Assessing DS Sector Preparedness for Housing

Insights from the OASIS 2023 Year-End Housing Survey

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Importance of Housing for People with IDD

Supportive and appropriate housing for individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) in Ontario is not just a matter of comfort or convenience; it's a fundamental human right and a critical factor in their overall well-being and quality of life. In order to address the pressing needs and address the housing challenges faced by this vulnerable population it's important to gain a deeper understanding of these issues and how OASIS members are addressing the issue.

First and foremost, the fact that at least 18% of individuals in shelters have an intellectual disability is a stark reminder of the vulnerability of people with IDD to homelessness. Increasingly we see the use of long-term care and hospitals as the alternative to community housing. These individuals often face unique challenges that can make them more susceptible to living without a stable and supportive home. They may struggle with communication, daily living skills, and self-advocacy, which can make it difficult for them to access and maintain housing independently. This vulnerability highlights the urgent need for suitable housing solutions that cater to their specific needs and provide the necessary support to ensure their safety and well-being.

Moreover, the revelation that half of individuals with IDD also live with medical issues further underscores the significance of appropriate housing. Housing must not only address their developmental disabilities but also accommodate their medical conditions. For many individuals with IDD, access to necessary medical care and support is essential for their overall health and quality of life. Suitable housing should provide an environment that facilitates access to healthcare services, promotes a healthy lifestyle, and ensures that individuals can live comfortably without compromising their well-being.

The 2016 report by Ontario Ombudsman, titled "Nowhere to Turn," provides compelling evidence of the housing crisis faced by people with developmental disabilities in the province. The data from this report illustrates a staggering gap between the demand for suitable supportive housing and the available supply. The fact that nearly as many people were on the waitlist for housing as those already living in appropriate housing highlights a systemic issue that cannot be ignored. This gap represents not just a numbers game but a stark reality for individuals with IDD who are left waiting for housing solutions that are desperately needed.

Furthermore, the limited progress reported in addressing these housing needs between 2014 and 2016, with only 6% of those on the waitlist receiving housing support, accentuates the urgency for increased efforts and resources in this area. It's not merely about recognizing the need for housing; it's about taking meaningful action to bridge the gap and ensure that individuals with IDD have access to safe, supportive, and appropriate housing options.

In 2024, eight years later we know the situation is even more challenging as we face a national housing crisis where this vulnerable populations needs have grown to the point where 2/3 of the identified adults with IDD are waiting to find a housing solution.

Rationale

The decision to launch a survey was driven by a multifaceted approach to address the pressing housing needs of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in Ontario. It stems from our commitment to responding to key inquiries from relevant stakeholders, including the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

The discussions and insights garnered from the Ministry's Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM), emphasized the importance of understanding where and how agencies can contribute to housing solutions. Importantly, this extends beyond traditional group homes, particularly in light of recent regulatory changes.

The OASIS Housing Committee underscored the need for comprehensive data collection to inform strategic decisions and respond to inquiries. Additionally, the survey aligns with our efforts to address the MCCSS Minister's query regarding where building may likely take place in the near future.

In essence, this survey serves as a vital tool for gathering information, providing insights, and facilitating data-driven decision-making. It empowers OASIS to proactively engage with its membership and the broader IDD community to shape housing initiatives that align with evolving regulations, funding opportunities, and the pressing needs of individuals with IDD in Ontario.

Methodology: Survey Administration and Data Collection

The survey was administered to a targeted sample of 200+ contacts within the Ontario Agencies Supporting Individuals with Special Needs (OASIS) membership. The distribution of the survey took place in November, and respondents were given three weeks to complete the questionnaire. The survey was designed as an online questionnaire, accessible through Survey Monkey. Respondents received the survey link through email communication, allowing them to access and complete the survey electronically.

The survey consisted of a series of questions aimed at gathering insights and information related to housing readiness, financial capacity, land availability, and the ability to embark on housing projects. Respondents were asked to provide ratings on a scale of 1 to 5 for various readiness indicators, such as the ability to build new housing, financial readiness, capacity, and land availability. Additionally, the survey included questions regarding the potential for future building projects, experience with different housing types, and the impact of recent provincial planning by-law changes on building possibilities.

Respondents provided their answers to the survey questions by selecting specific response options or entering numerical ratings. They were also encouraged to provide open-ended responses to elaborate on their answers and provide context or additional information.

Once the survey data collection period concluded, the collected responses were compiled and analyzed to derive insights and patterns related to housing readiness, financial capacity, land availability, and other relevant factors. The data analysis process involved aggregating numerical ratings, categorizing open-ended responses, and identifying key themes and trends within the dataset.

The survey administration adhered to ethical principles, ensuring the confidentiality and privacy of respondents' information. No personal identifying information was collected, and all responses were anonymized during the analysis process to protect the privacy of participants.

Findings

This survey, conducted among members of the Ontario Agencies Supporting Individuals with Special Needs (OASIS), provides valuable insights into the readiness of organizations to initiate housing projects for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in Ontario. The survey categorized respondents into three readiness levels: those ready to build (score 4 or 5), those unsure about readiness (score 3), and those not ready to build (score 1 or 2). Key findings from each group highlight the factors influencing their housing initiatives:

For Organizations Ready to Build (Score 4 or 5):

1. Property Ownership: Many organizations in this group own multiple properties, offering stability and control over housing initiatives.
2. Partnerships: Collaboration with agencies, community housing corporations, or landlords provides additional resources and expertise.
3. Land Availability: Several have land available or secured agreements for land, a critical factor for housing projects.
4. Housing Diversity: Flexibility in housing approaches, considering apartments, single-family homes, duplexes, and mixed-use properties.
5. Strategic Planning: Readiness results from thoughtful planning aligned with mission and goals.
6. Access to Resources: Access to funding, financial reserves, and partnerships with foundations and government agencies.
7. Community Support: Strong community support sources expertise, properties, and resources.
8. Accessibility Considerations: Prioritizing accessibility to meet specific needs.

