
2021 Business Plan & Budget

Community Services

The Community Services Division continues to work as the homelessness system manager within Northumberland County Community and Social Services. This work includes developing and improving a system and framework to coordinate and manage homelessness services across Northumberland (reflecting the 10-year Housing and Homelessness plan.)

The Community Services division also delivers a comprehensive Community Outreach program with case workers supporting those in crisis and living on low incomes. Outreach case workers can meet with eligible participants in their own homes and their own communities to identify support services and help design care plans and goals with individuals identifying actions to support success and sustainability.

Community services leads on co-designing services and programs and offering guidance and support to a range of partners building capacity and wellness in the community. This includes a comprehensive reach within the community to support and facilitate the inclusion of community sector voices in the planning, delivery and monitoring of services.

Prior Year Accomplishments

Economic Prosperity & Innovation

Funding

- Following the successful application to the Rural and Remote funding through the federal Reaching Home Initiative we were able to support Transition House to employ an outreach worker. This staff member supports those unable to access the shelter due to reduced capacity through the Covid 19 pandemic and connects clients with supports and resources available in the community.

Technology

- Technology has been used to support delivery of programs to people across Northumberland. This has included the use of a tablet to demonstrate apps and support for people using cannabis. This has proved to be very successful and we are currently reviewing methodology to evaluate the impact of this.
- It has been apparent through the COVID 19 pandemic that technology has supported people to stay in touch and access services. The Community services division worked



with other partners to ensure that those on low incomes or experiencing homelessness had a mobile phone to avoid isolation or not being able to contact family, friends and service agencies.

Service delivery

- Delivering services through partner agencies is an essential role of Community Services. Developing Service agreements that are legally sound, that mitigate risk and meet the needs of the community while ensuring that partner agencies can develop innovative and flexible services has been a priority through 2020. Through negotiation and co-design, all service agreements have been improved to reflect an outcome-based approach with the collection of data and metrics which support the strategic goals of the County and the partner agencies.

Sustainable Growth

Food security

- Continued with the alignment between food security and Community Services and identified joint priorities using the four pillars of food security as our guide to ensure that we mitigate risk and develop support across access, availability, utilization and sustainability of food issues.
- Developed a network of organizations and key contacts of those providing meals to vulnerable people through the pandemic. Offering advice and support and small amounts of funding, were able to sustain the network providing a range of different meal options for those who were experiencing homelessness, on low incomes, seniors, experiencing isolation and families at home with children through the pandemic.
- The work of the Food Policy Council has been put on hold through the initial wave of the pandemic and will be reviewed in the fall of 2020. Further alignment of the work priorities for this committee will be considered for the 2021 work plan
- Continue to promote and expand the food help website through 211, and the QR scan code to access the information. This has been a useful tool through the pandemic to enable people in Northumberland to easily access the information they require to access food and support.

Thriving & Inclusive Communities

Homelessness

- Continued to support, lead and build the Homelessness Coordinated Response Team (HCRT) including coordinating and managing weekly meetings throughout COVID 19



- Welcomed new members to HCRT including Police Services, and NHH.
- Reviewed shelter diversion and shared with HCRT, to identify preventive actions and solutions with clients to avoid homelessness offering consistent and timely responses.

Continuous improvement

- Aligning with the County Strategic priority, Community Services have embraced LEAN quality improvement and have utilized at Just Do It (JDI) approach into work planning activities.
- Community Services developed a LEAN Green belt project to review and improve the development, storage, and contents of Service Agreements. This approach has included two team members undertaking the training to become LEAN Green belt practitioners.
- Community capacity building has continued as a priority through 2020 and a range of training for community homelessness partners was arranged and taken through the national organization OrgCode.

Partnerships

- A new partnership has been developed to support the identification and implementation of priorities and projects to be developed and delivered through the Social Services Relief funding (SSRF). There have been two funds available through SSRF worth over 2 million and this new partnership, Northumberland Advisory Group (NAG), have been instrumental in ensuring that community strengths and opportunities have been considered and aligned with the priorities in the housing and homelessness plan and responded to the emergent needs of the COVID 19 pandemic. Community services have led, been the chairperson and coordinated the meetings, and have also developed a Terms of Reference for this group.
- We have continued to participate in Community partnerships and networks including Northumberland Affordable Housing Committee (NAHC), Situation Table, Human Services and Justice Coordinating Committee (HSJCC), Thrive and Substance Use committees. The Community services Manager now sits on the regional HSJCC communication and Knowledge Committee.

Community Safety and Well Being Planning

- Continued with the information sharing, awareness raising and education around the mandated requirement to produce a Community Safety and Wellness Plan. First steering group/leadership table is planned for fall 2020. Data collection has commenced and a



partnership with the data coordinator at Port Hope Police has been developed to access and analyze available data sets.

- A grant application was submitted to Durham Community Foundation and was successful with a five-thousand-dollar grant to ensure that marginalized and vulnerable communities are included in engagement activity related to Community safety and Well Being.
- Funding available from the Minister of Finance has been used for targeted outreach activity to support Police activity engaging with people using Cannabis. This work has included visiting businesses and talking to staff about the resources and information available to help build their skills, accompanying police to nuisance calls to talk to people about Cannabis use, communication and visits to schools talking to students about their cannabis use.

Shelter

- As a response to the sanitization and distancing requirements because of the COVID 19 pandemic, the emergency shelter was required to relocate to a new location. Through negotiation, a school site was identified and the school board approved use of part of the school building. Community services led the re-location and coordinated the move of the shelter to the interim space. New policy and working practices were developed to include measures to maintain staff and client safety through the pandemic.
- Developed a new Transitional Housing Pilot program with the use of Social services relief funding (phase 1). This pilot program offers support and practical assistance to participants to be able to identify permanent housing and prepare for successful independent living. Individual plans are created with participants covering areas such as relationships, health, finance, food security and other issues, to build confidence and skills for people to move into independent living.
- Worked on a renewed and updated application for access to HIFIS and for a plan to implement across Northumberland.
- Supported the completion and launch of the new strategic plan for the emergency shelter.
- Northumberland County became a full member of Built for Zero which is a national change plan, supporting lead communities to end Chronic homelessness. This system uses a data driven approach to optimize local homelessness systems.



- Renewed the motel overflow program as a response to the reduced capacity at the emergency shelter due to COVID 19 restrictions and created a coordinated access point for people experiencing homelessness that includes health screening, diversion and eligibility before the potential access to temporary motel accommodation.

Funding priorities

- Reviewed the CHPI allocations to ensure that we can meet the program objectives and that we are able to focus the resources to the initiatives which are highest need. This has included reallocation of funds to further support the safe and sustainable operations of the emergency shelter and the development of a data coordinator role to support agencies to meet their reporting requirements while improving the outcomes focus of the work.

Community Safety and Wellbeing

- The department has the lead for the mandated Community Safety and Well Being planned required under the Police Services Act on behalf of the County, and coordinated presentations across key partners in the County including Northumberland county Council, Fire Service, EMS, CAOs, health, community, Clerks, internal staff have taken place. Community engagement has started with an online survey using the Bang the Table platform.
- During the Phase 1 of the COVID 19 pandemic, Community Services took the lead to bring together agencies offering support and services under the banner of substance use. Coordinated bi-weekly meetings were held online to update on services that were available and any new access criteria such as open hours, PPE requirements etc. This group monitored trends and was able to identify community priorities in a timely manner.

Leadership in Change

Consultation and engagement

- Developed a community questionnaire that was offered through the Bang The Table platform, encouraging local people to participate and share their ideas and concerns with safety and well-being in their communities. This data will be used alongside other data sets including Situation Table and Homelessness data, and evidence from sources such as stats Canada and Provincial reports, to build the priorities in the mandated Community Safety and Wellbeing plan.



Pandemic Pay

- As the Service manager, we managed the pandemic pay for the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing across Northumberland. We worked with a range of agencies eligible for the funds and ensured compliance with Provincial requirements to completing the required reporting and attestation. We received the funding and allocated to agencies based on the reports approved by the Ministry and completed final reports for submission.

Training

- Due to COVID 19 safety concerns we were not able to deliver in person training. During the year professional development opportunities moved to a virtual environment. Training opportunities that were provided to staff, predominately through the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA) included Hoarding, Difficult Conversations, Time Management, Vicarious Trauma and Mental Health Awareness. Staff from the department and from partner agencies also participated in specific online events through the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH) including Crisis response, and COVID 19 good practices.

Housing and homelessness plan

- Upon receipt of ministerial approval work is planned with the Housing Services Division to develop an implementation plan for the 2019-2029 Housing and Homelessness Plan.
- Began discussions on implementation strategy including focus on data collection and securing support from key community agencies and their Board of Directors.
- Worked toward the completion of the 2019 Housing and Homelessness Plan Annual Report, delayed as a result of COVID-19 program implementation.

Staff training

- Staff professional development continues to be a priority in the Department and Community Services Team members attended online training including trauma informed client service, and Resiliency training.

2021 Service Objectives & Initiatives

Economic Prosperity & Innovation

Service Delivery

- We will use our Service Agreements with service delivery partners to prioritize outcomes that align with Provincial and local priorities and also with the strategic priorities of the County. New Service agreements will ensure that we can identify areas



of success and can measure the effectiveness and impact of the services delivered. The new staff role within the division, concentrating on data, will ensure that we can identify trends and utilize tools that have the biggest impact in our communities while aligning with homelessness strategic priorities.

Prosperity

- We will investigate the living wage for Northumberland and other poverty reduction activities and will work with our service delivery partners to develop initiatives that we can implement through our service agreements and other tools to further encourage prosperity in our communities.

Sustainable Growth

Food Security

- Continue to work with the Food Policy Council and support initiatives that align with the Strategic Plan of the County. Supporting the core group, we will further investigate the promotion and development of policy development and creating metrics that can be collected, reported and monitored.

