

# Planning, Developing and Delivering Housing for Arts Workers: Making PAL Place Home



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# Executive Summary

PAL Ottawa, and the Supporting Cast program specifically, have been helping senior artists and art workers maintain their arts practice, independence, and quality of life since 2012. Recognizing the increased likelihood that senior arts workers will experience financial strain, PAL Ottawa has provided critical advice, support, and resources. Like its Canadian counterparts, PAL Toronto, Vancouver, and Stratford, PAL Ottawa has been working steadfastly to provide affordable housing for artists and arts workers in the National Capital Region. Set to open in 2026, PAL Place is a dynamic, innovative community-based project, and draws critically on a strong and collaborative partnership between the City of Ottawa, Ottawa Community Housing Corporation and PAL Ottawa. PAL Place will provide affordable, arts community oriented housing for senior arts workers, in a building that meets net-zero emission and passive home design standards, while also centrally housing a creative space for the residents and eventually the broader community.

PAL Ottawa worked in collaboration with researchers at Carleton University, and the project received a one-year Social Science and Humanities Research Council Partnership Engagement Grant. A team of researchers from Carleton University ran a multi-prong descriptive study to identify future opportunities and challenges for PAL Place. This included: an online survey for applicants to collect demographic data and identify current needs which was completed by 90 people (representing 60% of PAL Place applicants at the time). The survey provided both demographic information and important descriptive data about their current needs and experiences. Twenty applicants participated in an in-person or online interview to further explore the themes identified in the survey. Thirty three people from partner organizations participated in an online focus group or interview sharing key insights on affordable housing, arts communities, and aging.

Key findings highlight critical elements related to:

- Affordability, and the high demand for affordable housing within the Ottawa arts community,
- Aging, Living, Inspiring and Placemaking at PAL Place and the unique needs and desires of aging artists,
- Relationships and Community and the potential benefits of building partnerships with allied organizations to foster community,
- Inclusions and Structural Barriers and the benefits of increasing diversity in PAL Place,
- Conflict, Governance and Decision-Making and the importance of transparency and resident input in governance.

The report ends with an overview of key opportunities and challenges that may support PAL Place as it moves forward. This report is intended to be viewed as a first step. Further research is needed to design an effective evaluation framework to measure the impact of PAL Place and policy guidance for decision makers. PAL Ottawa should be proud of the work they have done to date; PAL Place's future is bright.



# Résumé

PAL Ottawa, et plus particulièrement le programme des acteurs secondaires, aide depuis 2012 les membres seniors de la communauté artistique à maintenir leur pratique artistique, leur indépendance et leur qualité de vie. Reconnaissant la probabilité accrue que les travailleurs artistiques âgés subissent des pressions financières, PAL Ottawa a fourni des conseils, un soutien et des ressources essentiels. À l'instar de ses homologues canadiens, PAL Toronto, Vancouver et Stratford, PAL Ottawa a travaillé sans relâche pour fournir des logements abordables aux artistes et aux travailleurs du secteur des arts dans la région de la capitale nationale. Prévu pour ouvrir ses portes à l'automne 2026, PAL Place est un projet communautaire dynamique et novateur qui s'appuie essentiellement sur un partenariat solide et collaboratif entre la Ville d'Ottawa, la Société de logement communautaire d'Ottawa et PAL Ottawa. PAL Place offrira des logements abordables et axés sur la communauté artistique à des travailleurs artistiques âgés, dans un bâtiment qui répond aux normes de carboneutralité et de conception de maisons passives, tout en abritant un espace d'arts créatifs pour les résidents et, éventuellement, pour la communauté élargie.

PAL Ottawa a travaillé en collaboration avec des chercheurs de l'Université Carleton, et le projet a reçu une subvention d'engagement de partenariat d'un an du Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines. Une équipe de chercheurs de l'Université Carleton a mené une étude descriptive à plusieurs volets afin d'identifier les opportunités et les défis futurs pour PAL Place. L'étude comprenait une enquête en ligne destinée aux candidats afin de recueillir des données démographiques et d'identifier les besoins actuels. 90 personnes (représentant 60 % des candidats à PAL Place à l'époque) ont répondu à cette enquête. L'enquête a fourni des informations démographiques et des données descriptives importantes sur leurs besoins et expériences actuels. 20 candidats ont participé à une entrevue en personne ou en ligne pour approfondir les thèmes identifiés dans l'enquête. Trente-trois personnes issues d'organisations partenaires ont participé à un groupe de discussion ou à une entrevue en ligne pour partager leurs idées sur le logement abordable, les communautés artistiques et le vieillissement.

Les principales conclusions mettent en évidence des éléments essentiels liés à

- L'accessibilité et la forte demande de logements abordables au sein de la communauté artistique d'Ottawa,
- Vieillir, vivre, inspirer et créer des lieux de vie à PAL Place et les besoins et désirs uniques des artistes vieillissants,
- Relations et communauté et les avantages potentiels de l'établissement de partenariats avec des organisations alliées pour favoriser la communauté,
- Inclusions et barrières structurelles et les avantages d'accroître la diversité dans PAL Place,
- Conflit, gouvernance et prise de décision et l'importance de la transparence et de la participation des résidents à la gouvernance.

Le rapport se termine par un aperçu des principales possibilités et des principaux défis qui pourraient aider PAL Place à progresser. Ce rapport doit être considéré comme une première étape. D'autres recherches sont nécessaires pour concevoir un cadre d'évaluation efficace afin de mesurer l'impact de PAL Place et de fournir des orientations politiques aux décideurs. PAL Ottawa peut être fier du travail accompli jusqu'à présent; l'avenir de PAL Place est prometteur.

# Introduction

PAL Ottawa has created an incredible opportunity to build a welcoming and inclusive community for aging arts workers at PAL Place. Over the last year, a team of researchers from Carleton University spoke with PAL Place applicants, current and potential community partners, and similar housing initiatives across Ottawa, to identify opportunities and challenges in PAL Place's future. This research found many promising positives, including a strong arts community that is excited and ready to make PAL Place their own.

The opportunities and challenges laid out in this report aim to build on the work already being done by the dedicated volunteers and staff at PAL Ottawa. This report should be viewed as a first step. Further research is needed to design an effective evaluation framework to measure the impact of PAL Place and guide policy development. PAL Ottawa should be proud of the work they have done to date; PAL Place's future is bright.

**A note on language:** Within this report, we use the term 'arts workers' to speak to artists who work across a range of artistic mediums, practices and disciplines, and arts workers who work in a variety of roles in theatres, galleries, art spaces, and community organizations.

## Aims of Report

The goal of this report is two-fold: First, to present the findings of the one-year Partnership Engagement Grant between PAL Ottawa and Dr. Pamela Grassau and Dr. Lindy Van Vliet at Carleton University. This includes an overview of the current research on affordable housing, healthy aging initiatives and key findings from the community consultation sessions with partners of PAL Ottawa and applicants. Second, it provides a series of opportunities for PAL Ottawa that would facilitate placemaking, inclusive community building, and healthy aging in PAL Place.

# PAL Place: Background

PAL Ottawa, a CRA registered charity, is a volunteer-driven non-profit organization dedicated to fostering the well-being of artists and art workers in the National Capital Region. Launched in 2012, PAL Ottawa is a member of PAL Canada, an organization advocating for affordable housing for senior arts workers across Canada. PAL Ottawa helps senior members of the arts community retain their independence and quality of life by connecting art workers to advice, support, and resources.

PAL Ottawa's mission is, **"to provide affordable housing, personal support and community programming to low-income artists and arts workers in the National Capital Region, thereby maintaining the diversity and health of our arts community."**

In 2013, PAL Canada pioneered a volunteer assistance program called Supporting Cast which provides assistance to senior arts workers with household tasks, social visits and outings. The Supporting Cast program is one of PAL's essential pillars aimed at engaging the broader community in supporting individuals in need. Trained volunteers and fellow arts workers share skills, companionship and support especially for those facing challenges in daily living. Supporting Cast also offers workshops, presentations, and advocacy efforts to inform senior arts workers about helpful resources.

Establishing a Supporting Cast program was the first step taken by PAL Ottawa, despite having no physical housing space, and it has operated since then. Supporting Cast programs are intrinsic to PAL residences in chapters across the country. Requests to PAL Ottawa's program fluctuate from year-to-year, with close to 50 arts workers having requested assistance for a combined average requirement of 3-20 hours per week from PAL volunteers over the last 12 years.

Throughout its lifespan, PAL Ottawa has become aware of the unique housing needs of senior arts workers in Ottawa. Following a feasibility study, PAL Ottawa partnered with Ottawa Community Housing (OCH) to open and operate an apartment block named PAL Place. PAL Place will be a mixed-income affordable housing community that supports independent living for aging arts workers in an artistic, creative and supportive environment. Set to open in 2026, it will contain bachelor, one-bedroom, two bedroom and three-bedroom units offered at both average market rent (AMR) and below market rent (BMR) rates. The building includes 22 accessible units designed specifically for people with physical disabilities. The property will also contain amenities for active transportation (bicycle racks), charging stations for electric wheelchairs, a community kitchen (main floor), shared greenspace, a rooftop terrace and a 'Creative Spaces' multi-purpose common space. This space is designed to be flexible enough to provide artistic programs as well as social, health, and community building.



In speaking with PAL organizers, it was shared that the novelty of this partnership is marked by OCH's recent involvement with smaller specialized and localized not-for-profit housing operators within OCH-developed buildings, which have largely been previously operated by OCH themselves. This type of partnership would allow for smaller operators to serve the unique housing needs of communities and more effectively nurture harmonious, affordable housing developments. It is a large gain for the not-for-profit housing sector and offers support for organizers and advocates, who would likely not have the financial ability to develop a building outright. As such, it is a partnership that has the potential to serve the ultimate overarching goals of reducing homelessness all while contributing to community cohesion in Ottawa in this specific moment of housing precarity.

This initiative is especially essential because arts workers face unique challenges as they age and are more likely to experience financial strain than non-arts-based workers. A career in the arts sector is commonly contract-driven, thereby reducing arts workers' access to pension plans, benefits, and other forms of economic security that are normally attained through full time salaried positions.

PAL Place has the potential to be a model for other community-led affordable housing initiatives seeking to serve communities with unique economic, housing and aging needs. To this end, PAL Ottawa partnered with Dr. Pamela Grassau and Dr. Lindy Van Vliet at Carleton University, and artist and community facilitator and researcher, Lo Sirois, to run a one-year study identifying program and service development opportunities for the residents of PAL Place. This study also included the early development steps of a research plan to investigate the long-term benefits and effects of PAL Place. This research was funded by PAL Ottawa and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council through a Partnership Engagement Grant.

**The following, written by members of PAL Ottawa, explains their expectations for PAL Place:**

“There are a number of unique features about PAL Place that we think make it really exciting for our city:

- *Innovative Financial Model* – instead of raising the many millions that would be needed to build and own a project of this size, PAL was honoured when asked by OCH to partner to create PAL Place as part of the Mosaiq II complex. All units will be affordable housing in accordance with CMHC requirements for permitted household incomes. It is hoped that some units will offer deeper affordability for arts workers in need. It is estimated that at least 40% of PAL’s current applicants require deeper subsidies.
- *Creative Spaces* – PAL Place will include a 2,500 square foot space on the ground floor, called Creative Spaces that will provide space for residents to stage performances, hold art exhibitions and program workshops and other activities. OCH has approved and incorporated Creative Spaces into the building scope, and PAL is committed to raising funds to equip it for multiple uses. PAL Place is situated in the midst of the large Mosaiq II’s diverse income community, and thus will be able to offer supported creative arts programming to enrich the community.
- *Sustainable Building to Passive House Standards* – PAL Place will be built to Passive House Standards and will pursue net-zero greenhouse gas emissions, significantly reducing operating costs for residents and helping to combat climate change in our city. OCH, with help from CMHC, intends to make this project a leading-edge example in Canada of the best sustainable building practices available globally. As an example heating and cooling costs in PAL Place are expected to be \$200 per unit per year! A remarkable achievement.

PAL Place is based on similar projects in Toronto, Vancouver and Stratford that have been successfully run for over 20 years. Residents will include actors, musicians, singers, dancers, designers, directors, writers, visual artists, technicians, and administrators. PAL Place will welcome applicants from artists and arts workers of all ages; with senior arts workers 55 years old and over to be given priority.”

# Contextual Highlights from Discussions with PAL Ottawa:

The original research design of this project included interviews with PAL Place applicants and relevant community organizations doing similar projects. During the course of the research it became apparent that we required more information about the contextual factors surrounding the planning, funding, building, and management of PAL Place. To learn more about these factors we conducted a round of discussions with 5 members of PAL Place leadership on their initial vision and goals and potential barriers to meeting those goals.

## **The Mission for PAL Place:**

PAL Ottawa leadership described a three part mission for PAL Place. First, the organization hoped to provide **affordable housing** that would be accessible for arts workers who make a lower lifetime salary than non-arts workers, especially those over the age of 55. Secondly, to offer **personal support** for aging arts workers, both through the Supporting Cast program, and mutually amongst the eventual residents of PAL Place, both formally and informally. Finally PAL leadership described the goal of building an arts and artist **community** at PAL Place, in which arts and aging specific programming can be tailored by and for residents to meet their unique needs. These original goals are ambitious and there have been significant challenges to meeting them, in particular, the goal of affordability.

**“It's become very evident to us that we are getting further and further away from our affordability goals. While our artists' wages are stagnating, or, at worst, decreasing, the rates for “affordable” housing are increasing year over year. So the gap is widening with each year.” - PAL Ottawa Organizer**

There are several factors that impact PAL's ability to meet their goal of an affordable and supportive housing community for senior arts workers in Ottawa. Some of these barriers are systemic and affect other housing initiatives in Ottawa. If these barriers can be resolved or dissolved, these solutions have the potential to pave the way for other innovative projects like PAL Place to more effectively offer their skills and resources towards supporting affordable and community-oriented housing in Ottawa.

## **Current Institutional Barriers:**

### ***Complex and Prolonged Negotiations with Housing Partners:***

Complex and prolonged negotiations between the City of Ottawa, Ottawa Community Housing and PAL Place on the terms of their partnership has posed a significant challenge at PAL Place. They are negotiating towards an agreement that will determine financial structures, roles and responsibilities of each partner, and the regulations by which affordable units are managed and determined within the building.

An original MOU agreement was signed by OCH and PAL Ottawa in 2021. This document was to set the pace, structure and cost of PAL Ottawa's organizing efforts, however significant changes to this agreement have occurred since, reportedly due to changing regulations at the City of Ottawa. This has left PAL Place without assurance in their role as partner. Now left without a concrete agreement on how costs are split, how revenue is generated for the housing operator, and who has decision making authority over resident eligibility and rent subsidies for the building, PAL Ottawa is struggling without sufficient information and/or legal security to further organize and streamline their efforts to meet their Mission. With the building set to open in 2026, PAL is facing an increasingly tight timeline to design and implement policies that will increase affordability and community support within the confines of the final agreement.

### ***OCH and City of Ottawa Housing regulations:***

Based on the current partnership, PAL Place will be bound to market-based affordability models used by OCH as mandated by the City of Ottawa's housing policy, with rent costs derived from CMHC's calculations of average market rent for the area. Additionally, OCH is required not to surpass average market rent for any of its buildings' units. As such, PAL Ottawa does not currently have the authority or mechanisms to determine rental rates based on tenant income, or the option to broaden rental mix to cross-subsidize deeply affordable units for this project.

Furthermore, due to new policy regulations, any affordable units subsidized by Action Ottawa (the City of Ottawa's primary affordable housing program), including PAL Place, must be assigned to households on Ottawa's Housing Registry, thus giving housing operators like PAL limited ability to prioritize senior arts workers in alignment with their mandate and service level.

### ***Funding Limitations and Donor Relations***

The above-mentioned limitations challenge PAL Ottawa's ability to deliver on its mission, and have compromised donor confidence, particularly in donors who gave generously in the early stages of the project and who have seen this dramatic change in affordability and access.