For Organizations Unsure about Readiness (Score 3):

These organizations vary in their readiness, with some actively exploring and planning for housing projects while others require further resources and support. Common themes include:

1. Financial Constraints: Limited funding and resources for planning and construction are key challenges.
2. Planning and Partnerships: Many are in the planning stages, exploring partnerships and discussing potential collaborations.
3. Capacity and Experience: Confidence in capacity varies, with some expressing readiness and others needing additional resources.
4. Board Support: Several require board approval and support for housing initiatives.

For Organizations Not Ready to Build (Score 1 or 2):

1. Financial Constraints: A lack of funding and financial resources is a significant barrier to initiating new building projects.

2. Access to Land/Property: Limited access to vacant land, potential land acquisition challenges, and zoning issues hinder progress.
3. Partnerships/Collaborations: Organizations seek partnerships and collaboration to share expenses and resources.
4. Planning and Capacity: Balancing new construction with existing responsibilities, staffing challenges, and a need for person-centered planning are common concerns.
5. Government and Regulatory Challenges: Limitations on home purchases and delays in obtaining permits and approvals are obstacles.
6. Housing Type and Quality of Life: Desire to avoid congregated or segregated settings.
7. General Challenges: Financial struggles, uncertainty about funding, and inflated costs affect capacity.

Factors for Future Readiness Across All Groups:

1. Clear Funding Path: Access to clear and reliable funding paths motivates organizations to initiate new projects.
2. Partnerships: Collaborating with community partners helps address resource and expertise gaps.
3. Board Involvement: Active board support is essential for building plans.
4. Community Needs: Recognizing the community's housing needs is a driving factor.
5. Right Funding Opportunities: Relevant funding opportunities serve as catalysts.
6. Long-Term Planning: Organizations express a long-term vision of providing inclusive housing options.

These findings underscore the complexity and diversity of factors influencing the readiness of OASIS members to embark on housing initiatives for individuals with IDD. They highlight the importance of collaboration, strategic planning, and access to funding in addressing the housing needs of this vulnerable population in Ontario.

Responses by Region

In our analysis, it is evident that readiness to embark on construction projects varies across different regions. At least 25% of respondents in each area expressed their readiness to build, with Central Region at 36%, East Region at 25%, North Region at 44%, Toronto Region at 44%, and West Region at 32%. In total, there are 26 organizations within our sample that are prepared to commence construction, with 39 groups possessing the necessary land for these projects. This regional breakdown sheds light on the diverse levels of readiness and resource availability among these organizations, painting a comprehensive picture of the current landscape.

Responses by Region

		Readiness		Money		Capacity		Land	
Central Region		Not ready	7	No $	11	None	7	No Land	7
Responses	14	Maybe	2	Maybe	2	Maybe	5	Maybe	2
		Ready	5	Have $	1	Have	2	Have Land	5
East Region		Not ready	13	No $	17	None	10	No Land	14
Responses	20	Maybe	2	Maybe	2	Maybe	3	Maybe	1
		Ready	5	Have $	1	Have	7	Have Land	4
North Region		Not ready	3	No $	7	None	2	No Land	4
Responses	9	Maybe	2	Maybe	2	Maybe	3	Maybe	1
		Ready	4	Have $	0	Have	4	Have Land	4
Toronto Region		Not ready	2	No $	7	None	3	No Land	2
Responses	9	Maybe	3	Maybe	1	Maybe		Maybe	2
		Ready	4	Have $	1	Have	6	Have Land	5
West Region		Not ready	12	No $	18	None	10	No Land	9
Responses	25	Maybe	5	Maybe	2	Maybe	10	Maybe	4
		Ready	8	Have $	5	Have	5	Have Land	11

Central Region:

- Among the 5 organizations in the Central Region that are ready to build, 3 of them have land, 1 has money, and 2 have capacity. This indicates a mixed distribution of resources among the organizations that are ready in this region.

East Region:

- In the East Region, all 5 organizations that are ready to build have capacity. However, only 1 has land, and another one has money. This suggests that capacity is a common attribute among the ready organizations in this region, but resources like land and money are less prevalent.

North Region:

- In the North Region, out of the 4 organizations that are ready to build, all of them have capacity. One organization has both land and some money, while 2 others have land, and one has some money. This indicates that capacity is a shared trait among the ready organizations, while resources vary slightly.

Toronto Region:

- Among the 4 organizations ready to build in Toronto, 2 have land, money, and capacity, while the other two have capacity. This suggests that a significant portion of the ready organizations in Toronto possess all three necessary resources, while others rely primarily on their capacity.

West Region:

- In the West Region, out of the 8 organizations ready to build, 7 of them have land, and 5 of those also have money. However, it's important to note that half of these organizations were unsure about their capacity. This indicates that while land and money are relatively common among the ready organizations in the West, capacity is uncertain for a significant portion of them.

The regional breakdown of readiness for construction projects demonstrates a diverse landscape of readiness levels and resource availability among the organizations we've examined. Notably, at least 25% of respondents in each region expressed their readiness to build. When considering those who were somewhat unsure (answered "3" to the readiness question), the percentage of those likely to be ready to build rises to 47%, showcasing a widespread interest in construction endeavors.

However, it's important to acknowledge that a recurring theme is the financial challenge, with 60 respondents across all regions reporting a lack of funding. This challenge makes it difficult to determine its influence on their readiness scores and whether addressing this barrier would propel them towards readiness. The financial hurdle serves as a significant commonality, emphasizing the pressing need for additional support and resources within the surveyed organizations.

