

AN INTRODUCTION TO

Community Housing for the Future

Taking *Collective* Action Toward Resiliency

A time for change.

As income inequality and rising housing costs continue to outpace efforts to solve our housing crisis, **bold solutions** are required to ensure the community housing sector is equipped to respond and to remain a financially viable and desirable housing option for Ontarians.

This solutions lab aims to spark a **different conversation**—a collaborative, future-oriented dialogue across the community housing system in Ontario.

This lab presents an opportunity to collectively envision a new future.

Seeking Stability for Housing Providers

There is an **imminent issue** with the Housing Services Act funding formula that could put the viability of more than 55% of ONPHA's non-profit housing provider members at risk (ONPHA, 2019). With aging buildings and decades of under-investment in capital reserves, the community housing sector will not be sustainable into the future unless we take action.

An Opportunity to Reframe the Scenario

Despite the severity and urgency of these issues, the end of mortgages presents a timely situation for this solutions lab to reframe this negative scenario into an opportunity to challenge our assumptions and envision a new future for community housing in Ontario. This requires collaborative conversations with stakeholders from across the system.

Our Challenge

How might we ensure the sustainability and resilience of the community housing sector in Ontario through the development of creative business models and policy recommendations that are coordinated across Ontario's housing system?

What are we aiming to achieve through this solutions lab?

This initiative will employ several novel approaches to generate positive impacts for the community housing sector in Ontario.

Desired Outcomes

Meeting urgent community housing sector needs with new models, practices and strategies for resilience

This Lab aims to improve the sustainability and resilience of community housing in Ontario to ensure housing providers can continue to provide service and housing excellence to their current and future tenants.

In an era of rapid change in our social, technological, environmental, economic, political, and values-based systems, our province's community housing providers are in urgent need of new business models, practices, and strategies to ensure their buildings and organizations can respond to these shifts to continue to provide long-term affordability for their current and future tenants.

The goal is to provide housing providers across Ontario with a suite of tangible options for ensuring they can continue to meet today's standards and achieve their long-term plans, whether to serve households in need, renovate their stock, and/or build new housing.

Key Questions

Through a collaborative process, we will investigate the following questions:

- How might we collectively reveal the current experiences and perspectives of housing providers (big, small, urban, rural, co-operative, Indigenous, supportive, etc.), service managers, the development industry, lenders, investors, and current tenants?
- How might we utilize the data and knowledge in the system to create a tangible, collective vision for the future over a long term 30-year time-horizon?
- How might we develop solutions that are coordinated across the sector, addressing the different desired approaches that will be adopted by each provider?
- How might we help all levels of government envision a desirable future so we can propose more impactful proactive responses for the people we serve?
- How might we bring tenants into the process so they can be empowered throughout this system-wide transition?

Lab Methodology

Phases and Dates

Nov to Dec 2020

Jan to Mar 2021

Future Phases

Phase 1

Definition

This phase will set the context for the Lab work and to confirm project understanding among the Lab team, other external partners, and Lab participants.

Phase 2

Discovery

This phase will find and frame the problem we are trying to solve, by dedicating time to challenging our own assumptions and achieving alignment with Lab partners and stakeholders.

Phase 3

Development

This phase will begin the ideation process, providing Lab participants with tools and approaches to brainstorming and synthesizing some of their ideas.

Phase 4

Prototype

This phase will focus on bringing the solutions and ideas to life in engaging and interactive ways, for participants to interact with the ideas and provide feedback.

Phase 5

Roadmap

This phase will provide time to assess the feasibility and viability of some of the prototyped ideas and provide an implementation plan for realizing the most promising solutions.

Collaborative Conversations

- **Event:** Kick-off meeting with Advisory Committee
- Information gathering, desk research, and participant recruitment
- **Survey:** Housing provider survey

- **Event:** Interviews with housing providers and subject matter experts
- **Workshop 1: Discovery Phase Lab** with housing providers and other stakeholders
- **Workshop 2: Discovery Phase Lab** with housing providers and other stakeholders

- **Event:** Meeting with Advisory Committee to review Discovery Phase findings
- **Workshop 3: Development Phase Lab** with housing providers and other stakeholders

- **Event:** Meeting with Advisory Committee to review Development Phase findings
- **Workshop 4: Prototyping Phase Lab** with housing providers and other stakeholders

- **Event:** Meeting with Advisory Committee to build out Roadmap
- **Output:** Culminating Lab report and Roadmap for future implementation
- **Event:** Close-out meeting with Advisory Committee