An Update on Homelessness Programs in Ontario

Financial Accountability Office of Ontario

Presentation

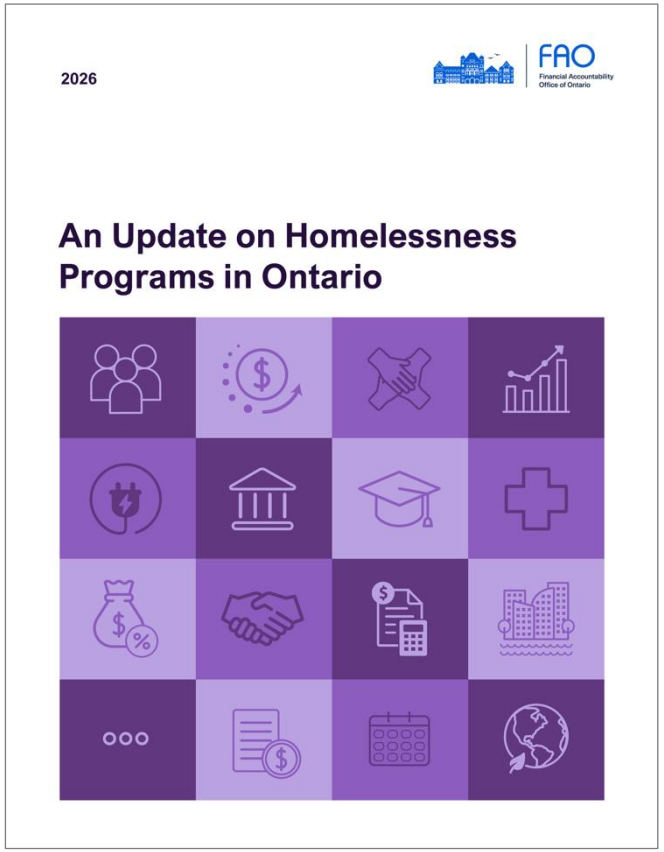
Overview

- The Government of Ontario (the Province), through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH), provides homelessness programs in collaboration with municipalities.

- These programs fund emergency shelters; supportive housing; housing assistance, including rent banks and help finding housing; and community outreach and support services.

- At the request of a Member of Provincial Parliament, this report:
  - reviews historical and projected spending on provincial homelessness programs,
  - estimates the number of households supported by provincial homelessness programs, and
  - projects the known population experiencing homelessness in Ontario through 2028-29.

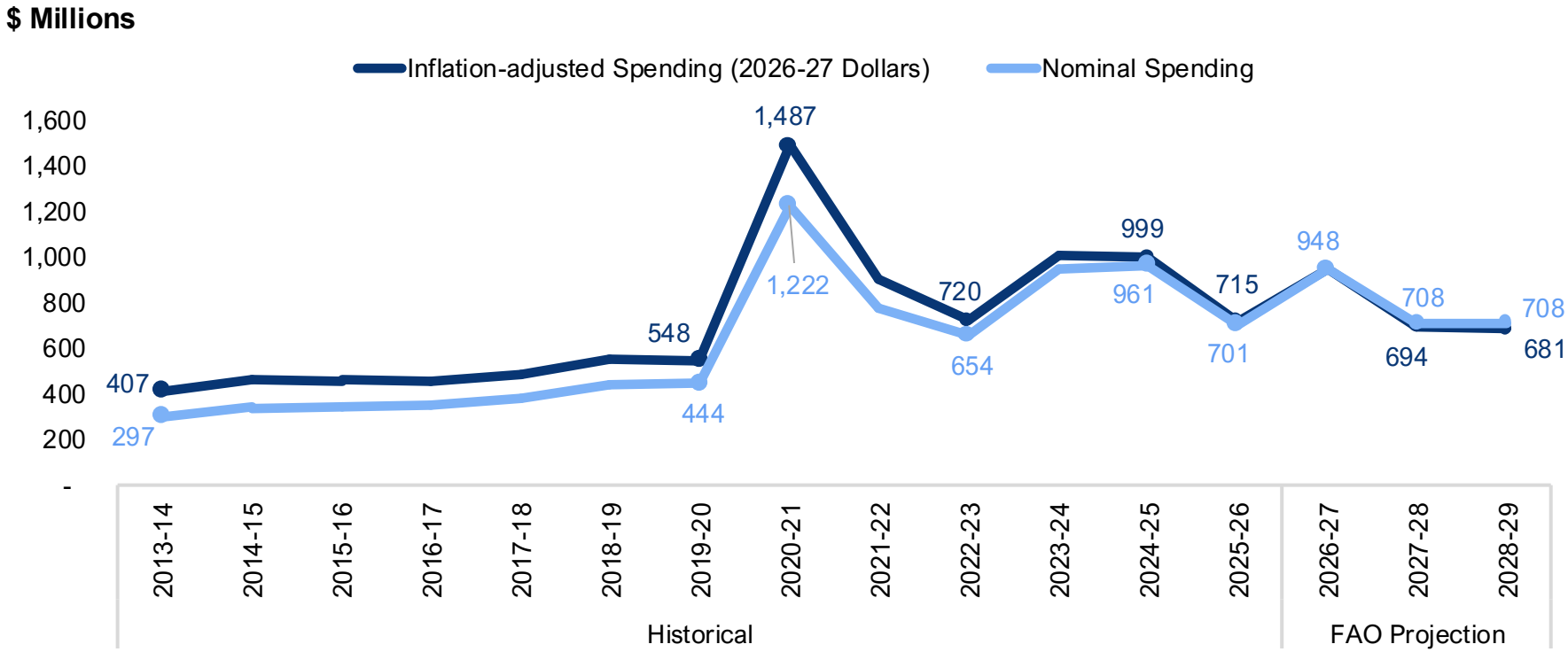
- This report focuses on homelessness programs governed by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH). Federal and municipal homelessness services that are provided outside the provincial framework are excluded from this report.



