

Table of Contents:

Introduction.....	1
First five years.....	1
Next three years.....	2
Challenges.....	2
Revenue and Expenses.....	4
Strategic Objectives.....	5
Service.....	6
Sustainability.....	8
Organization.....	9
Leadership.....	10
More About Us.....	11 12

Business Plan 2008 – 2010

**The Business Plan is Housing
Connections' three year strategic plan.
It sets out Housing Connections'
strategic plan of action.**

**It is developed in consultation with
our stakeholders, our Board Advisory
Council, Internal Review Panellists,
Board of Directors and staff.**

Housing Connections' Business Plan 2008 2010

Introduction:

This is the business plan for Housing Connections for the period 2008 to 2010.

Housing Connections, created in 2003 as a subsidiary of Toronto Community Housing to manage the waiting list for social housing in Toronto, is now five years old.

In the first five years Housing Connections:

- established a Board of Directors and Board Advisory Council
- set up an internal review system for applicants and rent supplement tenants to have their cases reviewed
- set up a vacancy management system for providers
- provided an innovative self help centre for applicants
- set up a web site and led the way with an online interactive application service and increased access for applicants to their own files
- set up a delivery of programs in the community through a network of community partners
- set up new financial reporting systems
- set up a web based system for housing providers to access waiting lists
- took on the management of the Rent Supplement Program
- took on the new role of delivering housing allowance programs for all three levels of government
- attracted new private-market landlords to participate in social housing programs

The lack of affordable housing is a pervasive and persistent problem for many Torontonians which means there is a steady increase in the number of people seeking rent-geared-to-income housing. There are currently more than 66,000 households on the waiting list and there is simply not enough affordable housing to meet the growing need.

The next three years will be challenging for Housing Connections as it strives to deliver on its core mandate of managing the waiting list for social housing in Toronto in the face of unprecedented demand and increasingly scarce resources.

Housing Connections has a vision of where to go and how to get there. This is the three-year plan to keep moving forward towards a vision that respects the applicant and the housing provider, which builds on the self-sufficiency of applicants, while empowering both applicants and housing providers. Housing Connections is committed to finding the most efficient means to this vision. Housing Connections understands the consequence of not delivering on the housing needs of Toronto's most vulnerable. We also understand that there may be political risk if there is erosion in public confidence in the system of access to social housing. We have no choice but to move forward and make the most efficient use of the knowledge earned, the infrastructure in place, the expertise and the foresight gained, and the partnerships forged.

This business plan describes our four-point business plan, with our focus on Service, Sustainability, Organization and Leadership. We detail each of the priority areas.

Challenges for Housing Connections in 2008 2010

Service – Housing Connections has made great strides in service delivery. More needs to be done, including updating information technology to provide applicants and stakeholders with the “anywhere, anytime” accessibility required in today's world of service delivery.

Information technology is necessary to help meet regulatory turnaround times and to increase efficiency and provide savings. It is an essential tool of the waiting list business including on-line application and update features for service to applicants, housing providers, and Community Partners.

Housing Connections has begun an exciting research pilot to find new ways to improve the system of matching applicant and landlord using investment in technology which promises to increase efficiency and cost savings.

