



WOODGREEN

Opportunity made here.

# WoodGreen Pre-Budget Submission

2023-2024



FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT  
AND EMPLOYMENT



COMMUNITY CARE,  
SENIOR WELLNESS, AND MENTAL  
HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS



WOMEN'S ECONOMIC  
EMPOWERMENT



SUPPORTIVE AND  
COMMUNITY HOUSING





WoodGreen Community Services is one of Toronto's largest social service agencies, serving clients across 40 locations, offering over 75 programs and services addressing the health and well-being of our community.

WoodGreen offers community programs and services that connect vulnerable populations with impactful supports to enhance self-sufficiency and improve clients' physical, social and mental well-being. We provide innovative solutions to critical social needs, including:

- Housing
- Community care services
- Community mental health and addictions services
- Child care
- Employment and financial empowerment services
- Newcomer services
- Youth programs

WoodGreen's programs reduce cycles of poverty and provide an opportunity for people to thrive and live healthy and well.

## WOODGREEN NEEDS



Amendments to provincial policies that will help increase access to affordable and supportive housing;



Funding contributions to expand and model our community care programs and community mental health and addictions services;



Investment for programs that provide clients a pathway from social assistance, homelessness and poverty to education, employment and stable housing;



Staffing retention and recruitment solutions in order to continue to serve vulnerable clients.





WoodGreen recommends action be taken in the form of policy amendments and additional investment and expansion of services in four key areas. Additionally, we have five recommendations that will help empower thousands of vulnerable residents to secure employment, housing, and wrap-around support services.

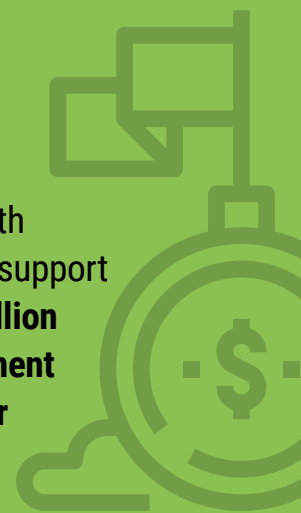
## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Continue to invest in the Skills Development Fund (SDF) to help the most challenged jobseekers improve their employability.
- 2 Provide additional investment for community care, assisted living care, community support, and health human resources.
- 3 Provide additional investment towards community care dedicated to expanding existing community mental health and addictions services.
- 4 Support women's economic empowerment through partnership with WoodGreen Community Services' Homeward Bound program.
- 5 Sustain supportive and community housing by providing funds to municipal housing programs, amending legislation, and streamlining processes.

## THE GOAL

**\$12.7M**

WoodGreen is seeking both partnership and financial support of an additional **\$12.7 million from the Ontario government to sustain and expand our programs and services.**



WoodGreen also supports our partners' recommendation for sector-wide investment towards community care and community mental health and addiction services:

- **\$182 million into the budgets of non-profit community support services providers – a base budget increase of seven per cent** and a community care sector Personal Support Worker (PSW) wage enhancement – as submitted by the Ontario Community Support Association (OCSA).
- **\$130 million, an eight per cent base increase towards the community mental health and addiction services sector** – as submitted by Addictions and Mental Health Ontario (AMHO).



## FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

# \$3.0 M

over three years for BETTER ODDS of  
BETTER JOBS project through the (SDF)



### RECOMMENDATION:

1

Continue to invest in the Skills Development Fund to ensure employment and financial empowerment programs are funded locally to help the most challenged jobseekers improve their employability.

WoodGreen is seeking \$3 million over three years to be invested into the BETTER ODDS of BETTER JOBS project through the SDF to build financial empowerment into Toronto region Employment Ontario services to help boost client employment, and improve job readiness, wages and long-term outcomes, for **20,250 Toronto residents**. Through city-wide financial stabilization supports and workforce development solutions, the project will support jobseekers who face structural inequalities and economic barriers that prevent them from having the opportunity to participate fully in the labour market.