Provincial Spending on Homelessness Programs

Spending on Provincial Homelessness Programs

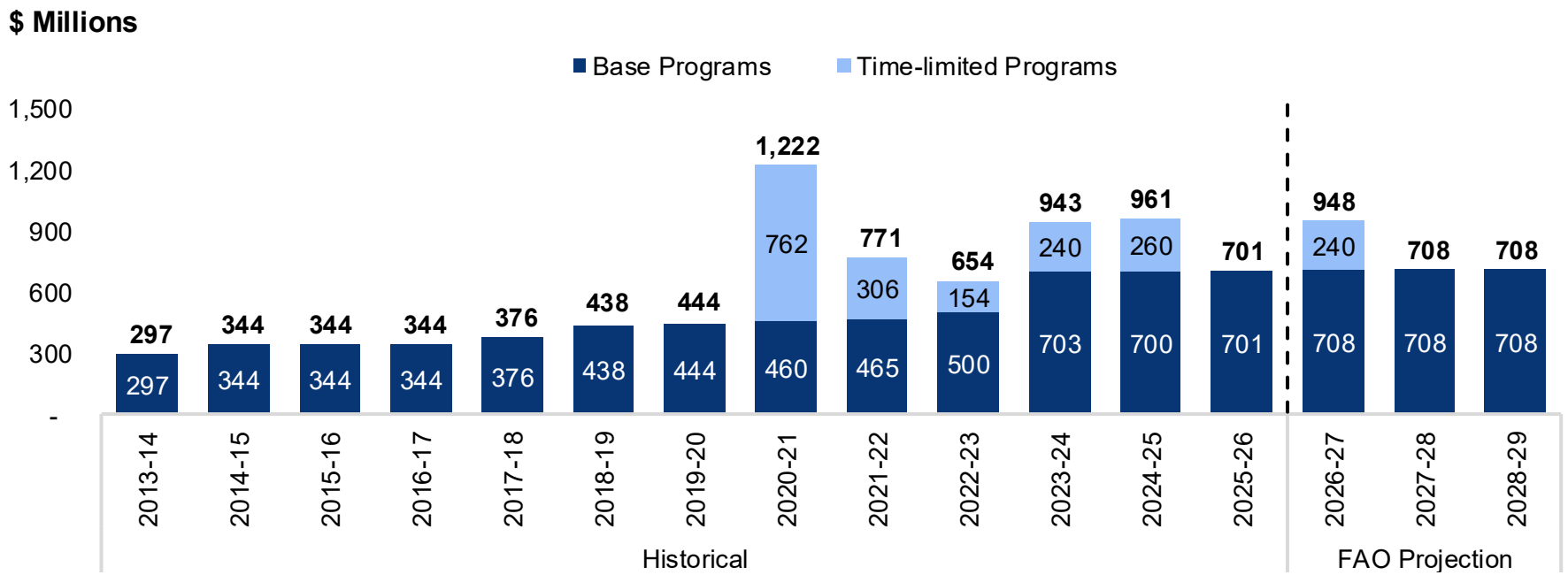
- On a nominal dollar basis, spending is projected to increase from $297 million in 2013-14 to $708 million in 2028-29 (average annual growth rate of 6.0 per cent).
- On an inflation-adjusted basis (i.e., real 2026-27 dollars), spending is projected to increase from $407 million in 2013-14 to $681 million in 2028-29 (average annual growth rate of 3.5 per cent).