Information management

- Our information management system for Community Outreach needs to be expanded to meet the growing demands of safe data storage and access. Initial exploration with utilizing Social Assistance Management System (SAMS) is underway. If we are unable to use the Provincial system for clients not receiving social assistance an alternative system will need to be identified.

Thriving & Inclusive Communities

Homelessness

- Upon receipt of ministerial approval work is planned with the Community Services Division to develop an implementation plan for the 2019-2029 Housing and Homelessness Plan.
- Finalize the development of and begin actioning an implementation strategy including focus on data collection and securing support from key community agencies and their Board of Directors.
- Completion of the 2020 Annual Report and submission to County Council and the ministry for approval as legislatively required.



- We will continue to promote RentSmart as a tool to help prepare people for successful tenancies. We will work with the Housing services Division to ensure the addition of local information on resources and benefits, and the addition of further support and information to landlords.
- As a Built for Zero designated community and as the homeless system manager, we will continue to build the capacity of the Homelessness Coordinated Response Team (HCRT) and work to improve our coordinated access system aligning with the Housing and homeless plan. This work will also include improvements to the data collected and stored in our By Name list – enabling us to better support people experiencing homelessness. This aligns with the strategic direction and priority to better utilize data in service planning and delivery.
- The common assessment tool used through our HCRT and homelessness support services is the Vulnerability Index - Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT). This is a survey administered both to individuals and families to determine risk and prioritization when providing assistance to homeless and at-risk of homelessness people. We will continue to promote this tool and offer training to internal staff and staff from partner agencies to ensure consistent, accurate and high standard assessments and scoring are carried out.
- We will continue to seek access to and implementation the Federal Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) across our community with partners who receive homelessness funding through CHPI or Reaching Home. This technology will be coordinated through the new data coordinator and will enable us to collect real time data about the services that are available including shelter beds and will ensure that we are able to allocate services to those who require them. We will ensure that all participating agencies are supported to implement and will have regular training so that all relevant staff are able to input correctly into the system and use to its full capacity.
- Sustaining the pilot transitional housing program, Next Steps, is a priority. The allocation of funds through CHPI will enable operations of the pilot throughout 2021 – allowing time for evaluation and review. This program supports individuals experiencing homelessness to build confidence and skills to be able to move into permanent housing.
- Building the capacity and reach of Northumberland advisory group (NAG) will support the community input and reflection of the impact of homelessness initiatives. This leadership table (membership from the human service agencies which remained operational during the initial wave of the pandemic) will build capacity to influence and support the direction of homeless services across the County.



People with Lived Experience

- The calls to action in the commissioned report recommending involving people with lived and living experience in our work remains a priority. Actions for 2021 include
 - Further work to work with peer workers (those with lived and living experience in the Next Steps program and paying the Northumberland living wage for their work.
 - Developing accreditation and recognition for peer workers through Fleming college.
 - Identifying and creating support for people who have used our services to become involved in improvement and consultation activities.
 - Developing opportunities and systems for PWLE representation on a range of front lines committees including the NAG.
 - Consider methods for PWLE to be involved and inform work to review food security initiatives. This work will include research and investigation from people who use food support programs to learn how these programs increase a person's or family's food security.

Wellness

- Supporting the Community Health Centers of Northumberland and their dental program specifically, we will develop a new service agreement with agreed outcomes and measurements for the services offered. This will be monitored bi-annually with a report and a meeting with program delivery staff. The program will also be required to undertake client engagement activity and share results.
- Recognizing that transport remains a priority for residents of Northumberland, Community Services will continue to support community transport initiatives managed through Community care and will co-design metrics which show passenger feedback and any trends and success with operations. We will also explore any opportunities for growth and innovation with this service.

Outreach Case management

- Continue to review and improve the case management program offered through our outreach team including software options available to manage this program. Initial investigations into the potential of using SAMS as the tool are ongoing. The current bespoke data collection data base which was created internally at the commencement of the program is now over – burdened and will not be able to continue to manage the amount of data that is required to be stored.
- Our aim is to ensure staff roles continue to align with community needs, Provincial and Federal Government mandates and the County strategic plan.



Community Safety and Well Being

- Lead and coordinate the steering group/leadership table that will lead the development, submission and implementation of the Northumberland Community Safety and Well Being plan and support the leadership group to develop an engagement strategy.
- Continue to lead the community consultations and research to identify the priorities and the risks to be included in the first Northumberland Community Safety and Well Being plan.
- Work with other Community Partnerships including the Situation Table and the HSJCC to collect and analyze data that identifies risks and support services in Northumberland.
- Review models and priorities for further street outreach – supporting partner agencies and aligning with strategic priorities. Understanding how this service builds capacity for individuals but also with partner agencies, we will explore opportunities to work with community paramedicine to expand the impact of the services.

Leadership in Change

Homelessness

- We are currently a 'Built for Zero' community through the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, participating in the Canada-wide movement to reduce chronic homelessness, focusing on systems change in Northumberland County. This program enables us to receive training and mentoring/coaching support to further build the effectiveness of our homelessness response system across the County.
- Case conferencing enables a formal, planned and structured meeting which helps provide coordinated and integrated services across providers and helps to reduce duplication. We will develop a structured and layered approach to case conferencing which aligns with current practices in both the Situation table (severe risk) and with Homelessness coordinated response team (HCRT – Some risk) and which enables service providers to promote wellness, and assign leadership and involvement or services to better support clients across the County.

Data and Evidence

- The new data coordinator position will enable us to work with internal colleagues to develop a data catalogue with standardized and validated data and develop required procedures and policies to ensure that data can be accessed and utilized appropriately. We will ensure that this development aligns with the County vision to create and open data portal promoting the ability to use evidence to inform decision making.



- We will continue to seek access to and implementation of the Federal HIFIS system to support homelessness data collection and case planning.

Creation of a File Audit Function

- We will develop a file audit process for the Community Outreach team focusing on accountability, training, and review of service gaps and identification of areas of improvement. This work will include developing an audit checklist for legislative requirements (forms, letters, and identification) and case management quality.

Staff development

- Learning and development opportunities will continue to be offered to staff within the department to further enhance skillsets required in providing quality customer service and case management planning. This will include utilization of the HR download system and shared opportunities with partner agencies.

Business Continuity Planning

- Continue working with the Health and Safety/Emergency Planning department to support focusing on business continuity activities in the event of an emergency.
- Continue planning and developing minimum service standards to ensure ongoing operations during an emergency or unforeseen incident which may impact the ability of continued operations.
- Investigate the use of connect text as communication tool to support business continuity.

Long Term Plan & Strategic Objectives

Economic Prosperity & Innovation

Project management and social policy

- Continue to support and explore the need for departmental support for project management function ensuring that programming and new services are delivered on time and in scope and are influenced through a social policy lens to incorporate current and future mandates and direction.

Ten Year Housing and Homelessness Plan

- Working with our partners we will continue to implement and review the plan, and align activities and programs with the targets and actions identified in the plan.

Thriving & Inclusive Communities

People with Lived Experience

- Working to develop further methods and practice which supports the strategic aims and embeds the involvement of People with Lived Experience throughout the work of the department. This work is ongoing. Developing the process to evaluate this work, and build into all future planning will be considered.

Homelessness

- As the face of homelessness and resources available to support people, coupled with the need for affordable housing in the Community continues to be identified, we will explore, with our partners, opportunities to expand coordinated access to include more housing support and resources, therefore further streamlining the support available to people experiencing precarious and changing housing needs.
- To further streamline services for people experiencing homelessness or precarious housing we will explore governance options for building a responsive and sustainable suite of services across Northumberland enhancing the homeless response system.
- Further the goal for nontraditional partners working with social care agencies to influence how services are provided and share their knowledge and resources across the system.

Health

- Working with health partners we will continue to be aligning social care with a person's health care needs as a Social Determinant of Health and be involved in the development and delivery of a system which is designed to allow for a seamless transition for patients accessing health care.

Community Safety and Wellness

- continuing the research and development of implementation and associated work plans with reporting functions, coordinating the activity across the County. This will include further alignment of strategic priorities with partner agencies and developing opportunities for enhanced sharing of resources to meet identified need.

Seniors

- Investigate the need to develop a comprehensive approach to a County-wide seniors' strategy which considers health and social care, and identifies the gaps in services. This strategy will promote evidence-based practice which enables seniors to live independently and retain, or improve, their quality of life

2021 Issue Paper

Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative

Purpose

This is a request for support to reallocate program funding within the Provincial Community Homelessness Initiative (CHPI). The recommended reallocations will offer the opportunity for focused support to priority areas in our Housing and Homelessness plan and support individual service agreements. This reallocation will also enable us to employ a data analysis coordinator to design, implement our processes for data capture, and analysis. All service managers are required to collect data on the revised CHPI performance indicators and per current requirements, also continue to report on the CHPI performance indicators in their CHPI year-end reports.

These amendments will ensure we are able to continue to offer services and support to those who are vulnerable, homeless or most at risk of homelessness in our community.

Background

Originally implemented in January 2013, the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) is a 100 per cent provincially funded outcomes-based program that aims to prevent and end homelessness by improving access to adequate, suitable, and affordable housing and homelessness services for people experiencing homelessness and for people at-risk of homelessness.

CHPI is administered under a service agreement between the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and each Service Manager (SM). These SMs are provided with funding and flexibility to offer programs and services to meet the objectives and outcomes of CHPI.

The vision for CHPI is to have:

A coordinated and holistic service delivery system that is people-centered, evidence informed and outcomes-based, and reflects a Housing First approach that focuses on homelessness prevention and reduces reliance on emergency services.

CHPI funding requires, that as a CSM, we are engaging in planning activities related to program delivery, which includes assessing service needs, identifying partners, and setting targets and methods to measure success in working toward ending homelessness.



Measurement and reporting are identified as a tool and activity in Northumberland County Strategic plan with the requirement for quarterly and annual reporting clearly laid out. The new position of Data Analysis Coordinator will ensure that the Community and Social services Department is able to meet this requirement throughout Community Services Business plan activities. Strategies will be developed to identify and target the root causes of common social issues by compiling available data to do analysis of trends and patterns of risk and enable us to focus available resources where there will be the biggest impact for our community. Once a completed plan is implemented, data and information will be equally critical in order to evaluate how effective it has been in addressing the priority risks and creating positive changes in the community.