Research demonstrates that when jobseekers improve their finances with the help of community financial empowerment services, they experience improved job placement rates, higher incomes and more stable work results. Achieving financial stabilization for our most challenged jobseekers will increase the odds they can successfully transition to employment.<sup>1</sup>

The project's target jobseekers include:

- **Social assistance recipients.** On average, there were just over 217,000 families or individuals receiving Ontario Works in 2020-21. Social assistance recipient clients can benefit

from services that help improve employability.

- **People who are justice system involved.** According to John Howard Society: "One study showed that 75 per cent of those admitted to federal institutions were assessed as having some or considerable difficulty in the area of employment. The latest Canadian data indicate that both sentenced and remanded prisoners show dramatically high unemployment rates at admission of over 40 per cent, while the national rate is normally between six and seven per cent."<sup>2</sup>
- **Newcomers.** According to Statistics Canada, in 2021 the unemployment rate in Ontario was 5.8 per cent for those born in Canada and 7.8 per cent for landed immigrants. For immigrants who landed less than 10 years ago, the unemployment rate was 8.9 per cent.<sup>3</sup>

BETTER ODDS of BETTER JOBS will establish five expert financial empowerment service agencies into a city-wide collaborative: WoodGreen Community Services, Jane/Finch Centre, Agincourt Community Services, West Neighborhood House, and the North York Community House. Partners in the project will also

work together to explore barriers and develop innovative training solutions with population-specific organization partners, including John Howard Society of Toronto and Elizabeth Fry Toronto for justice-system served individuals.

Previous WoodGreen projects have been successful thanks to funding from the SDF. The fund contributed to a WoodGreen & George Brown College partnership project to create a new CNC/ Precision Machining training program designed to address the challenges that women in trades may face. The program prepares women for entry-level work in the manufacturing sector. Currently, all of participants are on track to complete skills training in January 2023.

# 20,250

**The number of Toronto residents  
that would be supported by  
investing in the BETTER ODDS  
of BETTER JOBS project.**



COMMUNITY CARE, SENIOR  
WELLNESS, AND MENTAL HEALTH  
AND ADDICTIONS

**\$1.14 M**

annually to operate three units, which include  
10-11 beds each, of cluster care assisted living.  
In total, 30-33 clients.



**RECOMMENDATION:**

**2**

Provide additional investment for community care, implementation of  
assisted living care models, community support services, and health  
human resources.

This past year, \$12 million of the \$33  
million fiscal investment (\$100 million  
over three years in the 2022-2023 budget)  
was dedicated towards community care  
expansion in Ontario. This is not enough to  
meet the expansion goals of many social  
service organizations such as WoodGreen.

**WoodGreen calls on the Ontario  
Government to invest \$6 million towards  
expanding WoodGreen community care  
and community mental health services.**

According to the National Institute of Ageing,  
"91 per cent of Canadians and nearly 100  
per cent of Canadians aged 65 and older  
reported that they planned to support  
themselves to live in their own homes for  
as long as possible."<sup>4</sup> By 2031, nearly a  
quarter of Canadians will be aged 65 years  
and older<sup>5</sup>, and 1.2 million Ontarians will  
need home and community care.<sup>6</sup> However,  
in order to support the growing ageing  
population in need or desiring of home and  
community support in the future, there must  
be additional investment into community care  
services. WoodGreen and other community  
care agencies need additional investment  
to manage this increased demand, and to  
support expansion and sustainability of  
our services. WoodGreen cannot continue  
to reallocate resources from other service/  
program areas to add capacity.