Source: FAO analysis of information provided by MMAH.

Spending by Program

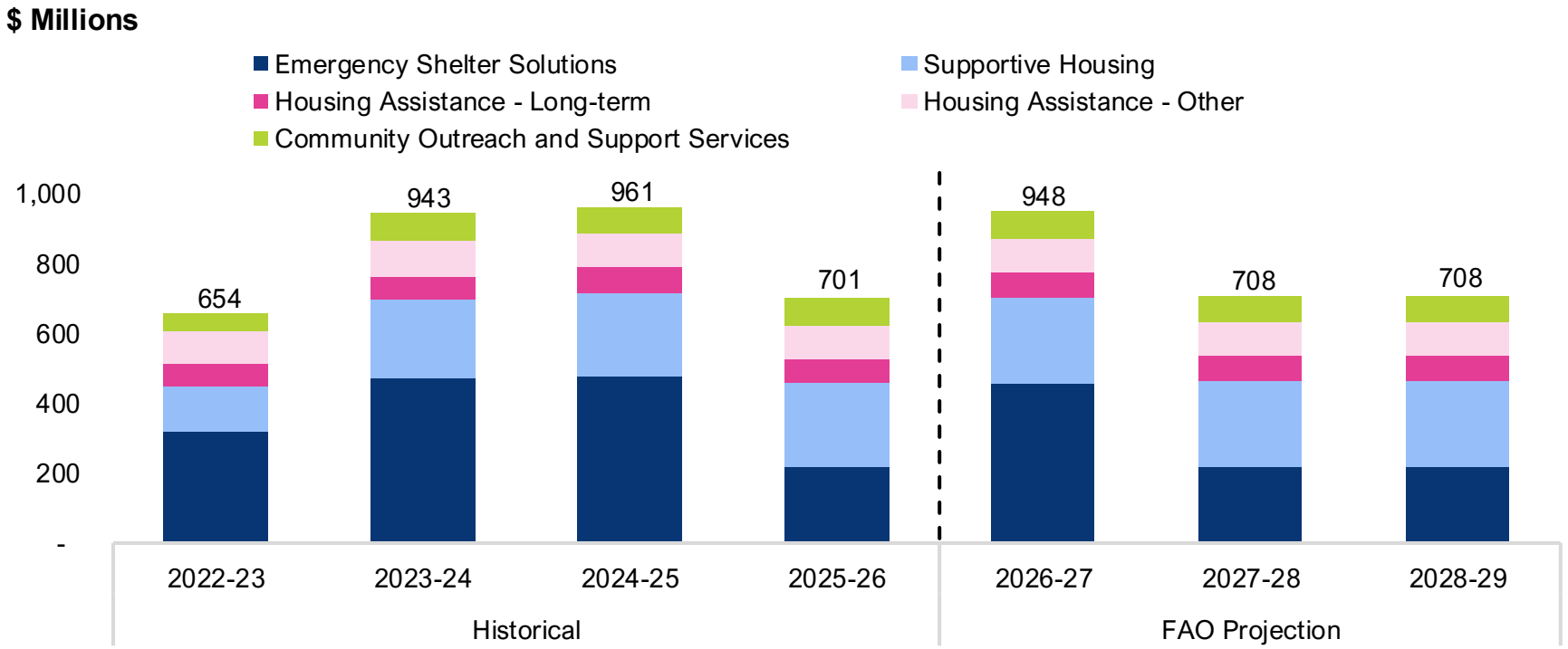
- The FAO divides homelessness programs into two categories:
  - Base programs, which include the Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) and the Indigenous Supportive Housing Program (ISHP).
  - Time-limited programs, which include the Social Services Relief Fund, New Deal Agreement with the City of Toronto and the Ontario-Ottawa Agreement with the City of Ottawa, and the Encampment Response Initiative.
- Since 2020-21, provincial spending on homelessness programs has fluctuated due to time-limited funding.



Source: FAO analysis of information provided by MMAH.

