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## 2019 Department Overview

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### Community & Social Services

#### Service Description

**Northumberland County Community & Social Services (NCCSS)** provides a wide range of programs and services to support Northumberland County residents and strengthen their social and economic well-being within their communities.

As an operating division of the Corporation of the County of Northumberland, the following core values are embedded in all facets of Community and Social Services programs and operations:

- Care & Support
- Collaboration & Communication
- Honesty & Integrity
- Innovation & Excellence
- Mutual Trust & Respect
- Accountability

#### Mandatory Programs

##### Community Services

Community Services is the systems manager, responsible for Provincial and Municipal Homelessness initiatives that support reducing homelessness and the risk of homelessness. By collaborating with community partners, Community Services leads the design of programs that improve access to adequate and suitable housing, targeting services for groups within the community who are at most risk (e.g. Victims of domestic violence, veterans, people with mental illness, people with disabilities, indigenous populations and others). Community Services leads the collection and analysis of homelessness related data including the requirement to undertake a biennial homelessness enumeration, and publishing the results.

##### Early Years Services

As the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager, Early Years Services is the child care service system manager responsible for planning and managing licensed child care services in Northumberland County. Child care services are managed by the department through a local



service planning process that reflects current child care legislation, regulations and policies/directives, as well as engagement with local licensees.

In addition to managing child care services, Early Years services are also responsible for the local management of all ministry-funded child and family programs. This responsibility integrates child and family programs into a cohesive system of services and supports known as EarlyON Child and Family Centres.

The ability to strengthen the quality of child care and early years experiences and enhance system integration requires the strategic leadership Early Years services to initiate, sustain and monitor local planning and development.

### **Housing Services**

Housing Services is a co-lead alongside Community Services for the Ten Year Housing and Homelessness Plan with a joint commitment to Housing First and providing housing stability for individuals across the housing continuum. This shared commitment along with the Ten Year Housing and Homelessness Plan provides guidance and direction for both divisions.

Housing Services is specifically responsible for the administration of Social Housing programs and non-mandated affordable housing programs in the County to ensure housing providers and other housing system stakeholders are meeting obligations in compliance with Social Housing legislation, County policies, municipal standards and various operating agreements. Housing Services is also responsible for systems based planning for housing initiatives throughout the County and leads strategic initiatives relating to housing stock, affordability, viability and housing security. In addition, Housing Services is the primary link to the Northumberland County Housing Corporation.

### **Ontario Works Services**

The Ontario Works Program is committed to providing an innovative program that reflects the overall vision of quality social assistance services that respect people's dignity, self-esteem and self-reliance, while fostering independence, community contribution and participation. We promote the development of employment programs that are responsive and accountable to the public and provide the people that are served by the program the necessary supports and tools to transition back into the labour market.

Basic financial assistance includes legislated mandatory and discretionary benefits for eligible recipients and members of the benefit unit.

### **Discretionary Support**

Discretionary benefits under the *Ontario Works Act* and the *Ontario Disability Support Program Act* are provided on a case-by-case basis. This includes children on whose behalf Temporary Care Assistance is being paid. The amount provided for discretionary benefits is determined by local policy.



## Discretionary Programs

### Community Services

#### Community Outreach Program

This program is designed to assist low income earners and residents on fixed incomes with special services and supports and to identify the social support needs of residents (ie child care, health, recreation, and housing) and connect them with the appropriate County, community and other government service systems. This program also supports community capacity building to develop models and systems that enhance and sustain support to residents in the community. This work includes training and support, networking and community development activities. The Community Services Division promotes community engagement and including people who have used services in program design and governance.

#### Customer Services Unit

This unit is responsible for the modernization and integration of client access to social services programs. This unit also provides program support for both internal and external customers and clients. Key components of this unit is a focus on front end customer services and back end services such as financial reporting, collections, records retention and accounting processes. This unit assists in ensuring compliance with performance and legislative standards and supports service divisions in the delivery of programs and reporting.

### Food Security Services

#### Food 4 All

The Food 4 All is a non-profit centralized food distribution warehouse located in Cobourg, and serving all within Northumberland County. This collaborative project was created to ensure a higher level of food security in Northumberland County. The warehouse acquires food and other essential items and redistributes them to local community agencies who in turn distribute them to their clients. The Food 4 All partners with and distributes product to over 130 local agencies including 70+ community groups, 39 school nutrition programs, 13 food banks. Additionally, Food 4 All shares provincially sourced product with 5 other Ontario Association of Food Bank Hubs located in Belleville, Trenton, Oshawa, Peterborough and Lindsay.

Food Security Services is continually working to alleviate hunger in communities across Northumberland County by developing unique partnerships and promoting education of the impact of food insecurity on health and well-being.



## Partnerships

Everything the department engages in is linked to well entrenched relationships and working collectively with a wide and varied range of partners. These partnerships include community agencies, non-profits organizations, local school boards, academic and training institutions, health care and multiple levels of government.

These partnerships are central in ensuring the department builds a robust and community led response to poverty reduction.

