
Housing Performance Measures in Ontario

Presentation to the
National Housing Research Council
Housing Data Working Group

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

May 5, 2009

Current Initiatives

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

Current Performance Measure Trends

- 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

• Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy

- 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

• Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy

- 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

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.

• Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy

- 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)

1. Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review

- 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

1. Municipal Performance Measurement Program

- 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

1. Municipal Performance Measurement Program

- 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.

1. Ontario's Health System Strategic Plan

- 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

1. Housing Indicators Dashboard

- 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

- 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

- 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

- 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)?