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# Housing Performance Measures in Ontario

Presentation to the  
National Housing Research Council  
Housing Data Working Group

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
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# Current Initiatives

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- The Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) is working towards developing housing indicators to support several key initiatives:
  1. Poverty Reduction Strategy
  2. Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy
  3. Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review
  4. Municipal Performance Measurement Program
  5. Health System Strategic Plan
  6. Housing 'Dashboard'

# Current Performance Measure Trends

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- Growing interest in outcomes-based performance measures (i.e. actual impacts/benefits that result from specific policies/programs)
  - In the past outputs (e.g. development of 10,000 units of affordable housing) were often the dominant focus of performance measures
- Performance measures are generally expected to be developed in lockstep with significant government policies, strategies and investments
  - Performance measures often form a key component of accountability frameworks
- Performance measures are often expected to track both internal (operational efficiency and effectiveness) and external (clients, stakeholders) impacts
- Many governments and agencies are utilizing client satisfaction surveys to measure the effectiveness of current programs and services
  - e.g. Government of Alberta conducts several client satisfaction surveys across a broad spectrum of government programs and services

# 1. Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy

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- In December 2008, Ontario released its Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) which includes:
  - Increasing the Ontario Child Benefit so that 1.3 million children in low-income families get up to \$1,310 a year
  - Full-day learning for four and five-year olds
  - Stabilizing funding for the Provincial Rent Bank Program at \$5 million annually
- The PRS sets a target of reducing the number of children living in poverty by 25% over the next 5 years
- Eight indicators were selected to measure progress, including an “Ontario Housing Measure”
- MMAH intends to consult on this measure as part of the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy consultations
- MMAH is recommending the use of CMHC’s annual core housing need measure

# 1. Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy

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- CMHC's annual core housing need has several strengths as a potential PRS measure, including:
  - Reasonable proxy for households in poverty
  - Accounts for three dimensions of housing need – affordability, adequacy and suitability
  - Captures most of the housing market (including private rental, social housing, and homeownership), with the exception of homelessness
  - Likely to be supported by both poverty and housing advocates
  - Reliable indicator and published annually
  - Based on Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID) data which is consistent with the Low Income Measure (LIM) used for the PRS
- The primary limitation of annual core housing need as a potential PRS measure is its 3 year reporting delay (e.g. 2005 data released in Fall 2008)

# Housing Need Indicators in Other Jurisdictions

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## Australia

- Housing Stress – households that pay more than 30% of gross income on housing and are in the lower 40% of the income distribution.

## England

- Housing Need Index – Combines data on overcrowding, home sharing, homelessness, unfit dwellings, households receiving housing allowances, and elderly and disabled need.

## US

- Worst Case Housing Need – The number of households with incomes below 50% of the area's median income and who either pay 50% or more of their monthly income for rent or live in substandard housing.
- CMHC's Core Housing Need is the only known housing indicator that accounts for all three dimensions of housing need – affordability, adequacy and suitability.

## 2. Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy

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- The Ontario government is currently developing a Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy (LTAHS)
- The LTAHS will support Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy and the Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review
- MMAH will consulting with partners, stakeholders and the public in a number of communities across the province this summer and fall
- Performance measures will be one of the topics discussed during the consultations
- MMAH will need to consider performance measures through several lens':
  - Client outcomes
  - Impact on housing need/affordability
  - Program outputs (e.g. units built, households assisted)
  - Administration and delivery (efficiency and effectiveness)

### 3. Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review

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- The Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review (PMFSDR) directs Ontario to work with its municipal partners towards developing an outcomes-based accountability framework for human services (including housing) in Ontario
- PMFSDR calls for the development of multi-year housing plans which will likely require performance measures to track progress
- PMFSDR also calls for the development of community outcome measures and targets to ensure services are achieving the right results
- The development of performance measures and targets will likely form a key component of a joint accountability framework and require collaboration with our municipal partners
- MMAH is currently working with the Ministry of Community and Social Services and Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care in exploring options for the consolidation of housing and homelessness programs



# 4. Municipal Performance Measurement Program

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- The Municipal Performance Measurement Program (MPMP) was introduced in 2000 – response to Provincial Auditors report for more municipal accountability
- Legislated requirement for municipalities to participate
- Municipalities use performance measures to make informed budget and service level decisions
- Municipalities are required to report their results to the province and to the public
  - performance results are **not** used by the province to determine eligibility for provincial grant funding
- Currently 54 Measures in 12 Service Areas
  - local government, fire, police, roads, transit, libraries, land use planning, parks & recreation, wastewater, storm water, drinking water, solid waste
- MMAH is currently exploring the opportunity of expanding MPMP into: housing, building services, long-term care and museums