## Environmental Scan

### Population & Demographics

#### Profile

- Northumberland County has a population of about 85,000, and there are approximately 35,000 households. It is projected that the number of households will continue to grow by 28.4% by 2041.
- The County has an older age profile than Ontario, with fewer residents aged 25 to 44 years and a higher percentage of residents over the age of 65. In fact, 36.5% of the population is aged 65 and older, the growth of senior households has grown significantly faster than the overall household growth in Northumberland, 37.5% compared to 13.1% between 2006 and 2016.
- Northumberland County has a larger proportion of smaller households compared to Ontario (68% compared to 58.7%) and smaller households are increasing while larger households are decreasing.
- Couples without children or persons living alone made up 61.2% of Northumberland households. These households are increasing, while households consisting of couples with children decreased between 2006 and 2016 by 9.5%.
- There has been a decline in Northumberland County's younger population between 2006 and 2016, with the youth population (24 years and younger) decreasing by 11.8% and adults between 25 and 44 years of age decreasing by 11.7%.
- About 35 percent of households include children; 35 percent are couples without children at home; and 26 percent are singles or other "non-family" households. This is relatively more singles and couples without children than for Ontario, and most growth is in these categories.
- 37 percent of children receiving child care subsidy are between the ages of 10 to 14, with the next highest group at 33.3% between the ages of 5 to 9 years.



- Population forecasts from provincial sources (consistent with the County's Growth Management Strategy) project future households over the decade 2011-2021 will be approximately 4,000 net additional households, an average of 400 per year.
- The total number of children and youth (age 0-19) in the Northumberland population is forecasted to increase 0.1% from 15,683 in 2019 to 15,704 in 2020.
- One-fifth of net additional households are projected to be renters, or almost 100 annually.
- Local food banks assist on average 2100 unique individuals on a monthly basis, approximately one third of these individuals are under the age of 18
- School nutrition programs provide more than 75,000 meals and snacks to approximately 6000 students per month.

### **Housing Stock and Supply**

- The majority of dwellings in Northumberland County are single detached, 79.4% compared to 54.3% in the province, it is anticipated that this focus will remain based on building permits issued between 2013 and 2018.
- Rented dwellings make up a much smaller share in Northumberland County compared to Ontario (18.9% compared to 30.2%).
- Northumberland County's vacancy rate in 2017 was 1.2%, and has remained below 3% since 2010.
- The majority of rented dwellings have been in the secondary rental market.
- 19 percent of housing stock dates from 1920 or earlier, compared to 8 percent for Ontario.
- 7 percent of homes are rated as needing major repair (12 percent for rental). This is slightly higher than the Ontario figures and associated with the older age of dwellings.

### **Affordability**

- More than a fifth of households in Northumberland County were facing housing affordability issues in 2015. With 22.2% spending 30% or more on housing costs, while 8.7% spend 50% or more on housing costs, and low-income households were more likely to facing housing affordability issues (55.7% spending 30% or more and 27.2% spending 50% or more)
- Some household types are more likely to be facing housing affordability issues including renters, youth, persons living alone, lone parent households, people with a cognitive disability.
- 11.9% households in Northumberland County are in core housing need, slightly below the Ontario average; however has a greater share of households falling below the affordability standard compared to Ontario.



- Based on the provincial definition of affordable housing, the affordable rental threshold is \$1,019 and the affordable ownership threshold is \$316,190.
- Based on the average rental costs of available units in Northumberland County, the current rental market is unaffordable for all low-income households, most moderate-income households and in some cases for high-income households.
- Average household incomes in Northumberland County are not keeping up with the increase in house prices. Between 2005 and 2015, house prices have increased by 45.9% compared to 29.1% increase to average household incomes. The average house price in June 2018 in Northumberland County was \$447,992, well above what the average household income can afford.
- Wait times for social housing are up to 9 years, with the highest demand for one bedroom units. The centralized waiting list has more than doubled in the last 10 years.

### **Homelessness**

- There are rising numbers of “working poor” residents using homelessness prevention services.
- Increasing number of cases of families sharing homes and single persons “couch-surfing” staying temporarily with a succession of friends and relatives).
- Many people who are homeless or at high risk have complex, multiple needs. These require stable housing as a base to address other needs but actual housing issues often worsen needs.
- Most people with intellectual/developmental disabilities have unstable housing, and support agencies deal with recurring housing-related crises.
- There is very little specialized housing with supports for high-need populations.

### **Early Years Supports**

- Based on 2016 census results, there are 3335 children, 0-4 years old in Northumberland County, and there are 550 licensed spaces in Northumberland County for children 0-4 years old. Based on a Statistics Canada Report ("Childcare in Canada"), 36% of parents in Ontario use daycare centres, equating to approximately 1201 children in need of care in Northumberland County.
- As of May 2018, there were 273 Children on licensed child care centre waitlists in Northumberland County. Of these children, there were 121 children on waitlists who were in need of childcare at the time data was collected. Thirty-four percent of children on waitlists were infants, 26% toddlers, and 40% preschoolers.
- On average, families pay \$35-42/ day for full day centre child care and \$39-42/day for home child care (depending on age). Centre fees are below provincial averages, and home fees are similar to provincial averages.