While PAL Ottawa is close to achieving its \$2M fundraising goal for PAL Place, which is a significant achievement for a first project, it recognizes that this amount only scratches the surface of what is needed to meaningfully lower rents long-term, pay for technical upgrades to the amenity spaces, and maintain its operations and programming. If PAL Ottawa wants to partner on future projects to obtain more authority over rental rates and unit assignment, it will need to enhance its fundraising targets and ensure more balanced revenues. But with donor confidence eroding over the outcomes of PAL Place, PAL Ottawa's prospects for future projects are at risk.

***"The understanding, which is very strong in our major donors who have given to the arts, that the lower level of income of artists, either through the gig economy or whatever, puts them into a very vulnerable position, particularly when they're age 55 and up." - PAL organizer***

### ***Raised Cost of Building***

New buildings are expensive, and thus it becomes harder when building new to meet affordability targets, even if the affordability will come to bear 10 years into the project. PAL's residents need that affordability in the short term. It is generally a difficult time to achieve affordability on new buildings without significant funding from other partners. While the allure of building new is strong, acquisition and retrofitting of existing rental buildings may be a viable alternative for a next project.

***"With new development, we can only achieve a certain level of affordability, because of the cost of materials and construction. And we sort of knew that going in, but we had a financial model we thought we could rely on. And then it just got worse." - PAL organizer***

### ***Internal Limitations, Volunteer, and Resource Scarcity***

Finally, as a volunteer-run non-for-profit organization, PAL Ottawa faces many of the same challenges as similar organizations in terms of resource and volunteer scarcity. PAL Place is an incredible undertaking that requires significant expertise in fundraising, housing policy, legal protocols, and community building. The PAL leadership described being strained to complete all the required tasks as volunteers with no paid staff.

Further, PAL members have reported that much of the energy from the volunteers has been lost or diverted in their strategizing and adapting to long delays to the agreement with OCH.

***"Then this is the dilemma within the nonprofit sector more broadly, right? There's so much volunteer-led work that is always on the verge of falling apart, um, because, you know, grant money dries out, or, you know, the priorities change, or the requirements change, and suddenly the financial model that you drew three years ago no longer applies." - PAL organizer***

# Methods

In August 2024, an online survey was sent to artists and arts workers who applied to be residents of PAL Place (applicants). The survey asked about current activities and services applicants utilize, demographic questions, and projected needs around aging. Nearly 60% of PAL Place applicants completed the survey, providing a solid picture of the applicant pool and their potential needs from a residence like PAL Place.

Lo Sirois, a community facilitator and researcher, ran interviews and focus group sessions with members of the Ottawa arts community, existing community partners and related organizations, and applicants. In total 39 residents and community organizations (community partners) participated in interviews between June and September 2024.

Finally, the authors of this report conducted a literature review of relevant research related to aging and housing, including research on naturally occurring retirement communities, aging in place, affordable housing initiatives, and the challenges of aging as arts workers.

The findings from the survey, interviews, and literature review were analyzed by Dr. Lindy Van Vliet, a research associate at Carleton University, Lo Sirois, an artist and the community facilitator hired to work on this project, and Dr. Pamela Grassau, an associate professor in the School of Social Work at Carleton University. These results were used to generate key themes and highlight future opportunities and challenges as PAL Place continues forward.

**126**  
**PARTICIPANTS**  
**TOOK PART IN THIS STUDY**

**SURVEY RESPONDENTS: 93 (62% OF APPLICANTS AT TIME OF STUDY)\*\***

**APPLICANT INTERVIEWEES: 20 (ALSO SURVEY RESPONDENTS)**

**PARTNER INTERVIEWEES: 33**

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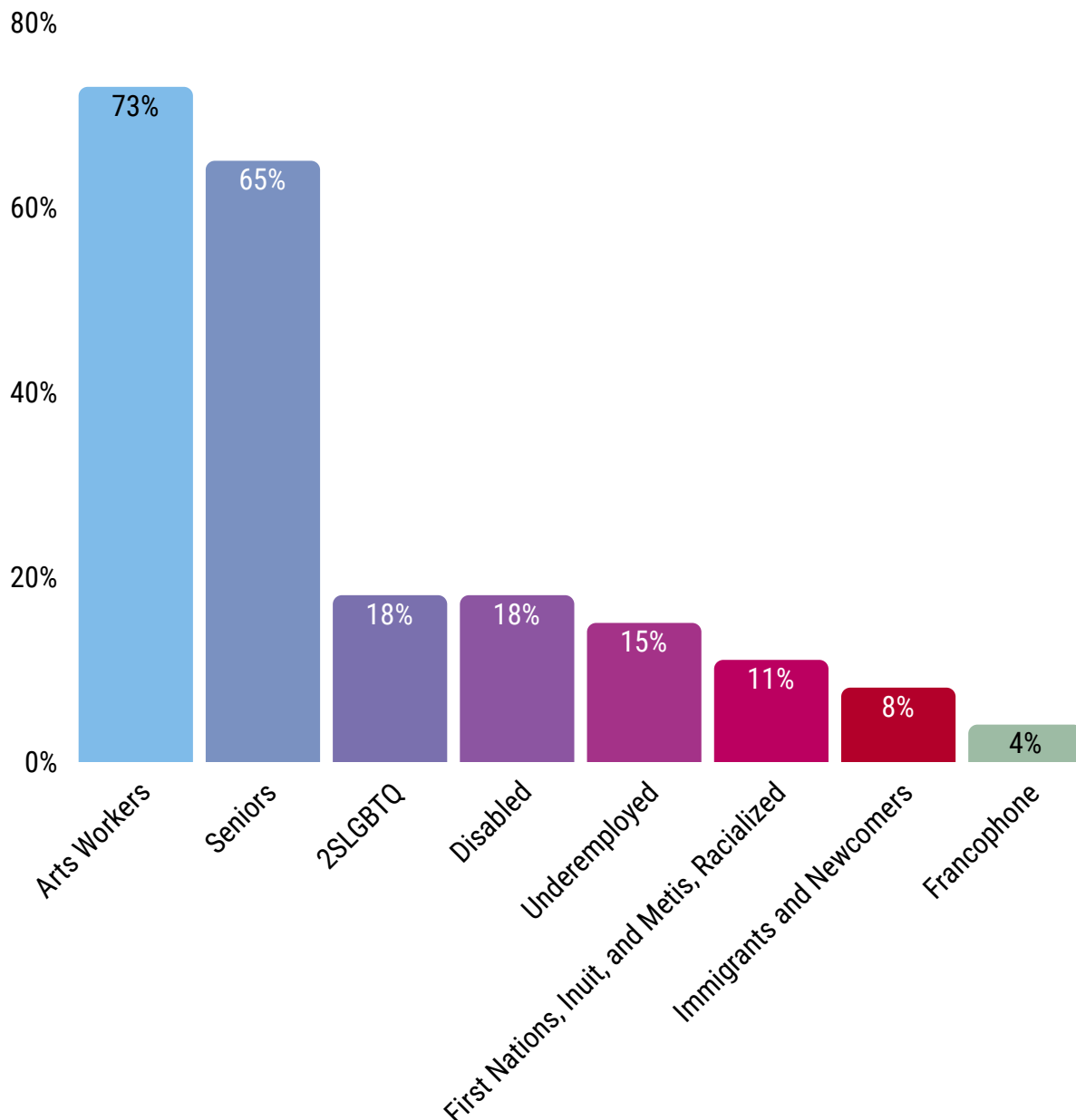
**\*\* Note:** This is an impressive survey response rate, far above the average for most online surveys which is typically around 44.1% (Wu et al. 2022). This indicates an involved applicant pool and paints a clear picture of applicant demographics and needs.



## Participation of Equity Seeking Groups

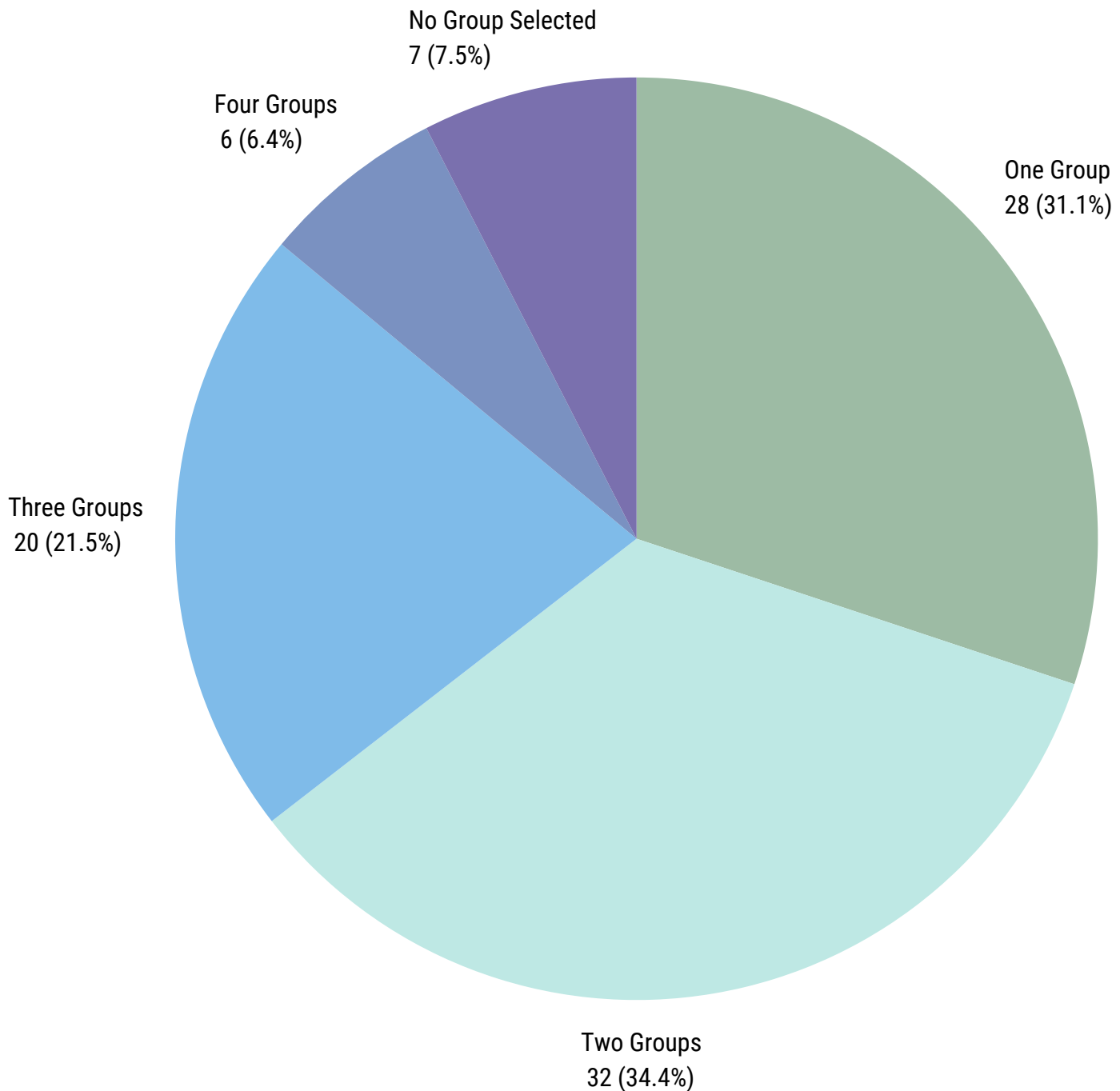
Survey participants were asked if they identified as a member of any equity seeking groups. These are groups that face disproportionate rates of discrimination and have unequal opportunities and outcomes in all areas of life (such as housing, employment, education, health, and finances) “which, as a result, constrain choices and opportunities while amplifying vulnerability to risk, harm, and negative health outcomes ” (Stajduhar et al. 2019, p. 2).

Of the respondents who selected they were a member of an equity seeking group, 73% identified as arts workers, 65% as seniors, 18% as 2SLGBTQIA+, 18% as disabled, 15% as underemployed, 8% as BIPOC, First Nations, Inuit, Metis or Racialized, 8% as immigrants or newcomers, and 4% as Francophone.



Many of the participants were members of multiple equity seeking groups. We found:

- **86 (92%)** of respondents are a member of **at least one** equity seeking group;
- **58 (62%)** are a member of **two or more** equity seeking groups;
- **26 (28%)** are a member of **three or more** equity seeking groups



To protect participant anonymity, we have decided not to provide an overview of participant demographics for artists and arts workers who took part in a follow-up interview or focus group.

# External Research

## *Housing Affordability for Seniors in Canada*

The housing crisis in Canada is clear (Government of Canada, Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Canada, 2024); in 2022 alone, Ottawa rental prices jumped 18% (Colley, Mark, 2022), and seniors are particularly hard hit by skyrocketing rent prices (Wyndham-West 2022).

Further, the Canadian population is aging. The Canadian Institute of Health Information (CIHI) predicts that the population of older adults in Canada (those aged over 65) will increase 68% in 20 years (CIHI, 2017) and make up more than 20% of the population by 2030 (Jakobi, Jennifer & Franke, Thea, 2022). While some people born in Canada are living longer, profound inequities persist, reflecting increased risks and poorer health outcomes for people who are First Nations, Inuit, Metis; who are Black; who are immigrants; who are 2SLGBTQ+; who are disabled; who live in the lowest income group; who have less than high school education; and who live with high social and material hardship (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2018, 2025)

2015 census data, the most recent pan-Canadian data on housing, paints a bleak picture of housing instability for seniors. According to the census data, almost a quarter of seniors live below acceptable standards, with 24.9% experiencing issues related to adequacy, suitability and/or affordability (Government of Canada, 2019).\*

Affordability is the most common concern, affecting 19% of seniors, followed by adequacy issues at nearly 5% and suitability issues at almost 3%. Seniors who live alone are particularly hard hit by the cost of housing, nearly 40% of seniors who live alone need and are unable to access affordable housing. Older seniors, especially those over the age 85, are especially hard hit with over 63% facing affordability, adequacy, or suitability issues related to housing (Government of Canada, 2019).

• • •

\*Adequacy means that residents' current housing does not require any major renovations. Suitability means that there are enough rooms for the number of residents residing in the home. Affordability means that housing costs are less than 30% of each household's income before tax (CMHC, 2024)

Sex and gender identity are also critical factors in understanding who experiences poverty and core housing needs in Canada. In PAL's community consultations, our facilitator noted that a large portion of applicants are women. As such, it will be essential for PAL to consider the unique housing barriers faced by women. The Canadian Women's Foundation notes that "experiences of poverty and low income depend on the intersecting barriers and forms of discrimination people face based on factors such as race, citizenship status, sexuality, gender identity, ability, health status, and age" (Canadian Women's Foundation, n.d.). Understanding how these intersecting barriers operate in explicit and implicit ways, and further, how discrimination can be perpetuated and reproduced, is critical in addressing core housing needs and health inequities. There is clear evidence that women are over-represented in low-income households. In 2019, "1.44 million women were living in low-income families in Canada, and female individuals represented the largest population living in low-income households compared to their male counterpart(s)" (Canadian Women's Foundation, n.d.; Statistics Canada, 2021).

Statistics Canada found that women-led households face some of the highest rates of housing instability and core housing needs.

28% of women-led households in Canada are in core housing need..., [and] some populations in Canada face higher rates of core housing need. Groups with relatively high rates of core housing need include: Inuit women (39.4%); First Nations women (24.5%); West Asian women (e.g. Afghan and Iranian women) (31.2%); Korean women (27.6%); recent immigrant women (28.4%); Black women (22.4%); and Arab women (25.7%) (Canadian Women's Foundation, n.d.; Statistics Canada, 2019)

Racialized communities also face disproportionately high rates of housing instability. Building on a national housing mandate to prioritize the housing needs of racialized communities, CMHC project managers, Shan and Li (2023) examined longitudinal Census Data from 2011 and 2016 to examine transitions into and out of core housing needs. The study found that racialized communities are at higher risk of experiencing persistent core housing needs over time.

First, race is associated with a higher likelihood of transitioning into core housing need. Second, race is associated with a lower likelihood of transitioning out of need. Racialized persons are more likely to enter core housing need and once in need, they are more likely to remain in need (Shan, Rachel; Li, Mingxin, 2023, p. 8).

