



HOME BEGINS HERE:

Transitional Affordable Housing



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



A NEW MODEL FOR REFUGEE HOUSING IN CANADA

Every family deserves a safe place to start their life in Canada. Many newcomers to Canada are forced into hotels, motels, or shelters. These are unstable conditions that make it harder to find work, settle their families, and move forward.

Reception House's transitional housing project at 449–471 Wellington Street North will create 34 units of transitional housing, bridging the gap between crisis and stability. A proven leader in newcomer settlement, Reception House brings decades of experience helping families rebuild and thrive.

This is a first-of-its-kind project in Canada—a purpose-built, ground-up transitional housing development for refugees and newcomers, rather than the typical model of renovated or repurposed spaces.

With safe housing and integrated supports, families can move forward with dignity and independence.



WHY NOW?

- Governments are making significant investments to address the housing crisis
- Reception House has already secured land through partnership with City of Kitchener
- This project is positioned to leverage public funding
- Demand is growing
- Without action now, more families will remain in costly, temporary accommodations that do not support long-term stability

This is a time-sensitive opportunity to move a proven model forward and deliver a lasting solution for the community.

**58% OF HOTEL/MOTEL
PROGRAM USERS IN
CANADA ARE NEWCOMERS
~\$205/DAY PER PERSON FOR
HOTEL STAYS**



WHY RECEPTION HOUSE

A trusted, proven model delivering real results

- Serving newcomers and refugees since 1987
- Supported 1,439 individuals in the past year
- Welcomed over 700 Government-Assisted Refugees from 15 countries

Strong outcomes from day one

- 99% of clients secured housing, despite a challenging rental market
- Average stay of 43 days in temporary accommodation, helping families transition quickly
- 387 children and youth supported, with newcomers enrolled in school

Integrated, wraparound supports

- Support begins on arrival and continues for at least one year
- Services include housing, employment, healthcare navigation, language training, and life skills

Pathways to independence

- 158 individuals accessed employment support
- 37 individuals secured employment
- Focus on early stability to support long-term independence

No settlement or resettlement organization in Canada has built a purpose-built, ground-up affordable transitional housing development specifically for refugees and newcomers. Most rely on renovated, leased, or repurposed spaces.

HOUSING CHALLENGES IN WATERLOO REGION

- Rents: ~\$1,950 (1-bedroom), \$2,300+ (2-bedroom)
- Affordable vacancy rates: below 1%
- Population growth is rising quickly
 - Residents born outside Canada nearly doubled (2016–2024)
- Many households, including newcomers, face barriers:
 - No credit history
 - No rental references
 - Limited local networks
- Only 49% of residents report high life satisfaction, reflecting growing affordability pressures
- Mental health outcomes are worsening locally, increasing demand for supports

RISING PROPERTY PRICES

LIMITED AFFORDABLE RENTALS

WAGE-HOUSING COST DISPARITY

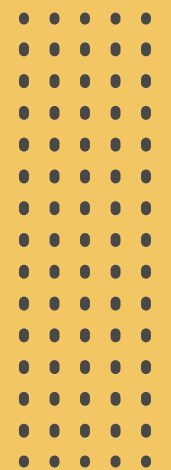
ACCESS BARRIERS

**Without transitional housing, families remain in crisis systems.
With it, they move forward.**

- Newcomers arrive without housing, income, or networks
- Without options, many rely on hotels or shelters, which can cost up to \$6,000/month compared to ~\$1,100 for transitional housing
- Stable housing allows people to find work, enroll children in school, and settle faster
- Reduces pressure on shelters and helps families move forward



**WHY TRANSITIONAL
HOUSING MATTERS**



BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

- 34-unit transitional housing development in Kitchener
- Designed for newcomers and families currently relying on hotels, motels, or emergency shelters
- Mix of 1 to 4-bedroom units to support families
- Wraparound supports on-site, including:
 - employment services
 - language training
 - healthcare connections
 - family supports
- Built using hybrid mass timber construction
 - modern, sustainable building method
 - supports faster and more efficient construction
- Creates a pathway to stability, employment, and independence

