Investment in community paramedicine

Peel requires support for our Mental Health and Addictions pilot program to ensure individuals experiencing homelessness, precarious housing and MHA-related issues receive early intervention.

Peel Region MHA roundtable

In fall 2025, Peel Region is planning a roundtable aimed at identifying treatment-focused solutions to address the growing addictions crisis. This critical dialogue will help shape locally responsive, evidence-informed solutions that will improve access to care.



Key takeaway

Peel's population is expected to increase significantly over the next decade and pressures on MHA services are expected to worsen without provincial support.



Addressing family, gender-based and intimate partner violence resourcing needs

Partnering to address gender-based violence

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is escalating in Peel, which has significant implications for community safety and well-being and requires a coordinated provincial response. Peel Region values recent provincial investments to help address this serious issue, including:

- Embrace and Victim Services of Peel were successful in securing \$1.7 million funding, over four years, through the OntarioStands Call for Proposals for 8 dedicated beds to support initial exit for individuals who have been sex trafficked.
- In support of capacity and direct service access for the larger gender-based violence sector Catholic Family Services Peel-Dufferin secured approximately \$4 million to expand the Safe Centre of Peel.

These investments are welcome and necessary. However, funding has not kept pace with rising demand, particularly for emergency and transitional housing that meets the complex and diverse needs of survivors.

Solutions aimed at addressing gender-based violence

A strong policy framework can establish the foundation for long-term collaboration across sectors to improve service integration at the local level. This would enable victims and service providers to navigate referral pathways and access resources in health, housing, legal, child welfare, and other social supports in a reliable and timely manner.

Currently, the sector suffers from fragmented, unpredictable, and piecemeal funding, leaving many victims without timely access to necessary support. A policy framework could introduce funding models that are more client-centred, allowing for predictable and stable service availability.

The provincial government should also prioritize investment in prevention, upstream solutions and stable operational and capital funding to expand critical services, such as emergency and transitional housing.



Addressing family, gender-based and intimate partner violence resourcing needs

Concerning trends

From January 1 to May 31, 2025, Peel police reported the following:

- There were 6,539 total family and intimate partner violence incidents reported. IPV calls are among the top calls for service.
- In 2023, Peel police reported 9,570 domestic disputes/IPV incidents.
- The average rate of family and intimate partner violence incidents investigated by Peel police is 43 daily; 2 hourly.
- Between 2020 and 2023, there was a 29.9% increase in the rate of family and intimate partner disputes reported to Caledon OPP.



Key takeaway

The current family violence, gender-based violence, and intimate partner violence crisis requires partnership and funding support from all levels of government to ensure the sector is adequately resourced to meet the growing demands within Peel's communities.



Enhancing Early Years and Child Care workforce strategy

Partnering for affordable and accessible child care

The Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) plan is a transformative initiative toward making child care more affordable and accessible for families in Peel, and communities across Ontario.

Peel Region appreciates the recently announced \$29.8 million in provincial funding, which will support:

- A new 3 year CWELCC target of 10,768 spaces to be realized between 2024 and 2026.
- At least 4,984 of these spaces will be non-profit and up to 5,784 for-profit spaces.
- Increased flexibility in the non-profit/for-profit ratio, enabling greater for-profit sector expansion where needed.
- The launch of the Early Learning and Child Care Infrastructure Fund to support non-profit expansion in Peel.

This provincial support is a positive step toward meeting local child care needs. By fostering accessible, affordable, and high-quality licensed child care, the CWELCC plan not only promotes early childhood development but also supports economic growth and helps reduce poverty among lower-income families.

Need to address staff shortages

While the recent investment is appreciated, meeting the 3-year space target of 10,768 will require over 1,200 additional program staff. CWELCC offers significant benefits, but its rapid expansion is putting growing pressure on workforce recruitment and retention.

A key challenge is the current compensation model, which does not reflect the qualifications and responsibilities of Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs), leading to urgent staffing shortages.

To fully realize the goals of the CWELCC plan, a competitive and equitable compensation framework is required. This includes fair wages and access to benefits to attract and retain the qualified educators needed to deliver high-quality care.



Workforce challenges

Wage compression and retention pressures

- The wage gap between experienced RECEs and new hires is narrowing, creating cost pressures for providers and reducing incentives for career longevity.

Inadequate wage floor

- The 2025 provincial wage floor of \$24.86 per hour falls below the GTA living wage of \$26.00 per hour and remains well below the compensation received by Designated Early Childhood Educators (DECEs) in school boards.

Lack of benefits

- Providing funding for health or retirement benefits, as part of the Provincial Workforce Strategy, will increase job satisfaction and reduce turnover.



Enhancing Early Years and Child Care workforce strategy

Compensation framework

Developing and implementing a compensation framework aligned with DECE wages in the school system that recognizes experience and qualifications are critical to attract and retain qualified RECEs across the sector.



Sustained, flexible funding

Providing Peel Region with multi-year, flexible funding to support ongoing local recruitment and retention efforts, including job fairs, tuition supports, and outreach initiatives will enhance Peel Region's ability to expand licensed child care.



Career pathways for non-program staff

Funding flexible training pathways for current non-program staff will reduce financial and scheduling barriers, enabling them to become RECEs while continuing to work.