**\$94.68**

**average per bed cost of cluster  
care, vs. \$201/day for long-  
term care.**

Community care allows seniors to age at  
home with enhanced support and models,  
such as **WoodGreen's assisted living  
cluster care**, can provide an additional  
option of care for clients other than  
long-term care (LTC). This is particularly  
important given there is a growing number  
of patients occupying acute care settings  
that do not require the intensity of those  
services. There are almost 5,000 alternate  
level of care (ALC) patients in Ontario. One  
in 11 ALC hospital patients are waiting for  
home and community care.<sup>7</sup>

It is estimated that the cost is close to  
\$1.3 billion if LTC home eligible clients  
were cared for in their own homes.<sup>8</sup> Only a  
fraction in comparison to what the Ministry  
of Long-Term Care projected it would cost  
to publicly fund 79,000 LTC beds in 2021-  
2022, which was \$6.4 billion.<sup>9</sup>

The National Institute of Ageing  
recommends public policy be developed  
that shifts more LTC resources from the  
provision of institutional care to home  
care and community-support services

and that only individuals requiring LTC are  
admitted. The report also recommends  
implementation of care models and  
policies that enable more older Canadians  
to live at home and in their communities  
with greater independence, which is exactly  
what cluster care offers Ontarians.<sup>10</sup>

Cluster care or cluster housing are shared  
living spaces for frail seniors with full-  
time assisted living services. Each cluster  
housing brings together eight to 11 seniors  
with complex needs in a group living  
environment. The clusters have private  
studio units and a common living, dining  
and kitchen area, where residents can  
gather to socialize and enjoy mealtimes.  
PSWs staff the assisted-living clusters  
24 hours a day for safety and assistance,  
according to each resident's needs. The  
model enables support for seniors who are  
experiencing advanced frailty, including  
those with mental health and neurological  
disorders such as Alzheimer's disease  
and other dementias. This program keeps  
clients living safely at home, alleviating





pressure off hospitals and reducing the number of patients waiting for alternate care settings.

Cluster care is extremely cost-effective with an average **per bed cost of \$94.68 per day or \$34,558 a year**, based on operating 11 beds in each unit. When compared to the average cost per patient per day in long-term care at **\$201<sup>11</sup> or \$73,365 a year**, **investment in cluster care could be a cost savings to the health system of \$38,807 per patient per year**. An even larger savings in comparison to the hospital average cost per patient per day being \$730 to support an ALC patient<sup>12</sup>. **WoodGreen is therefore seeking \$1,140,000 annually to operate**

#### **cluster care assisted living for three units of 10-11 beds (30-33 clients).**

Sustainability and human health resources are essential for the community care sector. WoodGreen specifically employs PSWs who service various programs, including our assisted living and cluster care model, in-home support, and adult day programs. PSWs in home and community care make less money than LTC and hospital PSWs, which makes recruitment and retention challenging.

According to a survey conducted by the OCSA, as of 2021, 14.2 per cent of full-time PSW positions were vacant which is a 331 per cent increase in vacant full-time PSW

positions in the home and community care sector. Across the home and community care sector vacancy rates for PSWs have nearly tripled in comparison to the 2020.<sup>13</sup>

WoodGreen strongly supports further investment to raise wages of home and community care workers from the current average of \$19 an hour to \$24 an hour to ensure wage parity between PSWs working in LTC and home and community care. This is essential to improving retention and recruitment of PSWs in the sector.

**An additional \$468,000 would help WoodGreen increase our PSWs' wages to \$24 an hour based on our current staffing and fee for service model.**