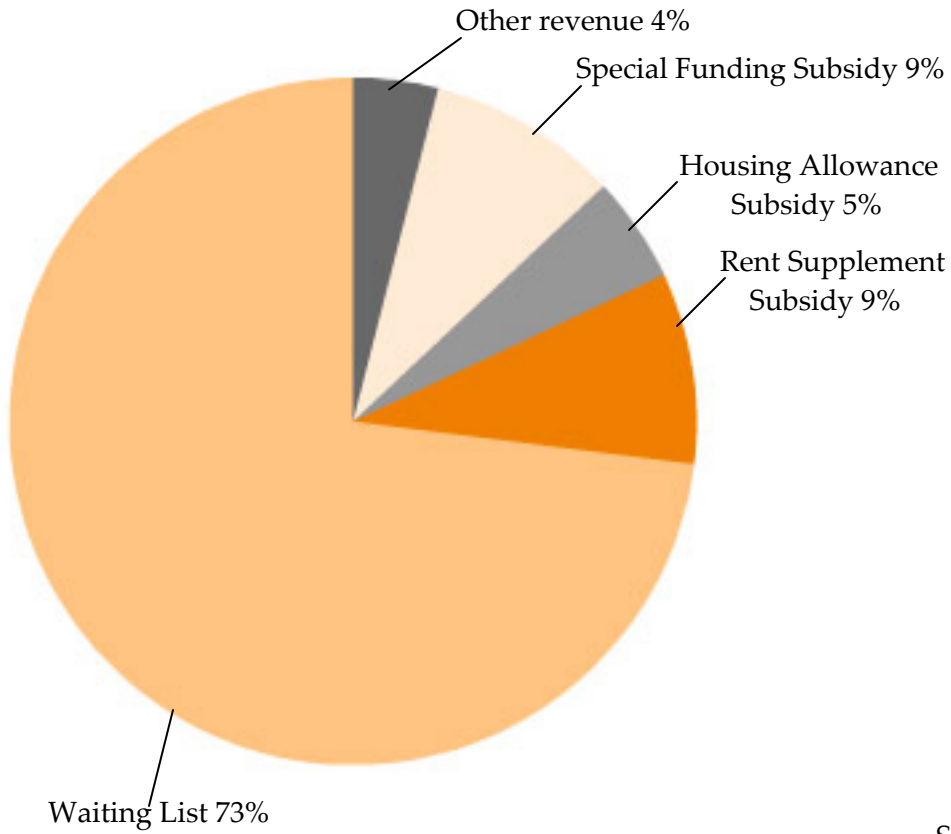
Sustainability - The high volume of new applications as well as maintaining the huge number of existing applications for subsidized housing consumes about two-thirds of Housing Connections' operating budget. At the same time other demands on Housing Connections have outpaced the original base funding formula negotiated between TCHC and the City of Toronto in 2002. The result has been operating deficits for several years, including the Rent Supplement Program. Housing Connections has pursued new business revenue opportunities but it requires further investment in research and key technologies.

Adding to the challenge is a drop in the average vacancy rate in Toronto from 3.7 percent in 2005 to 3.2 percent in 2006. When landlords don't have vacancies they aren't as likely to be attracted by housing programs. The new partnerships Housing Connections forged with private-market landlords when vacancy rates were higher will be harder to maintain.

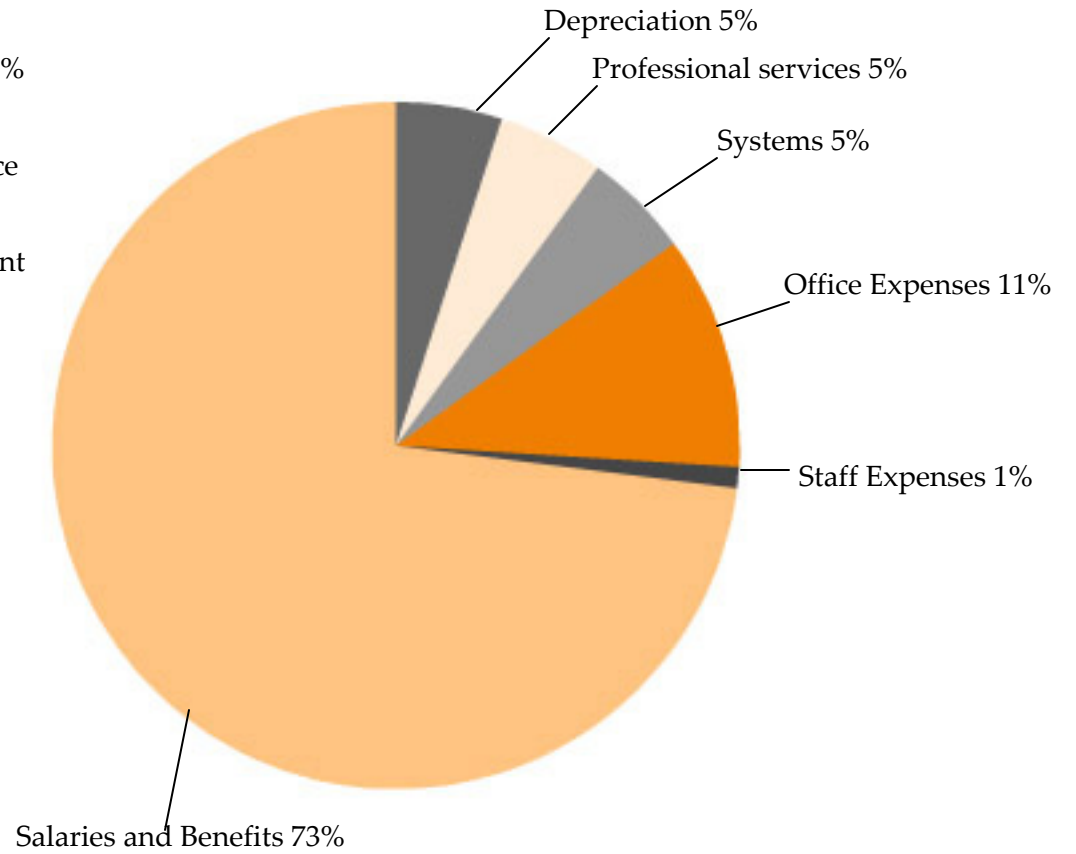
Organization - Housing Connections' workforce has had to be adaptable in the constant drive to manage increasing volumes of applicants; to adapt to the constant drive to improve service delivery; to adapt to new housing programs and to new business processes in the pursuit of cost saving and efficiency. New service agreements to administer innovative affordable housing programs has increased demands on Housing Connections' operational systems because of the complexity of the programs and the significantly increased business reporting for these programs.