Core housing needs are also highly prevalent in Two-spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, plus (2SLGBTQIA+) communities in Canada which face disproportionately high rates of poverty (Kia et al., 2021). A national survey of housing needs for aging 2SLGBTQIA+ community members identified the following requirements for safe and accessible housing, including:

nondiscriminatory living and work environments; feeling accepted by the community, landlords and coworkers; anti-discrimination policies; use of appropriate language; LGBT specific housing developments; housing availability and affordability; and disclosure as a choice (Thomas, Blackmore, Gahagan, 2023, p. 98).

Collectively, we are left understanding that housing affordability for seniors in Canada is a growing crisis, exacerbated by rising rental costs, an aging population, and persistent social inequities. With nearly a quarter of seniors living in inadequate, unsuitable, or unaffordable housing—and affordability being the most pressing concern—many face significant financial and health risks. Furthermore, women, racialized communities, and marginalized groups are disproportionately affected, highlighting systemic barriers that limit access to stable housing. Without comprehensive, equity focused housing strategies, these disparities will persist, exacerbating financial and health risks for vulnerable seniors.

### ***Challenges for Aging Arts Workers:***

Aging arts workers face a unique set of challenges. They experience lower lifetime earnings with a typical annual employment income of \$17,300, a figure that is 56% lower than the median of all workers (\$39,000) (Hill, 2019). This means that artists often have less private retirement savings. While there is little data on Canadian arts workers and retirement savings, a working paper from the International Labour Office and a USA-based study (Singerman, 2024), found that since so many arts workers have contract-based employment or fund their work via grants their overall lifetime contributions to public pension plans (such as CPP) or employer-pension plans are significantly lower than the average Canadian.

Outside of the financial burdens faced by aging artists, there are also different considerations around retirement. A 2011 study “Still Kicking: Aging Performing Artists in NYC and LAW Metro Areas” (Jeffri, Iguchi, & Penrose (2011), found that a majority of artists in the study did not plan to retire from their arts practice.

However, older artists face significant challenges continuing formal employment in the arts sector, including sensory loss, physical challenges, and ageism in the industry, . This finding was also present in the interviews conducted with PAL Place applicants. Multiple participants in this study described experiences of ageism that affected their arts practice and ability to make money as an artist

“

It's few and far between when I get an audition, because my age is not a popular age, so that's fine with me. You know, there's nothing I can do about that, so I'm happy to just take it as it comes. [Applicant]

So I'm 65, and the young person working at the gallery, he says, "you're still making art?" And my eyes just went like that (wide eyes). I couldn't think of any other, you know...you're always creating art when you're an artist. Like, the bugs there, or the disease, whatever you want to call it and you just create, you know, in between everything else. [Applicant]

Well ageism is certainly something that I'm facing now. I believe there's a huge amount of ageism in the arts, institutionalized in organizations like the Canada Council. [Applicant]

”

Despite the challenges, research on aging artists has uncovered the resilience within this community and the adaptations that aging artists make to enable themselves to continue their work practice (Chacur et al., 2024). Recent studies found a positive correlation between artist interventions, arts participation and quality of life for aging individuals (Neocleous & Vraka-Eleftheriadou, 2022).

Positive adaptations to enhance community resilience include:

- Adapting the pace of work
- Modifying arts practices (e.g. change in medium),
- Using technical aids (such as magnifying glasses, 3D printers, iPads for drawing),
- Artistic collaborations with younger artists or family members,
- Adapting work environments (smaller work stations, leaving common work spaces due to inaccessibility, in-home working space).

These adaptations can help inform the programs and service at PAL Place.



# Key Concepts

Key concepts woven throughout literature, research, and community reports that can help shape and address areas of study closely linked to PAL Place are: **1) Active Aging, 2) Independent Living, 3) Age-Friendly Cities/Communities, 4) Aging-in-Place, and 5) Placemaking.** Each of these concepts has emerged within specific social, historical, and political frameworks, shaping the way issues are framed, understood, and addressed. Recognizing these perspectives is crucial for developing comprehensive, inclusive, and effective strategies to support individuals (and communities) as they age.

## *Active Aging*

Active aging is an approach to aging that “promotes the vision of all individuals—regardless of age, socioeconomic status or health—fully engaging in life within all seven dimensions of wellness: emotional, environmental, intellectual/cognitive, physical, professional/vocational, social and spiritual” (International Council on Active Aging, n.d.)

Emphasizing that aging is not just about how long someone lives and recognizing that the experience of aging varies considerably, active aging has been promoted as a way of focusing on equity and inclusion, as well as more holistic understandings of health and wellness.

It includes a belief that remaining actively engaged in a variety of communities and activities inside and outside the home can help curb the negative effects of aging and improve health, longevity, and quality of life.

## *Independent Living*

Independent living is a term used to describe the ability to live autonomously, often meaning “a lack of dependence on others to complete everyday tasks, the capacity to live an active life and remain mobile, or simply the ability to live at home rather than in an aged care facility”(Strengers et al., 2021, p. 20).

The independent living approach has been criticized for promoting an unrealistic vision of aging that does not recognize the inherent interdependence of all people in society (Opel, 2018). Independent living is premised on the idea that “successful aging” means remaining independent, which requires financial stability and a strong social network, something not all older adults have access to. This “implicitly sets up a two-class system of older adults” and can be detrimental in long-term policy planning around aging (Rubinstein & de Medeiros, 2015, p. 34).

## ***Age-Friendly Communities/Cities***

The concept of age-friendly cities understands that our ability to age well depends on the presence of city and community supports and infrastructure. It proposes that by designing accessible and inclusive cities, we will support our aging populations. The World Health Organization identified 8 domains of “age-friendly cities” that promote the ability to remain at home or in the community for longer.

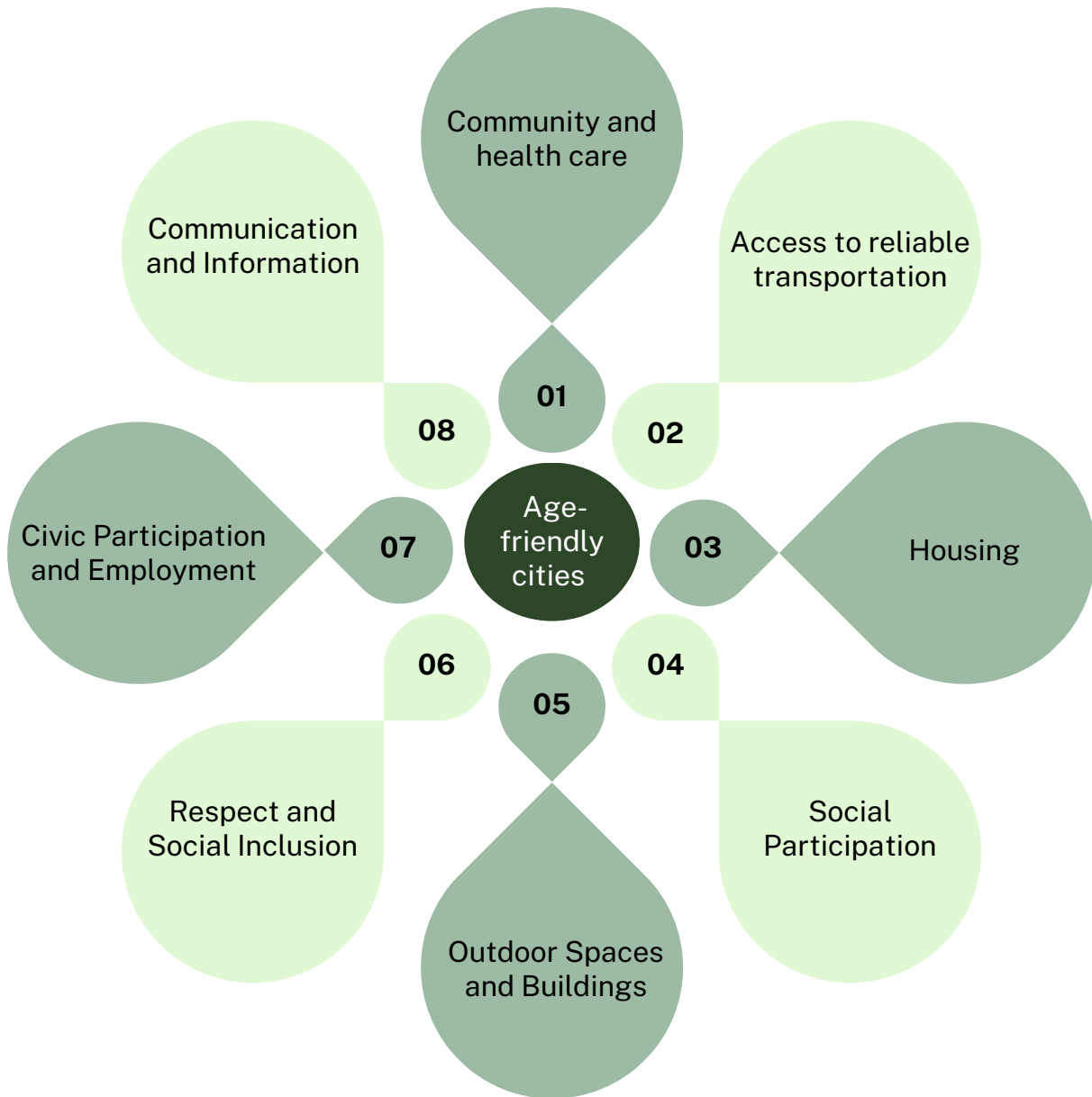


Figure 1: The 2007 WHO model of Age-Friendly Cities (WHO, 2007)

The 8 domains of age-friendly cities are underpinned by three central tenets cited widely in studies on aging. These are:

- **Affordability and Publicly Funded Resources:** Access to financial resources, in particular affordable housing, is often an indicator of access to other resources and ability to remain living independently (Blanchard, 2013; Gemito et al., 2014; Hubbard et al., 2014). For example, the ability to afford home health aides or outside support for activities of daily living (such as cleaning, cooking, bathing) greatly increases the length of time someone can live in the community or at home (Wagner, 2021).
- **Easily Navigable Services and Supports:** Easily accessible services that support the individual to complete Activities of Daily Life (ADLs) is a key indicator of longevity and ability to live independently (Lee et al., 2007; McAuley et al., 2005).
- **Accessible Built Environments:** The built environment must facilitate the ability to stay in the community, this includes: access to groceries, accessible transportation (Jakobi & Franke, 2022), hand-rails, accessible showers, wheelchair and walker-friendly environments among others.

While Age Friendly Cities is a comprehensive aging and planning strategy, they require advocacy and willing municipal partnerships. For this reason they may be a slower means of building housing and health supports for aging populations.

### ***Aging-in-place***

Many initiatives that focus on housing for older adults follow an aging-in-place model which promotes active aging by supporting people to live in their homes for as long as possible. While for many aging people it may be preferred and possible to continue living in their homes and communities, this often presumes that where they live is affordable, stable, secure and accessible.

Aging-in-place is a policy approach that focuses on enabling older adults to live in the community or in their homes for as long as possible and de-institutionalizing living arrangements for older adults (Vanleerberghe et al., 2017).

Aging-in-place is often understood as the optimal approach to aging in that it increases choice and agency for adults as they age (Forsyth & Molinsky, 2021). However, without proper infrastructure, care, policies, and connections, adults who age in the community or their homes can become “more prone to suboptimal management of chronic diseases, encounter accidents, experience social isolation, and depression” (Sumner et al., 2021, p. e395). Older adults who experience financial precarity can be made more vulnerable by age-in-place initiatives that are not accompanied by a strong social security net. Age-in-place residences can contribute to isolation and be detrimental to health if they do not have the ability to effectively and consistently support residents with their care needs (Samuel et al., 2021).

To situate age-in-place housing options in relation to the availability and cost of other retirement and supportive housing options, housing advocates such as Ismail-Teja and colleagues (2020) have drawn attention to the significant gaps that arise for low-income and rural communities as needs increase.

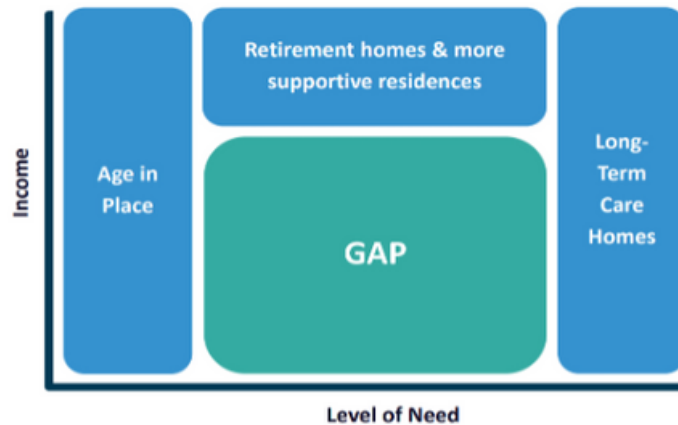


Figure 2: Age-in Place Level of Need and Income (Ismail-Teja et al., 2020, p. 7)

The graph above shows the significant gap (or lack) in services for older adults who cannot afford private retirement residences with care services, *and* who do not yet qualify for government subsidized long-term care homes. To address this gap in care, age-in-place initiatives need to increase the services and supports available to residents to allow for residents to fulfill their growing care needs in place. Further, publicly funded alternative housing options must be created to accommodate adults with high or increasing care needs who do not yet qualify for long-term care homes. PAL Place has the incredible opportunity to act as an “alternative housing option” as shown in the graph below and fill the gap between age-in-place initiatives and long-term care homes for older adults who live with financial insecurity.

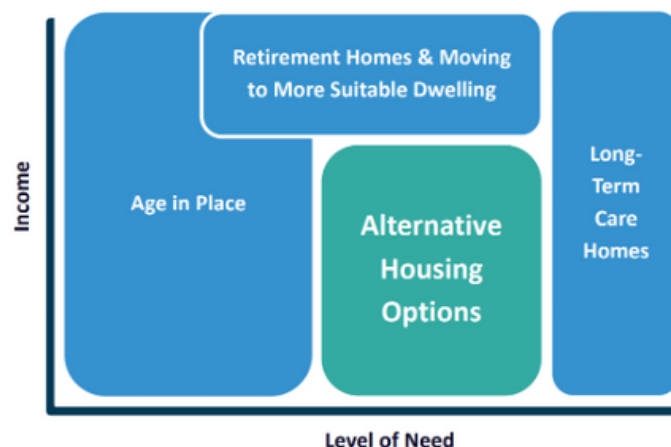


Figure 3: Age-in Place Level of Need and Income (Ismail-Teja et al., 2020, p. 54)

## ***Placemaking***

Placemaking (or Place Making) is a dynamic, participatory process through which individuals and communities transform physical spaces into meaningful places (Paulsen, 2009; Schneekloth & Shibley, 1995 as cited in Johansson et al., 2013, p. 114). Initially rooted in occupational science, it has been used to address the evolving identities, occupations, and relationships of individuals, particularly as they age, by supporting the physical, social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions of their environment.

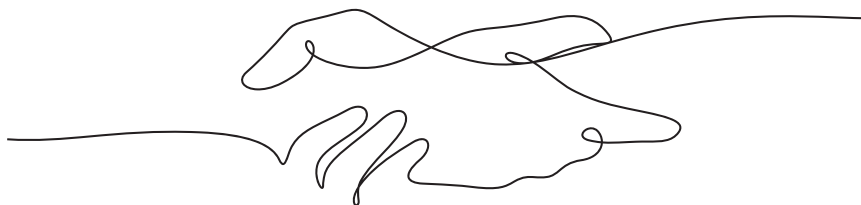
Unlike the more static notion of aging-in-place, which centers on remaining in one's current home and/or staying in one's community, placemaking is an active, dynamic process grounded in occupation, social connection, and personal meaning.

Placemaking considers how people understand themselves and what they do in relation to their surroundings, including work, migration, and culture (Johansson et al., 2013). This approach respects the diverse and changing needs of individuals, including their occupational roles, by supporting environments that sustain both work and daily life. It emphasizes doing and being in place, supporting occupational needs, and fostering spaces where people can feel a sense of belonging, purpose, and identity.