COMMUNITY CARE, SENIOR  
WELLNESS AND MENTAL HEALTH  
AND ADDICTIONS

**\$3.159 M**

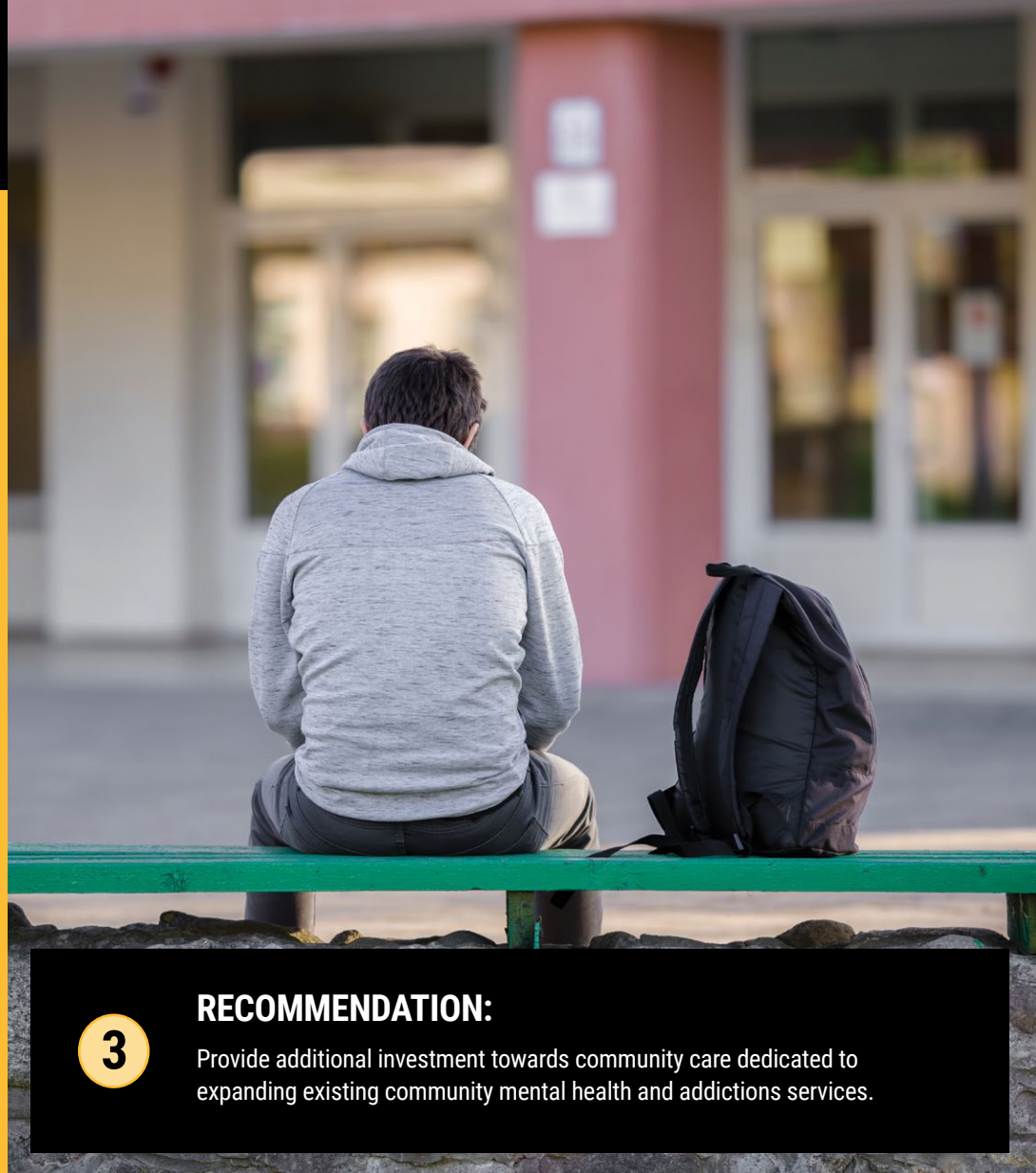
to expand staffing and resources for COSS

**\$834,000**

to expand the Toronto Seniors Helpline to  
24 hours of service a day in Toronto

**\$576,642**

to support operating costs, staffing  
and training for Walk-In Counselling services



**3**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Provide additional investment towards community care dedicated to expanding existing community mental health and addictions services.

**\$612,000+** potential cost savings  
for individuals diverted  
to Walk-in Counselling.

WoodGreen provides support to older adults and seniors with physical, cognitive, mental, developmental, and substance-use health challenges through programs such as the **Toronto Seniors Helpline and the Crisis Outreach Service for Seniors (COSS) program**. These programs help provide wrap-around support along the continuum of care for older adults. The uptake of these programs significantly exceeded their provincial targets and need additional funding to increase services.