Leadership Housing Connections has built considerable knowledge of the administration of housing programs and the social housing waiting list. Housing Connections is now ready to share this knowledge and provide leadership in public policy and advocacy for social housing.

Revenue 2007



Expenses 2007



**Administration and Other - 0%*

Strategic Objectives 2008-2010



Strategic Objectives

1. Service		
<p>Issues:</p> <p>There is a high volume of new applicants</p> <p>There is a high volume of existing applications requiring maintenance</p> <p>There is a wide diversity of service needs to meet</p> <p>There is not enough affordable housing to meet increasing needs</p> <p>The waiting list system is complicated and highly regulated</p> <p>Long waiting periods give applicants and stakeholders the impression that the system isn't working for them</p> <p>More services being delivered online</p> <p>Falling vacancy rates in the private market</p>		
Remove Barriers	Innovation	Excellence in Public Service
<p>Provide workshops to help applicants navigate new processes and build self-sufficiency and independence in the maintenance of their own applications</p> <p>Provide applicants with multilingual information workshops and website</p> <p>Improve access to information by making website more user friendly</p>	<p>Continuous evaluation of delivery of cost effective, innovative services</p> <p>Allocate resources for market research on helping applicants with housing selections</p> <p>Use research and pilot projects to test new innovative procedures to improve design and delivery of service</p>	<p>Improve flow of applicants through Resource Centre by triage</p> <p>Build public confidence in the access system by improving transparency - publish reports on strategies and results</p> <p>Establish customer service best practice targets and set up system of rewards for meeting targets</p>

Business Plan 2008-2010

<p>Develop specialized services for people seeking special needs housing</p> <p>Use technology to improve services and increase access to services</p> <p>Provide rent supplement tenants with clear information on their rights and responsibilities</p> <p>Improve access to information for landlords about housing programs and community-based tenant supports</p>	<p>Develop new ways to market programs and keep existing landlords and attract new landlords as business partners</p>	<p>Develop a culture of responsibility through modelling, rewarding and encouraging critical review - if an applicant's file passes your desk – take responsibility</p> <p>Expand service delivery integration with Community Partners</p> <p>Help staff adapt to new processes through training</p> <p>Balance efficient business processes and technology with the provision of sensitive and responsive services to applicants and users of the system</p>
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