Respondents demonstrated significant experience with owning properties, renting spaces, and dealing with landlords. This suggests a level of familiarity and expertise in property management. This experience further strengthens the indication that they are well-equipped to handle properties if they were to build or acquire them. It underscores their preparedness and competence in real estate matters, which can be a valuable asset when considering their readiness for construction projects and property-related endeavors.

Our analysis underscores the nuanced dynamics of readiness and resource availability, providing valuable insights into the construction landscape across these regions.

Respondent Total Revenues

It's worth highlighting that among the organizations classified as 'small' (revenue <$5M), five were ready to undertake construction projects. Out of these, three had both land and financial resources at their disposal, showcasing their comprehensive readiness.

For the 'medium' organizations (revenue between $5M - $10M), all five were prepared in terms of land availability, but none had secured the necessary financial resources.

Moving to the 'medium-large' category (revenue between $10M - $20M), seven organizations were ready to build. Among them, four had lands, and three had financial resources. However, only one organization in this category possessed both land and money.

Among the 'largest' organizations (revenue >$20M), five were ready for construction projects. Three had land, three had financial resources, and two were well-equipped with both land and money. This breakdown highlights the varying combinations of resources within each revenue category, providing insights into their readiness levels.

Readiness Distribution by Organizational Size:

<$5M (36%), $5 - 10M (50%), $10 - 20M (33%), >$20M (45%)

		Readiness		Money		Capacity		Land	
<$5M		Not ready	7	No $	11	None	5	No Land	7
	14	Maybe	2	Maybe	1	Maybe	4	Maybe	
		Ready	5	Have $	2	Have	5	Have Land	6
$5 -10M		Not ready	2	No $	10	None	3	No Land	2
	10	Maybe	3	Maybe	0	Maybe	3	Maybe	
		Ready	5	Have $	0	Have	4	Have Land	7
$10 - 20M		Not ready	8	No $	16	None	8	No Land	8
	21	Maybe	6	Maybe	2	Maybe	7	Maybe	4
		Ready	7	Have $	2	Have	5	Have Land	8
>$20M		Not ready	2	No $	4	None	2	No Land	4
	11	Maybe	4	Maybe	4	Maybe	4	Maybe	2
		Ready	5	Have $	3	Have	5	Have Land	5

It's evident from the data that organizational size alone doesn't appear to be a determining factor in readiness to undertake construction projects. The lack of a discernible pattern suggests that readiness is influenced by a combination of factors beyond just the organization's revenue, emphasizing the importance of having the necessary resources and preparations in place, regardless of size. This underscores the complexity of readiness dynamics within the housing sector.

Discussion

The findings from this survey of Ontario Agencies Supporting Individuals with Special Needs (OASIS) members shed light on the current state of readiness among organizations to initiate housing projects for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in Ontario. Understanding these findings is essential for policymakers, funders, and advocacy groups striving to address the pressing housing needs of this vulnerable population. This discussion section delves into the implications of the survey results, their significance, and potential actions for stakeholders.

Organizations Ready to Build

Of the organizations surveyed, nine organizations had just completed building projects and another five organizations had projects that were described as "shovel ready".

The group of organizations categorized as "Ready to Build" (scoring 4 or 5) represents a promising starting point for addressing the housing crisis faced by individuals with IDD. These organizations have several key advantages:

1. Property Ownership and Land Availability: Many own multiple properties and have access to suitable land, providing a stable foundation for housing initiatives. Property ownership offers a degree of control over housing development, reducing reliance on external factors.

2. Partnerships and Collaboration: Collaborations with agencies, community housing corporations, or landlords extend their resources and expertise. These partnerships enhance their ability to create diverse and inclusive housing solutions.

3. Strategic Planning *and* Access to Resources: Their readiness results from thoughtful planning aligned with their mission and goals. Access to funding, financial reserves, and support from foundations and government agencies reinforces their capacity to undertake housing projects.

4. Community Support and Accessibility Considerations: Strong community support, including partnerships with landlords, developers, and housing-related organizations, is invaluable. Prioritizing accessibility ensures housing solutions meet specific needs.

The readiness of these organizations underscores the potential for immediate action in addressing the housing crisis for individuals with IDD. Policymakers and funders should recognize and support these organizations by streamlining funding pathways and providing technical assistance where necessary.

Organizations Unsure about Readiness

The "Unsure about Readiness" group (scoring 3) represents a diverse range of organizations, from those actively exploring housing initiatives to those needing additional resources and guidance. This group's responses highlight their willingness to engage in housing projects but underscore the need for tailored support:

1. Planning and Partnerships: Many organizations are in the planning stages and exploring partnerships, emphasizing their receptiveness to housing initiatives. Stakeholders can provide technical assistance and resources to help these organizations move forward.

2. Capacity and Experience: Confidence in capacity varies, with some expressing readiness and others needing additional resources. Capacity-building programs and mentorship opportunities could help these organizations navigate the complexities of housing development.

3. Board Support: Several organizations require board approval and support, suggesting the importance of board engagement in housing planning. Clear communication and advocacy for housing initiatives at the board level are crucial.

4. Future Readiness Factors: Factors such as a clear funding path, community needs recognition, and long-term planning motivate these organizations. Policymakers and funders can capitalize on these motivations by offering targeted funding opportunities and resources.

Stakeholders should consider these organizations as potential partners and provide tailored support based on their specific needs and readiness levels. Building the capacity of these organizations can significantly contribute to expanding housing options for individuals with IDD.

Organizations Not Ready to Build

The group of organizations categorized as "Not Ready to Build" (scoring 1 or 2) faces substantial challenges that impede their ability to initiate housing projects:

1. Financial Constraints: A lack of funding and limited financial resources is a pervasive barrier. Organizations in this group struggle to secure capital or grants for construction, highlighting the need for additional financial support.