The Toronto Seniors Helpline provides telephone-based service navigation to older

adults, seniors and caregivers, as well as supportive counselling to reduce isolation, crisis de-escalation for those in crisis and activation of in-person supports when needed. **Last year, the helpline received and responded to 49,780 calls, nearly triple its target.** Most calls received by the Toronto Seniors Helpline are related to loneliness, isolation, crisis de-escalation and connection to community care resources.

COSS provides on-call crisis intervention and outreach for older adults (65+) with dementia, addictions or mental health

crises, available daily to seniors living in the city of Toronto. **Last year, COSS surpassed its target reaching 2,012 clients and 25,922 crisis visits, nearly double its target.** There are many common situations such as seniors not caring for themselves, concerning behaviours related to dementia/mental health/substance use, elder abuse, bed bugs, hoarding, precarious housing, and not coping well in the community. COSS is responsive to seniors' needs and collaborates with appropriate health and legal authorities when required.





**\$11M**

Approximate amount saved per year in healthcare costs if each new Crisis Outreach for Senior Services client avoids going to the hospital for one day per month.

### Walk-in Counselling services

From April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2022, WoodGreen's Walk-in Counselling services has provided a **total of 4,080 counseling sessions (totalling 6,120 hours of free, same-day psychotherapy) to adults and youth** to address numerous concerns, including anxiety, depression, anger management and various relationship challenges. The top hospital referral sources come from The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), St. Michael's Hospital and Michael Garron Hospital. Walk-in counselling services continue to be in high demand and further investment is needed to expand them.

### By the Numbers

WoodGreen calls on the Ontario Government to invest \$4.6 million:

- **\$3,159,000 to expand staffing and resources for COSS;** the additional funding to provide an additional 15 full-time staff – including **five new positions** (e.g. two nurse practitioners and three occupational therapists) to better support the **medical needs of clients** in the community, and **10 new full-time crisis staff**. This would allow WoodGreen to serve an additional **1,260 new clients per year**. **If each of those new clients avoided going to the hospital for one day per month for a year, it would save approximately \$11,037,600 per year in healthcare costs**, based off the costs to stay in hospital for one day (\$730).
- **\$834,000** of the \$5.4 million to **expand the Toronto Seniors Helpline to 24 hours of service a day in Toronto** and hire four more full-time staff to **provide 87 additional hours of operation** that we estimate will serve an additional 9,000 clients per year. This request is supported by all Toronto region Ontario Health Teams (OHTs).
- **\$576,642 to support operating costs, staffing and training for Walk-In Counselling services.** By diverting clients from using costlier forms of care, at current rates of \$100-\$300 per hour (market rate), is a potential cost savings of \$612,000 - \$1,836,000 for individuals.

