



Deputy Mayor

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NIGHT ECONOMY CHAMPION, CITY OF TORONTO

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MEDIA RELEASE
Immediate release

Deputy Mayor Ainslie Raises Urgent Need for Stable Housing Funding at OBCM

Toronto — February 6, 2026 — During the Ontario Big City Mayors (OBCM) meeting this morning, Deputy Mayor Ainslie called on Minister of Finance Peter Bethlenfalvy to provide stable and predictable funding for the Canada–Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB). He outlined to the Minister of Finance current funding levels will significantly reduce Toronto’s ability to house people experiencing homelessness.

Deputy Mayor Ainslie highlighted the proven success of the COHB program in Toronto, noting over 9,000 households have been assisted through the program in the past six years. In 2025 alone, 1,761 individuals and families were able to secure housing through COHB support. The current funding allocation will only allow for 610 households to be given the same support

“This program works,” said Deputy Mayor Ainslie. “The Canada–Ontario Housing Benefit has helped thousands of people find and keep housing. Without stable, predictable funding, we are at risk of losing hard-won progress and leaving more people without the support they need.”

Toronto’s public housing waitlist is more than 104,000 households long.

Deputy Mayor Ainslie further outlined, “Housing in Toronto is expensive. If there are units available, a one-bedroom may be \$2,000 -\$2,500 if a person is lucky. That is way out of reach of anyone who is currently in our shelter system, or who is on limited income such as ODSP (the Ontario Disability Support Program) or Ontario Works”

Deputy Mayor Ainslie emphasized predictable, long-term funding is essential for municipalities to plan effectively and respond to ongoing housing needs, not only for Toronto but throughout Ontario as municipalities continue to face record demand for housing and homelessness supports.

The Ontario Big City Mayors is urging the province to commit to sustained predictable funding levels for Canada–Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB). Evidence reflects the demonstrated success of the program and the growing need for housing stability across Ontario.

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