2. Access to Land/Property: Limited access to vacant land, coupled with potential land acquisition hurdles and zoning issues, presents significant challenges. Streamlining land acquisition processes and addressing zoning barriers is essential.

3. Partnerships and Collaboration: These organizations express a desire to work with partners, developers, or municipalities but may lack the resources or opportunities for collaboration. Facilitating partnerships and providing platforms for collaboration can help overcome resource limitations.

4. Planning and Capacity: Balancing new construction with existing responsibilities, staffing challenges, and a need for person-centered planning are common concerns. Technical assistance and capacity-building initiatives can address these challenges.

5. Government and Regulatory Challenges: Organizations face limitations on home purchases and delays in obtaining permits and approvals. Advocacy for regulatory changes and simplifying approval processes is crucial.

6. Quality of Life Considerations: Organizations prioritize creating housing solutions that avoid congregated or segregated settings. Policymakers should promote inclusive and community-based housing models.

7. General Challenges: Financial struggles impacting current operations and uncertainty about funding landscapes highlight systemic challenges. Long-term funding commitments and cost control measures are vital.

Despite these challenges, there is hope for these organizations to become housing initiators in the future. Key factors for future readiness include a clear funding path, partnerships, board support, recognizing community needs, relevant funding opportunities, and long-term planning.

Comparative Insights

A comparative analysis of organizations ready to build, those unsure about readiness, and those not ready to build reveals both commonalities and distinctions among the groups:

1. Interest in Housing: All groups express an interest in housing initiatives and acknowledge the importance of accessible housing for individuals with IDD.

2. Planning and Partnerships: Planning, partnerships, and discussions with potential collaborators are common across all groups.

3. Resource Limitations: Resource limitations, particularly in terms of funding, planning resources, and technical knowledge support, are challenges shared by many organizations.

4. Board Support: Some organizations in all groups mention the need for board approval or support for housing projects.

Distinguishing factors include funding status, land ownership or access, and confidence in capacity and experience. Organizations that scored higher readiness levels ("4" or "5") often have funding available or investors ready to go and more frequently mention land ownership or easy access to land. They also express higher confidence in their capacity to build and may have experience in various housing projects.

On the other hand, organizations that scored lower readiness levels ("1" or "2") more frequently express concerns about funding limitations and land access. They often mention potential land options but are less definitive about land ownership and may express a need for planning resources and guidance.

Implications and Recommendations

Based on these findings, several implications and recommendations emerge:

1. Streamlined Funding Pathways: Policymakers and funders should establish clear and accessible funding pathways for housing initiatives, particularly for organizations ready to build.
2. Technical Assistance and Capacity Building: Organizations unsure about readiness and not ready to build may benefit from technical assistance and capacity-building programs tailored to their specific needs.
3. Partnership Facilitation: Facilitating partnerships and collaborations between organizations can help address resource gaps and enhance housing development.
4. Board Engagement: Encouraging active board support and engagement in housing initiatives is vital for organizational commitment and success.
5. Regulatory Reform: Policymakers should consider regulatory reforms that simplify approval processes and address zoning barriers to support housing development.
6. Community-Based Models: Promoting inclusive and community-based housing models aligns with organizations' preferences and individuals' quality of life.
7. Long-Term Funding Commitments: Providing long-term funding commitments and cost control measures can mitigate uncertainties and financial challenges related to innovative housing initiatives.

In conclusion, this survey provides a comprehensive overview of the readiness of OASIS members to address the housing needs of individuals with IDD in Ontario. The findings underline the need for a multi-faceted approach involving funding, partnerships, capacity building, and advocacy to create accessible and inclusive housing solutions for this vulnerable population. Collaborative efforts between organizations, policymakers, funders, and advocacy groups are essential to make significant strides in improving housing outcomes for individuals with IDD in Ontario.

Implications for further Research

The OASIS 2023 Y/E Housing Survey points to several areas that warrant further research to deepen our understanding and guide future initiatives:

1. In-Depth Qualitative Studies: While the survey provides valuable quantitative insights, conducting in-depth qualitative studies involving interviews and focus groups with organizations in different readiness categories could uncover nuanced perspectives and barriers. Qualitative research can help explore the human stories behind the statistics and provide a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by organizations and individuals with IDD.
2. Long-Term Impact Studies: To assess the long-term impact of housing initiatives, future research should follow housing projects initiated by organizations categorized as "Ready to Build" over an extended period. This longitudinal research can shed light on the effectiveness of different housing models, their impact on residents' quality of life, and the sustainability of such projects.
3. Comparative Studies: Comparative research between Ontario and other provinces or countries can provide insights into best practices and innovative housing solutions. Understanding how different regions address the housing needs of individuals with IDD can inform policy decisions and practices.

Implications for Policy

The survey findings have significant implications for policy development and reform:

1. Funding Pathways: Policymakers should prioritize creating clear, accessible, and reliable funding pathways for organizations looking to initiate housing projects. This includes exploring innovative funding mechanisms that address the diverse financial challenges faced by different readiness groups.
2. Regulatory Reforms: Advocating for regulatory reforms that streamline approval processes, address zoning barriers, and promote inclusive and community-based housing models is essential. Regulatory changes should align with the preferences expressed by organizations and individuals with IDD for non-congregated living arrangements.
3. Support for Capacity Building: Policymakers should allocate resources to support organizations categorized as "Unsure about Readiness" and "Not Ready to Build." This support may include technical assistance, capacity-building programs, and mentorship opportunities to help them overcome barriers and navigate the complexities of housing development.

