

Overview

Ensuring students have access to housing is critical to attracting and retaining high-quality talent and supporting the social and economic prosperity of communities across the province. When students live near where they study and work, they have greater access to local businesses, community events and engagements, as well as co-op and work opportunities – key components in building strong communities and supporting local economies.

Ontario's universities remain committed to partnering with the province, municipalities and community partners to expand opportunities to develop purpose-built housing and help ensure domestic and international students have places to live in their local community.

Growing Demand for Student Housing

- As Canada, and Ontario in particular, continues to be an attractive destination for immigration and international students, the demand for housing will only increase.
- Universities are rising to this growing demand: According to a survey of 16 universities, in 2022-23, universities were able to fulfill more than 90% of requests for university residence spaces.

Universities Making Significant Investments to Increase Housing Supply

- Universities continue to use own-sourced funds (non-government) to help meet the growing demand for student housing.
- A 2022 housing survey of 16 Ontario universities conducted by the Council of Ontario Universities shows that:

There are currently more than 59,600 resident spaces supported by Ontario universities.

More than 6,400 new residence spaces have been added over the past five years – a 10 per cent increase.

To help address urgent need, more than 9,000 new spaces or 15 per cent are projected to be added over the next five years, with several reporting plans for expansion beyond 2028.

- Universities are also expanding off-campus spaces by continuing to work with community-based groups to identify opportunities, exploring leasing of new spaces and the redevelopment potential of university-owned off campus properties. For example:



In addition, universities are also supporting Off-Campus Housing services with dedicated staff to help students search for off-campus housing rentals. These can include dedicated advising services and social media platforms (e.g., Places4Students.com) that help students navigate the local rental market as well as dealing with landlord tenant relations issues and reviewing leases.



Universities are also working with landlord associations to create awareness and education programs, maintaining free off-campus housing listing services and removing listings of known problematic landlords from the university's off-campus listing site.

Working with the Province, Municipalities and Community Partners

Collaboration will be critical to responding to growing demand. By working together, Ontario's universities, the province, municipalities and community partners can support access to housing by:

Working with the province and municipalities to streamline the approval process and reduce regulatory barriers that are hindering the development of new university housing. This will help ensure students can live close to where they work and study.

Working with business, developers and industry to explore new, innovative and cost-effective ways to speed up the construction of new housing, such as modular construction.