2. Sustainability	
<p>Issues: The funds currently being provided strain the ability to keep up with volumes and changing demands. Systems have been under review for efficiency and cost savings while improving business Plans to improve efficiency require further long term investment in IT infrastructure Investment in innovative IT systems has put Housing Connections in the forefront of online social service delivery but it needs to be continually updated to keep pace with the changes and enhancements to remain a leader in the field Applicants and stakeholders have a growing reliance on the enhancement of technology which is an essential business tool of the waiting list</p>	
Financial Stability	Innovation in Systems Integration
<p>Continue discussion with the Service Manager (City) about funding for technology</p> <p>Explore new funding model(s) that allow financial planning to support improvements in efficiency and service</p> <p>Reinforce accountability through resource analysis of core programs</p>	<p>Identify opportunities to streamline operations through the implementation of new systems such as new tenant management system and new waiting list database system</p> <p>Promote adaptability and share best practices and innovative services</p> <p>Prove the value of innovation in service delivery using research and pilot programs</p>

3. Organization

Issues:

An adaptable workforce is necessary to find ways to manage the volume of applications, improved efficiencies and continuous improvement of service to the public and for continued growth. Staff needs to be open and engaged in the changes.

Housing Connections’ skills and knowledge of the administration of Toronto’s social housing waiting list and housing programs has grown so much that we now have a high level of expertise. This expertise is not widely recognized and opportunities to be consulted about issues affecting the waiting list and housing programs have been missed. The working relationship with TCHC and the Service Manager can be enhanced by engaging Housing Connections and having our first hand knowledge at the table.

Building Employee Capacity

Activities to build an inclusive workplace that recognizes the diversity of individuals, teams and business initiatives including:

- review and define core competencies for customer service organization
- provide workplace training and opportunities for growth to ensure skills remain fresh and relevant
- recognize and reward leaders in customer service
- balance privacy for the applicant and safety for staff in service delivery
- encourage constructive suggestions, discussion and participation
- engage staff in meaningful ways

Building Corporate Capacity

Housing Connections will be more assertive to ensure the expertise we have built has a place at the table with TCHC and the City for discussions affecting our business

Continue branding activities to reinforce Housing Connections as a separate identity

Housing Connections will continue to review joint ventures and services that can be shared with or provided by TCHC for efficiency and cost savings

4. Leadership

Issues:

Housing Connections has gained considerable knowledge of waiting list and housing program administration.

We are in the position of administering a long waiting list for access to social housing which is in scarce supply. Housing Connections can do more than simply administer the system by contributing its knowledge and experience to influence social policy.

Housing Connections has a history of working with a network of community agencies.

Housing Connections knows that it needs to be able to pursue opportunities to innovate to improve on service delivery, and in doing so bring about social change.

Administration of Housing Programs

Housing Connections will improve effectiveness by expanding its community network to include housing sector and public agencies in the delivery of programs

Contribute to community-based planning and priority setting initiatives with funders and stakeholder groups

Share learnings in the administration of housing programs to improve the development of future housing programs

Share lessons to influence the development of social housing policy and the development of regulations

Advocating for Social Housing

Create advocacy committee on Housing Connections' Board of Directors

Use available opportunities to advocate for change and promote issues related to access to social housing

Lead the study and piloting of new access models that help vulnerable populations

Create opportunity to promote business in the community

Support public education for preventing woman assault and understanding homelessness and poverty

