

City of Toronto COHB Additional Allocation Update

TAEH THHSP Forum

October 11, 2023



Overview

- COHB Program
- COHB Year 4 outcomes
- Year 4 Additional Allocations
- Renewal Strategy
- Questions

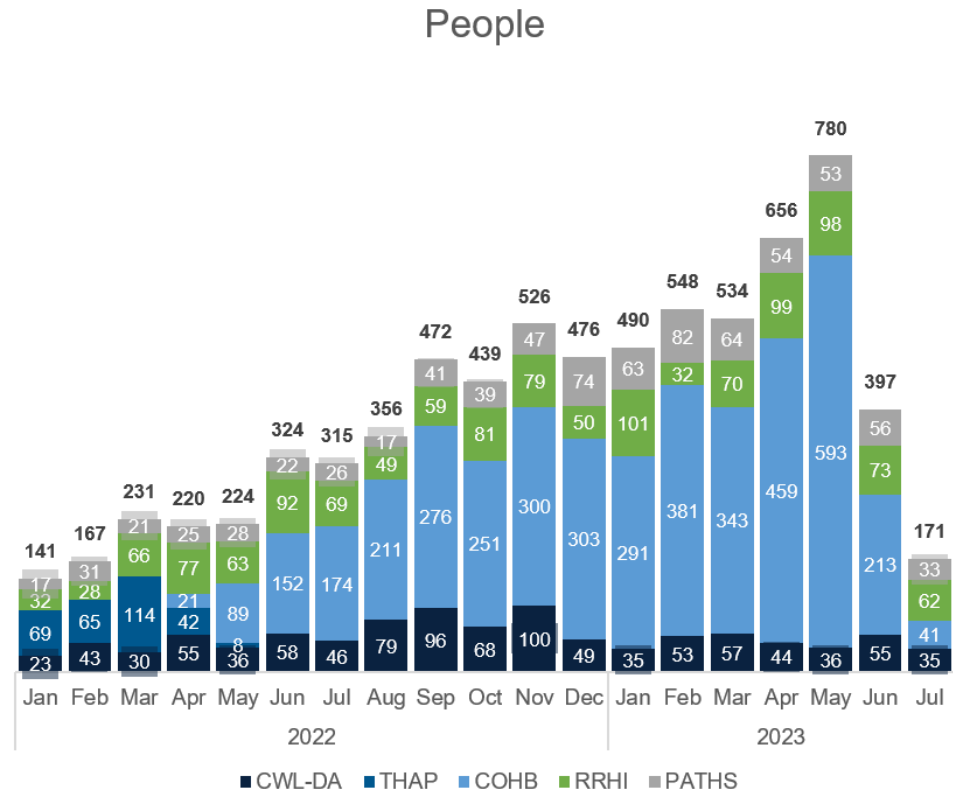
Canada Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) Program

- **Portable housing benefit** to assist with rental costs in the private housing market. The benefit is tied to the household and can be used to help pay rent **anywhere in Ontario**
- **Provincial Federal program** - part of the National Housing Strategy
- Program launched on April 1, 2020
- The COHB program funding ends on **March 31, 2029**
- Recipients must be removed from the Centralized Waiting List

COHB Year 4 Program Outcomes

- Over **4,000 households** are currently receiving COHB
- **Shelter Relief Stream** was introduced in **Year 3** and became the leading pathway to permanent housing.
 - **Over 2,600** shelter residents housed
- **Year 4** funding launched in April 1 and was exhausted within two months
- Stopped accepting referrals on May 12, causing significant pressure on shelter system

2022-23 Housing Outcomes by Program



COHB Year 4 - Additional Allocations

- Senior Management engaged in ongoing **intergovernmental advocacy** to build on the **demonstrated success** of the COHB program.
 - On **July 19, 2023**, City Council approved an additional allocation of **\$13.4M** to the to the Toronto COHB program, jointly funded by the **City and the Province**
 - On **September 18, 2023**, the Province announced an additional **\$13.08M** in COHB funding
- It is estimated that the additional funding will provide COHB benefits to approximately **2,100** households
 - This should sustain the current rate of take up of approximately **300 new applications/ month** to the end of the funding period (March 31, 2024).

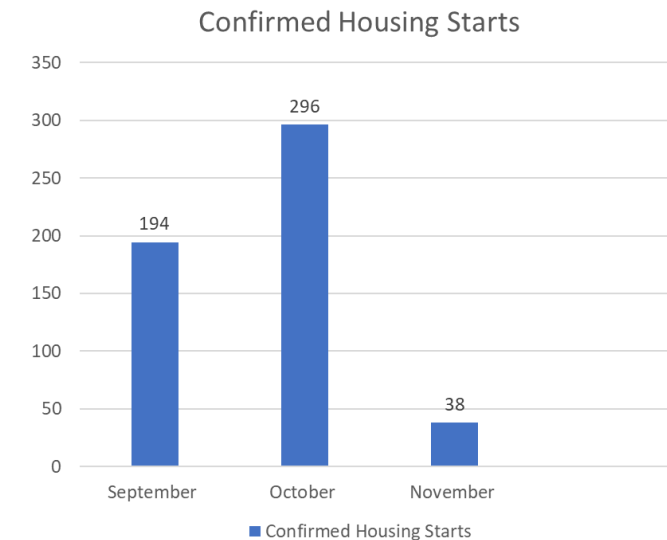
COHB Year 4 - Additional Allocation

The COHB Year 4 Additional Allocation was launched on Aug 22

Outcomes as of **Friday, October 6**

- **Shelter Relief Stream**
 - **582** referrals
 - 55% Chronically Homeless
 - 85% Asylum Seekers
- **Indigenous Households**
 - **27** referrals

