

## FirstOntario is awarded \$25,000 to support its affordable and sustainable housing initiatives

**Hamilton, ON, September 16, 2025** – FirstOntario Credit Union is a recipient of Concentra & Equitable Bank’s \$25,000 Empowering Your Community Grant for its *Affordable Housing Across Ontario* Program.

FirstOntario Credit Union is fueling their mission to create safe, affordable housing and uplift communities across the region in partnership with RentalRescue, a bold initiative revitalizing aging properties into safe, dignified homes. Their first project in Hamilton delivered eight affordable units—marking the start of a growing movement. In addition, FirstOntario is proud to support Bethlehem Housing and Support Services which provides housing and support services for individuals and families facing issues of homelessness, physical disability, mental health, domestic violence and family breakdown in Niagara.

“We appreciate the support from Concentra & EQ Bank. We all know communities across Canada are facing a housing crisis and we will be dedicated this entire grant to supporting initiatives that address affordable and sustainable housing,” said Joanne Battaglia, senior vice-president, Marketing, Communications & Community Partnerships.

Rental Rescue is a pioneering shared services company dedicated to empowering nonprofits in acquiring and preserving affordable rental housing in Hamilton. With FirstOntario, RentalRescue successfully acquired their first property consisting of eight crucial affordable housing units. Through this partnership, they have created a unique housing solution that secures properties and maintains affordable rents in the community. This milestone, accomplished in collaboration with FirstOntario, marks a significant step towards addressing the city’s housing challenges. The partnership with Bethlehem Housing led to the development of an affordable housing project in St. Catharines.

Affordable housing is a complex challenge—but FirstOntario believes in collaborative, community-driven solutions. They are leading the way in creating inclusive, resilient, and thriving communities—one home at a time.

With over \$1 million in financing for affordable housing programs in 2024–2025, FirstOntario is helping families unlock the dream of homeownership and long-term stability. Their work is a blueprint for how credit unions, governments, and nonprofits can come together to redefine what’s possible in affordable housing.

### **About FirstOntario Credit Union**

FirstOntario is a full service cooperative financial institution, serving members for more than 86 years throughout the Golden Horseshoe, Niagara Region, and Southwestern regions of Ontario. With \$7 billion in assets under management, FirstOntario is one of Canada’s largest credit unions. Everyone is welcome to be part of FirstOntario for financial services including daily transactions, mortgages, lines of credit, loans and investments. FirstOntario profits are invested into the communities we serve through support for entrepreneurs, competitive rates and charitable pursuits including our award-winning student nutrition program. Learn more about us today at [FirstOntario.com](https://www.FirstOntario.com).

**Media contact:**

Tony Iavarone  
AVP, Communications and Public Relations  
FirstOntario Credit Union  
[Tony.Iavarone@FirstOntario.com](mailto:Tony.Iavarone@FirstOntario.com)