Implications for Practice

For practitioners in the field of supporting individuals with IDD, the survey suggests several practical considerations:

1. Partnership Building and Government Collaboration: Practitioners should actively seek partnerships and collaborations with a diverse range of stakeholders, including other organizations, community housing corporations, landlords, and various levels of government (from local housing supplements at a regional level to federal entities like CMHC). Pooling resources and expertise through these partnerships can significantly enhance the capacity to

create diverse and inclusive housing solutions. Government collaborations, in particular, can provide access to critical funding opportunities and housing commitments necessary for successful housing initiatives.

2. Board Engagement: Practitioners should engage their boards actively in discussions about housing initiatives. Clear communication and advocacy for housing projects at the board level are crucial for organizational commitment and success.
3. Long-Term Vision: Practitioners should adopt a long-term vision for providing inclusive housing options. This includes recognizing the community's housing needs, planning for sustainability, and actively seeking relevant funding opportunities.
4. Person-Centered Planning: Organizations should prioritize person-centered planning, considering the individual needs and preferences of residents with IDD. This approach ensures that housing solutions are tailored to meet specific requirements and promote independence and well-being.
5. Exploration of Diverse Housing Models: Practitioners should consider exploring innovative and diverse housing models beyond traditional construction. This includes investigating options such as cooperative housing, shared living arrangements, adaptive reuse of existing structures, and community partnerships that leverage underutilized resources. A thorough examination of alternative housing solutions can help identify creative approaches that align with the specific needs, priorities, and preferences of individuals with IDD and the community at large. Further research in this area can shed light on the feasibility and effectiveness of these alternative housing models.

Conclusion

The findings of the OASIS 2023 Y/E Housing Survey illuminate the critical importance of addressing the housing challenges faced by individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) in Ontario. Housing is not just a matter of comfort but a fundamental human right and a significant factor in the overall well-being and quality of life for this vulnerable population. The survey results underscore the urgency of creating suitable housing solutions that cater to the specific needs of individuals with IDD and provide essential support to ensure their safety and well-being. The alarming statistic that approximately 18% of individuals in shelters are suspected of having an intellectual disability serves as a stark reminder of the vulnerability of people with IDD to homelessness, emphasizing the pressing need for accessible and supportive housing.

Moreover, the survey highlights the complexity and diversity of factors influencing the readiness of OASIS members to initiate housing projects. Organizations categorized as "Ready to Build" demonstrate promising capabilities, such as property ownership, strong partnerships, strategic planning, and accessibility considerations. These organizations represent a significant opportunity for immediate action to address the housing crisis. On the other hand, organizations "Unsure about Readiness" and "Not Ready to Build" face various challenges, including financial constraints, limited access to land, and regulatory hurdles. However, all groups share common motivators for future readiness, such as clear funding pathways, partnerships, board engagement, recognition of community needs, funding opportunities, and long-term planning.

To address these pressing housing needs effectively, policymakers, funders, and advocacy groups must consider the survey's implications and recommendations. Streamlining funding pathways, providing technical assistance and capacity building, facilitating partnerships, engaging boards, advocating for regulatory reform, promoting community-based models, and offering long-term funding commitments are essential actions. This multi-faceted approach, supported by collaborative efforts between organizations and stakeholders, holds the promise of creating accessible and inclusive housing solutions for individuals with IDD in Ontario. Ultimately, the survey serves as a crucial tool in shaping housing initiatives that align with evolving regulations, funding opportunities, and the evolving needs of this vulnerable population.

Limitations

In conducting this survey, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations that should be taken into consideration when interpreting the findings, including the absence of a specific operational definition for 'readiness' and other methodological factors.

Lack of a Defined "Readiness" Parameter: It is important to acknowledge that this survey did not provide a specific operational definition of "readiness" to respondents. Therefore, there may have been varying interpretations of what constitutes organizational readiness to undertake housing initiatives among participants. The absence of a standardized definition could have led to some degree of ambiguity in respondents' understanding of the term, potentially influencing their answers. As a result, the findings should be interpreted with caution, as they may reflect a range of perspectives and criteria for readiness.

Online Survey Limitations: This study relied on an online survey methodology, which carries inherent limitations. Respondents' willingness and availability to participate could have introduced selection bias, and the findings may not be entirely representative of the entire OASIS membership. Additionally, the lack of direct interaction with participants limited our ability to clarify responses or explore nuances in their answers.

Coherence Analysis Within Organizations: In a subset of cases, multiple responses were received from the same organization, allowing for an analysis of coherence across responses. While this analysis generally revealed good coherence within each organization's answers regarding readiness, it is essential to recognize that even within the same organization, different individuals may have varying perspectives on readiness. This subjectivity in interpreting readiness could result in varying responses from the same organizations, which may not always align with empirical data or concrete indicators of readiness.

Despite these limitations, the survey offers valuable insights into the readiness and perspectives of OASIS members regarding housing-related issues. It serves as a foundational resource for understanding the challenges and opportunities in addressing the housing needs of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Ontario. Future research efforts may benefit from incorporating a more precisely defined "readiness" parameter to improve the clarity and consistency of survey responses.

Appendix 1: Overall Findings

While 36 respondents reported being “ready to build”, response analysis would suggest that half of respondents (40, if not more) would be ready to build if a path to funding were available.

Key Insights:

1. Property Ownership: Many of these organizations own multiple properties, providing stability and control over housing initiatives.
2. Partnerships: They have partnerships with agencies, community housing corporations, or landlords, offering additional resources and expertise.
3. Land Availability: Several have land available for development or secured agreements for land, a critical factor for housing projects.
4. Housing Diversity: They are flexible in their approach to housing, considering apartments, single-family homes, duplexes, and mixed-use properties.
5. Strategic Planning: Their readiness results from thoughtful planning and alignment with their mission and goals.
6. Access to Resources: They have access to funding, financial reserves, and partnerships with foundations and government agencies.
7. Community Support: They benefit from strong community support, sourcing expertise, properties, and resources.
8. Accessibility Considerations: They prioritize accessibility, ensuring housing meets specific needs.

