

UPDATE

from the Ministry of Municipal
Affairs and Housing



July 2007

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MESSAGE FROM MINISTER JOHN GERRETSEN

The Ontario Legislature has risen after a busy session. This past winter and spring, our government introduced important legislation. [Read more](#)



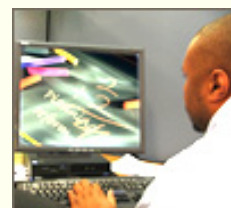
\$185 MILLION ROOF FOR ONTARIO FAMILIES

It is called ROOF. It stands for Rental Opportunity for Ontario Families. And it means new help for thousands of working families across the province. [Read more](#)



THE LEARNING CENTRE FOR MUNICIPALITIES

Municipalities now have one-stop access to Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing education, training products and resources. [Read more](#)



ACCESSIBLE HOME OPENS NEW HORIZONS FOR CHATHAM FAMILY

A Chatham family's wish for an accessible home has come true thanks to a partnership among the federal, provincial and municipal governments and to the support of a local agency. [Read more](#)



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Message from Minister John Gerretsen



Welcome to the fourth issue of **UPDATE**, the e-newsletter keeping you informed of news and progress in the municipal and housing sectors.

The Ontario Legislature has risen after a busy session. This past winter and spring, our government introduced and the legislature passed the Safeguarding and Sustaining Ontario's Water Act, 2007, the Endangered Species Act, 2007, the Independent Police Review Act, 2007 and the Safer Roads for a Safer Ontario Act, 2007. Additionally, Brownfields and housing allowances changes were approved under the Budget Measures and Interim Appropriation Act, 2007.

Since taking office, one of the priorities of the McGuinty government has been to strengthen Ontario's communities. It has been my pleasure since 2003 to introduce many pieces of legislation aimed at doing just that, including the Greenbelt Act, the new Municipal Act and a new Planning Act.

This spring I have had the good fortune to attend the conferences and meetings of various associations and groups with whom our ministry has a shared interest. These include those organized by the Large Urban Mayors' Caucus of Ontario, the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association, the Ontario Association of Architects and the Municipal Law Section of the Ontario Bar Association. I find dialogue on such occasions to be invaluable in my work as a minister.

As the summer begins, the various tables of the [Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review](#) are meeting regularly and will continue to do so over the coming months. The Review partners — the province, The Association of Municipalities of Ontario and the City of Toronto — will keep you updated on the discussions and hard work being carried out at the Review Tables.

I look forward to receiving your [feedback](#) on this issue of **UPDATE** and encourage you to forward it to your colleagues and friends. If **UPDATE** has been forwarded to you and you would like to continue receiving it, please take the time to [subscribe](#).

John Gerretsen
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

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\$185 Million ROOF For Ontario Families

It is called ROOF.

It stands for Rental Opportunity for Ontario Families.

And it means new help for thousands of working families across the province.

Beginning in January 2008, the \$185 million program will provide a housing allowance of \$100 per month to more than 27,000 low income working families struggling with housing affordability in Ontario.

"It's a straightforward and effective way to give a helping hand to working families," says Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing John Gerretsen.

"Some of them will be families that recently arrived in Ontario, and are struggling to make their way in our great province. Others will be long-time residents who need a helping hand.

"We want to reach out to give them that extra assistance they need to move forward with their lives."

To be eligible for ROOF, a family must meet all of the following criteria:

- Work and have an earned income of at least \$5,000 and an Adjusted Family Net Income below \$20,000;
- Have one or more dependant children under the age of 18;
- Be a renter household paying more than 30 per cent of income towards rent;
- Have less than \$10,000 in liquid assets;
- Not be receiving social assistance or other government shelter assistance; and,
- Be a resident in Ontario and have appropriate status in Canada.

Families can pre-register for the ROOF family housing allowance program on-line at Ontario.ca/ROOF.

There is also a toll-free number for more information at 1-888-544-5101 (TTY: 1-800-263-7776).

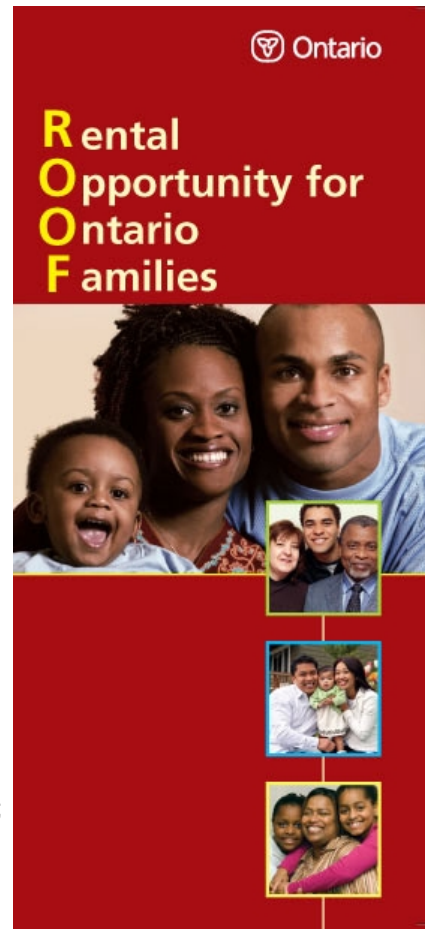
Registration for the program will begin in August, with the first cheques being sent out in January 2008.