The need for consistent data collection parameters and process is apparent throughout Community services division areas of responsibility. Service providers across the County measure their activity and success using different definitions, different time scales, sometime different geographic boundaries and different indicators. To ensure the ability to demonstrate accountability and transparency we need to work towards ensuring that we promote and lead with a consistent approach. This is also recognised within the Northumberland Housing and Homelessness plan. "Ensure all housing and homelessness service providers use a common approach to collect and sharing data, including a common intake assessment process using the VI-SPDAT tool and a cloud-based database. "Other direct alignment includes recommendations within the Northumberland Housing and Homelessness plan that explicitly identify the need to use data effectively, and this new position will ensure that we are able to align with this priority with a measured and planned approach.

It is anticipated that there will also be support for alignment with other Departmental priorities such as the Affordable Housing Strategy. This Strategy , which identifies indicators and data sources as well as a recommendation to publish an annual Housing Report Card to monitor progress on meeting the goals of the Strategy will benefit directly from the expertise provided through this new position - to collect, collate and analyses data from a range of sources.

The new Community Safety and Well Being plan also requires that a key task of the advisory committee will be developing and maintaining a dynamic data set and ensuring its ongoing accuracy as new sources of information become available. Working in collaboration with partners across the County of Northumberland who maintain extensive and detailed data sets (for example health, education, Police, Housing and Justice partners), we will be able to synthesize and collate data to be able to produce evidence informed planning and evaluation. These new opportunities to share multi-sectoral data and evidence will help us to better understand the community through identifying trends, gaps, priorities and successes which in turn will support the sharing of resources and strategic priorities. To work effectively in this area, all sectors need to share their long-term planning and performance data so we all have a



common understanding of local and systemic issues. This will be supported by dedicated staff support.

Our experiences over the last year also clearly demonstrate that the provision of adequate and safe emergency shelter for those experiencing homelessness, using a housing first approach, is priority in our community and serving our most vulnerable population with our finite resources.

In 2019 the rigorous and wide ranging community consultations for both the Affordable Housing Strategy and the Housing and Homelessness Plan renewal have also been opportunities to reflect on the priorities in the community and the effectiveness of services that prevent homelessness, and provide services to support those that are experiencing homelessness. Community meetings, active community members and round tables during 2019 including homelessness and community safety issues have informed the priority setting for this issue paper too.

Consultation/Options

The Community and Social Service Department currently operate most of this funding through service agreements with at least 7 local not-for-profit service providers and receive quarterly reports that identify program and service usage, outcomes and identify issues, alongside detailed financial reporting. Quarterly updates from the managers of these services and programs also enable the department to monitor emerging trends and needs in the community.

The contract for the Homelessness Mental Health Case Manager funded through CHPI concluded on June 30. Alongside this the HomeShare Pilot program operated by Cornerstone ended September 30th, 2020 and the development of an outcomes-based service agreement led to the consolidation of the diversion and homelessness prevention roles.

As part of our continual evaluation of program investments, we have used this opportunity for reinvestment of this funding ensuring ongoing support of positive outcomes for people experiencing homelessness in our community. Recommendations for this reinvestment are detailed below.

Recommendation 1

It is these combined experiences, along with the alignments noted in the previous sections that has led us to identify the need for a data analysis coordinator for the division. It is recommended that \$95,000 be reinvested to employ a Community Services Data analysis coordinator. This position will be a reclassification and will not add to the current head count of the Community and Social Services department. This position fits within the current staffing allocation.



Recommendation 2

It is recommended the current emergency shelter provider receives increased investment to be able to continue to meet the standards required in our service agreement with them. The current funding level to operate a 24/7 shelter, offering services to homelessness people with the highest acuity is not enough. Increased funding is required to enable the organization to be adequately staffed and pay staff a minimum of a living wage ensuring the shelter is always maintained and safe. Trained staff will be able to deliver services and case management to homeless clients to help them with life stabilization and to find more permanent housing. It is recommended to increase the core investment from \$400,000 per year to \$490,000 per annum.

Recommendation 3

It is recommended that current investments with CHPI funds also include an increase of Shelter benefit of \$50,000 be made available for clients moving from federal benefits following COVID, or who have experienced a reduction an income through the pandemic and now have outstanding rent and utility areas are able to be supported to retain housing. This support will include case work support to ensure life stabilization moving forward.

Recommendation 4

Reviewing other CHPI investments to co-design outcomes-based service agreements remains a priority, as we work with service providers to identify the measures and indicators that demonstrate added value and success within the homelessness system. Through this move we will re-negotiate funding with our Violence against Women's shelter to focus the investment to very targeted outcomes based on homelessness supports. This will provide approximately \$125,000 annual investment.

Recommendation 5

The Social Service Relief Fund 2019/20, allocated to Northumberland to develop and implement homelessness prevention programs and services through the COVID pandemic, afforded us the opportunity to pilot the provision of transitional housing for people experiencing homelessness in our community. Focused and specialist supports were offered to participants and accommodation secured to work with clients to build knowledge, confidence and skills to seek and retain permanent housing. This program is funded until the end of March 2021. It is recommended that CHPI funds are allocated to continue this program dedicated to moving people out of homelessness. The pilot program has enabled us to create program eligibility criteria, programing, inclusion of people with lived experience and measures for success. It is anticipated this will require approximately \$240,000 per annum requiring a reallocation of \$172,000 in 2021.



Recommendation 6

To ensure that we can continue to develop a highly effective homelessness response system with skilled and knowledgeable staff across Northumberland, we will use \$14,154. To provide system level training across all partners working in homelessness and support services. This will include issues of consent, trauma informed care, care planning and case conferencing and effective data capture and management.

The Director of Community and Social Services, the financial analyst in the Department of Finance and the CAO have also been involved in designing these reallocations within the 100% provincially funded amount throughout the budget and business planning cycle.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact to the Northumberland County associated with this issue paper.

Risk Considerations

The role of the CSM to manage the CHPI program is to be able to demonstrate that we are engaging in planning activities related to program delivery, which includes assessing service needs, identifying partners, and setting targets and methods to measure success in working toward ending homelessness. This recommended reinvestment allows the County to proactively and accurately capture data and collate information, identify trends and issues and opportunities to demonstrate investment in those with greatest need. This recommendation also ensures that the available funding is directed to areas of highest priority, and highest impact on our community.

Risk has been a consideration throughout this development of this proposal. The risk associated with not increasing the investment to the emergency shelter provider is that the shelter will not be able to maintain the provision of effective and safe shelter as an option in Northumberland.

The change to the services provided by Mental Health Services will be monitored and new opportunities to support health related outcomes for other community priorities will be explored. Ongoing dialogue and partnership working with the mental health provider will be a priority to ensure continued alignment of services which benefit Northumberland residents.



Impacts to Member Municipalities/Partners

Services and programs that are funded and supported through the CHPI program are delivered across all areas of the County, offering support to residents in all 7 Municipalities. This will not change, and services will still be available to all eligible residents.

Included in 2020 Long Term Plan: YES/NO

No, however the 2020 business plan identified the following actions which supports the recommendations made above;

- **Development of a well-constructed Homelessness Systems Framework**
- Streamlining the support available to people experiencing precarious and changing housing needs.
- Continue work on tailored responses for the needs of high prevalence groups
- Examine organizational capacity including strategic alignment, technical and financial resources to support Community Safety and wellness initiatives

2021 Business Plan & Budget

Early Years Services

Northumberland County Early Years Services continues to evolve policies, programs and services to greater align with and better reflect the Ontario government’s vision and ongoing transformation of the early years and child care system. The *Early Years and Child Care Act, 2014*, emphasizes the role of the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager as the system planner for early learning and child care.

The pandemic greatly affected child care and early learning programs in 2020. Many of the second-year action items from the Early Learning and Child Care Five Year Service Plan were put on hold while the Early Years Team was reacting, planning and implementing the “new normal” for early learning and child care programs during the pandemic.

On March 17, the provincial government declared a State of Emergency and ordered the closure of all licensed child care centres, and all facilities providing indoor recreational programs including EarlyON Child and Family Centres. This order did not apply to Licensed Family Home Child Care Agencies. On March 21, the province subsequently announced that in order to support health care and front-line workers in securing care for their children, selected Licensed Child Care Centres were approved to be exempt from the closure order. On June 9, the province announced that Licensed Child Care agencies could start to re-open on June 12, if they adhered to the enhanced health and safety protocols.

The Early Years Division led and continues to lead several key initiatives to support children, families, operators and the community during the continued pandemic. From March 17 to September 1, 2020 and beyond the main areas of focus were:

- The creation and implementation of Emergency Child Care (ECC) for Northumberland front-line workers.
- The implementation of virtual EarlyON Child and Family support services.
- To support licensed child care operators with re-opening their sites to provide safe and nurturing environments to children, and to support parents returning to work.
- To work closely with the Haliburton, Kawartha and Pine Ridge District Health Unit (HKPRDHU) and the Licensing Branch of the Ministry of Education (MEDU) to determine the safest way to operate.
- To provide children, parents/caregivers and educators with ongoing supports for children with special needs whether at home during the closure or in a licensed child care setting.



The Early Years Team will continue to work with HKPRDHU and the Ministry of Education as the pandemic continues to impact programs and services in 2021.