Spending by Operating Service Category

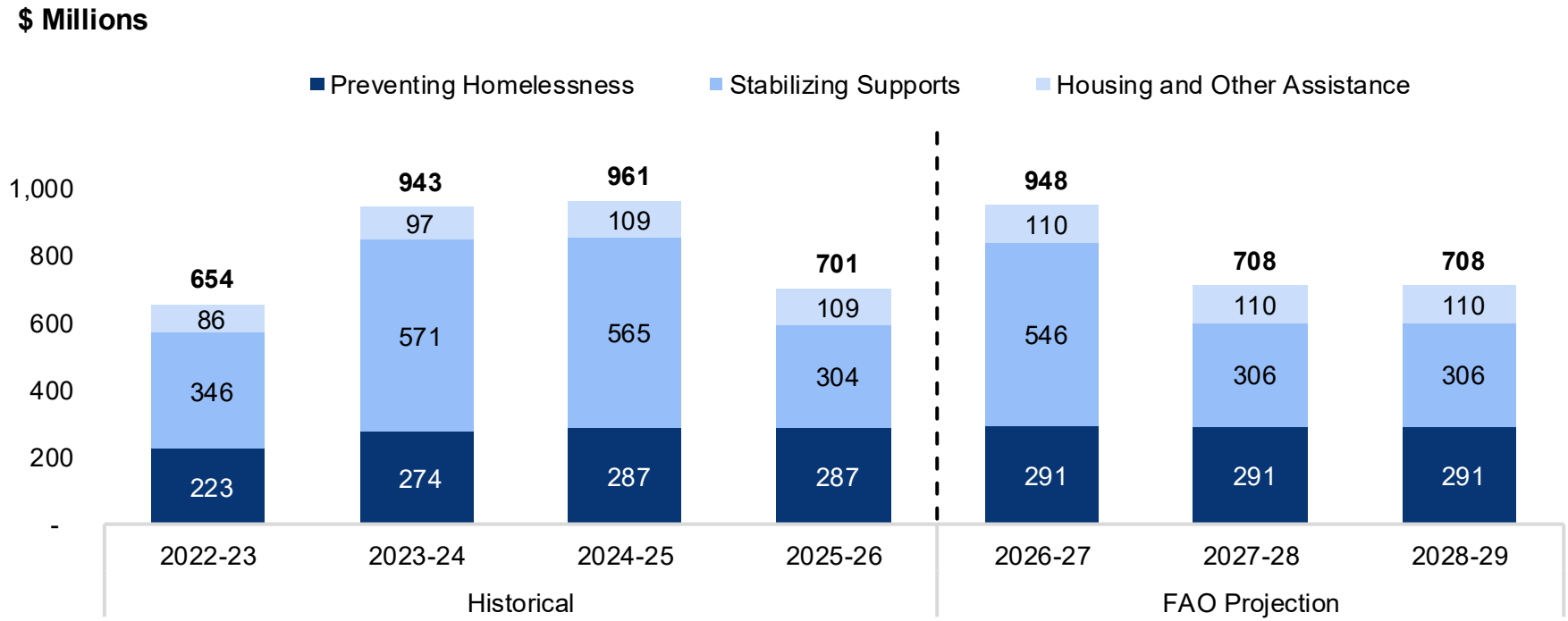
- Provincial homelessness programs are grouped into four broad operating service categories: Emergency Shelter Solutions, Supportive Housing, Housing Assistance (long-term and other), and Community Outreach and Support Services.
- Spending on Emergency Shelter Solutions is projected to experience the most variation from 2022-23 to 2028-29.



Source: FAO analysis of information provided by MMAH.

Spending by Purpose

- The FAO defines three main purposes for provincial homelessness programs: preventing households at risk of homelessness from entering homelessness, providing immediate stabilizing supports for households experiencing homelessness, and providing housing and other assistance to help households exit homelessness.
- Only funding for stabilizing supports is projected to be lower in 2028-29 compared to 2022-23.