More About Us

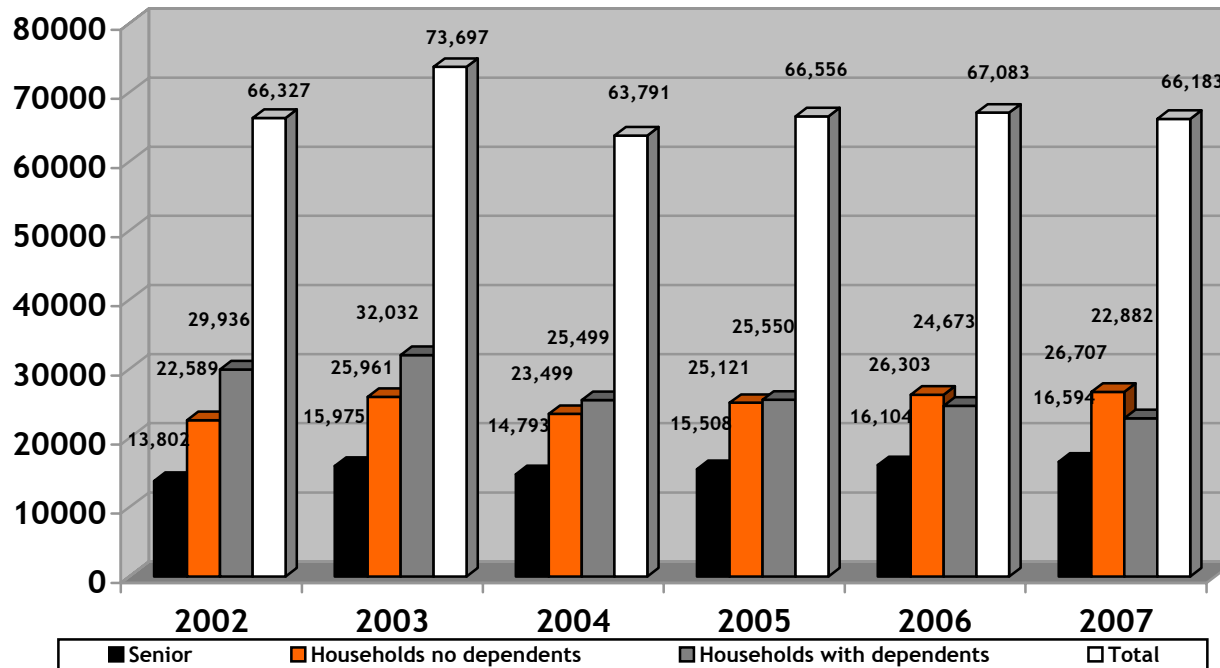
The total number of people on the central waiting list was 128,666 at the end of December 31, 2007. There were 66,183 household applications as of December 31, 2007. Each household application could include a number of people.

Our network of Community Partners across Toronto has increased to include 34 partners. They provide waiting list and housing information, help make housing choices and help fill out and maintain applications.

A result of the new Canada-Ontario-Toronto Housing Allowance Program is the growth in the partnerships to deliver affordable housing to a total of 134 new agreements with private-market landlords.

Contact Methods	2006 Totals	2007 Totals
Post	35,520	31,891
Fax	14,868	8,847
Drop Box	21,572	7,325
Email	6,981	19,208
Resource Centre (In Person)	21,056	18,513
Call Centre	239,990	217,209
Online Self Serve	N/A	19,045
Total	339,987	314,360

Five year Waiting List Totals



Use of Housing Connections Website

In 2006 Housing Connections launched an online application. In 2007, we launched a new online service providing any where, any time interactive application update. This means that applicants can apply on line as well as change contact information, list of housing choices, etc all on line, at their convenience.

In April 2007, when the online web update system was first launched, there were 465 users. This number has rapidly and steadily increased each month since then to 2,103 a month in February 2008.

Board Advisory Council*

Applicant, Tenant and Community Organization

Representatives

Ibrahim Absiye
Tom Janzen
Jonathan Morse
Asabi Parker

Private Non Profit and Co op Housing Representatives

Mary Jankulak
Anita Millar
Patricia Hyman
Hellen Haziproddromu, Co-Vice Chair
Charm Darby

Private market Representatives

Brad Butt, Chair
Gobal Mailwaganam, Co-Vice Chair
William Valdez
Nick Savino
Tom Mitchinson

**As of April 2008.*

Board of Directors*

Derek Ballantyne, CEO, Chair
Gordon Chu, Treasurer
Peggy Edwards, Director
Kevin Lee, Director
Gale Murray, Director
Stephanie Olin Chapman, Director
Kate Stark, Director

Internal Review Panel*

Elizabeth Agoston-Assang
Kutub Ahmed
Judy Berger
Ade Davies
John Devries
Patsy Duffy
Iris Fabbro
Irene Fantopoulos
Faisal Hassan
Tracy Izzard
Dan Ladico
Julie Lam
Jonathan Lebi
Susan Molnar
Addai Sarfo
Juan Shi
Evadne Shirley
Kevin Speicher
Doug Stuart
Ronny Yaron

The **Internal Review Panellists** are **community members** who are representative of our stakeholders including housing providers, community agencies, shelters and private citizens. A total of **230 Internal Reviews** held in 2007.

**For more information about
Housing Connections please visit:
www.housingconnections.ca**

**Housing Connections
Resource Centre
176 Elm Street
Toronto
M5T 3M4**

416 981 6111



Published by Housing Connections, March 2008