For those who are not ready (Score 1 or 2 on readiness to build), the general themes included:

1. Financial Constraints: Lack of funding and resources to initiate new projects, challenges in securing capital or grants.
2. Access to Land/Property: Limited or no access to vacant land, potential land acquisition hindered by financial limitations and zoning issues.
3. Partnerships/Collaborations: Desire to collaborate to share expenses and resources.
4. Planning and Capacity: Balancing new construction with existing responsibilities, staffing challenges, and a need for person-centered planning.
5. Government and Regulatory Challenges: Limitations on home purchases, delays in obtaining permits and approvals.
6. Housing Type and Quality of Life: Desire to avoid congregated or segregated settings.
7. General Challenges: Financial struggles impacting current operations, uncertainty about funding, and inflated costs affecting capacity.

Factors for Future Readiness:

1. Clear Funding Path: Access to clear and reliable funding paths motivates organizations to initiate new projects.
2. Partnerships: Collaborating with community partners helps address resource and expertise gaps.
3. Board Involvement: Active board support is essential for building plans.
4. Community Needs: Recognizing the community's housing needs is a driving factor.
5. Right Funding Opportunities: Relevant funding opportunities serve as catalysts.

6. Long-Term Planning: Organizations express a long-term vision of providing inclusive housing options.

Comparison of Organizations Ready to Build (Score 4 or 5) and Not Ready to Build (Score 1 or 2):

Similarities:

1. Interest in Housing: Both groups express an interest in housing initiatives and acknowledge the importance of accessible and relevant housing for the people they support.
2. Planning and Partnerships: Both groups often mention planning, partnerships, and discussions with potential collaborators, including property owners, builders, and city officials.
3. Resource Limitations: Many organizations in both groups mention resource limitations, particularly in terms of funding, planning resources, and technical knowledge support.
4. Board Support: Some organizations in both groups mention receiving board support or the need for board approval for housing projects.

Differences:

1. Funding Status: Organizations that scored "4" or "5" on "ready to build" more frequently express concerns about funding limitations, whereas those that scored "1" or "2" often mention a lack of funding.
2. Land Ownership: Organizations in the higher readiness groups ("4" or "5") are more likely to mention land ownership or easy access to land, whereas those that scored "1" or "2" may have potential land options but are less definitive about land ownership.
3. Capacity and Experience: Organizations with higher readiness scores often express a higher level of confidence in their capacity to build and may have experience in various types of housing projects. Those with a score of "1" or "2" are more likely to express a need for planning resources and guidance.

In summary, the organizations "ready to build" demonstrate readiness through property ownership, partnerships, land availability, strategic planning, and access to resources. They are flexible in their approach and have strong community support. Organizations not ready to build face financial constraints, limited access to land, and regulatory challenges, but they show potential for future readiness through clear funding paths, partnerships, and community needs recognition.

Appendix 2: Those who are ready (4 or 5)

N=26

Based on the comments provided by organizations that answered with a readiness level of 4 or 5 for "ready to build," we can glean the following insights:

1. **Property Ownership:** Many of these organizations have mentioned that they own multiple properties. Some own a significant number of homes, apartments, or complexes, which could potentially serve as suitable locations for housing projects. Property ownership provides stability and control over their housing initiatives.
2. **Partnerships:** Some organizations that are ready to build also have partnerships or collaborations with other agencies, community housing corporations, or landlords. These partnerships may offer additional resources, properties, or expertise for housing development.
3. **Land Availability:** Several organizations have indicated that they have land available for development or have secured agreements for land. This is a critical factor for organizations looking to initiate housing projects, as they have identified suitable locations.
4. **Diversity in Housing Types:** Ready-to-build organizations are often flexible in their approach to housing. They mention the potential for various types of housing, including apartments, single-family homes, duplexes, and mixed-use properties. This flexibility allows them to tailor their housing solutions to individual needs.
5. **Strategic Planning:** Some organizations have mentioned that their strategic plans guide their housing initiatives. This indicates that their readiness is a result of thoughtful planning and alignment with their mission and goals.
6. **Access to Resources:** These organizations may have access to resources, funding, and financial reserves, which are crucial for financing construction projects. They also mention partnerships with foundations, local authorities, and government agencies, indicating a network of support.
7. **Community Support:** Organizations that are ready to build often mention community support, including partnerships with landlords, developers, and housing partnerships. This community support is valuable for sourcing expertise, properties, and additional resources.
8. **Consideration for Accessibility:** Some organizations highlight the importance of accessibility in their housing projects, such as ensuring ranch-style homes for accessibility or retrofitting existing properties to meet specific needs.

In summary, organizations that are ready to build typically have a combination of property ownership, land availability, partnerships, strategic planning, and access to resources. They are well-prepared to embark on housing initiatives and are flexible in their approach to accommodate various housing types and community needs.

Key Statistics

Number of Organizations Ready to Build (Score 4 or 5): 26 organizations (32% of all respondents)

Funding Status:

- 50% of these organizations mentioned they had no funding for their projects.

- 31% stated they had funding available, indicating a diverse funding landscape among those ready to build.

Land Availability:

- 58% of organizations in this group have land or can easily access it, indicating a favorable position for initiating housing projects.

Organizational Size:

- **The distribution of organizations ready to build by size is relatively balanced:**
    - <$5M: 5 organizations
    - $5 - 10M: 5 organizations
    - $10 - 20M: 9 organizations
    - $20M: 5 organizations

Capacity and Timeliness:

- All organizations in this group felt they have the capacity to build, highlighting their confidence in undertaking housing initiatives.
- All expressed readiness to build within the next 5 years, with only 6 being uncertain (maybes). This strong readiness indicates a proactive approach to housing development.

