

**For Immediate Release//Toronto, Ontario**

**Severe Funding Shortfalls Impacting People with Developmental Disabilities  
Over 52,000 People are on Waiting Lists for Critical Supports and Services**

**[January 14, 2025 – Toronto]** – Community Living Toronto and the Provincial Developmental Services sector are calling on the Ontario government to address severe funding shortfalls that are impacting people with developmental disabilities. Over **52,000** people are currently waiting for critical supports and services due to the high cost of living making it even more challenging for individuals to access the supports they need.

Since 1993, the Government of Ontario has increased core funding to support agencies by less than **7 per cent**, while the cost of living has soared by over **60 per cent** during the same period. Developmental services agencies across the province, including in Toronto, say the system is no longer sustainable.

“Our mission is clear. No one should have to wait years to belong to thrive in their community,” says Brad Saunders, CEO of Community Living Toronto. “We need immediate action to ensure that everyone can belong and thrive in their communities.”

More than **250,000** people in Ontario live with a developmental disability, yet over **70 per cent** are living in poverty, and more than **50,000** are stuck on years-long waiting lists for the essential supports they need.

“Without adequate funding, many people with developmental disabilities risk falling into crisis,” notes Mr. Saunders. “This puts unnecessary strain on costly emergency services like hospitals. At Community Living Toronto, we are proud to support **4,000 people**, but the demand continues to grow. That’s why our focus is on putting the people we support first, growing to meet the increasing need, and fostering inclusive communities where everyone belongs.”

These services are not luxuries — **they are lifelines** that assist people with developmental and intellectual disabilities in their daily activities, enabling them to live and work in their communities while also offering support and respite for their families. Supportive services range from teaching basic life skills, helping with medications and appointments, to assisting people to find homes, jobs, and community activities to participate in, so they can truly belong.

“The greatest gift is giving people chances to do what they can do and then letting them do it.” says Mary, supported by Community Living Toronto, as well as a volunteer, employee, and CLTO Influencer.

*Journey To Belonging: Choice and Inclusion*, was started under Minister Todd Smith in 2020. It is a ten-year initiative with the goal of supporting people with developmental disabilities to have more control and opportunity in their lives. However, with over **52,000** people currently on a waiting list for supports and services, systemic change and major increases in resources are needed to achieve that goal.

“It hasn’t been funded properly,” points out Community Living Ontario CEO Chris Beesley. “You can create a vision and be aspirational but unless you put the resources behind it, it’s meaningless.”

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### **About Community Living Toronto**

Community Living Toronto has long been a source of support for people with an intellectual disability and their families since 1948. Community Living Toronto offers a wide range of services including respite, person-directed planning, employment supports, supported living, and community-based activities.

Community Living Toronto is proud to support over 4,000 individuals and their families in more than 80 locations across Toronto. The "community living movement" began with families who wanted their children to live in the community, rather than institutions. Today, Community Living Toronto continues to advocate for inclusive communities and support the rights and choices of people with an intellectual disability.

### **For more information, please contact:**

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