Prior Year Accomplishments

Thriving & Inclusive Communities

Licensed Child Care

- Updated Service Agreements to multiyear agreements to match Ministry of Education contract.
- Develop a Child Care Operators Manual with a focus on funding guidelines and fee subsidy operating procedures.
- Hired the second Early Years Coordinator who as the Early Years pedagogical lead has provided increased supports to operators and educators.
- Managed complicated funding guidelines and reconciliation processes to ensure Operators continued to have sufficient funding to support ongoing operations due to the pandemic. There were four different funding periods with different guidelines, rules and accountability processes. There was significant increased administrative burden.
 - January 1 to March 16 – regular operation
 - March 17 to June 12 – Closure period
 - or
 - March 17 to June 26 – Closure period and Emergency Child Care
 - June 12 to September 1 – Re-opening period
 - September 1 to December 31 – Resumed programs and services.
- Provided additional financial support through the Federal Safe Restart Funding which was used to support operators with purchasing additional personal protective equipment, enhanced cleaning, additional staff to meet health and safety requirements, support for short term vacancies as operators transition to full capacity and minor capital required to meet new requirements.
- Established weekly operator virtual meetings to provide ongoing support to operators through the closure and reopening periods as the system transitions to address its response to the pandemic.
- Ongoing waitlist survey with operators to assist in monitoring child care demand.
- Migrate Ontario Child Care Management System (OCCMS) to Mission from the County.



EarlyON Child and Family Centres

- The EarlyON Child and Family Team, led by the Early Years Coordinator, in collaboration with the three lead agencies: Northumberland YMCA, Brighton Children’s Centres and Beehive Day Care Centre, had to adapt quickly to adjust programs and supports for children and families due to the pandemic.
- Implemented virtual programming to support children and families during the closure period and continued beyond to provide options for families for continued social distancing options. Some examples of virtual programming offered:
 - Interactive videos created by the team that showcase interactive games, songs and activities that support play and family participation.
 - Activity ideas for family engagement.
 - Messages and personal stories from EarlyON educators to families.
 - Provision of other resources including links to videos/webinars, articles, and other websites that offer information about early learning activities for families to enjoy from the safety and comfort of their own home.
 - One on one support to families who reach out.
 - Implemented a virtual program for new parents.
- Relocated the EarlyON location from YMCA Cobourg to the newly renovated space at Five Counties Children’s Centre (FCCC).
 - Built a partnership with FCCC and the Infant Hearing program to introduce parents’ of new born babies to EarlyON Child and Family Centres and early years supports in Northumberland through their testing program.
- Supported Triple P, Positive Parenting Program:
 - Continued, in partnership with other funders, the Triple P Coordinator position with Rebound Child & Youth Services.
 - Implemented Triple P, Positive Parenting virtual sessions one on one and group.
 - Supported EarlyON Educators and HKPRDHU Healthy Babies staff to be trained as Triple P facilitators in various levels.

Special Needs Resourcing

- Implemented a new Service Delivery Model which expands the Resource Consultants role to incorporate providing professional development supports at a centre level. This helps to ensure there is a transfer of knowledge to practice happening and that resources are more readily available.
- Established virtual connections with families and operators to adapt to providing services during the pandemic.
- Continued to build in Resource Consultant services and supports at EarlyON Child and Family Centres to assist families with early identification.



Indigenous Led Early Years Program

- Indigenous Early Years Team continued the coordination of community connections with Alderville First Nations, local Indigenous organizations, and Indigenous early years stakeholders.
- Virtual EarlyON Facebook Events in June to celebrate National Indigenous Day.
- Developed kits of Indigenous cultural teachings and provided instruction virtually to model the delivery of the kits to EarlyON Centres and licensed child care programs.
- Developed Indigenous Early Years kits for parents to borrow to provide opportunities for families to engage at home.
- Designed a virtual series of Cultural Competency Training sessions for Early Years partners.
- Continued the Indigenous Perspectives Network.
- Indigenous Early Years Team relocated to the Cobourg FCCC EarlyON Child and Family Centre to facilitate joint planning and program delivery.

Capacity Support for Early Years Operators/Educators

- Based on survey results, the Early Years team moved to a new delivery of Professional Development. The model has a greater focus on supporting transfer of knowledge to practice with direct supports and virtual learning.
- Began to train all Early Childhood Educators in the Positive Early Childhood Education (PECE) program, an extension of The Positive Parenting Program (Triple P). Trained all Resource Consultants and two YMCA staff as PECE coaches to support the implementation and integration into practice. To date 56 educators have taken the virtual training series.
- Continued to support, in partnership with Five Counties Children's Centre, multiple learning opportunities focused on early learning professional development and quality assurance.
- Key Highlights
 - Team Building at 3 Centres using Lego Serious Play.
 - Self-Regulation Sessions.
 - 2020 ECE event.
 - Networks: Pedagogical, Cook's and Preschool.
 - Mental health session to support Educators as they offer programs during the pandemic.
- EarlyON Specific Educator Capacity Building
 - STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math) Sessions on: Rich Environments, Infants and Toddlers and Outdoor Environments.
 - What does *How Does Learning Happen?* Look Like with Families.



- Empowering Parents as Partners in their Children's Play.

Quality Improvement Framework

- The implementation of the Community Learning Quality Reflection Tool, that outlines a continuous cycle of evaluation/monitoring, goal-setting, training and improvement initiatives, mentorship, and transfer to practice to accommodate and support the integration of Licensed Child Care and EarlyON Child and Family Centres as a single system was put on hold due to the pandemic.
- The Quality Tool was updated to address the updated *How Does Learning Happen* document that was developed to correspond with the new enhanced health and safety and other protocols that were developed in response to the pandemic.

Early Years Service Planning and Community Engagement

- Through a strategic planning process, the Best Start Network and the Northumberland Children's Services Committee investigated consolidating into one Early Years Planning Table. As a result, the Northumberland Child and Youth Collaborative (NCYC) was formed in early 2020 and will continue to meet on a quarterly basis.
- Updated EarlyOn web-based calendars and information to be more user friendly.
- Continue to plan and partner with our School Board partners.
- Surveyed families to:
 - Gauge interest for Emergency Child Care.
 - Inform program planning during the ongoing pandemic health and safety regulations.
- Joined the steering committee for the Collaborative 12 and Under Intervention Program (CUIP).

Youth Support Programs

- Continued to pilot the Community and Social Services Trusteeship Program. This program was a collaborative approach funded through Ontario Works, Early Years and Homelessness.
- Continued to support youth service delivery which improved existing services offered by Rebound Children and Youth Services, by reducing wait times, increasing access and helping to address the significant service gap with younger youth and children under the age of 12 (connected to EarlyON).
- In partnership with the KPRDSB and YMCA Northumberland, continued to support the TEAM program for young mothers.



Leadership in Change

Data Validity, Measurement of Impact

- Established a Community Data Consortium, with management and the DAC attending an online training session to become familiar with the program. Community partners will be approached to determine their interest in participating. Members of the GIS Cooperatives, which consists of GIS professionals from the County and member municipalities, were eager to join.

Professional Development

- Learning and Development opportunities in 2020 have moved to the virtual environment. All staff have access to webinars offered through the Ontario Municipal Social Service Association (OMSSA) on a range of topics, including Time Management, Vicarious Trauma, and Mental Health awareness. We continue to review opportunities for staff to participate in various learning and development opportunities.
- Supported Corporate training opportunities including: LEAN Training, Just DO IT training.
- In addition to the formal Professional Development schedule, the Early Years division also invested in staff learning and development opportunities, including:
 - OCCMS Training (Ontario Child Care Management System)
 - OCCMS Focus Groups
 - Association of Educational Researchers of Ontario Annual Conference: Data Literacy

2021 Service Objectives & Initiatives

Thriving & Inclusive Communities

Licensed Child Care

- Continue to support child care operators as they provide care to children and support to families during the ongoing pandemic. This includes support for increased PPE, enhanced cleaning and increased administrative burden due to new and complicated funding templates.

- Continue to monitor and plan for Provincial, Ministry of Education funding reductions that will have an impact on the Early Years budget. Due to the pandemic, we are unsure if the proposed changes for 2021 will be implemented. There has been an increase in administrative burden put on CMSMs with COVID-19 reporting that will continue into 2021. There will be challenges if the proposed reduction of administration funding from 10% to 2.5% is implemented although there is a plan in place to address this.
- Continue to work with the child care operators on exploring new ideas to improve access to licensed child care for families. Focus will be on addressing affordability.
- Review and update the operator's budget reporting tool and fee increase request process.
- Investigating the establishment of a market rate fee scale.
- Implement Fee Subsidy Attendance monitoring program.
- Investigate opportunities to assist operators with salary grid guidelines.
- Develop a surplus fund policy for non-profit operators.
- Continue to engage Child Care Operators and their Boards in working on process and policies to support program viability and enhanced accountability.
- Continue to work with the licensed home child care sector that compensates operators and agencies in a transparent and equitable way.
- Continue to increase public awareness of licensed home child care as a viable option for families which includes a focus on recruitment of home providers.
- Update Cross-jurisdictional Service Agreements with neighbouring CMSMs.

EarlyON Child and Family Centres

- Continue to support EarlyON programming that is meeting the needs of children and families in relation to the enhanced health and safety protocols as per the pandemic and the updated *How Does Learning Happen* document.
- Continue to build on the communication strategy that focuses on increasing community awareness of the free child and family programming offered at EarlyON Child and Family Centre and virtually, including:
 - Explore social media platforms.
 - Participate in community events.
 - Enhance partnerships with local schools and attend kindergarten nights, welcome BBQ's, etc.
- Continue to enhance connections between County departments to explore opportunities to partner or support County events including virtual tours of County programs such as the MRF and the forest.



- Plan and implement a virtual parenting program in collaboration with the Ontario Works department. The program will be geared towards the Learning, Earning and Parenting (LEAP) participants and other interested Ontario Works participants.
- Explore opportunities for community partner agencies and the Community and Social Service Department to offer their programs and services at EarlyON locations, enabling them to provide services across the County. Building on the Hub philosophy.
- Work in partnership with the IT department to update EarlyON IT equipment and infrastructure.