The program is the latest step in the government's successful Affordable Housing Strategy.

The centerpiece of the strategy is the [Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program](#), which involves an investment of almost three quarters of a billion dollars.

The result will be up to 20,000 new units of affordable housing for low- income households, victims of domestic violence, and people with mental illness, and 5,000 housing allowances for lower income families in Ontario.

The Strategy also includes the Strong Communities Rent Supplement Program, which provides municipalities with \$50 million per year for 20 years for rent supplements across the province.



The provincial [Rent Bank Program](#) has provided municipalities with more than \$18 million in funding, and to date has prevented some 8,000 low-income households from being evicted due to a missed rent payment.

As well, the new [Residential Tenancies Act](#) improves rights and protections for tenants in Ontario, and restores balance to the system.

In the [2007 provincial budget](#) the government announced the investment of an additional \$392 million to create new affordable housing opportunities for the most vulnerable households in Ontario.

This funding is divided among three new housing programs:

- A \$127 million program to create or rehabilitate rental housing for low-income households through the Delivering Opportunities for Ontario Renters initiative.
- An \$80 million program to benefit off-reserve Aboriginal households.
- \$185 million for ROOF to assist lower-income working families.

Related links:

- [ROOF](#)
- [Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program](#)
- [Rent Bank Program](#)

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The Learning Centre for Municipalities



Municipalities now have one-stop access to Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing education, training products and resources.

[The Learning Centre](#) (TLC) is live on the ministry's website.

The Learning Centre provides the convenience of one-stop access to ministry education, training products and resources.

"We are excited about this new development," Karen Smith, manager, Education and Training Services, says. "While the site is a work in progress, the roster already includes e-learning modules on recent planning reform legislation, presentations on affordable housing, the Ontario Municipal Board Planning Reform checklist for municipalities, and information on changes to the Municipal Act."

Schedules of upcoming ministry training events are also posted on the site.

The Learning Centre was born out of a need for timely, cost-efficient and accessible training services and products for those working in and with municipalities.

E-learning was considered as a quick and efficient means to deliver training from individual desktops 24/7. To date, two e-learning modules have been developed: [Intensification: Using Land Efficiently](#) and [What is the PPS](#) (Provincial Policy Statement)? Other modules will be developed as demands for training arise.

Related Links:

- [The Learning Centre](#)
- [Intensification: Using Land Efficiently](#)
- [What is the PPS?](#)

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Accessible Home Opens New Horizons for Chatham Family



A Chatham family's wish for an accessible home has come true thanks to a partnership among the federal, provincial and municipal governments and to the support of a local agency, Chatham Hope Non Profit.

The government partnership is realizing almost three-quarters of a billion dollars investment through the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Agreement, which was signed in 2005. The federal and provincial governments are providing \$301 million each. The result, including the Chatham project, will be 15,000 new units of affordable housing and 5,000 housing allowances for lower-income families in Ontario.

Traci Jinkerson was a client of Chatham Hope and had lived in one of its houses with her five children, including her son Scotti who has cerebral palsy and is in a wheelchair.

Scotti was confined to one room of that house as his wheelchair would not go through most of the dwelling's doorways.

Chatham Hope approached the community's service manager to discuss the possibility of demolishing its property and rebuilding a four-bedroom modified house. The cost to rebuild the home would be approximately \$200,000.

Chatham Hope applied for funding and received \$70,000 through the [Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program](#) (AHP) - Strong Start initiative.

Traci has now moved with her five children to their new and accessible home. She says her son now has much more independence. "It's awesome. It has made a big difference for him. It's all on one floor, so he can go wherever he wants."

The one-storey, four-bedroom home was specifically designed for wheelchair accessibility. It includes a lift to transport Scotti from his bedroom to the bathroom. All doorways in the house are wide enough to provide barrier-free movement. Thanks to the modifications, Scotti can now move freely throughout his home without any help.

In addition, Chatham Hope installed a radiant heating system and energy-efficient appliances.

Scotti's favourite home improvement is the bathroom, which has a roll-in shower, a change table and a low sink.

The young man could barely contain his emotions when he saw the new home. "I almost cried," he says. "It was so fantastic, it was incredible."

Related Links

- [Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program](#)
- [Gallery of announced affordable housing projects](#)
- [Looking for affordable housing in your community](#)

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