Total COHB Referrals		
October 6, 2023	#	%
DOS Shelters (City)	133	23%
POS Shelters	262	45%
Total Base Shelter system	395	68%
Refugee Serving Agencies	157	27%
Refugee houses	30	5%
Total Refugee system	187	32%
Total referrals	582	



COHB Renewals

- All COHB applicants are required to complete an annual renewal form and file their income taxes in order to maintain their benefit
- Over **1,600** former shelter residents had to complete the annual renewal process in 2023
- We met with other municipalities that have prioritized Shelter residents for the COHB benefit, consistent feedback received:
 - COHB worked very well to move clients from the shelter to housing but a very large percentage of the former shelter residents failed to renew their COHB and re-entered the shelter system

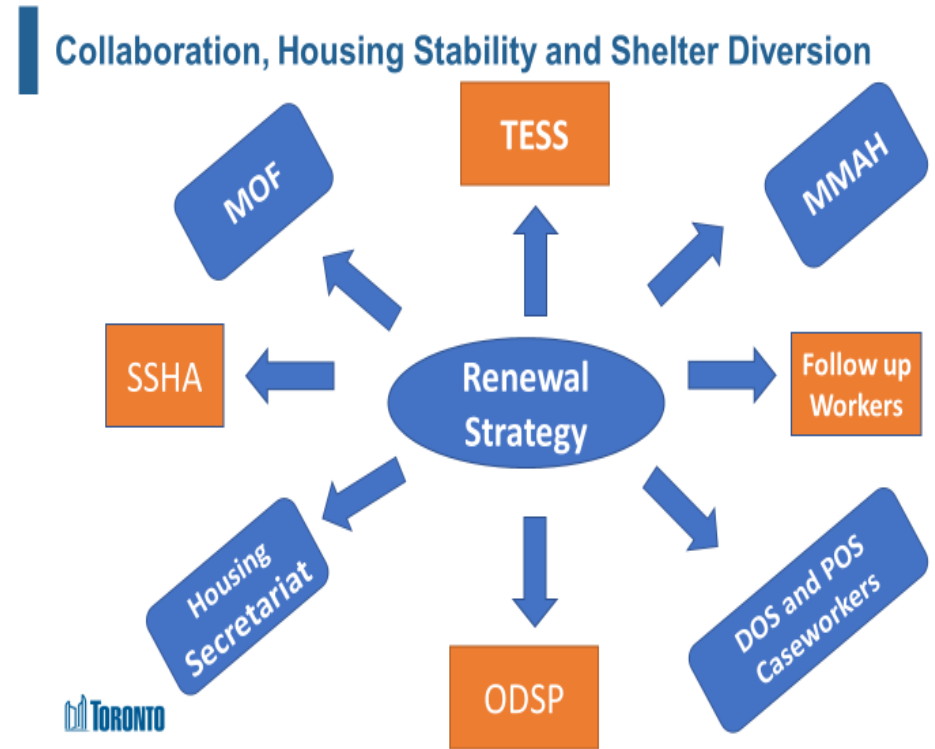
COHB Renewal Strategy

Collaboration, Housing Stability and Shelter Diversion

Housing Stability Services lead a Cross Divisional Renewal Strategy to support former Shelter residents to maintain their COHB benefit

97% of COHB households in Toronto have successfully completed the Annual Renewal process.

3% have outstanding COHB renewals



Collaboration for a Successful Renewal Strategy

Toronto Employment and Social Services (TESS)

Developed training material, Q and A and information sessions for caseworkers

Updated TESS divisional website with details on COHB renewal

Sent out a targeted broadcast message to all COHB recipients on Ontario Works

Caseworkers reached out to households with an outstanding renewal via phone and Mybenefits

Ontario Disability Support Program(ODSP)

Housing Secretariat met with Manager of ODSP

List of ODSP clients that have not renewed their COHB provided

Caseworkers contacted ODSP recipients that have not renewed their COHB benefit

Outcome of contacts were reported back to HS to follow up

Shelter Partners and TICAB Agencies

Housing Secretariat met with Shelter and TICAB managers

List of non OWA /ODSP clients that have not completed renewal provided to original referring site

Original referring staff contacted clients that have not renewed their COHB benefit

Outcome of contacts were reported back to HS to follow up

Ministry of Finance (MOF) & Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing(MMAH)

Provided income tax exemptions to approximately 300 COHB recipients at the City's request

Extended income tax completion due date of from September 7, 2023 to Sept 21, 2023

Preparing for Next Renewal Period

New COHB recipients

- **Request a Follow up worker** for clients who may have difficulty completing income taxes and completing renewal
- **Ensure clients understand the COHB program** and the annual renewal requirements
- **Review the Q and A** for households referred to COHB and provide them with a copy
- If possible **retain contact details** of clients referred into COHB so you can support the Renewal Strategy next year



Questions?