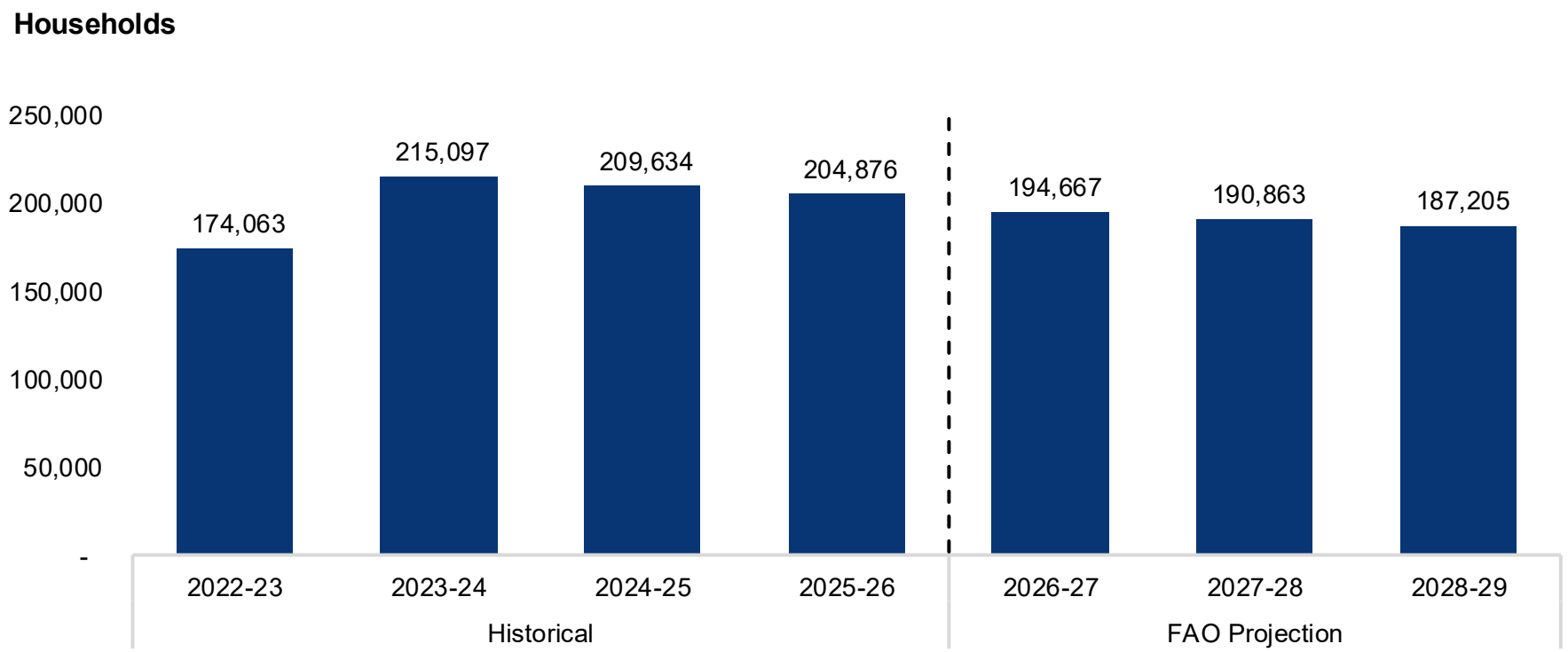


Source: FAO analysis of information provided by MMAH.

Households Supported by Homelessness Programs

Households Supported by Provincial Homelessness Programs

- The number of households supported by provincial homelessness programs is projected to increase from an estimated 174,063 households in 2022-23 to 215,097 in 2023-24 then decline to 187,205 households in 2028-29.



Note: Historical values are FAO estimates.
Source: FAO analysis of information provided by MMAH.

Households Supported by Base Programs

- The FAO estimates that the number of households supported by base homelessness programs peaked in 2023-24.
- The decline in households supported from 2023-24 to 2028-29 is primarily due to lower projected inflation-adjusted base program spending.

	Historical (Households)				FAO Projected (Households)		
Program	**2022-23**	**2023-24**	**2024-25**	**2025-26**	**2026-27**	**2027-28**	**2028-29**
Homelessness Prevention Program	165,396	196,673	185,457	179,047	176,942	173,484	170,159
Indigenous Supportive Housing Program	7,599	11,890	17,675	17,348	17,726	17,379	17,046
Base Total	**172,995**	**208,563**	**203,132**	**196,395**	**194,667**	**190,863**	**187,205**

Note: Historical values are FAO estimates.
Source: FAO analysis of information provided by MMAH.

Households Supported by Time-limited Programs

- The FAO estimates households supported by time-limited programs declined from 2022-23 to 2025-26 and that there will be no households supported starting in 2026-27.

Program	Historical (Households)				FAO Projected (Households)		
	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Social Services Relief Fund	30,965	–	–	–	–	–	–
New Deal Agreement and Ontario-Ottawa Agreement	–	23,359	21,404	23,187*	–	–	–
Time-limited Total	**30,965**	**23,359**	**21,404**	**23,187***	–	–	–

* Based on information provided by the Province, the FAO expects a final payment of $240 million under the New Deal Agreementand the Ontario-Ottawa Agreement, for services provided in 2025-26, to be recorded in the 2026-27 fiscal year.
Note: Historical values are FAO estimates.
Source: FAO analysis of information provided by MMAH.

Households Supported by Operating Service Category

- The FAO estimates that the number of households supported by operating service category peaked in either 2023-24 or 2024-25.
- The projected decline in the number of households supported over the projection period is due to the expiry of time-limited programs and lower inflation-adjusted program spending.