Recognizing that the places where people live also need to address people's social-cultural and spiritual needs, placemaking, "provides an opportunity to move away from over-simplistic perspectives on ethnicity and culture by addressing the process character of how ethnicity and culture are expressed in everyday practices." (Johansson et al., 2013, p. 114).

Beyond occupational science, placemaking has also been embraced in urban planning, community development, and public arts-based practices. In these contexts, especially within creative placemaking, collaborations among organizations help shape public spaces into inclusive, expressive, and animated environments that reflect community values and identities (Ellery, Ellery & Borkowsky, 2020).

In essence, placemaking is the human act of transforming spaces into places that are socially, culturally, spiritually, and personally significant.



# Community-Based Housing Initiatives

Community-based housing initiatives are housing projects that are led by members of the communities they serve. These include not-for-profit affordable artist housing, naturally occurring retirement communities (NORCs), cohousing initiatives, and housing cooperatives. These initiatives act as potential models for PAL Place. Below we outline some of the successes and challenges facing each:

## NOT-FOR-PROFIT AFFORDABLE ARTIST HOUSING

### DEFINITION

- Not-for-Profit Affordable Artist Housing, such as ArtscapeToronto, can take a variety of forms, from below market rental apartments, to rent geared to income live-work communities, to below market rate condos for purchase by artists and their families. What they all have in common is that they are organized and managed by not-for-profit organizations run by and for artists to allow affordable housing. Artscape in Toronto has affordable housing units alongside several other initiatives, such as below market condo purchase locations. Artscape Non-Profit Homes Inc. in a recent reorganization continues to operate the properties at Artscape West Queen West and affordable housing at Wychwood Barns (Artscape, 2024). Affordable Homes Inc., a non-profit housing provider, is leading "operations of three Toronto Artscape Inc. operated sites: Bayside Lofts, Weston Common and Parkdale Arts & Cultural Centre." (Artscape, 2024).

### SUCCESSSES

Creation of affordable artist spaces: Since grants and funding are often more accessible for organizations, the formalization of artists live-work spaces can increase access to grants that fund artists housing and studios. Artists can access housing at more affordable rates, which further helps their creation process.

Intergenerational sharing: Live-work spaces can increase access to artists of various generations leading to more collaborative artist endeavors.

Increased visibility: Live-work spaces can increase the visibility of artists and allow a larger audience/client base for their work.

### CHALLENGES

Displacement and gentrification: The rise of "creative cities" or creative districts has led to the displacement of individuals who can no longer afford to live in the newly established creative districts. Despite attempts to make affordable housing, Artscape in Toronto has also been critiqued for its role in gentrifying the "Liberty Village" area (Catungal et al., 2009). Zoning should work to keep out big developers from "creative districts" to slow the gentrification, and ensure that affordable housing and arts spaces are maintained.

Requires coordination with multiple levels of government: The required zoning, by-laws, and complex funding coordination can make this type of housing difficult to achieve.



## NATURALLY OCCURRING RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES (NORCS)

### DEFINITION

- Housing complexes that are not originally designed for older people or for retirement but which house nearly entirely older people Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCS) typically coordinate care services for their resident population based on their common need and often in conjunction with university or municipal partnerships to fund part time on-site organizers or facilitators.

### SUCCESSSES

Collaboration between residents and social services: Successful NORCS bring together external agencies and residents to work together towards healthy aging-in-place (Elbert & Neufeld, 2010). In particular, resident cooperation in the creation of these collaborations encouraged their success (through, for example, resident councils) (Bedney et al., 2010). External partnerships are also a factor that lead to success with the age-in-place NORC method. (Parniak et al 2022).

Programs: The existence of programs that keep residents connected to their community and/or provide an education component (ex. Health workshops) were seen as a successful component of several NORC studies (Elbert & Neufeld, 2010). Programs that “facilitate greater activity and promote feelings of well-being” are particularly important (Masotti et al., 2006, p. 1164). “Something to do, someone to do it with”, includes member-led as well as professionally led services (Mills et al., 2022, p. 1).

Health and Social Services: Not just the existence of services, but resident knowledge of services, is a key indicator of success. Some NORCS do not run their own health or social services but have internal resources (such as health navigators) who can coordinate access to services and increase the feeling of connection in the residence (Mills et al., 2022; Parniak et al., 2022)

Social-economic cost: Successful NORCs reduce the social cost of housing aging adults by enabling adults to live in their home longer (Elbert & Neufeld, 2010; Masotti et al., 2006).

### CHALLENGES

Financial sustainability: It is a challenge to maintain financial solvency (Parniak et al., 2022),

University Partnerships and Supports: Most NORCs do not run their own health or social services, this means they require strong partnerships to be successful. To date, most established NORCs have been able to build these partnerships due to their association with universities or researchers who facilitate the connections or supply financial resources to make them possible. The success of many of these initiatives require the support of university-funded program leaders, with training in elder care, social work and facilitation skills. It may be difficult for non-university affiliated NORCs to fund this type of position.

# COHOUSING

## DEFINITION

- Cohousing is a form of housing that is intentionally designed and equitably managed by a group of individuals to allow both private ownership of living spaces and collective co-ownership of common and social spaces within their shared building. Cohousing combines “elements from private and collective ownership to provide the benefits of both individual home ownership and community living that shares resources” (Thompson, 2018, p. xiii).

## SUCSESSES

**Mutual Support:** The choice to intentionally live with other neighbours provided an additional layer of support (Glass, 2009, 2020; Puplampu, 2020; Puplampu et al., 2020). Glass (2020) found that loneliness in cohousing units was lower than the national average but still impacted about ¼ of residents. (2020, p. 20)

**Adult Independence:** Cohousing can be built to enable individuals to complete the activities of daily life such as adaptive showers, elevators, walking paths to promote cognitive and physical health etc. (Glass, 2020; Puplampu et al., 2020; Thompson, 2018).

**Belonging and Socialization:** Evidence from cohousing finds that being involved in these community housing spaces promotes a sense of belonging as people socialize on a regular basis with other residents. (Puplampu, 2020; Puplampu et al., 2020).

**Support Services and Collaborative Partnerships:** Specifically designed partnerships with external service providers can increase required supports for residents based on their needs (Hou & Cao, 2021).

## CHALLENGES

**Completing the Project:** On average these cohousing projects take about 10 years to complete, many do not get past the early design stage (Monton et al., 2022). Current city zoning and bylaws as well as economic models for collective purchase do not allow for ease in funding, design, permitting, and building. ([Ottawa Cohousing 2024](#))

## HOUSING COOPERATIVES

### DEFINITION

- A housing cooperative is a collectively managed series of housing units organized by residents under a single enterprise to which they (the resident-members) belong. Membership functions using a traditional Lease agreement.
- "Co-op housing is member-controlled housing. The members who live in a co-op are the ones responsible for running the co-op. Each member has a vote and every year members elect a Board of Directors from the membership." (Co-operative Housing Association of Eastern Ontario (CHASEO), n.d.)

### SUCCESSSES

**Government-funding:** This is a form of housing that has received and is currently receiving government funding for development, and as such can be easier to establish for residents than other forms of affordable housing.

**Resident-Led:** This is one of the only forms of housing (apart from cohousing) that is collectively held by the residents who live within the housing community. It allows residents to maintain collective control of their rental apartments.

**Rent Subsidies:** Often government subsidies can be applied to coop housing units, allowing lower-income people to participate in this form of housing community.

### CHALLENGES

**Land Ownership:** It is possible for co-ops to be on rented or 'lent' land. This can cause problems as the co-op ages and the land-ownership or the lease is renegotiated. One local seniors co-op was granted an affordable land lease in the 1980s for which their agreement has just ended. They are now having to raise five million dollars to purchase their land anew, and they are unsure if they can afford this.

**Conflict:** Often cooperative housing can have consistent conflict due to difference of opinion in organizing and living in close quarters.

**Set-up:** The burden of time, energy and funding applications involved in setting up a co-op, and the current high land & building costs means that this form of housing can be difficult and time consuming to organize anew.

## SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

### DEFINITION

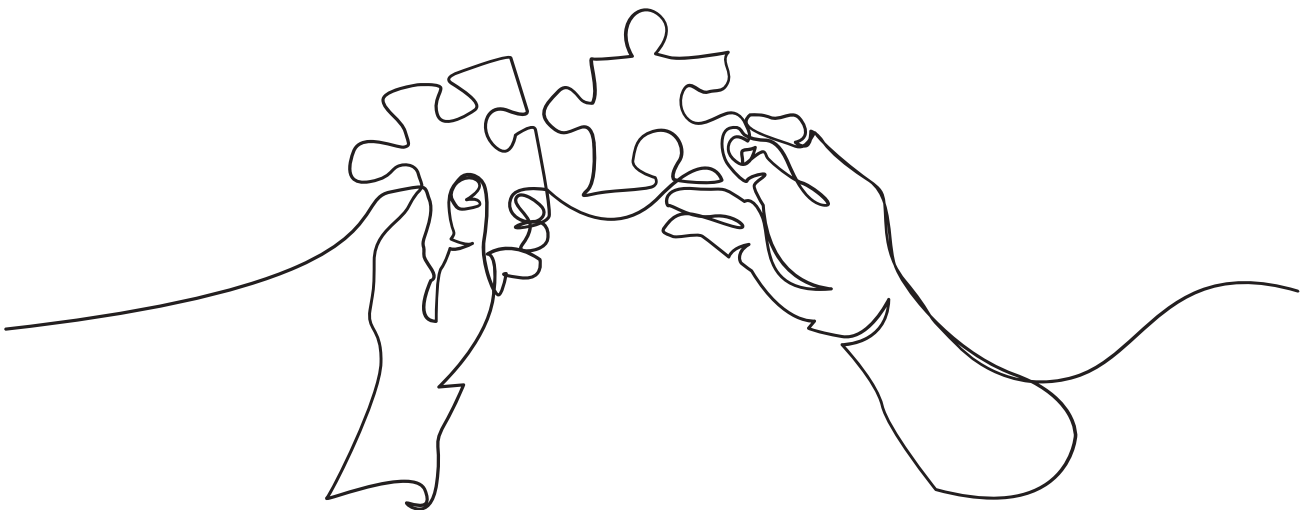
Supportive housing is a model that runs adjacent to aging-in-place in many ways, in that care and service provision is integrated into the housing model and is made accessible for residents. This model likely has more wraparound support than PAL Place might require, but could be a good model to look to for best practice in specific areas of health and wellness needs for residents.

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“Supportive housing is housing that provides a physical environment that is specifically designed to be safe, secure, enabling and home-like, with support services such as social services, provision of meals, housekeeping and social and recreational activities, in order to maximize residents’ independence, privacy and dignity.” (CMHC, 2025)

It is often run by not-for-profit housing and health organizations, with services provided by on-site and off-site staff for residents with complex mental and physical health needs.

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# Findings

The applicant survey, interviews, and community partner interviews provided interesting insights into the health, social, and community care concerns that arise as people age. Further, attention was placed on the critical role of relationships, community, resident-led programming and strong community networks for a building such as PAL Place. Five main themes were generated from the data, including: affordability; aging, living, imagining, and place making at PAL Place; relationships and community; inclusion and structural barriers; and conflict, governance, and decision- making.

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## Affordability

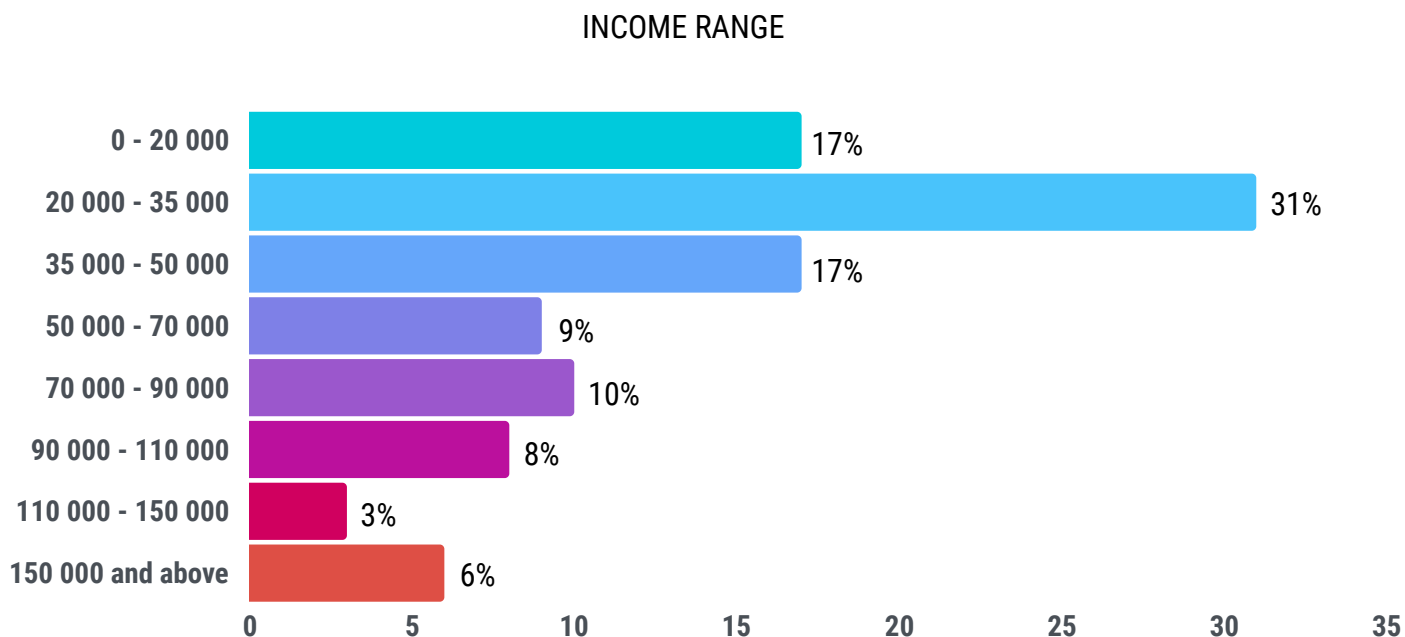
Access to affordable housing was a key concern for applicants and community partners. Survey results indicated that nearly two-thirds of applicants (65%) have an average household income below \$51,000

This is significantly lower than the average household income in Ottawa which was \$125,700 in 2021. The issue of affordability was a frequent talking point in applicant interviews: participants spoke of the financial challenges associated with being an aging arts worker, including: reduced access to grants, fewer contracts, and limited access to pensions.

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*Well getting old, it comes with its own set of complications. Well, I think, I think if you're younger, it's easier to rebound and to make a way, but if you get to a certain age, you're no longer as resilient and so the forces, the economic and social forces that are affecting us all get worse. If you're older. I mean, if you have lots of money, it doesn't matter. But if you have no money, it matters. [Applicant]*

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As they grappled with the financial challenges of aging, applicants saw PAL Place as a potential safety net for aging artists and expressed hope that it could offer affordable housing options for individuals who do not have retirement savings or a pension.

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*Not everybody has had the opportunity to contribute to CPP, myself included, I put a lot in the last 13 years, but previously to that, I barely put any in. So, you know. I guess, [PAL Place could offer] some avenue of subsidy, so that people aren't worried about cash, so they're not worried about food, they're not worried about accommodation.*

*[Applicant]*

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At the same time, several participants shared their concerns that the rent at PAL Place would be more than they were able to afford and expressed frustration with the perceived lack of transparency around predicted rent prices.



When asked about their concerns in relation to PAL Place, one applicant shared:

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*I couldn't really get an answer as to what, what the ballpark for the rent might be. I'm very fortunate where I live now. I got this place through a relative of a friend, and the rent hasn't been raised for some time, and it's a really good deal for what I have. So I just want to get a sense of, am I going to be paying way, way more rent than I'm currently paying, because that will factor into my decision making. [Applicant]*

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Many participants called for a rent-geared-to-income approach where rent prices would be set at 30% of each resident's household income.