Early Years Expansion

- Continue to investigate with KPRDSB, PVNCCDSB and Mon Avenir Conseil Scolaire Catholique the possibility of capital builds and retrofits for early years spaces in their schools as per the Province's Schools First Approach.
- In partnership with Five Counties Children's Centre build a community hub model for early years service delivery:
 - Designated space for the Indigenous Led Early Years Team
 - Office/counselling space for community partners
 - Community use room for group sessions
 - Direct connections to other early years programming. i.e. Infant Hearing

Special Needs Resourcing

- Resource Consultants will continue to support educators with the implementation of the Learning Quality Reflection Tool. As *How Does Learning Happen* has been updated to reflect the health and safety regulations due to the pandemic, this support is even more crucial as educators adjust their practice to meet these needs.
- Direct more resources to frontline to build capacity with educators to better support children with unique needs.
- Explore opportunities to support inclusion through programming or equipment.

Indigenous Led Early Years Program

- In partnership with Nogojiwanong Friendship Centre, continue to increase awareness of the supports for urban Indigenous, Métis and Inuit families in Northumberland.
- Indigenous Early Years team will continue to build and enhance the coordination of community connections with Alderville First Nations, local Indigenous organizations, and Indigenous early years stakeholders.
- Continue to offer Cultural Awareness Training in person and virtual for Early Years partners. This includes establishing set sessions for new staff or staff refreshers.
- Expand workshops to include a Medicine Walk and Medicine Bundle



- Focused on the early years, offer the 7 Grandfather's Teaching Toolkit workshop and the Indigenous documentation workshop.
- Build on the Indigenous Perspectives Network.

Capacity Building Support for Early Years Operators/Educators

- Based on survey data, in partnership with Five Counties Children's Centre, continue to offer multiple learning opportunities through various mediums.
- Continue to investigate webinars and other online training opportunities to support educators by minimizing time requirements and ensuring social distancing.
- Continue to train all Early Childhood Educators in the Positive Early Childhood Education (PECE) program, an extension of The Positive Parenting Program (Triple P).
- Provide support for the educators to adapt to the new *How Does Learning Happen* document that was adjusted in response to the new reality of offering early years programs during the pandemic. Investigating bringing in Glory Ressler.
- Due to a greater emphasis on outdoor programming in response to the pandemic, this will be a focus for 2021 learning opportunities.
- Leadership/mentorship training for Pedagogical leads.

Quality Improvement Framework

- Continue the implementation of Learning Quality Reflection Tool that has enhanced pieces to support changes due to the pandemic across all Early Years Programs. Focus on a continuous cycle of evaluation/monitoring, goal setting, training and improvement initiatives, mentorship, and transfer to practice.
- Build a framework to monitor Service Agreement accountability measures.

Early Years Service System Planning and Community Engagement

- Update the five year Early Years Service System Plan's key priorities, in partnership with community partners, to reflect the government's new framework. The Plan will continue to be data driven and focus on the outcome indicators.
- Connect with nontraditional and corporate partners to seek opportunities for program sponsorship through in kind or financial support for Early Years Programming.
- Engage lower tier municipalities and recreation departments in partnership opportunities with space and programming.



Youth Support Programs

- Look to continue to support the joint Community and Social Services Trusteeship Program, by reviewing opportunities with Ontario Works and Homelessness.
- Continue to assist Rebound Child & Family Centre in meeting demand for established programs and create stronger connections between these programs and EarlyON Centres.
- In partnership with the KPRDSB and YMCA Northumberland, investigate new opportunities to support all young parents, not just mothers, across Northumberland.

Leadership in Change

Data Validity, Measurement of Impact

- The DAC will present the EDI data from 2018 to community partners. This data, in combination with KPS and other available data, is essential to inform future Early Years planning.
- Continue to develop outcomes and measures for all programming, including Early Years Service System Plan.
- Continue to work collaboratively with other department resources to build and maintain data sources that will support future programming and operational needs, including the development of key performance indicators and streamline collection methods.
- Implement a Cross-County Parent Satisfaction Survey for Child Care and EarlyON Child and Family Centres.
- Implement a Cross-County Staff Satisfaction Survey for Child Care and EarlyON Child and Family Centres staff.
- Investigate data sharing agreements with relevant partners.
- File audit function for fee subsidy will be reviewed to ensure it focuses on accountability.

Professional Development

- Continue building on the department's professional development training series, with continued focus on customer service, the client experience, self-care and Emergency Response as it relates to Social Services.
- Learning and development opportunities will continue to be offered to staff within the department, to further enhance skillsets required in providing quality customer service and case management planning.
- Continue to support the corporate direction of LEAN.



Business Continuity Planning

- Business Continuity planning for the Early Years division, alongside the Community & Social Services department as a whole, will continue in 2021. This planning will include a review of the divisional level response to COVID19, as well as a detailed review of minimum service standards in the event of an emergency. Current plans will be updated to address solutions that were implemented in 2020, and to provide awareness for staff of the requirements during an emergency.

Long Term Plan & Strategic Objectives

Thriving & Inclusive Communities

- The overall goal is to continue to build a high-quality, accessible and affordable early years and child care system within the provincial funding allocations.
- Continue to monitor and plan for Provincial, Ministry of Education funding reductions that will have an impact on the Early Years budget. Due to the pandemic, we are unsure when and if proposed changes will be implemented. There has been an increased administrative burden placed on CMSMs, in addition to a greater demand for funding, in order to address the pandemic.
- Ongoing evaluation and monitoring of the five years Early Years Service System Plan.
- Continue to investigate opportunities to create additional licensed spaces for 0 – 4 year olds with a focus on infants to address waitlist demands across the County.
- Continue to partner with KPRDSB, PVNCCDSB and Mon Avenir Conseil Scolaire Catholique on capital build and retrofits for early years spaces.
- Through Indigenous led programming, continue to increase access to licensed child care and family and support programs for Indigenous, Métis and Inuit families in partnership with Nogojiwanong Friendship Centre and Alderville First Nation.
- Continue to look for ways to support affordability of child care in partnership with increasing salaries of educators.

Capacity Building Support for Early Years Operators

- Develop a workforce strategy to support recruitment and retention of early years and child care professionals in Northumberland.
- Seek opportunities to support under qualified early years staff in becoming a Registered Early Childhood Educators. Explore various paths, such as the ECE Qualification Upgrade Program, a college program in Northumberland or distant education.
- Continue to provide ongoing support locally for professional development opportunities.



Learning Quality Reflection Tool

- Implement provincial and local mechanisms for measuring program quality as part of the overall Early Years outcomes and measurement strategy.
- Continue to implement the County's Learning Quality Reflection Tool.

Early Years Service System Planning and Community Engagement

- In conjunction with the Northumberland Children and Youth Collaborative, continue to increase awareness and access of quality early years programs.
- Continue to find opportunities to build on the Hub model.

Leadership in Change

Data Validity, Measurement of Impact

- Early Years Services recognizes the utility and power of data in planning, evaluating, and reporting and will continue to work with the department and community partners on sharing data and using data to inform decisions.

Professional Development for Frontline Staff

- Continue to build internal capacity through learning and sharing opportunities.
- Find efficiencies utilizing Lean approaches to examine internal processes in order to meet targets and outcomes.

2021 Business Plan & Budget

Food Security Services

The direction of Food Security Services continues to evolve and look beyond just the day to day operation of the Food 4 All warehouse. Initial steps were taken in 2018 and further expanded in 2019 and 2020 to examine some of the root causes of food insecurity both in Ontario and throughout Northumberland County. In March of 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the Food 4 All operation had to change the daily warehouse operation to respond to the COVID situation. Throughout the pandemic, Food 4 All remained open to assist local food banks and feeding programs to help the most vulnerable members of our community receive the assistance they required. The creation and release of our third annual report (Feed the Change 2020) helped us to share information with the community about what hunger truly looks like in our area. This report also included some data regarding what was done through Food 4 All to respond to increased demand in Northumberland during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Prior Year Accomplishments

Economic Prosperity & Innovation

Volunteer Opportunities/Development

- During the initial few months of COVID we stopped utilizing our volunteers to ensure the health and wellbeing of both volunteers and County staff.
- Limited numbers of volunteers returned as of July, and in August we provided one high school student with training and the volunteer hours required for his school program.
- Additional volunteers were brought back in latter Q3 and Q4 of 2020.

Increased Local food Purchasing

- As we continue to purchase healthier food items for local food banks and school nutrition programs, we increased the number of local suppliers we utilize in order to provide these items. Current local purchases include:
 - Local grocery stores and wholesale produce supplier
 - Fresh produce and beef from local farmers
 - Liquid milk directly from supplier (Kawartha Dairy)
 - Fresh bread directly from suppliers (Canada Bread)
 - Fresh eggs directly from supplier (Burnbrae Farms)



Sustainable Growth

Fundraising/Food raising Activities

- Worked with staff from MyFM radio station on the third annual “All Hands on Deck” food drive in August of 2020 (rescheduled from March)
 - In the 3 years of this event, more than 10,000 lbs of food and personal care items and more than \$6,300.00 in financial donations have been raised
 - This annual event is a partnership between Food 4 All and Northumberland Fare Share with all food and financial donations being split equally between the 2 organizations
- Due to COVID, the annual Classic Rock Restock event held each year in front of Cobourg’s Victoria Hall was rescheduled to spring of 2021

Food Security/Community Services

- Continued work to on the alignment between food security and community services and identified and planned joint priorities
- Continued to promote the foodhelpnorthumberland.cioc.ca web based reference tool for contact information for food banks, community gardens, school nutrition programs and meal programs. This tool includes a QR code to support ease of access to the information
 - This site was updated regularly during the pandemic to ensure operating hours, contact information and pertinent information for each feeding program was kept up to date
- Shared operational updates and initial 2021 food security plans that will be worked on collaboratively

Financial Policy – Membership Fees

- After developing our new financial policy in 2018 we continued to implement new processes (based on the policy) in 2020.
 - On the County’s updated web site, the online donation tool continues to be a useful option where money is being donated to Food 4 All / Food Security through the web site.
 - Significant financial donations totaling more than 4 times our annual donation budget was received during the COVID-19 situation. Most of these donations were received through our online donation tool.
- We continue to review our membership fee structure on an annual basis to help ensure additional operational sustainability for the Food 4 All program.
- Revised our “Donation Policy” to provide us with more flexibility on how donations are spent. Additionally, we have begun sending personalized thank you notes to donors with each donation they make towards Food 4 All/Food security. These thank you notes



will be updated throughout the year and will provide the donor with information about how donations have been utilized during the year.