	Historical (Households)				FAO Projection (Households)		
Operating Service Category	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Emergency Shelter Solutions	42,705	59,112	55,611	52,453	44,747	43,872	43,031
Supportive Housing	14,129	22,803	26,620	26,139	26,448	25,931	25,434
Housing Assistance – Long-term	7,817	9,022	7,695	7,544	7,395	7,251	7,112
Housing Assistance – Other	41,395	52,859	54,310	53,247	52,283	51,261	50,279
Community Outreach and Support Services	116,210	116,491	116,937	114,654	112,773	110,569	108,450

Note: Historical values are FAO estimates.
Source: FAO analysis of information provided by MMAH.

Households Supported by Purpose

- The FAO estimates that the number of households supported through prevention supports and stabilizing supports peaked in 2023-24.
- The number of households experiencing homelessness supported through housing and other assistance peaked in 2024-25.

	Historical (Households)				FAO Projection (Households)		
Purpose	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Preventing households at risk of homelessness from entering homelessness	96,906	113,997	106,195	104,147	103,013	101,000	99,064
Stabilizing supports for households experiencing homelessness	70,192	92,890	89,975	86,722	80,431	78,859	77,348
Providing housing and other assistance to help households exit homelessness	15,565	18,392	26,258	25,753	25,439	24,942	24,464

Note: Historical values are FAO estimates.
Source: FAO analysis of information provided by MMAH.

Population Experiencing Homelessness in Ontario

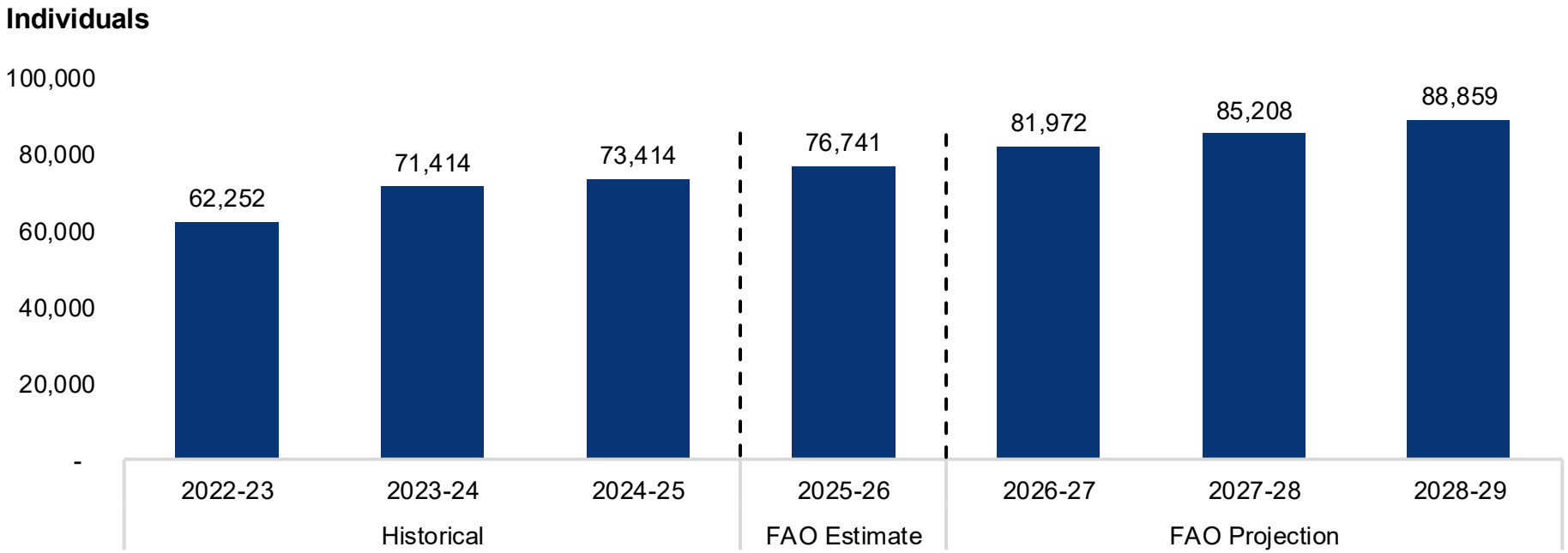
By-Name List

- In March 2021, the Province directed Ontario's municipalities to implement a By-Name List (BNL) to enumerate and record demographic information about the local population experiencing homelessness and to help connect people experiencing homelessness to services and supports.

- Importantly, the BNL represents the 'known' population experiencing homelessness in Ontario and does not represent the total homelessness population. This is due to people experiencing hidden homelessness who are not known to municipalities and individuals who have not consented to be on the BNL.