Applicants highlighted that rent-geared-to-income would ensure affordability across the board, especially for aging artists who may not be regularly working and struggle with rising rent and living costs.

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*That's the concept of the RGI, rent geared to income, is that your rent should only be 30% of your income. That's a wonderful concept. So, the neat thing in my co-op is, we have people paying market and people on RGI, and we don't know who's who, it's kind of mixed. But you assume that everyone is at that - 30% goes to your housing. [Applicant]*

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One applicant spoke to the impact of increasing housing costs on older tenants in his cooperative housing community. He describes how a rent increase at the co-op disproportionately impacted older adults who were not working:

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*The people who were mostly working, and could, if there was a housing charge increase, we could mostly sustain it. And then, people who were beyond their working years couldn't sustain that as well. [Applicant]*

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While PAL Place currently plans to offer rent prices at CMHC determined Average Market Rent (AMR) and Below Market Rent (BMR) rates, these prices would still be over the 30% household income of two thirds of applicants. CMHC typically sets BMR at 80% of AMR, in 2024 the average market rent in Ottawa is \$1698 for a two bedroom unit, which translates to a below market rent of approximately \$1358 a month. Rental prices are also increasing steadily year over year meaning this price will be higher when PAL Place is open in 2026.

For the half of applicants who have a household income of \$35,000 or less per year, affordable rent (based on 30% of their income) would be approximately \$875 a month. This is significantly lower than the \$1358 calculation based on AMRs for 2024 in Ottawa. At the same time, just over a quarter of applicants (27%) have a household income above \$70,000 which could present the opportunity for rent-cost offsetting via a rent-geared-to-income program where applicants pay 30% of their household income rate and subsidize residents with lower incomes

The following chart demonstrates what affordable rent would look like for applicants based on their stated income.

Household Income Range (CAD \$)	Percentage of Applicants	Affordable rent (based on 30% of highest income in each bracket)
0 - 20,000	17%	\$500
20,000 - 35,000	31%	\$875
35,000 - 50,000	17%	\$1250
50,000 - 70,000	9%	\$1750
70,000 - 90,000	10%	\$2250
90,000 - 110,000	8%	\$2750
110,000 - 150,000	3%	\$3750
150,000 and above	6%	\$4375 (based on \$175,000 income)

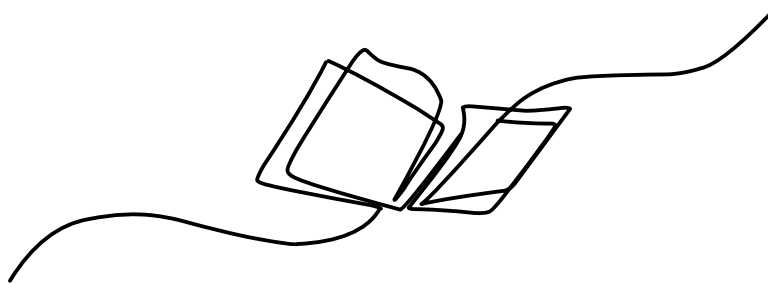
Creating a rent scheme that is flexible to the needs of aging artists is one of the ways that PAL Place can ensure its space is accessible, especially for applicants who do not have pensions. Many applicants are currently struggling to cover the costs of living, for example, 13% of survey respondents noted they accessed a food bank at least once in the last year. As one applicant described:

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*Paying high rents, often for substandard quarters, is causing anxiety in some older persons' lives. Without additional pension money on top of OAS (Old Age Security) and GIS (Guaranteed Income Supplement), and most of us with a smattering of CPP (Canadian Pension Plan), we cut it close to the bone each month. This is why I find myself at the Community Cupboard and sometimes taking advantage of breakfast served at a local church once a week. [Applicant]*

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Future research is needed to explore how different rent and rent supplement schemes (rent-geared-to-income, subsidized rent) would impact residents, particularly residents who access Ontario Works (OW) or Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). Any rent scheme should be designed to ensure it does not unfairly penalize any resident who is receiving subsidies, for example, by artificially inflating the income they have to report to OW or ODSP.



## Aging, Living, Imagining, and Place Making in PAL Place

The second key theme that emerged in the data is the importance of understanding the unique needs of arts workers as they age. Survey data demonstrated that artists from all ages are interested in living at PAL Place. Applicant ages range from 29 – 89 yet, applicants are by and large over the age of 60, and 1/5th of applicants are over the age of 80. This means a majority of applicants are aging and PAL Place must be prepared for the associated realities.

### **Successful Aging:**

The research team asked applicants what 'successful aging' in PAL Place would look like. Applicants highlighted how important it was for PAL Place to be a place where they could live fully, which meant continuing to be an artist.

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*Active, engaged, waking up, feeling that life is there to be experienced, instead of just know, being put away somewhere and tossed out of the place where things happen, right? I think it's okay to retire. I am a freelancer, so I'll never retire, I may shift one day.*

[Applicant]

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*To be in an environment that's relatively peaceful, to be able to socialize, but also have privacy...So intellectually stimulating, keeping the body active and being able to pursue passions.[...] And then, if I decide I want to keep being a director and an actor or whatever, possibly opening up avenues where things like that could happen, even if it's just play readings or that kind of thing, but to keep that passion fed.*

[Applicant]

\*\*\*

*I think aging, aging in place, also sort of involves imagining a future for yourself. And so there must be ways to kind of do that in a building of this nature where people can imagine like... I suspect most artists, they're not like people who work in offices where, you know, they turn 65 and they no longer are doing X, Y and Z. Whereas artists, they keep going.*

[Applicant]

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### ***Health & Social Needs:***

Applicants' hopes for successful aging are very possible with care and planning for health and wellness. Older adults have distinct health and social care needs that PAL Place will have to prepare for in order to ensure an accessible and inclusive space for residents.

Survey results show that residents are frequently accessing hospitals (54% of residents) and medical services, and are in need of additional support services such as food banks (13% of residents) and crisis support. The following table shows how many surveyed applicants accessed each of the following supports at least once in the past year.

Service	Percent of Applicants
Hospital	54%
Health Centre	39%
Walk-in Centre	37%
Crisis Support	13%
Mental Health Services	9%
Food Services (food banks etc.)	13%
Disability Services	13%

### ***Neighbourhood Orientation:***

A majority of applicants are currently living outside of Little Italy (PAL Place's new neighbourhood) with applicants coming from all across Ottawa and Ontario (see Supplementary Information for an overview of where applicants are coming from). This means applicants will need orientation to the local medical and social services including where to find walk-in clinics, food banks, mental health supports, meals on wheels, and other services catering to older adults.

### ***Aging at PAL Place Supports:***

Further, many participants articulated a desire to stay in PAL Place for as long as they were able to, meaning their care needs will increase as they age, so will their need to access health and social services.

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*Interviewer: How long do you hope to live in PAL Place?*

*M: My grandma died [at]101, my grandfather died [at] 99, my great aunt died [at]97 so there you go.*

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The fact that many applicants expressed a desire to stay in PAL Place for as long as possible is not surprising. Interview data from partner organizations highlighted that most affordable housing projects have long term tenants because it is difficult to find affordable housing.

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*We need additional (affordable) housing for families. Just in general, if anyone looking for affordable housing who's not on the priority list, it's just a long wait. To be on the priority list means you're homeless, you're living with a life-threatening illness, or living/fleeing abuse.*

*We look at our tenants and we see that people are there for the long haul. We don't have a lot of move-outs.*

[Community Partner, Bruce House]

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Applicants' desire to age at PAL Place, alongside evidence of present-day needs, makes it essential that PAL Place adopt a model that recognizes how aging increases the care needs of residents. For this to be successful, partnerships will need to be made with health and social service providers.

Alongside the various medical and social services listed previously in the *Health & Social Needs* section, survey data demonstrated that applicants are closely connected to, and accessing a variety of community, social, and culturally specific services including:

- Wabano Centre
- Odawa Friendship Centre
- Ottawa Senior Pride Network
- The Good Companions Centre
- Various Religious organizations
- Alcoholics Anonymous and other addiction support services

During our community consultations, we noted that the services and programs employed by housing communities are unique to their needs. This can be evidenced by the aging in place studies and community-based practices being done in NORCs, such as the OASIS program at Queen's University, in collaboration with the Old Forge Community Resource Centre in Ottawa. Their work makes clear the benefit of building supportive networks of partnerships to promote healthy aging in place. The quote below shows how one local NORC has created their network of partnerships:

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*What's been happening is they've brought together Queens Pine Crest, Queensway Community Health Center and their health care providers, community paramedics and Rexall. OASIS and the members themselves provide these wellness clinics once a month and support people in either accessing health care that they might not have, especially folks who don't have family doctors, or just don't have the knowledge of different community resources to seek that kind of help.*

[Community Partner, Old Forge Community Resource Centre, OASIS Program]

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The NORC aging-in-place program also highlights some universal needs for aging communities:

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*The health navigation piece, I think, is really essential in a lot of communities. The, you know, social, recreational, nutrition, physical activity, all of those are really essential to the everyday lives of everyone, let alone older adults. And what we really believe in, is providing or facilitating these types of activities as preventative strategies, as opposed to the typical reactive healthcare model that we have basically all over Canada.*

[Community Partner, Old Forge Community Resource Centre, OASIS Program]

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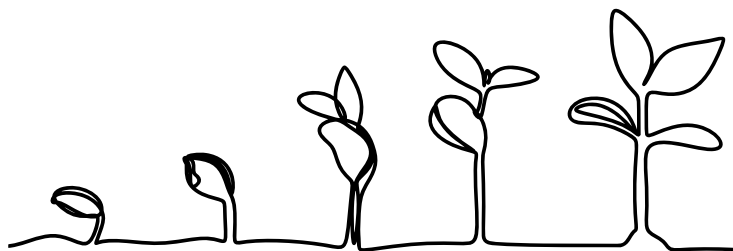
Alongside partnerships with formal care providers, some similar community housing organizations created care teams in their spaces to allow residents to support each other. These care teams can function in a variety of ways but are all based on shared care work, ensuring residents are looked after in their home, in similar ways to PAL's current Supporting Cast program. These types of care teams could benefit residents of PAL Place.

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*We had from the beginning a community care team which we call co-care. But multi-generational communities have that too. It's often called a care team or a wellbeing team or something like that. It just provides support when people have accidents or are going through a mental health crisis or, you know, have just had a baby or whatever.*

[Community Partner, Harbourside Senior Cohousing]

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### ***Arts-specific Supports:***

Since PAL Place caters specifically to arts workers, partnerships and programs specific to the arts will be hugely important and beneficial. In the survey applicants were asked to share about the community spaces and resources they require to sustain their arts practice. The primary needs listed in the survey included:

- Studio and workspace (ex. A painting studio and a glassblowing shop, studio share, rehearsal space, recording studio, performance venue)
- Art supplies and equipment (ex. Art supplies stores, tool room for small carpentry items, access to a kiln, efficient speech to text software)
- Community spaces and interaction (ex. A place to exchange and grow with other artists, cultural and community centres, seniors community centres for instruction).
- Financial and grant support (ex. Arts grants, adequate/cost-inclusive housing)
- Accessibility and technical support (ex. Tech support, help setting up music equipment)
- Language and publishing support (ex. Assistance with publishing translated works, assistance with promotion)

Residents told us sustaining their arts practice will support their physical and mental health and their spiritual, relational, financial and career success.

### ***Design for Physical Accessibility:***

Community partners that worked with aging adults offered ample advice about the importance of physically accessible spaces. A senior's cohousing organization described how they integrated universal design into their building plans to ensure units are adaptable to individual and collective needs.

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*So we knew from the beginning that we were not going to provide assisted living. We can't do that. What we did was first to design the units in such a way that they would be easily adapted to people's individual needs. So it was a universal design.*

[Community partner, Harbourside Senior Cohousing]

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### ***Supportive Housing, Long-term Care, or End of life care:***

Support needs increase as a person ages, and the concept of “independent living” can run counter to the realities of aging. As residents and board members of Tannenhof Senior’s Housing Cooperative shared with us, it is both unpleasant, and against human rights violations to remove a person’s right to housing, even (or especially) in cases of increasing care needs. PAL Place must be prepared to address changing support and care needs.

If it is no longer possible to support a resident in living at PAL Place or similar housing projects, partner organizations emphasized the importance of helping residents navigate the transition to more supportive housing. This could mean building relationships with other supportive housing programs and assisting residents in making those connections, or it could involve maintaining contact with the resident and facilitating continued access to the PAL Place community.

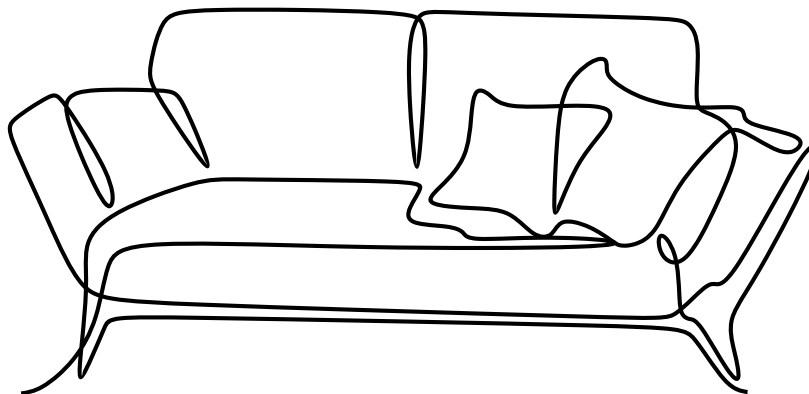
Finally, it is important to remember that aging in place may also mean dying in place. As such becoming equipped for end-of-life care, palliative care, and supporting the community in grieving will be necessary for a healthy community life.

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*We try to stay with them every step of the way if we cannot provide the support due to the system we have for that stage of life. We continue to engage with them after, whether it be continuing to see them for a while and eventually transitioning towards the [...] move onto long term care or a supportive housing program that's more wraparound.*

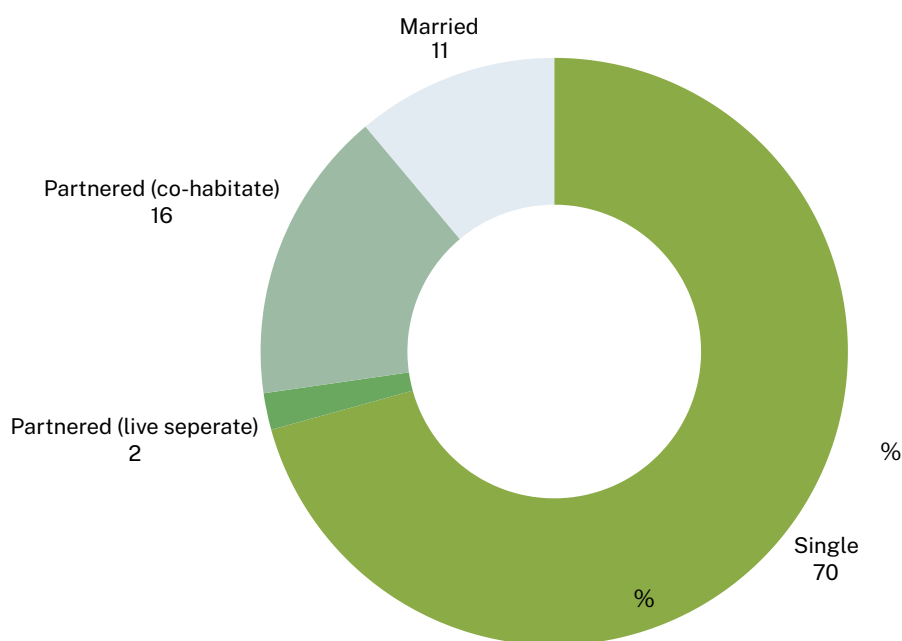
[Community partner, Bruce House]

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## Relationships and Community

One of the key elements of healthy or active aging is a strong social network which can help prevent cognitive decline and maintain physical health. Overwhelmingly, participants noted that they chose to apply to PAL Place because they were attracted to the idea of living in community with other artists. Of the applicants who completed the survey, a vast majority (70%) are single (of which 40% are living in precarious housing), 27% are married or cohabitating with a partner, and 2% are partnered but currently live separately.