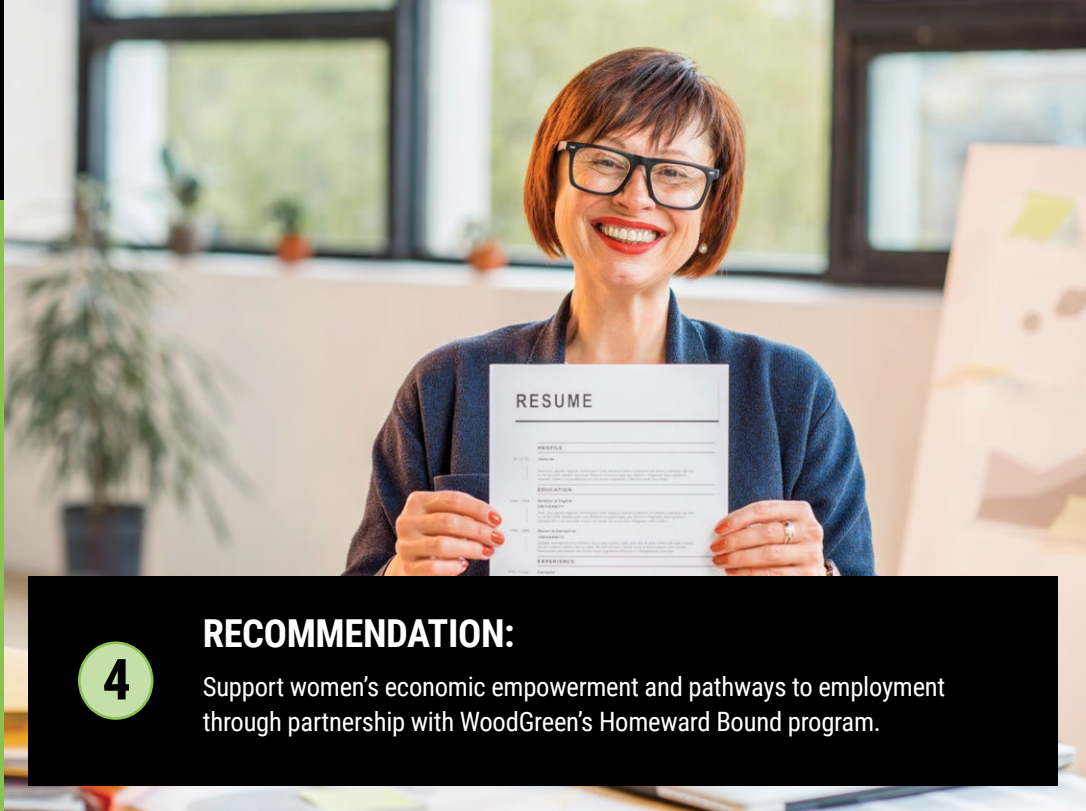




## WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

**\$3.968 M**

over four years to support job coaches,  
social workers and family resource  
workers for the Homeward Bound program.



**4**

### RECOMMENDATION:

Support women's economic empowerment and pathways to employment through partnership with WoodGreen's Homeward Bound program.

Homeward Bound is a social and financial support program which provides critical interventions for single mothers and families relying on social assistance, offering a wrap-around multi-service support package including education, housing, childcare and access to employment. A social return on investment (SROI) analysis in 2017 by the Constellation Consulting Group determined **that every dollar invested in Homeward Bound is approximately six dollars created in social and economic value. Even more, as of 2017, \$48 million has been saved through reduced social assistance and increased tax revenues from the program.**

Programs that will help Ontarians stay off social assistance and out of poverty are

**87%**

**Employment rate among  
Homeward Bound  
graduates, vs. 6% for  
those entering the  
program.**

crucial, especially for women. Females made up the majority of Ontario Works beneficiaries in 2020-21 with 64 per cent, about 77 per cent more than males.<sup>14</sup> Ontario requires program solutions that ensure people remain employed and do not return to social assistance. According to the Ontario Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Service, the percentage of cases that exited Ontario Works (between October – December 2018) that returned within one year (by December 2019) was 33 per cent<sup>15</sup>. Homeward Bound has a proven record to get women employed and off Ontario Works without returning. The SROI analysis found the employment rate amongst participants entering Homeward Bound was 6 per cent compared with 87 per cent up to five years after graduation. Last year, 100 per cent of Homeward Bound graduates were successfully employed in 2020-2021.

This program has already been modelled through affiliate partners as in the case of Durham Region, Halton Region, Peterborough and Brantford. The Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendships Centres (OFIFC) also adapted the model with indigenous cultural considerations.

WoodGreen is seeking partnership with the Ontario government to consider adopting the Homeward Bound model as a person-

**\$23.8M**

**could be saved through  
reduced social assistance and  
increased tax revenues with  
this investment in WoodGreen's  
Homeward Bound.**

centred social assistance system with a proven track record of getting people back to work. **WoodGreen is seeking partnership through a four-year agreement, where funding of \$992,000 annually, total of approximately \$3,968,000 over four years, will support case counsellors, social workers and family resource workers for the program. Based on the (SROI) 2017 analysis, approximately \$23.8 million could be saved through reduced social assistance and increased tax revenues with this investment.** Through this pilot, collectively we may gather further cost-savings evidence, mobilize key learnings, outcomes, practices and explore potential expansion models.