- In 2018, there were, on average, 389 Children receiving fee subsidy each month. Most (45%) of children receiving fee subsidy are school age (older than 5.8 years old), although a high proportion (25%) is preschool-age (31 months to 4 years).

### **Economic Context and Income**

- Approximately 35% of the Ontario Works caseload has been on assistance for 2 years or more, with 12% of the caseload having been on assistance for more than 5 years.
- The Sole Support Caseload has increased slightly over the last year, representing 31% of the total caseload and the singles caseload sits at 61% of the total caseload.
- Approximately 40% of our caseload is between the ages of 16 and 29 with 58% being single.
- Approximately 17% of our caseload is between the ages of 50 and 65.
- 37% of our recipients are children under the age of 18, with 19% of our total recipients under the age of 6 years.
- The Northumberland economy has a diverse range of sectors, but is weighted to agriculture, construction/utilities, and manufacturing.
- The local labour market continues to be dominated by precarious employment, including part-time, seasonal, contract/temporary employment in the retail and service industry.
- In June 2018, the Unemployment Rate in Canada dropped to 6.0% and in Ontario to 5.9%. Youth Employment continues to be a focus of both the Federal and Provincial governments. While the Youth Unemployment rate sits at 9.5% as of April 2018, the youth demographic continues to represent the highest served group on assistance, with approximately 40% of our caseload under the age of 30 years.
- In January 2018, legislative changes were made to increase minimum wage across the sectors. In Northumberland, we have seen an influx of jobs available, but are lacking the appropriate candidates to fill the positions.
- Provincial Poverty Reduction focuses on Ending Chronic Homelessness through Housing First strategies; renewed Federal interest in developing a National Housing Strategy emphasizing Homelessness initiatives and potential investments in successful Housing First models.
- Certain household types are more likely to have low incomes compared to Northumberland County as a whole, specifically renter households, youth households, persons living alone, lone parent households, Indigenous households, senior households, physical disability mental health issues and households with a member with cognitive issues.



## **Funding**

### **Community Services**

Homelessness Programs are funded through the Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) which is provincial funding although programs are determined based on local need and designed to meet community needs. There is also a levy contribution to ensure service provision.

The Community Outreach Program is funded currently through the County levy.

### **Early Years Services**

Early Years Services are mainly funded through the Ministry of Education. All mandated programs have provincial guidelines although some programs have flexibility to incorporate local needs when designing programs to meet the uniqueness of a community. There is also a levy contribution to ensure service provision, which includes mandatory contributions based on Provincial legislation.

### **Food Security Services**

The Food 4 All warehouse is funded through the County levy, membership fees and financial donations.

### **Housing Services**

The Housing Services budget projection is based on annualized Federal and Provincial allocations, and subject to new funding as part of any new initiatives. In addition, funding is provided through the County levy and rental and laundry revenue.

### **Ontario Works**

As of January 1, 2018, the final upload occurred as a result of the Provincial Municipal Fiscal Service Delivery Review (PMFSDR). The Province now provides funding for the bulk of the program, including the mandatory components of the program (such as basic needs, shelter and mandatory benefits). There will still be a cost shared portion of delivery for administration, discretionary funding and employment programming. While the Agreement changes funding arrangements for Ontario Works, it does not change service delivery responsibilities. The Province acknowledges that Municipal and First Nations Ontario Works delivery agents are best suited to maximize existing relationships with other local service providers.

## **Legislative**

### **Community Services**

Homelessness programs and services are planned according the legislative requirements of the *Housing Services Act, 2011*, and within the scope of the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative Program Guidelines, January 2017. The Provincial focus on homelessness comes from a number of key provincial priorities.



The Community Outreach Program has detailed municipal policy and procedure guidelines that address principles of service and eligibility criteria.

### **Early Years Services**

Early Years programs are governed by the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*. The Renewed Ontario Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework, 2017 provides a vision for the early years to ensure children from 0-12 years of age have the best possible start in life. The framework is supported by a set of principles and is meant to provide strategic direction to our early years partners both within and outside of government.

### **Food Security Services**

As a member of the Ontario Association of Food Banks and Food Banks Canada, the Food 4 All operation must adhere to very specific rules and regulations regarding food procurement, safe food handling and fundraising initiatives.

### **Housing Services**

Housing programs and services are planned according to the legislative requirements of the *Housing Services Act, 2011* and Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing policy directions along with any additional Federal and Provincial Program and Funding Guidelines; in addition to compliance with any other provincial regulatory requirement and/or municipal by-law or County approved policies.

### **Ontario Works**

Service is planned according to the requirements of the *Ontario Works Act* and directives that are established by the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Local planning is through the approved Ontario Works Service Plan for 2017-2018 and the Ontario Works Service Plan Addendum 2018.

The newly elected provincial government announced on July 31, 2018 that they will be developing a new plan for social assistance which should be released before the end of 2018. It was also announced that the Basic Income Pilot would be winding down (by the end of March 2019) and that a cost of living adjustment of 1.5% was being implemented effective October 1, 2018. At the time of preparation of this business plan, there have been no formal announcements by the newly elected provincial government with respect to changes to the current Social Assistance Programs.