



ONTARIO NON-PROFIT
HOUSING ASSOCIATION

June 11, 2026

RE: Role and Capacity of Women's Shelters and Transitional Housing to Support Women and Girls in Canada

Dear Members of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women,

On behalf of the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association (ONPHA) and our members, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the Standing Committee for undertaking a study on the role of women's shelters and transitional housing and providing us with the opportunity to submit feedback on this important issue.

ONPHA is the voice of non-profit housing in Ontario. For more than 30 years, our member-funded and directed association has represented non-profit landlords and local housing corporations across the province. Our membership spans the housing continuum, from supportive housing to low-end of market rentals. Collectively, ONPHA's members represent one of the largest non-profit housing developer networks in Canada, providing more than 30 per cent of the country's community housing stock and housing over half a million Canadians.

Women's shelters and transitional housing play a critical role in supporting women and their families in core housing need, particularly for women fleeing gender-based violence. Community housing with adequate wrap around supports provide a safe space for women and their families. These services help interrupt cycles of instability and homelessness that can otherwise persist over generations.

While shelters and transitional housing are essential, it is equally important to recognize the role of housing across the full continuum. Without access to stable, long-term housing options, women and children risk becoming trapped within the shelter system rather than permanent housing solutions.

For many women who rely on shelters and transitional housing, securing permanent housing is no longer solely a question of affordability – it is also a question of access. Safe, suitable, and stable housing has become increasingly difficult to obtain. Housing costs and rents remain high, forcing many Canadians to devote unsustainable portions of their income to housing. Women's shelters and transitional housing cannot fulfill their intended purpose without a sufficient supply of long-term affordable housing to transition into.



As the Committee examines the role and capacity of women's shelters and transitional housing to support women and girls in Canada, it is essential to also examine how women are supported as they move through the wider housing continuum, and how capacity at all ends of the continuum can be expanded to enable successful transitions out of shelters and into longer-term housing solutions.

ONPHA recommends expanding the scope of the Committee's study to focus on long-term permanent housing solutions to support women move along the housing continuum to avoid a perpetual cycle of housing instability. ONPHA looks forward to continuing to work collaboratively with the Committee to advance solutions that ensure women have access to safe, suitable, and sustainable housing.

Sincerely,

Marlene Coffey, MA, MAES, MCIP, RPP
Chief Executive Officer, Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association