Historical Trends and Outlook

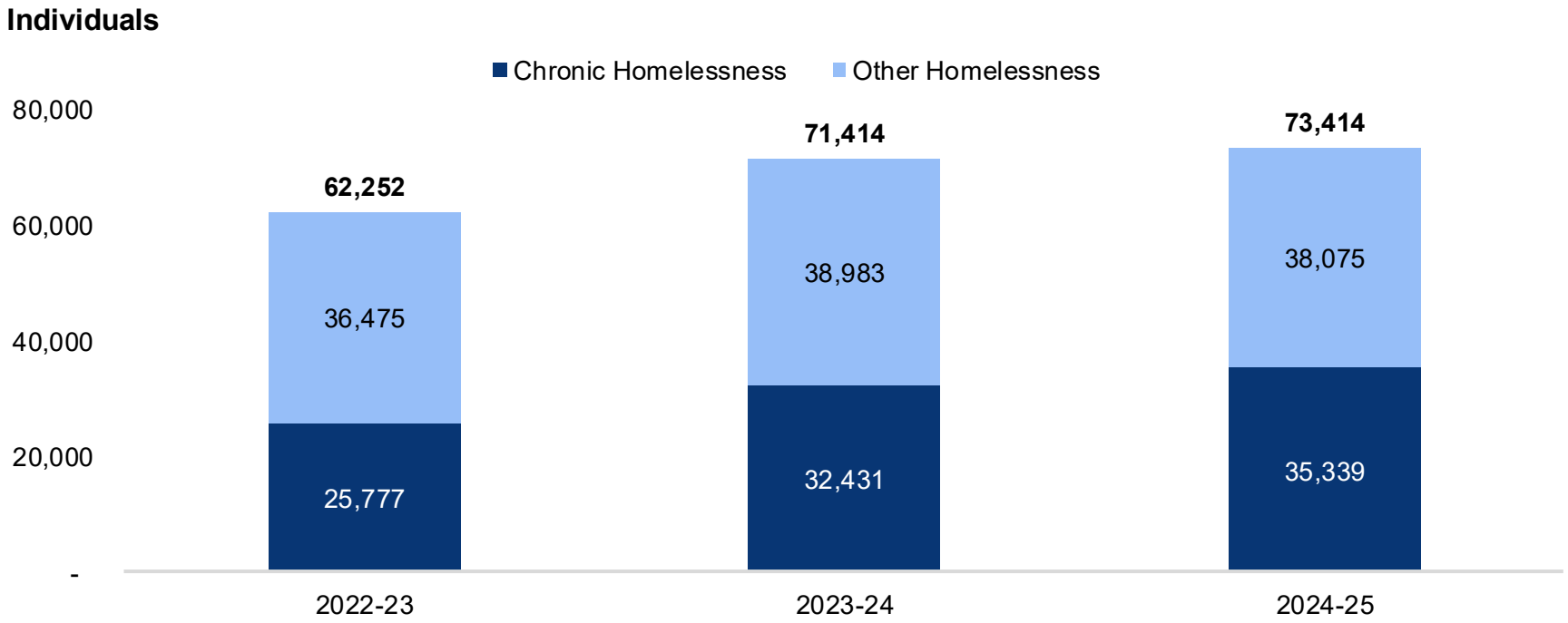
- From 2022-23 to 2025-26, the known population experiencing homelessness increased by 23.3%, driven by declining housing affordability and strong population growth, partially offset by the expansion of provincial homelessness and housing supports and an increase in federally funded supports for asylum claimants in 2025-26.
- From 2025-26 to 2028-29, the FAO projects that the known population experiencing homelessness will increase by 15.8%, as population growth slows and housing affordability improves, partially offset by declining provincial homelessness program support and slower growth in provincial housing supports.



Note: The By-Name List (BNL) has important limitations: the BNL may underrepresent the total population experiencing homelessness, including individuals who have not consented to be on the BNL and people experiencing hidden homelessness who are not known to municipalities; the BNL may double count individuals who have moved across municipalities; and ongoing changes and refinements to information collection processes by municipalities may affect comparability over time.
Source: By-Name List data provided by MMAH and FAO calculations.

Types of Homelessness

- In 2024-25, the latest year with available data, the BNL recorded 73,414 individuals who experienced homelessness in Ontario, of which:
  - 35,339 individuals experienced chronic homelessness, an increase of 37.1 per cent from 2022-23.
  - 38,075 individuals experienced other types of homelessness, an increase of 4.4 per cent from 2022-23.



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Source: FAO analysis of By-Name List data provided by MMAH.

Demographic Analysis

- Of the 73,414 individuals who experienced homelessness on the BNL in 2024-25:
  - 9,803 (13.4 per cent) were youth and 63,611 (86.6 per cent) were adults.
  - 9,695 (13.2 per cent) identified as Indigenous and 63,719 (86.8 per cent) did not identify as Indigenous.