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*If you're dealing with aging people, that's part of it. I think, though, that living in community keeps us sharper. Wayyyyy sharper than being in any kind of retirement community. Many of us are still working, which I think my personal bias is that that keeps one sharper. But we're having to deal with the problems of living together. And so some of those things that I identified that are challenges...Are the best thing that could happen...because they do bring you closer as you work through them...You have to think. And when too much is taken care of for you, you don't think.*

[Community Partner, Harbourside Seniors Cohousing]

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Participants highlighted the importance of living with other artists, the shared values, and the support PAL Place could offer.

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*I like the idea of being in the building with other artists. That meant, you know, I thought that there was more chance for shared interests and shared life experience as well, including the challenges that artists face, you know, financially, among many other things. [Applicant]*

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*Seems to me like, it's like a mini Disney world where all the good values are put together in a building. Company, camaraderie, support, sharing, safety. I mean, it's great. [Applicant]*

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### **Common Spaces:**

To foster this sense of community many participants called for the creation of common areas where they could host community-wide events, including: arts show and tells, community dinners, educational events, workshops, book clubs, among others.

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*(At PAL Place I would love to see...) common rooms that would promote ways for people to socialize and like book clubs or any number of things, discussion groups. You know, there's probably a lot of people who will end up in PAL that have a wealth of knowledge that people would like to benefit from. A library, you know, maybe there could be a library. [Applicant]*

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*Part of it is to bring the community to PAL and to bring PAL to the community. So, you know, again, it's all part of what I would consider to be a healthy exchange where people are still feeling creative and still expressing their creativity. And having an opportunity to do that in a way that is constructive and productive for them, but also engaging the community around. So, you know, we have a theater. It's called The Press Theater Green Room. We have an exercise space that has a dance bar and mirrors, which is used by people who are dancers or movement oriented people. [Community Partner, PAL Toronto]*

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In particular, participants called for a common space for arts practice that could also be used as a revenue generating space to make it more accessible for them to sell, display, or promote their work. For many, PAL Place was appealing because it would allow them to continue their career and remain connected to a larger city-wide artist community from within PAL.

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*That's something that's really important to me, that I can separate that (arts/studio space) from the rest of my living, you know, so that would be something that would be important. There's a real dearth of venues in Ottawa, even places to rehearse that kind of thing. So I've heard a bit that PAL is thinking about, you know, a community room, a rehearsal space, whatever that might be. So something like that would be, would be terrific, actually. [Applicant]*

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(Referring to potential earnings made from shows or workshops held in the PAL Place building) *Yeah, if it's not just for the building, we could maybe make a few bucks. [Applicant]*

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Many applicants described a passion for cooking together and common meals. This desire is an example of one of the many ways in which we can foresee that the collaborative use of common space will contribute to building a culture of community wellness and care.

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*Breaking bread together is like the key to building a community, right?*  
(Community Partner, Abbeyfield house)

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*I've always dreamt of having a community cook up kind of thing, where you cook large batches together and then everyone gets to go home with ready made meals that you can put in the freezer. [Applicant]*

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### **Notes on Community Care:**

As previously noted, for many participants community building includes incorporating community care aspects into the buildings' social life. This could be informal acts of care (such as checking in on a neighbour) or more formalized types of care (such as a shared pet initiative).

At the same time, several participants expressed concern that they would be expected to participate in social activities more than they were able to. These participants hoped to have personal space, both to practice their art but also to be alone.

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*You know, to be in an environment that's relatively peaceful, to be able to socialize, but also have privacy. And I just want to, you know, close the door and be on my own.*

*[Applicant]*

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Some participants noted that any acts of community care or resource sharing would need to be done in a sensitive manner to ensure they do not inadvertently shame individuals who need or want additional support. An applicant here describes some of her thinking on how to make the food bank logistics more welcoming at a residence where she lived:

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*I think it has to be done in a way that makes people feel comfortable. Because the way they're doing it now, it's almost like shaming people in a way, you know what I mean. So, they're having to stand outside in a line, and it's just – Before they used to bring the food into the green room in the building, and then the residents would be able to come down and help themselves to the food. So, it was more sort of insulated, whereas now they have to stand in a line outside, waiting for their turn to go in, and sort of being checked in.*

*[Applicant]*

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### ***Intergenerational Living:***

A number of applicants were concerned that taking up residence in a senior's community could cause isolation, and as such showcased desire to build intergenerational connection and community as part of their experience living at PAL Place.

Different suggestions were made on how to build an intergenerational community, including: allowing younger artists to apply, hosting intergenerational workshops and skillshares, as well as other forms of exchange with younger artists, to allow PAL to stay connected and relevant to the wider arts community. Partner agencies noted that intergenerational communities are also more inclusive for residents who are already living in intergenerational homes and would have to otherwise change their living arrangements to move into PAL Place.

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*We have such wisdom to offer - it would be a shame if it were lost*

[Applicant]

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*I really enjoy any opportunities within my work to mentor young people..., I've worked quite a bit with young people, and I really believe in fostering them as human beings*

[Applicant]

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### ***Networks & Partnerships:***

Several participants articulated a desire that the PAL Place community building efforts extend beyond PAL Place and connect to the broader community, including local arts centres, food banks, or other non-profits.

This connection could include a two-way partnership where PAL Place residents make use of partner services, and volunteer time or resources towards sustaining the partner organizations. However the partnerships look, participants emphasized the importance of building relationships with other supportive organizations.

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*Never walk alone, right? Regardless how prepared you are, and utilize the resources already in the community.*

[Community Partner, Ottawa West Community Support]

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### ***Resident-Centered Programming:***

Community organizations and other housing collectives shared with us that a combination of resident-suggested and staff-supported programming works best towards creating cultures of resident engagement and participation.

All community partners who work with senior populations cited isolation as the number one factor to overcome in ensuring health and wellness of their clients and communities. Our data indicates that a majority of respondents are single and therefore have fewer opportunities for social interaction in their homes. Community building activities could combat loneliness and isolation. Suggestions from applicants during our interview process were ample and varied. They included the following:

- Public and intergenerational arts workshops
- Song Circles/Jams
- Artist Speaker Series
- Library/Book Club
- Yoga/Meditation
- Meal Prep/exchange
- Gardening
- Writing Circles
- Outdoor/Indoor Concerts
- Outings to NAC/ National Gallery, to see artist works & performances
- Sauna / Pool
- Fitness Classes
- Collective theatre/performance
- Visual Art Shows

Some of the programming that is currently happening at other PAL Place buildings is described here:

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*[PAL Toronto has their] own in-house supporting cast program. Vancouver does not, they don't have an official supporting cast program, but they do do things that that would fall under that category. They both have a food bank, and they have different entertainment projects within their chapter.*

[Community Partner, PAL Canada]

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In measuring the success of programming, community partners shared that the metrics of attendance, resident knowledge of programming, and qualitative feedback from residents are great guides. Partner organizations also spoke to a feeling of engaged presence and joyful cooperation that occurs when there is programming that serves the needs of residents.

Unitarian House spoke well of their collaborative relationship with residents, and the culture of engagement that they have created in their retirement residence.

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*We work together very closely to make sure the programs happen and work together. So the staff, myself, the board and the residents association, it's a very strong resident association compared to other retirement homes in the community. I'm going to say that it's next to none.*

*There is sort of an expectation that people contribute back to the community when they move in. Whether it's through fundraising and pledges or volunteer their time, volunteer their knowledge, their expertise. It's not always monetary, but there is an expectation that there's a contribution towards the home.*

[Community Partner, Unitarian House]

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Community partners often noted that well attended programs and services are a sign of resident health and wellness. They not only provide direct benefit to resident's fitness, mental sharpness or food security for example, but they also allow residents to network and further help one another.

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*The healthy choices would be the people that would be looking for social programming. I think that makes all the difference. In the senior residences that we work with, and we do provide some exercise programs to some of these residences. The communities that are within there [...] that help each other all the time. That's grassroots. It's just themselves helping.*

[Community Partner, OWCS]

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While grassroots helping provides ample community engagement, participants and community partners also noted that it would be important for PAL Place to consider hiring staff to help coordinate potential services. We asked community partner Unitarian House what they would suggest as support for aging artist housing:

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*Nurse navigators, a social worker, an activity director. Yeah. Otherwise, the volunteers are all just going to take from one another. And it won't. There won't be that one person to keep it all streamlined. I mean, I have a paid person and we're still struggling, so having no paid person would just be chaos, I think.*

[Community Partner, Unitarian House]

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From discussions with applicants, we have also become aware that an effective staff assignment could include an “arts navigator” who would help connect PAL to arts practices and organizations in the community and build partnerships with other arts organizations.

Relationships and community building will not only improve the living conditions for residents and foster a strong social network, but will also contribute to healthy aging and should be a significant priority in the first few years of the program.



# Inclusion and Structural Barriers

As with any community, PAL Place will have to actively work to address structural barriers to inclusion in their community building efforts. Structural forms of oppression, including racism, colonial violence, transphobia, homophobia, and lack of trauma-informed frameworks implicitly and explicitly inform program, services, and community building efforts. Participants in this study highlighted the importance of PAL Ottawa taking action to build safer and more inclusive community spaces.

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*I want to be around a mixed, diverse population, ...I want to be in a place that everyone doesn't look like me.*

[Applicant]

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Cultural safety was a frequent topic in applicant and partner interviews. Several applicants articulated concerns that the housing would be “too white”, may not be inclusive to individuals who do not speak English as a first language, or be inaccessible for people who have experienced personal or systemic trauma.

## Partners identified potential actions that can help create safer space at PAL Place:

**1. Ensuring there is racially diverse leadership,** so that there is not an undue burden put on some racialized residents to speak as the voice for all in their community, or a homogeneous residential population.

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*Have different voices in the room! Because I cannot speak for all Cis(gender) Black women over 50, and we need Queer Muslim voices, Latina voices in a wheelchair...*

[Applicant]

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**2. Including residents in policy level decisions.** Several of the partner organizations discussed their own struggles in their initiatives becoming anti-racist, equitable, and safe for individuals who have experienced structural oppression (i.e. racism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, ableism, ageism, colonial violence). These partners highlighted the importance of ensuring residents with lived experience of structural violence are in decision making roles and have a voice when it comes to naming and finding resolutions for experiences of discrimination.

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*Why aren't the marginalized people the ones deciding if there was transphobia or not? Like the people who are a part of making those policies should be the people who are the most at risk of needing those policies. So if it's transphobia, trans people should be the ones saying: 'this is transphobia'. If it's racism, people of colour should be the ones being like: 'this is racism.' And therefore, when racism happens and where transphobia happens, maybe not to have the help of a straight, white, cis man and instead seek out trans people who can sit down around the table and say: 'yes, this transphobia' or 'no', or 'yes and no', or whatever[...] usually the people who will decide if it was or wasn't are not the people who are impacted by those policies.*

[Community Partner, Coop les Artistes du Ruisseau ]

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**3. Ensuring there are programs and activities that are culturally relevant for all residents,** and not only centering European/North American cultural traditions (e.g. Not just Scottish dancing). This also means ensuring there is programming that is conducted in languages other than English, and/or that translation is easily accessible.

Community Partner Isaruit explains why this is so important to their artist community:

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*It's a very difficult place for Inuit to live (Ottawa). We know that approximately 65% of the Inuit living here are homeless...*

*We realized we needed a place where we felt comfortable, just as people, to speak our Inuktitut language, to talk about the issues that are present in our lives, to eat food together, and, oh, by the way, create!*

[Community Partner, Isaruit Inuit Arts]

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**Cultural safety must be incorporated into policy decisions.** The selection criteria for resident applications was brought up as a potential policy area of concern. Partner organizations provided some ideas for PAL to consider:

**a) Widening the definition of 'Arts Worker'**

Trans, queer, artists of colour, Indigenous, and disabled artists often faced additional barriers in their arts career due to structural racism in funding and arts organizations, discrimination in hiring processes and the compounding harms of systemic oppression. These artists may also carry a cultural understanding of art that is not recognized by industry or state norms. For these reasons, selection criteria with a strict definition of 'artist' could limit who is able to apply to PAL Place.

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*That word 'art'... it implies the buying and selling of stuff, you know, and creating just for the purpose of selling. That's not what we're about here. We're about doing art as creators. So it's actually the same word for God in Inuktitut, which is the creator, right? We don't know any Inuit who aren't artists right? Or creators...wonderfully gifted. You know, cooking arts, language arts, storytelling arts, on and on.*

[Community Partner, Isaruit]

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#### **b) Anti-discrimination Training**

Community partners identified the importance of anti-discrimination and structural racism training for selection committee members to reduce the potential for racism and discrimination in the selection process.

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*It's a very white co-op. There have been problems where in the selection committee there was racism, and discrimination comes into play in the foundation of the co-op. And so (a solution to this would be) making sure, like for me it would be like seeking out training for folks in decisional roles, and also like mapping out resources. And having those accessible for the community.*

[Community Partner, Housing Cooperative]

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#### **c) Indigenous Intergenerational Inclusion**

Indigenous partner organizations discussed how age restrictions on living at PAL Place can hinder intergenerational living arrangements and be a barrier for Indigenous applicants. Note that the desire for intergenerational living was also expressed by applicants and other partner organizations.

#### **d) Widening Networks of Outreach**

There were some concerns expressed about how and where PAL Place was being advertised to potential residents. In particular, partners noted that PAL Place should make an effort to advertise to Indigenous artists, queer artists, artists of colour, and francophone artists through their specific cultural/social service organizations and collectives. A list of suggested organizations and collectives is included in the appendix. Indigenous respondents also noted that Indigenous community members should be consulted on how and where PAL Place is promoted as well as the selection criteria for PAL Place.

#### **e) Reducing Ageism in the Arts and Housing**

Participants described experiences of ageism in the arts sector and called for PAL Place to make an active effort to ensure that staff and leaders were trained in ageism and showed respect for all residents. This should be integrated into selection criteria to ensure residents are not disqualified based on perceived age or ability.

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*Oh, whoever you hire at PAL Place, make sure there's no ageism [...] ageism is when people don't want to listen to your opinion and your concerns, and then you know that's, that's ageism.*

[Applicant]

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In addition, several participants expressed the hope that PAL Place will be safe for Queer and 2SLGBTQI+ individuals. Participants discussed how older queer artists can feel pressured to go “back in the closet” as they age because of lack of safe, affordable, places for them to live. As one participant described:

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*Something that's an inclusive space. You know, one of the fears as a gay person is going into care and going back into the closet to deal with homophobia of/from the the people running, the caregivers, that's a big concern of a lot of queer people. So inclusivity is really important to me and the desire to stay there, you know, to move in and not realize it's a big mistake, yeah, you know. So that means, you know that it's livable, habitable, that the management isn't too intrusive as well. That it's a place that I want to invite my friends to visit. Yeah, pretty basic things.*

[Applicant]

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Further, queer artists may not have the same access to family support that non-queer artists do, making social support more crucial and an important part of PAL place services.

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*Queer older artists really need housing because for a lot of people around me as a theater artist, who are getting older and are queer, they don't have children and sometimes they're not even in touch with their families, right? We need a space where we will be safe and accommodated and it's not going to be super expensive. So, yeah, I feel like there's so many queer artists. And so (the organization) Vieillir Gaiement is a great idea because that's where they address those things where it's like older queer people will usually have to go back in the closet. And there's nothing sadder. I would be so sad to know that that's something that would happen in a coop for older artists. Like they don't feel safe...*

[Community Partner, Coop Les Artistes du Ruisseau]

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Having community partners who represent and advocate for various cultures or structurally vulnerable groups can be an excellent way of starting this work and help to foster safer community spaces at PAL Place.

### ***Trauma-informed care:***

Lastly, a framework that can help build and maintain safer and more inclusive spaces at PAL Place is trauma-informed care.

Trauma-informed care is a concept and practice that seeks to make safer spaces for all people, including people with experiences of trauma so as to limit re-traumatizing experiences in delivering care and treatment. It is a concept found in therapeutic and medical practice, as well as in artistic, cultural, and community organizing spaces.