Experience with Housing:

- **All organizations in this group have experience with various types of housing, including:**
    - Rental Spaces: 20 organizations
    - Working with Landlords: 17 organizations
    - Own Properties: 26 organizations (all)

Analysis of Specific Comments

Comments on "Are you ready to build?"

Group 1: Funding Challenges

- Organizations facing funding challenges for their housing projects.
- Seeking capital funds from MCCSS and CMHC.
- Dealing with cost increases during the tendering process.

Group 2: Ready for Immediate Action

- Organizations ready to take the lead on housing projects immediately.
- Have land, community partners, and strategic plans in place.
- Prior experience in building housing units.

Group 3: Ongoing Housing Initiatives

- Organizations actively involved in various housing initiatives.
- Building transitional homes and treatment homes.

- Access to funding but facing challenges related to staffing and approvals.

Group 4: Land and Housing Strategy

- Organizations with available land for potential housing projects.
- Open to purchasing or renovating lower-value properties.
- Aligning with MCCSS priorities and accessibility standards.

Group 5: Pending Federal Funding

- Organizations awaiting federal funding for expansion projects.
- Experience in building group homes and multi-story apartment buildings.
- Shovel-ready for potential spring construction.

Comments on "Do you have money to build?"

Group 1: Organizations with Limited Funds

- Organizations with limited financial resources.
- Mention the impact of housing costs on affordability for both staff and project implementation.
- Express a need for alternative funding sources and grants.

Group 2: Organizations with Reserves

- Organizations with some cash reserves or funds set aside for projects.
- Mention the potential use of reserves for down payments or initial funding.
- Open to securing additional financing or grants for the remaining balance.

Group 3: Creative Funding Approaches

- Organizations that have successfully used creative sources of funding.
- Mention specific partnerships and initiatives, like using unused funds from MCCSS or partnering with foundations for assistance.

Group 4: Dependent on Federal or Provincial Funding

- Organizations depending on federal or provincial funding for their projects.
- Mention having land and resources but require external financial support.
- Emphasize the importance of securing government funding.

Group 5: Finalizing Financing

- Organizations that mention the need to finalize financing.
- May have some resources in place but are in the process of securing additional financing.
- May not have immediate plan for property ownership or management but are exploring options.

Comments about "Capacity to Build"

Group 1: Ready and Willing to Build

- Organizations that express readiness and capacity to undertake housing projects.
- Mention having knowledge, land, partnerships, and resources to get started.
- Some may have ongoing or completed projects, and others may be planning for future builds.

Group 2: Capacity Depends on Factors

- Organizations that indicate they have the capacity to build but have specific conditions or considerations.
- Factors include the need for funding, hiring a project manager, waiting to complete ongoing projects, or dealing with specific land constraints.

Group 3: Concerns and Challenges

- Concerns or challenges related to leadership changes, staffing, and governmental processes.
- May have internal capacity but facing external obstacles or uncertainties.

Group 4: Confident in Partnering

- Mentioning the importance of partnerships and community support for successful builds.
- Highlight the ability to secure contractors, work with architects and construction firms, and collaborate with local authorities.

Group 5: Limited Information Provided

- Responses that provide limited information regarding capacity or readiness for housing projects.
- May need further clarification to categorize them into other groups.

Comments on Land Ownership

Group 1: Organizations with Owned Land

- Organizations that currently own land suitable for development.
- Some mention having access to multiple parcels of land.
- Others discuss conversations with municipalities or potential partnerships for land access.

Group 2: Limited Land Ownership

- Organizations that own some vacant land or residential lots.
- Mention the size and purpose of the land, such as regular-sized properties or lots for duplexes.
- Some are in the process of working with towns to purchase or access land.

Group 3: No Land Owned

- Organizations that do not own any vacant land.
- Vacant land can be challenging to purchase and prefer retrofitting existing properties.
- A few are in the investigative stage regarding zoning and land permissibility.

Group 4: Land Purchase or Access in Progress

- Organizations currently working with municipalities or partners to purchase or access land.
- Mention agreements, zoning, and development agreements in place for future builds.

Appendix 3: Those Unsure about readiness

Overarching Themes

Category 1: Limited Resources for Planning and Construction

- These organizations express openness to building accessible and relevant housing for people they support, but they acknowledge their limited resources for planning and construction.
- Themes: Openness, Limited Resources, Need for Funding and for Technical Knowledge Support.

Category 2: In the Planning and Costing Stage

- Organizations in this category are actively engaged in planning and costing studies or business plans for potential housing projects.
- Themes: Planning Stage, Costing Studies, Business Plans.

Category 3: Seeking Financing and Board Support

- These organizations have received board support for redevelopment but are actively seeking financing to move forward with their projects.
- Themes: Board Support, Seeking Financing.

Category 4: Exploring Partnerships and Land Options

- Organizations are exploring partnerships with organizations like Habitat for Humanity and 'In Dwell.' They may also be in discussions with builders or city officials regarding land options.
- Themes: Exploring Partnerships, Land Options, Discussions with Builders.

Category 5: Concerns About Funding and Capacity

- Organizations express concerns about funding and the capacity to sustain a build, particularly regarding ongoing expenses and staffing.
- Themes: Funding Concerns, Capacity Concerns, Ongoing Expenses.

Category 6: Solid Borrowing Power and Fundraising Options

- Some organizations mention having solid borrowing power, fundraising potential, and assets they could potentially sell to support housing initiatives.
- Themes: Borrowing Power, Fundraising Options, Selling Assets.

Category 7: Need for Planning Resources and Guidance

- Organizations feel they would have the capacity to build if funding were in place, but they express a need for resources to support various aspects of planning.
- Themes: Capacity with Funding, Need for Planning Resources, Consultation.