Demographic Category	Individuals 2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Change 2022-23 to 2024-25	% Change 2022-23 to 2024-25
Youth	7,765	9,042	9,803	2,038	*26.2*
Adults	54,487	62,372	63,611	9,124	*16.7*
Total	**62,252**	**71,414**	**73,414**	**11,162**	***17.9***
Indigenous	8,504	9,075	9,695	1,191	*14.0*
Non-Indigenous	53,748	62,339	63,719	9,971	*18.6*
Total	**62,252**	**71,414**	**73,414**	**11,162**	***17.9***

Note: 'Youth' refers to individuals experiencing homelessness under the age of 25 living independently of parents/caregivers. 'Adults' refers to individuals experiencing homelessness aged 25 and over. However, 'adults' may include some children under the age of 16 who are accompanied by parents/caregivers. The By-Name List (BNL) has important limitations: the BNL may underrepresent the total population experiencing homelessness, including individuals who have not consented to be on the BNL and people experiencing hidden homelessness who are not known to municipalities; the BNL may double count individuals who have moved across municipalities; and ongoing changes and refinements to information collection processes by municipalities may affect comparability over time.
Source: FAO analysis of By-Name List data provided by MMAH.

Geographic Analysis

- The BNL records individuals experiencing homelessness by service manager area. The majority of people experiencing homelessness in Ontario are in large urban centres. In 2024-25, the City of Toronto recorded the largest number of individuals who experienced homelessness at 19,462.

Service Manager Area	Individuals			Change 2022-23 to 2024-25	% Change 2022-23 to 2024-25
	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25		
City of Toronto	21,192	21,369	19,462	-1,730	*-8.2*
City of Ottawa	7,882	10,934	9,431	1,549	*19.7*
City of London	3,868	4,126	4,576	708	*18.3*
City of Windsor	2,606	2,922	4,007	1,401	*53.8*
City of Hamilton	3,716	3,674	3,744	28	*0.8*
County of Simcoe	2,580	3,204	3,504	924	*35.8*
Regional Municipality of Peel	1,721	3,033	3,279	1,558	*90.5*
Regional Municipality of Niagara	2,914	3,230	2,709	-205	*-7.0*
Regional Municipality of York	1,388	2,006	2,493	1,105	*79.6*
Regional Municipality of Waterloo	1,393	1,396	2,016	623	44.7
All Other	12,992	15,520	18,193	5,201	40.0
Total	**62,252**	**71,414**	**73,414**	**11,162**	***17.9***

Note: The By-Name List (BNL) has important limitations: the BNL may underrepresent the total population experiencing homelessness, including individuals who have not consented to be on the BNL and people experiencing hidden homelessness who are not known to municipalities; the BNL may double count individuals who have moved across municipalities; and ongoing changes and refinements to information collection processes by municipalities may affect comparability over time.
Source: FAO analysis of By-Name List data provided by MMAH.

Geographic Analysis: Individuals per 100,000 Population

- After adjusting for population size, four of the 10 service manager areas with the highest rates of homelessness were in Northern Ontario. The highest rate of homelessness in 2024-25 was in the Cochrane District at 1,097 individuals experiencing homelessness per 100,000 population.

Service Manager Area	Individuals per 100,000 Population			Change 2022-23 to 2024-25	% Change 2022-23 to 2024-25
	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25		
Cochrane District	525	793	1,097	571	*108.7*
Rainy River District	308	427	834	526	*170.9*
City of Windsor	569	617	824	255	*44.8*
City of Ottawa	722	971	809	87	*12.1*
Nipissing District	552	988	804	251	*45.5*
City of Brantford	739	777	793	54	*7.3*
City of London	706	728	787	81	*11.5*
City of Kingston	687	706	695	7	*1.1*
Thunder Bay District	976	611	604	-372	*-38.1*
City of Toronto	701	674	594	-107	-15.3
All Other	230	276	306	76	33.0
Total	**408**	**453**	**454**	**46**	***11.4***

Note: The By-Name List (BNL) has important limitations: the BNL may underrepresent the total population experiencing homelessness, including individuals who have not consented to be on the BNL and people experiencing hidden homelessness who are not known to municipalities; the BNL may double count individuals who have moved across municipalities; and ongoing changes and refinements to information collection processes by municipalities may affect comparability over time.
Source: FAO analysis of By-Name List data provided by MMAH and Statistics Canada, "Population estimates, July 1, by census division, 2021 boundaries", Table: 17-10-0152-01.

Thank you!

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