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*“Trauma-Informed Care is a strengths-based framework that is grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma, that emphasizes physical, psychological, and emotional safety for both providers and survivors, and that creates opportunities for survivors to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment.” (Hopper et al, 2010)*

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Closely connected are trauma and violence-informed approaches, which highlight how organizations, and communities, such as PAL Place can intentionally embed, “policies and practices that recognize the connections between violence, trauma, negative health outcomes and behaviours..., [that] can create universal trauma precautions, which provide positive supports for all people (PHAC, 2018)

Based on the stated needs of marginalized identities who took part in the study, this is a practice that could greatly benefit staff, facilitators, and care/service providers at PAL Place and will help support diversity and inclusion practices at PAL Place.

# Conflict, Governance, Decision-Making

## **Conflict:**

Conflict is a necessary and generative part of any community. Building clear and transparent governance and decision-making processes can help in lessening conflicts and ensuring inclusive and sustainable community spaces.

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*Where there's people living together, there is going to be conflict.*

[Community Partner, Tannenhof Seniors Housing Coop]

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Partner organizations, such as housing cooperatives and cohousing communities, shared with us that nurturing open lines of communication, building trust between residents, and preparing for eventual conflict were important steps in setting strong foundations for sustainable housing communities. This includes learning methods of honest communication and conflict resolution to help navigate conflicts as they arise, turning conflict into an opportunity to deepen connections and evolve the community.

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*So many opportunities for conflict become an opportunity to change your mind, to expand, to grow, to have conversations that may sound like arguments, but are actually conversations.*

*For conversations, my favourite is the Haven method of communication, which is on their website. Haven.ca under resources, which is a method of curiosity and inquiry..., For Conflict resolution we also use a method developed by a man named Laird Schaub which is a six-step conflict resolution model, ..., I mean they're all natural curiosity driven, right? Rather than judgment driven.*

[Community Partner, Harbourside Seniors Cohousing]

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### **Open Lines of Communication:**

Part of building trust and rapport that contributes to community cohesiveness is fostering open and honest communication between residents and staff.

The applicant participants in focus groups indicated that they were very open to discussing their needs and wanted clear means of providing feedback. Setting up a process for residents to convey their thoughts will go a long way to effectively managing the building.

The means of feedback that applicants reported being comfortable with include:

- Recurring group meetings - in the form of:
  - Resident association meetings
  - Dinner & sharing
  - Roundtable discussion & sharing
- Evaluation forms & Surveys (online & in print)
- Suggestion boxes
- One-on-one meetings or check-ins (in person, online, or on the phone)
- Open/online forum
- A phone number to call

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*I think about time and scheduling around that, how long certain things are open to feedback, people's different kinds of schedules that they have. There's always the people who answer emails in five minutes, and there's people who take five days or longer.*  
*[Applicant]*

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### **Governance Models:**

To encourage resident engagement and incorporate resident feedback into building policy and management, robust governance systems are used in community housing projects.

We spoke to community partners and applicants living in community-led housing about governance structures, and found that the majority operate in a committee/board based model, involving a residents board that helped steer the governance for their buildings and included several smaller committees with specific mandates such as:

- Cleaning and maintenance/repairs
- Gardening and outdoor spaces
- Social Committee
- Security
- Administrative & financial
- Welcoming/Selection Committee

There was also variation in the governance methods and organizational structures of each housing and partner organization, and as such, the design of governance and decision-making systems for the PAL Place Ottawa community will be a unique process. Some of our interviewed partner organizations used governance models listed in short detail below:

Consensus decision-making, the Haven method of communication & Laird Shaub's conflict resolution training/process, alongside specific work committees (Harbourside Senior's Cohousing, BC).

Resident-led Sociocracy (a consent-based form of collective decision-making), including circles (like committees) and sub-circles, Accessible Non Violent Communication Training for residents, alongside private consultation & facilitation for cohousing development. These cohousing groups must also adhere to condo-strata financial/legal frameworks (Ottawa Cohousing).

Cooperative Board & Committee Structure, with unresolved conflict brought to the board to be solved. (Tannenhof Seniors Housing Cooperative)

Not for profit board Structure, as well as staff and member-led intentional and casual weekly conversations, in circle, with two questions asked: "What do you want to do this week? What do you need to do it?" (Isaruit Inuit Arts).

Regular resident group meetings with an on-site facilitator, to determine resident care needs and activity programming. These meetings are sure to include food. (Old Forge Community Resource Centre, OASIS Project).

Quarterly Town Halls & Monthly Resident Association meetings, supported by the staff (Unitarian House).

Community partners emphasized the importance of ensuring that PAL Place residents hold leadership roles within the building. Across all interviews, participants described resident participation and leadership in creating programs and services as one of the most significant indicators of success. While highlighting the importance of resident involvement in the building, PAL applicants also emphasized the critical role of PAL Ottawa, especially in responding to issues related to real estate, building maintenance, funding, and other related matters.

A resident and organizer from an artist housing cooperative describes their success in a collective circular organizing process:

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*I think it's kind of like a circular process. Of trying something, like making a decision as a group, trying it out, then fine tuning it and just kind of having this constant, constant feedback loop. If that works, I find that successful because like, there are going to be pitfalls. There are going to be problems. There are going to be maintenance breakdowns. There are going to be water leaks, there are going to be power shortages and blah, blah, blah. And that's not even...successful, but I think that when folks feel engaged and also feel like they have spaces where they can express themselves and bring new ideas, I think that's really important.*

[Community Partner, Coop Les Artistes du Ruisseau]

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### ***Aligning Values & Resident Associations:***

Building on grassroots principles, where there is respect for multiple voices, diverse lived experiences, perspectives, and skillsets, and when values and goals are aligned, a strength in collaborative organizing can emerge.

It is not always easy to align values and goals with a project as complex as housing and arts centres, and as such, smaller committees may be necessary to focus on specific needs or tasks. An example of how this has been addressed exists in Cohousing Communities, which regularly practice naming and aligning their goals at an early stage in their project to help guide the formation of their smaller committees, and to more broadly steer the larger collective's decisions and governance methods.

Above and beyond the formation of smaller committees, it is necessary and suggested by many community-led housing initiatives to have a means for all residents to be able to meet regularly to express their feelings and concerns about their living, organizing, and social spaces, to improve their environment and means of relating if so desired. A common method of organizing residents in retirement housing is a Residents' Association or Residents' Council. More information on how to start a Resident's Council can be found at the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority (see references).

This is one way of many to organize the residents of a building. In some cases, more organic and informal means of resident engagement can occur as cited by Partner Ottawa West Community Support who work alongside many Seniors and see the relationships that form when in shared housing community:

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*That's grassroots. It's just themselves helping. It's not formal. It's informal and they do a great job. So I think that's most important. If you can get a group of people in with a core view, that would work towards a goal.*

[Community Partner, OWCH]

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Whatever the means of organizing and subsequent programming or services chosen by residents, it was cited that the close support of building and managerial staff is of great importance:

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*And we work together very closely to make sure the programs happen and work together; so the staff, myself, the board, and the residents association. It's a very strong resident association compared to other retirement homes in the community. I'm going to say that it's next to none....I've never worked in another retirement residence that has an able, and willing, and capable resident association.*

[Community Partner, Unitarian House]

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### ***Incorporating Diversity & Inclusion:***

A number of housing communities noted that it can be challenging to get all residents to participate in the governance board and committees. In particular, committees tend to be dominated by white residents and have limited racially diverse representation. This concern around leadership and representation was echoed by several other partner organizations, who noted that white members filled the majority of their leadership roles, and they were actively working to make their spaces more culturally safe and provide more culturally specific ways for residents to become involved in the governance and social life of their buildings.

### ***Further Exploration:***

More research and consultation with residents will be needed to explore which of these governance forms will work best with PAL Ottawa. Specific interviews should be run with applicants and partner organizations to discuss and design conflict resolution systems, effective governance models, and how to improve opportunities for more inclusion and diversity within the determined structures/methods.



# Future Opportunities and Challenges for PAL Place

PAL Ottawa is a force for social change in Ottawa, working hard to ensure that aging artists and arts workers have access to the community and social support they need to continue to “live, create, and inspire.” The success of PAL Ottawa’s Supporting Cast program shows the incredible potential that the organization has to foster a similar creative and caring community within PAL Place. Conversations with applicants and community partners were full of enthusiasm for the future of PAL Place. At the centre of many of these conversations was an emphasis on the importance of accessibility. Partners stressed that affordable housing initiatives like PAL Place are a key element in the fight against structural oppression. Research around housing inequity clearly shows that individuals who experience discrimination on the basis of their race, gender, or sexuality are also more likely to experience housing insecurity (DeLuca, Rosen 2022). PAL Place is an opportunity to support individuals by providing safe, affordable, and accessible housing options. An interview participant from Bruce House, a community organization that works in housing people impacted by HIV, described how affordable housing has a positive impact on individuals who experience discrimination and oppression:

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*We've definitely seen drastic changes when housing people. We've had people who in the context of, because we work with people living with HIV, maybe they have a really detrimental deficiency with their counts. And at risk of developing, you know, full blown AIDS or something like that. And then they get housed, they get stabilized, they are taking medication regularly, and seeing their health care providers regularly. They are engaged in social activities either with us or with other organizations in the city. And yeah, we see a dramatic change in our tenants.*

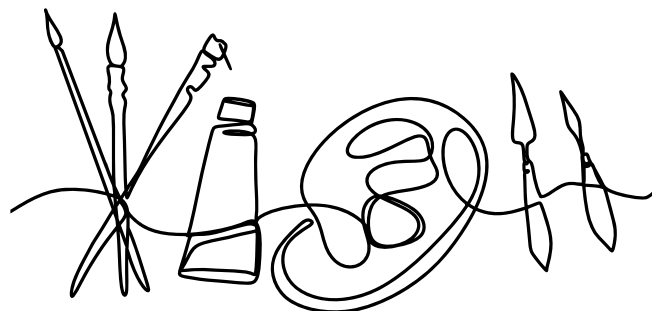
[Community Partner, Bruce House]

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Accessibility and placemaking can inform how PAL Place approaches future challenges. Placemaking focuses on how people transform physical spaces into socially meaningful places –and accessibility is central to this transformation. True accessibility extends beyond physical design; it encompasses fostering strong relationships with Indigenous and marginalized communities, incorporating practices that welcome inclusion and diversity, grounding practice in trauma-informed care, ensuring deep affordability based on applicants' income levels, supporting food security, and creating resident-led, caring community spaces and activities. These elements are key to making PAL Place not just a space, but a place of belonging and connection. By actively involving community members in the design and stewardship of their environment, placemaking empowers individuals to shape spaces that reflect their identities and needs, fostering a sense of ownership and pride. This is especially essential for aging adults, who benefit deeply from living in places that foster connection, reflect their work, social, and cultural identities, and value their contributions.

The following section outlines some opportunities to address the challenges PAL Place may face within their political and social contexts. We also explore opportunities for PAL Place to engage residents in accessible and meaningful placemaking at PAL Place.

Note: We have tried to take into account the specific institutional barriers that PAL faces in their organizing. That said, we are aware that some suggestions may be stated more broadly and thus PAL will be left to interpret and find novel solutions or engage in advocacy and policy change to implement. There are community partners who face similar challenges to those of PAL Place and thus may be interested in collaborating in this work of finding collaborative solutions and/or advocacy.



### **Opportunity 1: Affordability**

**The original goal of PAL Place was to provide affordable rent and create programs that address the rising cost of living and the specific barriers to housing faced by arts workers, seniors, and other equity seeking groups within the arts community.**

In interviewing PAL Place Organizers, we have come to understand that this goal is challenged by the institutional barriers PAL Place faces in their partnership with the City of Ottawa and OCH. The housing crisis in Ottawa, significant homelessness, and a strong community mandate to develop and implement innovative solutions to address needs, highlights how essential PAL Place is.

Considering that two-thirds of applicants live under \$50 000 annually, **it is clear that to be accessible and affordable, the rental rate at PAL Place should be based on the income of applicants rather than standardized rent prices.** In negotiating with partners, PAL could consider:

1. **Providing units that meet applicants' affordability needs**, which coincide with federal guidelines for affordable rates (under 30% of the applicants' income). Further research should be done to ensure that any potential rent subsidies provided by PAL do not unduly burden residents who are on Ontario Works (OW) or Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP).
2. **Exploring non-fiscal solutions:** 13% of residents are accessing a foodbank each year. Consider building partnerships with other community groups to increase access to the necessities of daily life for free or at a subsidized cost (clothing, food, art supplies).
3. **Hiring a housing access coordinator** who will help residents navigate application processes related to subsidies and housing, and ultimately achieve residence at PAL Place. This access coordinator can work with applicants to move through the housing registry system, ensure applicants are able to apply for PAL Place and access any eligible rent supports where available, to ensure residents are able to stay there long term.



4. **Exploring innovative solutions** for PAL's unique project needs. Innovative solutions seen in recent affordable and community-led housing include: stacking of available subsidies to meet deeply affordable rent (Odenak at Dream LeBreton), investor collectives in cohousing to fund the inclusion of lower-income residents (Cohousing Communities), cooperative social enterprise businesses run by residents of housing communities to fund their housing and livelihoods (12 Neighbours).

Targeted suggestions for PAL Ottawa's specific circumstance, building on the current financial model and barriers are:

- **Continue to grow the Sustainability Fund:** Leverage PAL's national networks to increase fundraising efforts to the Sustainability Fund, until it can match the subsidy needs. This would allow further independence from potentially wavering City financial support and restrictive affordability regulations with OCH, offering increased financial power and control to subsidize rents and fund PAL operations. This can occur at the pace PAL's organizing allows to prevent volunteer burnout. It could involve tenants in yearly fundraising campaigns through their artistic efforts.
- **Request an operations budget or co-budget from OCH.** As operational budgets are required, request that OCH provide an operations budget, or at the minimum, a co-investment in the operations budget with PAL Ottawa, to ensure that there is a good complement of multiple part-time or full-time staff for PAL Place.
- **Access grants for operations costs.** While recognizing that granting applications can be time intensive, and upcoming grant calls may not always apply to PAL's specific needs, hiring a grant-writing specialist will ensure that upcoming grants are known about in advance, and that strong, fundable applications are submitted.
- **Renting some units for above market rent** to build the sustaining fund and allow other units to be far below and thus increase the general diversity of the building. Explore other housing initiatives in Ottawa, and in other Canadian cities who draw on this financial model and explore how this could be instituted at PAL Place. While we understand that OCH has regulations that do not allow for units to be rented above a certain threshold, we can see the benefits of this method for PAL Ottawa's specific mixed-income population.

5. **Work with Ottawa's Housing Registry to develop a referral system for low-income artists and arts workers**, following the model of PAL Toronto. This may involve working with the Registry to include "artist/ arts worker" as a vulnerable class in the housing registry classification system, and/or other collaborative working relationships that enable arts workers to be selected and referred to PAL Place.

### **Opportunity 2: Living, Creating, Inspiring, and Aging in PAL Place**

**This research uncovered the many unique needs of the aging arts population. These needs will require policies, resources, and supports that enable residents to live in PAL Place for as long as they wish.**

A majority of applicants are over the age of 60, and nearly 20% are over 80. Further, affordable housing initiatives tend to have long-term residents, and many residents expressed a desire to age-in-place in PAL Place. As such, PAL Ottawa should consider policy decisions that support residents and meet them where they are in their health and life journeys. In concrete terms, PAL Ottawa should consider:

1. An orientation process for new residents that introduces them to local health and social services.
2. Building formal partnership with the Somerset West Community Health Centre, Ontario Health at Home, and other health and social services.
3. Hiring a “health care and social services navigator” to support residents to access health services, food programming, social services, and others.
4. Running social activities to prevent isolation.
5. Partnering with community palliative care and end of life care services.
6. Creating end-of-life policies for how to deal with deaths in the building.
7. Creating practices/a culture/policies to help allow open conversation about care plans, cognitive decline, and power of attorney.
8. Establishing transportation services for residents:
  - a. Investment in a PAL community van with regular grocery runs.
  - b. Working with OC Transpo to ensure a nearby bus stop.
  - c. Connecting residents to Paratranspo.
9. Partnering with community groups aimed at building and supporting wellness, creativity, connection and belonging as residents age (see list in the Appendices).