Warehouse Technology

- During 2020 we continued to investigate alternate warehouse inventory software options to use within the Food 4 All operation, looking specifically at:
 - A system which would allow us to ensure fair and equitable distribution of product based on inventory levels and the needs of various community agencies.
 - Better reporting options not currently available on existing software.
 - Bar code scanning for product entering and leaving warehouse.
 - Smart phone app compatibility for off-site access to inventory program.
- We continue to utilize other warehouse technology including:
 - Walk in cooler and freezer temperature monitoring software
 - GPS tracking of warehouse vehicles
 - Online appointment scheduling software
 - Hunger count tracking software used by all Food 4 All member agencies
 - Food rescue software
 - Provincial food bank donation allocation software

Thriving & Inclusive Communities

COVID-19 Response – The First 20 Weeks of Action (March 13 – July 31)

During the pandemic the Food 4 All warehouse remained open and continued to provide much needed assistance to local food banks and feeding program. This included:

- 370,090 pounds of food and essential items distributed from Food 4 All to local food banks and feeding programs
- \$962,234.00 worth of product distributed (value of \$2.60 per pound distributed)
- 118 deliveries made to local food banks and emergency shelters during April through June
- 3000+ emergency food hampers distributed to local food banks
- \$41,449.16 in grants provided to local food banks and emergency food programs
- \$38,385.66 spent on assorted fresh and non-perishable food items
- 2420 separate individuals (26% under 18) assisted at local food banks

School Nutrition Program Assistance

- Worked with “School Nutrition Programs Central East” to provide new healthy food items including bread, juice and eggs to local school nutrition programs.
- During the 2019/2020 school year we had our first full school year of using the new online order program for schools to order their monthly food items.



- Provides one system for schools to submit monthly reports and school food orders.
- System includes more healthy food options (that meet school nutrition guidelines) that are delivered to schools each month.
- Product was shipped to Food 4 All where it was then divided into individual school orders, loaded onto school courier vehicles and delivered to each school program.

Food Distribution from Social Services Office

- After implementing a LEAN yellow belt project in 2019, we continued to utilize the new process for distributing and tracking food to the clients that we assist
 - Amount of product being stored has been significantly reduced
 - Storage cabinet is closer to the CSU staff to improve efficiencies in gathering food
 - Clients are given choice as to what they would like to receive
 - Inventory is tracked on a weekly basis to ensure accuracy

Hunger Action Month Activities (September 2020)

- Third annual Hunger Action Month activities implemented in September of 2020
- Proclamation by County Council recognizing September as Hunger Action Month in Northumberland County
- Sharing our second “30 Ways in 30 Days 2020” calendar via social media to show community members how they can help
- Released our third annual report (Feed the Change 2020) which identifies food security data and Food 4 All distribution statistics from 2019.
- Working with our department’s housing division staff we distributed emergency food hampers, fresh food boxes and sanitizing cleaner to 9 social housing complexes located throughout Northumberland.

Milk 4 Families Program Review (Ongoing)

- Continued to examine the Milk 4 Families program to ensure maximum value for our investment
- Continuing to distribute increasing quantities of liquid milk to local families
- Changed gift card allotments to local programs to more accurately reflect their individual client needs

Food Banks Northumberland – Standards of Service

- Continued our work with local food banks and key community partners to establish consistent levels of service to local food bank visitors which was increasingly important during the pandemic



- Provided uninterrupted access to warehouse items, including direct deliveries to food banks from April through June during the pandemic
- Continuing to provide food items based on the revised Canada's Food Guide
- Continuing our work to identify service gaps between locations and identify ways to fill these gaps

Leadership in Change

Waste Diversion/Food Rescue

- Continued to work with 2 partners for waste diversion
 - Food waste is picked up weekly by local farmers and diverted from landfill
 - Total of 8,000 lbs of waste diverted in Q1 + Q2 of 2020
- Continued partnership with Second Harvest and their FoodRescue.ca program to access rescued food from donors
- Expanded our partnership with Walmart in Cobourg which now includes weekly pick-ups of donated fresh, frozen and non-perishable items

Warehouse Transportation

- Food 4 All van continues to be used for both food security and emergency social services (ESS) purposes
- Our 5-ton truck was used to make deliveries to food banks during the first 3 months of the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of 107 deliveries were made to local food banks during that time.
- The large truck is also used to pick up larger donations including a weekly trip to Toronto.

Food Banks Northumberland – Professional Development

- Due to the COVID-19 situation our in-person meetings had to be replaced with teleconference meetings and zoom calls

Revised/Updated Warehouse Operational Policies

- Original warehouse policies were created and implemented in 2015
- This policy is reviewed annually and adjusted as necessary.
- New policy document is being kept as an electronic file to assist with ease of distribution and ease of updating whenever necessary.

2021 Service Objectives & Initiatives

Historically, the focus of the Food Security division has centered primarily on the day-to-day operation of the Food 4 All warehouse program. As we continue to expand our focus to include



both the daily warehouse operation and to include the broader issues that affect food security, we began to focus our work in 2019 and early 2020 on the 4 pillars of food security. In 2020, this work was temporarily stalled as the COVID-19 pandemic forced us make changes to our daily operation ensuring that we were able to continue to provide support and assistance to local food banks and feeding programs during the pandemic. Looking forward to 2021 and beyond, the focus of the Food Security division will continue to expand and examine the broader issues of food insecurity and poverty reduction within Northumberland County and finding ways to alleviate some of the barriers that contribute to these issues.

Economic Prosperity & Innovation

Volunteer Opportunities/Development

- We will continue to provide volunteer opportunities which will provide interested individuals with marketable skills (fork-lift training, First Aid/CPR) to improve their opportunities to gain employment and assistance in our daily operation.

Increase Local food Purchasing

- As we continue to purchase healthier food options, we will strive to make these purchases from local producers/suppliers whenever possible and we will continue to look for new local suppliers whenever possible.

Sustainable Growth

Food Security/Community Services (Continued work under the 4 pillars of food security)

- **Ensuring financial accountability for all donations that are received (Access)**
 - Following up on work done in 2020 regarding new donation SOP
 - Issuing personalized thank you notes for every donation received
- **Working to maximize the use of excess food items that are available at the warehouse (Access)**
 - Working with community partners including the OAFVC to create simple items using existing excess ingredients, pancake mix as one example
 - Longer term plans will require creative approaches to be able to ensure the needs of the customer are being met without increasing costs or creating barriers to access
 - Planning for this including viability, cost, risk and growth potential will be determined during 2021 where we will provide opportunities to engage our warehouse members and individuals with lived experiences with the co-design of these new products
- **Food waste (Availability)**
 - Continue to work with local retailers including Walmart to pick up and receive donated food items



- Look for new partnerships with other local retailers to pick up additional food items for distribution to local feeding programs and diversion from local landfills
- Begin to work with our Waste department to identify possible ways to divert additional excess food away from local landfills and to local feeding programs
- Continue our work with local partners including the food policy council and other local providers and businesses to make this a sustainable plan with the opportunity for future growth
- **Outreach and Independence (Utilization)**
 - Begin to develop outreach activities and plans to ensure that the most vulnerable people in our communities have access to food
 - We will work with our community partners to ensure that food and access to food is part of planning care and services in community programs
 - Develop plans to train case workers and counsellors to ask people about food, to tell them about where to get food
 - We will partner with programs that promote healthy food and cooking to encourage the uptake and promotion of these programs
 - We will work to develop programs and provide information that move people towards skill building and motivation to prepare their own meals

Staff/Volunteer Training & Development

- Examine staffing needs both within the Food 4 All operation and the broader department and develop a plan to determine how to best utilize current staff and volunteers
- Continue with development and training opportunities for staff and volunteers

Business Continuity Plan

- After beginning work on our BCP in 2019, the COVID situation expedited our need to have a plan in place and lots of work was done on the plan in 2020
- In 2021 we will continue the work we started in 2020 to finalize our business continuity plan for the warehouse operation to ensure minimal disruption to our service to our members during emergency situations.
- We will make sure we include appropriate information from Feed Ontario's provincial BCP

Thriving & Inclusive Communities

Food Security/Community Services (Continued work under the 4 pillars of food security)

- **Ensuring financial accountability for all donations that are received (Access)**
 - Following up on work done in 2020 regarding new donation SOP
 - Issuing personalized thank you notes for every donation received



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 - We will partner with programs that promote healthy food and cooking to encourage the uptake and promotion of these programs
- We will work to develop programs and provide information that move people towards skill building and motivation to prepare their own meals

Ongoing Community Development Plans

- Continue the “Moving from Good to Great” professional development program with our Food Banks Northumberland partners and their volunteers
- Continue to review and improve the “Milk 4 Families” program to determine need and impact
- Support where possible, the development of a municipal Poverty Reduction Strategy



Leadership in Change

- Continue the training and development opportunities for both staff and volunteers including but not limited to:
 - First aid, Health & Safety, Safe Food Handling and Forklift Certification

Long Term Plan & Strategic Objectives

Economic Prosperity & Innovation

Increase Local food Purchasing

- We will continue to use local producers/suppliers whenever possible for food purchases for the operation
- We will look to source out new local suppliers for additional food purchases

Sustainable Growth

- Continue to operate as a distribution hub and member of Feed Ontario as a best practices warehouse operation for food and essential item distribution
- Continue to examine sustainable funding opportunities for the operation (grants, membership fee adjustments, online donations, etc.)
- Continue to research and implement updated processes and practices to streamline the overall operation and make it as LEAN as possible

Thriving & Inclusive Communities

- Ongoing work will be done with our Community Services division focusing on the 4 pillars of food security
- Continue and expand “Moving from Good to Great” training and development program for local food banks and feeding programs

Leadership in Change

- Continue to enhance staff and volunteer roles that align with the County’s and Food 4 All’s strategic goals
- Continue to develop and enhance internal warehouse policies and procedures to ensure high customer service standards
- Work with other County departments to enhance service delivery to community partner agencies

2021 Business Plan & Budget

Housing Services

The direction and strategic priorities of the Housing Services division continues to evolve to better reflect the strategic direction of the department and County, specifically focusing on the renewed 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan and the Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy. Housing Services continues to strive to better address the needs of Northumberland County residents facing housing insecurity and remains committed to implementing a housing retention framework in the delivery of community housing. Housing Services continues to prioritize the development and implementation of key strategic planning initiatives to guide investments into the long-term maintenance of existing community housing stock alongside the creation of new affordable and community rental housing across the County.