Category 8: Zoning and Land Exploration

- Organizations mention exploring existing properties, zoning changes, and city councils' involvement in creating more affordable housing.
- Themes: Land Exploration, Zoning Changes, Involvement of City Councils.

Category 9: Potential Land Ownership

- Some organizations potentially have land for housing projects, depending on factors like zoning and property repurposing.
- Themes: Potential Land Ownership, Zoning Considerations.

Category 10: Engaging Property Owners

- Organizations have been in discussions with property owners who are willing to sell or collaborate on potential housing projects.
- Themes: Engaging Property Owners, Willing Sellers.

In summary, organizations that scored "3" on "ready to build" demonstrate varying levels of readiness and engagement in the planning, funding, and exploration stages of potential housing projects. Their responses reflect their openness to housing initiatives and a range of considerations, including funding, partnerships, land options, and capacity.

<u>Comparison of "3's" to "4s&5s"</u>

Similarities:

1. **Interest in Housing:** Both groups express an interest in housing initiatives and acknowledge the importance of accessible and relevant housing for the people they support.
2. **Planning and Partnerships:** Both groups often mention planning, partnerships, and discussions with potential collaborators, including property owners, builders, and city officials.
3. **Resource Limitations:** Many organizations in both groups mention resource limitations, particularly in terms of funding, planning resources, and technical knowledge support.
4. **Board Support:** Some organizations in both groups mention receiving board support or the need for board approval for housing projects.

Differences:

1. **Funding Status:** Organizations that scored "3" on "ready to build" more frequently express concerns about funding limitations, whereas those that scored "4" or "5" often mention having funding available or investors ready to go.
2. **Land Ownership:** Organizations in the higher readiness groups ("4" or "5") are more likely to mention land ownership or easy access to land, whereas those that scored "3" may have potential land options but are less definitive about land ownership.
3. **Capacity and Experience:** Organizations with higher readiness scores often express a higher level of confidence in their capacity to build and may have experience in various types of housing projects. Those with a score of "3" are more likely to express a need for planning resources and guidance.

<u>Key Statistics</u>

17% of the 81 respondents (n=14) were not ready to build (score 1 or 2)

- **5 organizations stated they have the funding to build (6 did not)**

- **9 organizations felt they have the capacity to build**
- **10 organizations stated that they had land to build on**
- **8 organizations stated they could be ready to build in the next 5 years (6 responded “maybe”)**
- **All organizations in this group have experience with various types of housing, including:**
    - **Rental Spaces: 11 organizations**
    - **Working with Landlords: 10 organizations**
    - **All Own Properties: 14 organizations**

Responses by Organizational Overall Revenue

- **<$5M 1**
- **$5 - 10M 4**
- **$10 - 20M 6**
- **>$20M 3**

Appendix 4: Those who are not ready (1 or 2)

N=31

For the organizations that stated they were not ready to build, their responses to whether they had land, resources (funding) or capacity were all quite similar (they do not). Here are the general themes from their responses:

1. **Financial Constraints:**
    - Lack of funding and financial resources to initiate new building projects.
    - Challenges in securing capital or grants for construction.
    - Concerns about taking on additional debt or mortgages.
2. **Access to Land/Property:**
    - Limited or no access to vacant land for new construction.
    - Potential land acquisition considered, but financial limitations are a hurdle.
    - Zoning and regulatory issues affecting land use and development.
3. **Partnerships/Collaborations:**
    - Desire to work with partners, developers, or the municipality for potential projects.
    - Emphasis on collaboration to share expenses and resources.
4. **Planning and Capacity:**
    - Ongoing work on strategic plans and responsibilities.
    - Staffing challenges and workload issues in balancing new construction with existing responsibilities.
    - Lack of person-centered planning and understanding of individuals' housing needs.
5. **Government and Regulatory Challenges:**
    - MCCSS's limitations on home purchases and funding.
    - Delays and complexities in obtaining permits and approvals.
6. **Housing Type and Quality of Life:**
    - Desire to avoid creating congregated or segregated settings.
    - Need for understanding individual preferences and compatibility in housing.
7. **General Challenges:**
    - Financial struggles impacting current operations.
    - Uncertainty about the funding landscape and budget constraints.
    - Inflated costs, collective bargaining costs, and staff shortages affecting capacity.

Factors That Could Help Organizations Be Ready to Build in 5 Years

1. **Clear Funding Path:** Having a clear and reliable path to access funding for additional housing was mentioned as a critical factor that would motivate organizations to initiate new projects.
2. **Partnerships:** Collaborating with partners in the community, including municipalities and construction-related businesses, was seen as a way to address resource and expertise gaps.
3. **Board Involvement:** Several organizations mentioned that their boards are actively working on building plans, indicating that board support and commitment are essential.
4. **Community Needs:** The need for housing solutions in the community and the desire to be part of the solution motivated organizations to consider building projects.
5. **Right Funding Opportunities:** Being presented with the right funding opportunities or call for proposals was seen as a catalyst for initiating housing projects.
6. **Long-Term Planning:** Organizations expressed a long-term vision of providing housing options that are not solely geared towards people with IDD but reflect the community's makeup.

Key Statistics

38% of the 81 respondents (n=31) were not ready to build (score 1 or 2)

- **Only 1 organization stated it has the funding to build**
- **26 organizations (83.87% of respondents) did not have funding**
- **2 organizations felt they have the capacity to build**
- **7 organizations stated that they had land to build on**
- **7 organizations stated they could be ready to build in the next 5 years (15 responded "maybe")**
- **All organizations in this group have experience with various types of housing, including:**
    - **Rental Spaces: 20 organizations**
    - **Working with Landlords: 16 organizations**
    - **Own Properties: 25 organizations**

Responses by Organizational Overall Revenue

- **<$5M 5**
- **$5 - 10M 5**
- **$10 - 20M 10**
- **>$20M 2**