## SUPPORTIVE AND COMMUNITY HOUSING

# Invest

additional funding to the City of Toronto  
to backfill the loss in revenue resulting from  
The More Homes Built Faster Act

# Amend

the More Homes Built Faster Act maximum  
affordability period for inclusionary zoning  
from 25 years to 50 years.

# Continue

to provide surplus and underutilized land  
to non-profit developers for affordable  
housing as part of the More Homes  
for Everyone plan.

# Develop

a one-stop spot streamlined process  
for supportive housing addressing needs.

# 1:15

Between 2011 and 2016,  
it was estimated that for every  
one new affordable housing unit  
created in Canada, 15 existing  
affordable units were lost.



## RECOMMENDATION:

5

Sustain supportive and community housing by providing funds to municipal housing programs, amending legislation for the inclusionary zoning maximum affordability period and streamlining processes for supportive housing funds and subsidies.

**Invest** additional funding to the City of Toronto to backfill the loss in revenue resulting from the *More Homes Built Faster Act* removing “housing services” from the list of eligible development charges services. For most non-profit developers, development charge incentives and other incentives are already in place through concessions municipalities make under municipal capital facility status. The legislation gave a cost savings to non-profits with market units, however, the legislation is now threatening the ability of a municipality to raise funds to assist non-profits with developments. To clarify, our concern relates to the availability of a municipal contribution, not to its source. Those revenues contribute to important housing programs, such as Create TO, Open-Door and Housing Now. WoodGreen relies on these programs for the development of our affordable housing portfolio, in which we have a pipeline of 2,000 units over the next decade.

- Our 1117 Gerrard St. E building was a \$16 million project where governments and community support came together to develop an affordable housing building. The city joint funding from the Open-Door Program, with a social impact fund and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) National Housing Co-investment Fund (NHCF) developed a mixed of Rent-Geared-to-Income and Market Rent units for seniors 59+, which

would not have been possible without financial contributions from the city.

- The ability of non-profits to partner may now also be impaired. For example, in 2021, WoodGreen signed a public-private partnership agreement with Sun Life and The Daniels Corporation (Daniels) and the City of Toronto to integrate long-term, affordable, rental living for single mothers in their multi-family residential development. The City of Toronto contributed \$5.1 million to WoodGreen for the project. WoodGreen was able to obtain a head lease and manages 34 affordable housing units in this 346-unit building (10 per cent). Under the agreement, Sun Life and Daniels established a 40-year lease commitment with WoodGreen, allowing for the creation of long-term affordable housing in downtown Toronto, a project not possible without municipal contributions. This kind of program is creative, entrepreneurial and opportunistic. It needs local response and support. By removing the municipality from this equation, the proposed legislation will have the effect of slowing the supply of below market housing.

**Amend** the *More Homes Built Faster Act* under the maximum affordability period for inclusionary zoning to be increased from 25 years to 50 years, which is the affordable maximum used by WoodGreen. Inclusionary zoning is a key tool for



development of affordable housing and 25 years is not nearly enough time to build a material stock of affordable units. It is a major concern that existing stock of affordable housing are transitioning to market-based units. Many affordable housing units developed on a 15-year operating agreement are coming to an end and developers are transitioning them from affordable rent-geared-to-income units into market-based housing. Between 2011 and 2016, it was estimated that for every

one new affordable housing unit created in Canada, fifteen existing affordable units were lost.<sup>16</sup> Ontario is losing existing stock and needs longer affordability periods.

**Continue** to commit to provide surplus and underutilized land to non-profit developers for affordable housing as part of the More Homes for Everyone plan.

**Develop** a one-stop spot streamlined process for addressing supportive housing needs including rental assistance, rent subsidies and operating funding. An

ongoing challenge for WoodGreen and other non-profit developers is the absence of a streamlined process for subsidies and operating funding required to provide seniors and other disadvantaged people with wrap-around services in these supportive housing buildings. Non-profit developers also need upfront rent subsidies that are available through three ministries but are not guaranteed when budgeting the development and determining the feasibility of a supportive housing project.

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