Prior Year Accomplishments

Economic Prosperity & Innovation

Development of a County Affordable Housing Strategy

- Formed the Affordable Housing Strategy Implementation Working Group with representatives from all member municipalities focusing on the Strategy's implementation from a municipal perspective.
- Council formally approved the Affordable Housing Strategy and implementation strategy.
- Completed planning and recommendations to County Council on developing a pilot program to support the Affordable and Rental Housing Policy.
- Support private and non-profit developers applying for incentives through the Affordable and Rental Housing Policy for the creation of affordable housing units.
- Continued discussions with member municipalities on land-banking opportunities to continue identifying shovel-ready and funding-ready projects.

Sustainable Growth

Social Housing Master Plan/Northumberland County Housing Corporation Strategic Asset Management Plan



- Worked with Housing Services Corporation (HSC) to develop a Social Housing Master Plan and NCHC Strategic Asset Management Plan for the County as a Service Manager and as the sole shareholder of the NCHC. Final Master Plan to be presented in Spring 2021, as delayed by COVID-19 restrictions to the Building Condition Assessment project.
- Began utilizing AssetPlanner for the NCHC portfolio to support strong capital planning and asset management initiatives.

Elgin Park Redevelopment

- Submission of rezoning and site plan applications to the Town of Cobourg, in partnership with Major Capitals Project Team and the design team.
- Received provincial and federal funding through Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiatives for \$5,770,000 for the construction of Elgin Park.
 - Execution of the Contribution Agreement for this funding.
- Sought financing options for the remainder of the funding cost through Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation's (CMHC) Co-Investment Fund.
- Supported tenants impacted by the Elgin Park Relocation through obtaining temporary relocations and working to mitigate risk.

473 Ontario Street

- Engaged with Habitat for Humanity Northumberland, Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services and the NCHC to develop affordable and innovative housing options at this location.
- Worked with the project partners and legal counsel to explore governance and operations model for implementation.
- Sought funding through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities for pre-construction studies through the Sustainable Affordable Housing Program.
- With internal design team, project partners, and legal counsel explored construction delivery models to ensure project delivery goals are met.

Capacity Support for Non-Profit and Co-operative Housing Providers

- Completion of virtual operational reviews for non-profit and co-operative housing providers in light of COVID-19.
- Began working with HSC to identify opportunities for improvement within operational review processes and templates.
- Provided training to non-profit and co-operative housing providers on asset management, procurement and capital planning best practices.



Community Housing Building Condition Assessments

- Completed BCAs, elevator audits, capital reserve replacement forecasts, energy audits and accessibility audits for all community housing providers, including non-profit and co-operative housing providers and the Northumberland County Housing Corporation.
 - In addition, the above studies were also completed for former federally funded providers based on their expressed interest.
- Continued to provide asset management software to all community housing providers in order to ensure information is current and accurate.
- Sought funding for the completion of studies, including a successful application to CMHC Seed Preservation Funding in the amount of \$57,500.

Northumberland County Housing Corporation (NCHC) Governance

- Completion of independent audit of the NCHC for the 2019 fiscal year, approval of revised corporate by-laws, submitted 2019 NCHC Annual Report, and hosted second Annual General Meeting.
- Engaged HSC to complete strategic planning with the NCHC to support the continued development of the Board in establishing and progressing strategic priorities.
- Initiated review of all NCHC policies, processes and procedures.

Support to the NCHC and implementation of the Purchased Services Agreement

- Continued to develop internal processes to support the full implementation of the purchased services agreement between Northumberland County and the NCHC, including cross-departmental education and training sessions.
- Established new banking account for the NCHC to support expanding acceptable payment methods for tenants.
- Continued planning and reallocation of budget lines and internal allocations to better identify between housing administration and NCHC.
- Planned and responded to the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Increased cleaning and disinfecting; installation of electronic messaging boards in common areas; installation of hand sanitization stations throughout buildings; etc.

Strategic Asset Management for the NCHC

- Working with HSC as a part of the Social Housing Master Plan to complete a strategic asset management plan for the NCHC.
- Completion of building condition assessments, and related studies as above.



- Began work on installing passenger lift at 8 King Street, Colborne, Ontario (work to be completed in 2021) through investment from the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative.
- Supported the implementation of the 2020 Capital Plan, with key projects including:
 - Electrical Service Work (Thermal Scans and resulting repair work as required)
 - Hot water tank replacement
 - Lighting replacement
 - Interior painting
 - HVAC/exhaust systems engineering
- Facility policy and process review to ensure compliance with legislation, adherence to best practices and consideration of risk mitigation.

Thriving & Inclusive Communities

Implementation of Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF) for Community Housing Providers

- Developed and implemented a SSRF program for community housing providers, including non-profit, co-operative, former federal funded providers and the NCHC.
- Monitored spending and targets on a quarterly basis to ensure spending aligned with program criteria focusing on responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, through increased cleaning and disinfecting, tenant supports and programming, and supporting good governance/operational practices.

Social Infrastructure Fund

- Continued implementation of the provincially and federally funded Social Infrastructure Fund (SIF). Continued investments in 2020 included:
 - Housing Support Program providing monthly rent subsidies to low-income households in private rental agreements.
 - Oversaw the completion of home repair projects through Renovate Northumberland, in partnership with Habitat for Humanity Northumberland.

Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI) and Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI)

- Continued implementation of COCHI and OPHI provincial and federal funding in Northumberland County. Investments made in 2020 included:
 - Oversaw home repair projects through Renovate Northumberland, in partnership with Habitat for Humanity Northumberland.
 - Oversaw community housing capital repair projects through COCHI and OPHI and aligned with Building Condition Assessments (BCA) and AssetPlanner software.



- Established application-based program for non-profit and co-operative housing providers for capital repairs.
- Supported homeowners and housing providers with delays in projects as a result of COVID.

Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) Implementation

- Implemented the COHB locally, developing processes/policies for the implementation of the COHB.
- Working with community partners and the homelessness systems to identify households in need of benefit.
- Began long-term planning on COHB implementation moving into 2021 and beyond.

Home Ownership Revolving Fund

- Provide down payment assistance to 4 prospective homeowners through Habitat for Humanity Northumberland using funds in the Home Ownership Revolving Fund.

Expansion of Rent Supplement Programming

- Implemented the Made in Northumberland Rent Supplement Program, supported 4 households in 3 municipalities to obtain rent-geared-to-income (RGI) housing and removed from the centralized waitlist.
- Revised rent supplement agreements, internal processes, and introduced new tenant agreements and mandatory tenant insurance.

Community Engagement/Partnerships

- Continued engagement with community agencies and key stakeholders on housing strategies, coordinated service delivery and seeking opportunities to promote community engagement within the NCHC community housing stock.
- Participated in local, regional and provincial networking tables to address issues relating to housing.
- Continued to network and dialogue with agencies and developers on the need to create additional housing stock in Northumberland.
- Continued public education initiatives of Housing Awareness Day raising awareness of affordable and attainable housing issues within the broader community as aligned with the Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy.



Service Level Standards

- Continue to implement the proposed actions outlined in Northumberland County's Service Level Standard Action Plan.
- Consider options to expand rent supplement programming to gradually increase rent-g geared-to-income units and preserve Strong Communities Rent Supplement Program.

Tenant Engagement

- Continued the delivery of tenant programming during COVID-19, including ongoing partnerships with the Northumberland Community Health Centres and fresh produce delivery to all NCHC tenants.
- Completion of a tenant engagement survey, as a part of the development of the Social Housing Master Plan.

Indigenous engagement

- Finalized and signed a Memorandum of Understanding and Service Agreement with the Nogojiwanong Friendship Centre to support the continued introduction of urban Indigenous programming to Northumberland.
 - Raised awareness of this new service agreement with department staff to facilitate referrals for clients requiring culturally competent services.
 - Supported department staff in data collection in services provided to urban Indigenous people as a part of the implementation.
- Developing a partnership with the Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services for the development of housing, working toward construction readiness.

Leadership in Change

Implementation of Housing Retention Framework

- Continue the implementation of the housing retention model of community housing, including developing tools, training, and policies.
- County Council approved Housing Retention Framework for the ongoing management and administration of community housing in Northumberland.
- Continue to educate and raise awareness within the broader Community and Social Services department and other department and the broader community housing sector.



Ten Year Housing and Homelessness Plan

- Upon receipt of ministerial approval, work is planned with the Community Services Division to develop an implementation plan for the 2019-2029 Housing and Homelessness Plan.
- Began discussions on implementation strategy including focus on data collection and securing support from key community agencies and their Board of Directors.
- Worked toward the completion of the 2019 Housing and Homelessness Plan Annual Report, delayed as a result of COVID-19 program implementation.

Service Manager RGI Directives and NCHC Policy Review

- Initiated the review of all existing RGI directives and the introduction of new directives to ensure alignment with new provincial legislation and provide further clarity to all community housing providers and tenants.
- Initiated the review of all existing NCHC policies and the introduction of new policies to ensure alignment with provincial legislation and provide greater clarity to tenants and NCHC staff as directed by the NCHC Board of Directors.