**6-STOREY
BUILDING
WITH 34 UNITS**



*449–471 Wellington Street North
Kitchener, ON*

Building Specs:

19

1-bedroom units

5

2-bedroom units

5

3-bedroom units

5

4-bedroom units

Life Skills Spaces:



Communal laundry & kitchen



Play spaces and learning areas



Multi-purpose rooms



Support staff offices providing on-site support for our most vulnerable clients

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY BENEFITS

UPON LEAVING TRANSITIONAL HOUSING, 38% WERE EMPLOYED AND 14% ENTERED EDUCATION OR TRAINING

- **Strengthens communities and reduces system pressure:** Investment in transitional housing lowers demand on shelters, healthcare, and policing, with research showing benefits can exceed program costs
- **Supports faster workforce participation:** Stable housing allows newcomers to focus on finding work, building skills, and contributing to the economy
- **Lowers long-term public costs:** Reduced shelter use, fewer hospital visits, and increased employment make this a cost-effective approach
- **Shortens time spent in crisis systems:** Helps people move more quickly out of shelters and temporary accommodations into stable housing
- **Creates pathways to employment and education:** 38% of individuals are employed, and 14% are in education or training at the time they exit transitional housing
- **Strengthens long-term community outcomes:** As families stabilize, they participate more fully in local life and the economy

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Ways to Give

- Leadership gifts to support construction and major building components
- Naming opportunities within the building (units, program spaces, community areas)
- Multi-year pledges to support project completion
- Corporate partnerships and in-kind contributions

Your Impact

- Families move into safe, stable homes.
- Residents gain the tools and support to enter the workforce and integrate into the community.
- Communities experience reduced pressure on emergency services and stronger social and economic outcomes.

With your support, we can create safe, supportive homes where newcomers live with dignity, build skills, and fully participate in life in Kitchener.



Major gifts may be pledged over 2–3 years, allowing donors to maximize their impact while supporting the timely completion of the project.

DONOR RECOGNITION OPPORTUNITIES

Your support helps create a place where newcomers can build stability, independence, and a sense of belonging.



Shape the Heart of the Building

\$1,500,000 – Community Space
Name the central gathering space where families connect, learn, and build community

\$1,000,000 – Program & Learning Centre
Support a major program area focused on settlement, youth, or skills development



Create Spaces for Stability

\$500,000 – Residential Unit Naming
Provide a safe, stable home for a family starting their new life

\$250,000 – Shared Program Space
Support essential spaces such as a community kitchen, children's room, or wellness area



Support Daily Programming

\$100,000 – Program Rooms
Fund spaces used for training, counselling, and community support

\$50,000 – Co-Naming Opportunities
Contribute to shared spaces that bring people together



Be Part of the Community

\$25,000 – Feature Spaces
Support smaller but meaningful areas like play spaces or study corners

\$10,000 – Community Champion
Be recognized as part of a group of donors helping make this project possible

Home begins here – because every journey deserves a safe beginning

All donors will be recognized in a way that reflects their contribution, including signage, donor walls, and campaign materials.

THANK YOU

"No one should spend their first days in Canada moving from shelter to shelter. We are taking action to build a home for refugees, a foundation for new beginnings."

Babur Mawladin, Reception House CEO



Zohra, from Afghanistan

"I still remember arriving in Canada as a little girl, holding my family's hands. Reception House gave us more than shelter; it gave us kindness and safety. It was our first home. For others, it may be a building, but for us, it was the beginning of everything."

SOURCES & REFERENCES

- *Waterloo Region Vital Signs Report (2025)*
- *Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) data*
- *CMHC Rental Market Report*
- *Research on supportive and transitional housing outcomes (various studies)*