### **Opportunity 3: Relationships, Community, and Resident-Centered Programs and Services**

**This research found that residents want a diverse range of programming tailored to their needs and desires. PAL Staff and community partners could support these programs.**

Relationships and community play a significant role in a person's health and well-being, which becomes even more critical as people age. As common spaces are built and utilized, offering attention and support to building community care and wellness practices among residents will go a long way. This includes considering how community organizations and services are welcomed into PAL Place, as well as how connections are established within the surrounding neighbourhood.

1. Make use of the diverse expertise, skill, and offerings from residents to lead and/or inform programming.
2. Find support and collaboration from Community Partners to offer specific programs to meet resident needs and widen PAL's networks of support. (For Ex: Falls prevention classes)
3. Allow programming to be tried, tested, and adapted with resident feedback to meet resident needs.
4. Ensure programming is clearly communicated and promoted amongst the residents.
5. Offer a diversity of programming - ensure that there are offerings that apply to the diversity of cultures, creative practices, abilities, skill levels and health practices of residents.
6. Develop a robust monitoring and evaluating plan to regularly measure the success of programs. The following metrics will offer guidance:
  - Attendance.
  - Resident knowledge of programming.
  - Qualitative feedback from residents.
  - Ask & observe: does it nurture a culture of engagement, health & joy?

#### **Opportunity 4: Ensuring inclusion and addressing structural barriers**

**To ensure PAL Place is an inclusive place for all residents, PAL Ottawa should consider working with community partners and residents to minimize structural barriers to residency, including:**

1. Ensure that the selection criteria are not implicitly biased against equity-seeking arts workers who may not have had the opportunity to work full-time in the arts.
2. Consider extending the age restrictions on the selection criteria to allow residents to move in with their extended (or chosen) family or loved ones.
3. Make concerted efforts to improve the diversity of the leadership team by:
  - a. Making a call-out for leaders of colour, Indigenous leaders, and others who have experienced structural violence.
  - b. Completing anti-oppression and trauma-informed care training at the board and leadership levels.
3. Develop reciprocal relationships with community groups that represent PAL Place applicants. Consider what PAL Place can offer in this partnership (space, access to arts spaces, shared resources) and what PAL would like to learn from the partners.
4. Develop culturally specific/safer programming in collaboration with partner organizations and residents. (See Native Women's Association of Canada, 2023; City of Ottawa, 2021; Curtis et al., 2019)
5. Support residents of colour, queer residents, Indigenous residents, and others to build networks of support at PAL Place where they can together identify and navigate potential areas of concern.
6. Develop a strong conflict resolution process that is transparent but protects the identity of any complainants.

### **Opportunity 5: Conflict, Governance, and Decision-Making**

**One of the most effective ways to foster community is through transparent and open dialogue. This can be achieved by offering various and consistent means for residents to share their needs, experiences, and feedback, while also building and implementing a well-designed, trauma-informed, and collaborative governance model. It should also include inclusive conflict resolution strategies.**

#### **Feedback and Conflict Resolution Measures**

1. Offer a variety of methods for residents to share feedback, experiences, and requests for change or support to PAL Place staff. Consider the ideas offered by applicants on page 56 of this report.

2. Develop a working system within PAL Place for conflict resolution upon opening to help both building managers and tenants prepare for inevitable moments of tension and disagreement. The proposed system may have to shift and adapt over time:

- Allow for this proposed system to be amended as residents become involved in the organizing and fine-tuning of methods that better apply to their unique community.
- We recommend that it be a method practiced by a housing or not-for-profit community that you can consult with if needed, so as to have a community of practice and support.
- It should involve outside on-call facilitators and specialists who can provide services if needed including options for mediation that are culturally safe for the residents involved.

3. Ensure clear and inclusive communication for managing feedback and conflict:

- Have translation, ASL, and captioning services available.
- Know your residents' language and communication access needs.
- Offer online and in print as well as written and audio versions of important information.

## Governance

Our data showed that resident involvement is a major indicator of the success of programs, services, and decisions. Therefore, any governance model should be informed by residents themselves and supported by PAL staff. Governance systems and building management must consider how to be inclusive of people based on factors such as language, culture, ability, spirituality, migration history, trauma and violence background, and desire for socialization. We recommend PAL consider the following:

4. Set up an organizational structure that allows and encourages residents' involvement in the building's management.

- Be clear in PAL Place's initial organizational structure about what input PAL's leadership wants from residents.
- Clearly communicate to all tenants upon move in about how they can be involved in leadership and organizing within the building.
- Be prepared that the initial organizational structure will shift and adapt over time as residents inform the functioning methods of the building and organize to advocate for their needs.

5. Connect to community resources for support:

- Find housing or not-for-profit community partners that you can consult with on an ongoing basis, so as to have a community of advice and support for your governance structure.
- When advocacy is needed for specific groups of the PAL community, these decisions can be made in conversation with both affected residents and pertinent community partners (ex. Isaruit, Ottawa Pride).

# Future Research Opportunities

Ongoing monitoring and evaluation will be an essential part of PAL Place's future work. Ensuring there is consistent and continual monitoring and evaluation of programs, services, and resident's quality of life will provide opportunities for regular conversations on what is working and what needs to change.

Throughout this research, we have realized more targeted research is needed to develop evaluation metrics that align with PAL's principles, policies, and programs. There is very little consistency between studies on how to evaluate and what to evaluate in age-in-place initiatives. Vanleerberghe and colleagues (2017) found that there is no general consensus on what "quality of life" means across various age-in-place initiatives making it difficult to accurately assess if aging-in-place increases or improves quality of life.

Some resources that may be helpful are evidence-based materials that have been developed to assess and evaluate Age-Friendly Initiatives and Cities. Building on the WHO Age Friendly Cities Framework, and the development of core indicators to measure Age-Friendly Cities (WHO, 2015), the Public Health Agency of Canada, collaborated with a wide range of partners to develop indicators that could be used to evaluate Age Friendly Communities in Canada (Orpana et al., 2016). As part of this work, an accessible and community focused report was published to support community groups to evaluate Age Friendly Community Indicators (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2015).

Further, expanding to include evaluation metrics that are used in placemaking initiatives may offer a broader range of methods and tools to capture dynamic, participatory outcomes that are focused on spatial, creative, collective and transformative change (Courage et al., 2021).

We recommend further research be conducted, in collaboration with community partners, and possibly other PAL establishments, to develop a monitoring and evaluation plan that is accessible, accurately measures PAL's goals, and is not onerous on staff, volunteers, or residents.

# CONCLUSION

The research data from this project was rich and painted a picture of a diverse and engaged group of arts workers who share a passion for co-living and co-creating a community of care. Across all sources, participants expressed a strong desire to age in place within a supportive, artist-centered community. Five key areas of opportunity emerged from the data: affordability, living, creating, inspiring, and aging in PAL place, relationships, community building, structural barriers and inclusion, and governance and decision-making.

The foundation of the recommendations for PAL Place is rooted in accessibility and place-making principles that ensure residents are not only housed but are meaningfully connected to their environment and community. True accessibility encompasses not only spatial design but also inclusive practices such as trauma-informed care, deep affordability, participatory and co-designed community and belonging for equity-seeking communities, as well as reconciliation and relationship-building with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples.

The five recommendations outlined in the report emphasize the importance of creating a supportive, sustainable, and inclusive living environment for artists and art workers as they age:

- **Affordability** – Develop flexible rent schemes and financial supports that address the economic realities of artists, seniors, and equity-seeking groups.
- **Living, Creating, Inspiring, and Aging in PAL Place** – Tailor policies and supports to meet the evolving needs of aging artists, enabling them to live, create, thrive, and age with dignity and purpose.
- **Relationships, Community, and Resident-Centered Programs** - Support and prioritize opportunities for residents to build strong relationships with one another, ensuring that resident-centered programs are actively integrated. Welcome and foster strong links and collaborations with other artist networks, local social and health care-based programs and services, and the broader neighbourhood.
- **Inclusion and Structural Barriers** – Work proactively with community partners to dismantle barriers to residency and ensure that PAL Place is a welcoming and accessible space for all.
- **Conflict, Governance, and Decision-making** - Foster open communication through accessible and inclusive feedback strategies and transparent measures and methods to address conflict. Design and build collaborative governance, decision-making, and leadership models.

Together, these recommendations position PAL Place as a model of inclusive, community-driven housing where aging artists can live creatively, connect deeply, and thrive meaningfully.



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# Appendix A: List of Participating Community Organizations

- Unitarian House
- Tannenhof Senior's housing cooperative
- Ottawa West Community Support
- Coop Artistes du Ruisseaux
- Studio Space Ottawa
- Harbourside Seniors Cohousing
- Abbeyfield House
- LoriAnn Girvan, Principal, LAG Advisors
- Chaseo (Association of Ontario Cooperatives)
- Churchill Seniors Recreation Centre
- PAL Canada
- PAL Toronto
- Old Forge NORC program
- Ottawa Cohousing
- Isaruit Inuit Arts



# Appendix B: List of Community Supports and Current and/or Future Partnership Opportunities

## Arts Organizations

- [Arts Ottawa](#)
  - [Arts Directory](#)
- [Art East Ottawa](#)
- [Artist Run Alliance](#)
- [Artist-Run Centres and Collectives Conference / Conférence des collectifs et des centres d'artistes autogérés \(ARCCC-CCCAA, aka ARCA\)](#)
  - [Directory](#)
- [Canada Council for the Arts](#)
- [Cultural Human Resource Council](#)
- [Isaruit Inuit Arts](#)
- [MASC](#)
  - [Senior Partnerships](#)
- [Ottawa Arts Database](#)
- [Ottawa Art Gallery](#)
  - [Seniors Programs](#)
- [PAL Canada](#)
- [Saw Gallery](#)

## **Neighbourhood Arts Spaces**

- [Enriched Bread Artists Studio Space](#)
- [The Gladstone Theatre](#)
- [Gladstone Clayworks Coop](#)
- [Loam Clay Studio](#)
- [Alcorn Music Studio](#)
- [Ottawa Glassblowing Cooperative](#)
- [Loretta Studios Gallery](#)
- [Next Door: Event space](#)
- [Absolute Comedy](#)
- [Ten Toes Cafe Somerset](#)
- [Art House Cafe](#)

## **Specialized Services and Supports**

- [Aphasia Centre of Ottawa](#)
- [Alzheimer Society of Ottawa and Renfrew County](#)
- [Association Ontarienne des Sourd\(e\)s francophone](#)
- [Community Geriatric Psychiatry](#)
- [Hospice Care Ottawa](#) (see advanced illness and end of life and bereavement section below)
- [Ottawa Cancer Foundation of Ottawa](#)
- [Ottawa Heart Institute](#)
- [Parkinson Society of Ottawa](#)
- [Regional Geriatric Program of Eastern Ontario](#)
- [The Bronson Centre](#) (list of organizations)
- [The Dementia Society of Ottawa and Renfrew County](#)
- [Hear Canada](#) (hearing aid support)

## **Community Health and Social Services**

- [City of Ottawa – Ontario Works](#)
- [Ontario Disability Support Programs](#)
- [Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organisation](#)
- [Ontario Health at Home](#)
- [Home and Community Care Support](#)
- [Ottawa West Community Support](#)
- [Somerset West Community Health Centre](#)
- [Appletree Walk in Clinic, Presont St](#)
- [Plant Recreation Centre \(City of Ottawa\)](#)

## **Housing**

- [Ottawa Social Housing Network](#)
- [Salus Supportive Housing](#)
- [Alliance to End Homelessness](#)
- [Ottawa NORC Finder](#)
- [Centretown Citizens Ottawa Corporation](#)
- [Ottawa Community Land Trust](#)
- [Starts With Home](#) (campaign to scale up not for profit housing support)
- [Ontario Housing Cooperative Federation](#)
- [Acorn Canada](#) (tenants rights)
- [Cornerstone Housing for Women](#)
- [Dream Lebreton Odenak](#)
- [12 Neighbours](#)

## **Food Security**

- Parkdale Food Centre
- Ottawa Food Bank
- Dalhousie Food Cupboard (PAL's catchment area)
- Meals on Wheels Ottawa
- Highjinx Ottawa

## **Francophone**

- Association Ontarienne des Sourd(e)s francophone
- Spill Propagation (langue des signes en pratiques artistiques)
- Theatre Action (french inclusive theatre network)
- ATFC (Association des Theatres Francophones du Canada)
- Fédération des aînés et des retraités francophones de l'Ontario
- Maison de la francophonie d'Ottawa
- Montfort Renaissance
- Centre de services Guigues

## **2SLGBTQI+ Queer Support**

- Capital Rainbow Refuge
- Franco Queer
- Vieillir Gaiement
- Good Companions
  - LGBT Wellbeing Check-in Program
- Max Ottawa
- Ottawa Senior Pride Network
  - Compiled Community Directory of practical service providers who are LGBTQ2+ pr LGBTQ+ friendly.

### **First Nation, Inuit, Indigenous and Métis Support:**

- [Isaruit Inuit Arts](#)
- [First Nations Caregiver Support Education \(HPCO\)](#)
- [Odawa Native Friendship Centre](#)
- [Métis Nation of Ontario](#)
- [Minwaashin Lodge](#)
- [Wabano Indigenous Centre for Excellence in Healthcare Services](#)

### **African, Caribbean, Black Community Programs and Support**

- [African, Caribbean and Black Wellness Resource Centre](#)
- [Counselling Connect - ACB](#) counsellors
- [Counselling Connect](#)
- [Ottawa Black Mental Health Coalition](#)
- Somerset West Community Health Centre
- [Black Community Supports Phone Line](#)

### **Advanced Care Planning Resources and Conversations**

- [Advanced Care Planning Canada](#)
- [First Nations Health Authority: Advance Care Planning](#)
- Canadian Virtual Hospice: [Coming full circle: Planning for your care: Ensure your wishes are heard and respected](#) (Created by Indigenous peoples across Canada for Indigenous People)
- Canadian Virtual Hospice - [Planning for My Care: For people who identify as Two-Spirit and/or LGBTQ+](#)
- [Compassionate Ottawa](#)
- [Champlain Hospice Palliative Care Program](#)

## **Advanced illness and End of Life Resources and Supports**

- [Hospice Care Ottawa](#)
- [Journey Through the End of Life](#) (A Guide for family and friends)
- Information you may need: [When Your Loved One Dies](#)
- [Pallium Canada – Care Connections](#)
- Canadian Virtual Hospice (online support and information)
- [Hulse, Playfair & McGarry - Central](#)
- [Kelly Funeral Home – Somerset Chapel](#)
- [Funeral Co-Operative of Ottawa](#)

## **Caregiving Supports and Education**

- [Ontario Caregiver Organization](#) – Ontario Caregiver Helpline
- [The Dementia Society of Ottawa and Renfrew County – Caregiver Support](#)
- [Hospice Care Ottawa – Caregiving Supports](#)
- [Métis Nation of Ontario – Community Support Services](#)
- [First Nations Caregiver Support Education](#) (HPCO)
- [Pallium Canada – Care Connections](#)

## **Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID)**

- [Medical Assistance in Dying: Overview](#) (Government of Canada)
- [Medical Assistance in Dying: Support and Resources](#) (Government of Canada)
- [Bridge C-14](#) (Peer to Peer Connections and Community Supports Through all Stages of Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD))
- [Dying with Dignity](#)
- [End of Life Doula Association of Canada](#)

## **Bereavement Support**

- [Bereaved Families of Ontario – Ottawa Region](#) (Peer-support)
- [Hospice Care Ottawa](#)
- [Champlain Health Line](#) (Bereavement support resources)
- [Canadian Virtual Hospice](#) (online support and information).
- [Kids Grief](#)
- [Youth Grief](#)
- [The Compassionate Friends](#) (Grief support for bereaved parents and their surviving children)
- Roger Neilson Children's Hospice [Grief Support and Services](#)
- [Ottawa Humane Society](#), Pet Loss Support Resources and Group