## 4. Municipal Performance Measurement Program

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- MPMP currently tracks two types of measures:
  - Efficiency: \$ Per Capita/Household, \$ Per Unit of Service/Use
  - Effectiveness: Compare outcomes against service goals and provide information about the quality of service
- MPMP Housing Technical Working Group has recently been established
  - Includes members of the Ontario Municipal Benchmarking Initiative (OMBI), Service Managers, the Social Housing Service Corporation (SHSC), 5 additional smaller rural and northern Service Managers, and MMAH staff
- The MPMP Housing Working Group will:
  - Build upon performance measure work already undertaken by OMBI/SHSC
  - Develop useful efficiency and effectiveness housing performance measures
  - Finalize measures by May 31, 2010 (inclusion in 2011 MPMP reporting year)
- MMAH would like to explore outcomes-based performance measures to:
  - enable municipal finance officials to make informed budgetary and service level decisions; and
  - provide meaningful information to assess the overall impact of the housing programs, tools and services they provide on client end-users.

# 5. Ontario's Health System Strategic Plan

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- Ontario's Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is currently developing a 10-Year Health System Strategic Plan
- MMAH has been asked to recommend performance measures and targets that broadly affect the health of Ontarians
- There is a strong interest in including housing measures as it is widely recognized that housing is an important social determinant of health
- Current research indicates that individuals that are adequately, suitably and affordably housed experience better health outcomes than those that are not sufficiently housed
  - CMHC reports that 89% of children residing in adequate housing have excellent overall health compared to only 72% of children residing in inadequate housing.
- MMAH is currently analyzing options to support the Health System Strategic Plan and there may be opportunities to align with the housing measure used to support the Poverty Reduction Strategy

## 6. Housing Indicators Dashboard

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- MMAH recently developed a 'dashboard' of key housing, economic and financial indicators/trends and program statistics (internal product)
- The primary intent was to provide decision-makers and staff with a one-stop shop for key housing data trends, including benchmarks and key interrelationships between indicators
- The dashboard includes:
  - Rental market data
  - Home ownership data
  - Employment trends, CPI
  - Affordability measures (both rental and ownership)
  - Affordable and social housing program statistics
  - Rent increase guideline and eviction applications
  - Feature indicator: revolving graph, chart or narrative on relevant data that may be one-off or not updated regularly

# Measurement Challenges

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- No “Silver Bullet” measure – the housing system is highly complex:
  - Several forms of tenure across the continuum with unique housing needs
  - Many forms of assistance (e.g. capital units, rent supplements, rent bank)
  - Dozens of programs with different eligibility and reporting requirements
  - Host of delivery agents (e.g. province, municipalities, non-profits, co-ops, third-party providers, etc)
- While most agree that it is important to measure outcomes - the impact that government programs and services have on clients - there are several challenges:
  - Minimal data currently exists on client outcomes, information on program/service effectiveness is largely anecdotal
  - Generally requires surveying/interviewing of clients, something that government’s have not typically done
  - Often requires longitudinal data, extremely expensive to undertake
  - Data is often qualitative and subjective (i.e. personal accounts of their experiences) therefore, some question its reliability
  - In Ontario, housing is locally administered, therefore the province does not have direct access to clients

# Measurement Opportunities

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- Performance measures support a shift from anecdotal knowledge to evidenced-based policy development
- Performance measures linked to government initiatives such as the PRS and LTAHS enhances accountability to deliver against plans
- Can help to identify good value for money investments by identifying programs and services that are most effective in meeting client/public needs
- Outcomes measurement provides several opportunities including:
  - Helps to determine gaps in services and identify potential solutions
  - Meaningful engagement of clients and the public
  - Highlight the impact of affordable and social housing on clients health, education and economic outcomes

# Housing Metrics Discussion

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- Does your jurisdiction monitor the annual core housing need data published by CMHC and how is it utilized?
- Does your jurisdiction have any specific housing performance measures that are used to track progress in assisting clients?
- Has your jurisdiction created any new housing measures where existing data is insufficient?
- Does your jurisdiction have a mechanism to evaluate client satisfaction with housing services (e.g. client satisfaction survey, exit survey)?