Newcomer talent and immigration barriers

By collaborating with federal partners, the province can address domestic ECE shortages by removing barriers for internationally trained RECEs and supporting their settlement and employment in Ontario.



Key takeaway

Peel Region is ready to work with the province to implement these solutions and ensure the success and sustainability of the CWELCC program.



Asylum claimant response

Supporting asylum claimants in Peel's communities

The province-wide one-time \$13 million budget enhancement in 2023–24 for asylum claimant settlement services was greatly appreciated. It helped stabilize services and enabled local agencies to respond to urgent needs. However, with this funding ending in December 2024 and no confirmed allocations for 2025, Peel service providers are under increasing pressure. Agencies have already begun reducing staff and scaling back services due to ongoing federal and provincial funding shortfalls.

While the federal government is responsible for asylum claimants, Peel Region has stepped in to fill critical service gaps. Without continued federal funding, especially as the Interim Housing Assistance Program (IHAP) sunsets in 2027, the Reception Centre and related supports will be at serious risk. Additional support is also urgently needed for asylum claimants with dependants still living in hotels.

Federal support needed

Peel Region is seeking the province's support in urging the federal government to:

- Maintain and enhance IHAP beyond 2027.
- Collaborate with provinces and municipalities to coordinate asylum claimant settlement and job placement.

Should federal funding decline, provincial support may also be required to address emergency shelter pressures. A transitional cost-share model could sustain services.

Without renewed federal support, the Reception Centre may not be sustainable, putting further pressure on Peel's homelessness system and delaying asylum claimants' path to employment and housing.

Continued provincial partnership is essential to protect vulnerable newcomers and maintain system stability.



Multi-level government response

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) investment through Interim Housing Assistance Program in Peel:

- 2023: \$22.4 million, reimbursing 95% of operating costs for Peel's asylum claimant response.
- 2024: \$73.2 million, including \$22 million for capital and operating for the Peel Reception Centre, and more than \$51 million for operational and emergency shelter/hotel costs.
- January 2025 to March 2027: IRCC committed \$103.5M to support operating costs for Peel's asylum claimant response and to acquire and operate a family shelter for asylum claimants.



Asylum claimant response

Ensuring long-term success requires the following:

Sustained settlement funding

- Renew and expand provincial funding with multi-year commitments to support agency planning and stability.

Stronger federal-provincial coordination

- Advocate for the continuation of the IHAP program beyond April 2027.
- Improve federal data sharing to support local planning.

Housing and employment support

- Increase housing assistance, address rental discrimination, speed up work permit and SIN processing, and identify settlement locations with job and housing availability.

Support for nonprofits

- Provide stable operational funding and workforce development supports to help community agencies meet rising demand.



Key takeaway

Predictable funding, coordinated planning, and joint advocacy are essential to sustain critical services, respond to rising demand, and support the successful integration of asylum claimants. These efforts are key to protecting vulnerable individuals and ensuring long-term community stability across Ontario.



Collaborating to combat food insecurity

Investing in upstream solutions

Peel Region values recent provincial investments to help address food insecurity, including:

- Project-based provincial funding, through sources such as the Ontario Trillium Foundation for food providers.
- Partnering with Peel Region on potential capital investments that grow the capacity of addressing structural, systemic issues underlying food insecurity.

By increasing Ontario Works (OW) rates, the provincial government will invest in an upstream solution that supports food security, leading to better health outcomes and decreased reliance on social supports.

Research has repeatedly shown that household food insecurity can be reduced by policy interventions that improve the financial circumstances of households at the bottom of the income spectrum.

Addressing the root cause of food insecurity must include adequate income to cover basic costs of living, including higher social assistance rates.

The following measures are also needed:

- Emergency food relief
- Long-term systemic change
- Focus on upstream community-driven solutions

By working collaboratively across sectors — government, nonprofit, community organizations, and local businesses — a more equitable, resilient food system that supports all residents can be developed. Moreover, reducing food insecurity in Peel will also reduce demands on the health system as people living in food insecure households are more likely to have chronic health conditions, mental health challenges, and a greater need for health care services.



Peel's food insecurity challenges

- 8.6% (123,660) of Peel residents live in poverty, including 9.5% (27,900) of children aged 0 to 17.
- Nearly 23% of Peel residents, more than 1 in 5 households, face some level of food insecurity.
- From 2022 to 2024, Peel Region invested \$7.34 million to improve access to emergency food.

Rising demand for food support in Peel (2024)

Food Banks Mississauga:

- Served 1 in 13 residents
- Reported 421,251 client visits

Knights Table (Brampton):

- Served 1 in 16 residents
- Reported 474,099 client visits

The Exchange (Caledon):

- Saw a 43% increase in demand
- 27% of users were first-time clients

Overall demand increased by 40–60% across Peel food providers compared to 2023.

Collaborating to combat food insecurity

Root causes of food insecurity

The difference in the rates of poverty and food insecurity reveal an alarming trend that food insecurity in Peel is experienced by residents both above and below the official poverty rate.



Solution

Addressing the root cause of food insecurity must include adequate income to cover basic costs of living, including higher social assistance rates.



Key takeaway

Food insecurity cannot be eliminated through downstream community-level interventions alone. All levels of government must act to alleviate the burden on municipalities and food banks by investing in stronger upstream social and health programs and poverty reduction policies.



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