Implementation of Rent-Geared-to-Income Simplification and the Community Housing Renewal Strategy

- Began implementation of provincial Community Housing Renewal Strategy and RGI Simplification. Changes made in 2020 included:
 - Implementation of the one refusal of housing rule for RGI housing.
 - Introduced a phased approach to support NCHC tenants with fluctuating income in preparation for RGI simplification in July 2021.
 - Continued communications with tenants and non-profit and co-operative housing providers on these changes.
 - Completed analysis on project loss of tenant revenue due to RGI simplification and began budgeting for increased subsidy requirements for all community housing providers.

Review of Housing Services and NCHC File Management and Records Management Processes

- Continued work to become TOMRMS compliant across electronic and hardcopy filing systems throughout the NCHC and Housing Services.
- Initiated the creation and use of an NCHC electronic drive shared across support departments for the NCHC.



- Reorganized location of hardcopy files within Housing Services to support increased access by staff, considering requirements to physical distance as well as implementing a LEAN approach.
- Reviewed of housing file management processes and responsibilities, established fail-safes and ongoing file location monitoring to ensure client privacy is maintained.

Housing Services Workload Realignment

- Realigned workload of Housing Services staff in attempts to achieve better equalization of workload, while allowing for additional capacity to support the implementation of the Affordable Housing Strategy, provide support for new and changing housing programs and more in-depth support to non-profit and co-operative housing providers.

Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

- Housing Services and the broader Community and Social Services office remained open throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, while reducing the necessity for in-person visits by members of the public.
- As a result of the pandemic, Housing Services was required to shift services and adapt to new technologies and processes to continue providing urgent, emergency and ongoing supports to tenants, housing providers and the broader communities. In addition to the department response, Housing Services specific response included:
 - Support in establishing the temporary emergency shelter at Cobourg Collegiate Institute.
 - Ongoing communication with housing providers and the NCHC Board by teleconference and emails on responses to COVID-19.
 - Participation and informing provincial response and considerations in COVID-19 planning, specific to Housing Services.
 - Increased communication with NCHC tenants throughout the pandemic, on measures taken, impacts to rent and service delivery.
 - Led the NCHC COVID-19 response with the Facilities Division, including but not limited to:
 - Increased cleaning and disinfecting of common touch points
 - Installation of electronic messaging boards in common areas
 - Installation of hand sanitization stations throughout building
 - Closure of playgrounds and common rooms to encourage physical distancing
 - Exploring the feasibility of alternate banking methods to support tenants seeking virtual/remote rent payment options.



Business Continuity Planning

- Continued working with the Health and Safety/Emergency Planning department to support focusing on business continuity activities in the event of an emergency.
- Continued planning and developing minimum service standards to ensure ongoing operations during an emergency or unforeseen incident which may impact the ability of continued operations.
- Initiated planning for a second wave of the pandemic and began planning response and putting contingencies in place.

Creation of a File Audit Function

- Developed a file audit function focusing on accountability, training, review of service gaps and identification of service gaps and identification of areas of improvement. The launch of this initiative has been delayed due to COVID-19 but is anticipated to launch late 2020/early 2021.

Professional Development for Frontline Staff

- In 2020, professional development opportunities moved to a virtual environment. Several training opportunities were provided to staff, predominately through the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA) on a range of topics including Hoarding, Difficult Conversations, Time Management, Vicarious Trauma and Mental Health Awareness. In addition, staff were able to complete courses through the Ontario Non Profit Housing Association (ONHPA) on RGI governance principles.

Fostering a LEAN environment

- Through participating in corporate initiatives and opportunities to learn about the LEAN methodology, Housing Services has embraced a “Just Do It” attitude and is working toward continuous improvement throughout the full suite of programs and services.

2021 Service Objectives & Initiatives

Economic Prosperity & Innovation

Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy

- Continue working with the Affordable Housing Strategy Working Group to implement the Affordable Housing Strategy focusing on continued data collection processes and methodologies; development of template tools for use in implementation.



- Create and implement a pilot program to support the Affordable and Rental Housing Policy.
- Continue to work toward implementing the foundational recommendations within the Affordable Housing Strategy.
- Continue working with member municipalities and other sources to develop a land bank of shovel-ready and funding-ready projects.
- Consider landlord engagement and education opportunities to support the creation of additional affordable housing units (both new and through rent supplement) in collaboration with the Community Services Division.
- Work with the Northumberland Affordable Housing Committee to begin implementing the Yes In My Backyard Committee as part of the foundational work required in the implementation of the Strategy.

Sustainable Growth

Social Housing Master Plan/NCHC Strategic Asset Management Plan

- Through this Master Plan, revitalization opportunities to expand the social and affordable rental housing stock throughout Northumberland will be explored alongside the consideration of long-term viability of the portfolio.
- Consider long-term capital investment programs to support the continued viability of community housing providers.
- Implement AssetPlanner for the NCHC portfolio for stronger capital planning and asset management initiatives.

Elgin Park Redevelopment

- Working with Major Capital Project Team and design consulting team, to begin construction in Spring 2021.
- Secure financing for the remaining of funds for the full construction through CMHC's Co-Investment Fund or alternate financing sources.
- Partner with Habitat for Humanity Northumberland in relation to the existing units at Elgin Park, including the repurposing of building materials ahead of demolition.
- Support tenants throughout the construction period, including those requiring rehousing.
- Consider processes and policies for the introduction and management of market rent units alongside expanded waitlist for subsidized housing units.



473 Ontario Street

- Working with Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services, Habitat for Humanity Northumberland and the NCHC continue to put the legal requirements in place to jointly build.
- With project partners and Major Capitals Project Team, select an appropriate construction delivery model and begin work to complete pre-construction requirements.

Capacity Support for Non-Profit and Co-operative Housing Providers

- Complete of operational reviews for non-profit and co-operative housing providers considering COVID-19.
- Continue with HSC to identify opportunities for improvement within operational review processes and templates.
- Work with housing providers to continue exploring opportunities to further viability of each housing provider.
- Continue to build relationships with former federal housing providers and explore opportunities to collaborate.

Community Housing Asset Management

- Based on final recommendations from the Social Housing Master Plan, explore opportunities to support strong asset management practices within the sector.
- Consider opportunities to expand and develop programs and plans for the long-term management of the non-profit and co-operative housing provider budgets, specifically mortgage savings.
- Consider and plan for the year three Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative allocation.

Northumberland County Housing Corporation (NCHC) Governance

- Finalize and adopt NCHC visual identity work, including the creation of a logo, letterhead, presentations, etc.
- Complete policy review of all NCHC policies, processes and procedures and develop service level standards.
- Establish clear decision-making authorities including decisions requiring Board approval and/or internal County department decision making processes.



Support to the NCHC and implementation of the Purchased Services Agreement

- Continue to develop and implement internal processes to support the full implementation of the purchased services agreement between Northumberland County and the NCHC, including cross-departmental education and training sessions.
- Continue planning and reallocation of budget lines and internal allocations to better identify between housing administration and NCHC.
- Continuing business continuity planning, preparing for a future wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Increased cleaning and disinfecting; installation of electronic messaging boards in common areas; installation of hand sanitization stations throughout buildings; etc.
- Consider the adoption and implementation of mandatory tenant insurance.

Strategic Asset Management for the NCHC

- Finalize work with HSC as a part of the Social Housing Master Plan to complete a strategic asset management plan for the NCHC.
- Implement use of AssetPlanner to manage long-term capital planning, monitoring changing building condition and other key projects.
- Complete installation of a passenger lift at 8 King Street, Colborne, Ontario (work to be completed in 2021) through investment from the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative.
- Complete the replacement of 11 balconies at 24 Queen Street, Port Hope, Ontario.
- Continue to implement the 10-year capital plan, recognizing any potential required changes through the Building Condition Assessments.
- Continue completing facility policy and process review to ensure compliance with legislation, adherence to best practices and consideration of risk mitigation.

Housing Reserve Forecast and Planning

- Work with the Finance Department to develop a strategy for the long-term management of the Housing Reserves that includes considerations for the long-term ability to support:
 - Pre-construction financing of affordable housing projects
 - Implementation of the Affordable Housing Strategy
 - Required studies, analyses, and contracted services to support County and Housing Services visions.



Thriving & Inclusive Communities

Social Infrastructure Fund

- Continue implementation of the provincially and federally funded Social Infrastructure Fund (SIF) Housing Allowance and Rent Supplement Programs.
- Begin planning for program wind-down including working with caseworkers and tenants to ensure smooth transition out of assistance.

Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI) and Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI)

- Oversee the completion of 2020/2021 projects and manage delays as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Continue the implementation of COCHI and OPHI provincial and federal funding in Northumberland County. Investments being made in 2021 include:
 - Home repair projects through Renovate Northumberland, in partnership with Habitat for Humanity Northumberland.
 - Community Housing capital repair projects through OPHI and aligned with Building Condition Assessments (BCA) and AssetPlanner software.

Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) Implementation

- Continue implementing the COHB, including working with internal department stakeholders, community partners and the broader homelessness systems to provide input into the prioritization of applicants.

Home Ownership Revolving Fund

- Provide down payment assistance to 4 prospective homeowners through Habitat for Humanity Northumberland using funds in the Home Ownership Revolving Fund.

Expansion of Rent Supplement Programming

- Continue the expansion and implementation the Made in Northumberland Rent Supplement Program, to support households on the centralized waitlist obtain rent-g geared-to-income (RGI) housing.



Community Engagement/Partnerships

- Continue engagement with community agencies and key stakeholders on housing strategies, coordinated service delivery and seeking opportunities to promote community engagement within the NCHC community housing stock.
- Participate in local, regional and provincial networking tables to address issues relating to housing.
- Continue to network and dialogue with agencies and developers on the need to create additional housing stock in Northumberland.
- Continue public education initiatives of Housing Awareness Day raising awareness of affordable and attainable housing issues within the broader community as aligned with the Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy.

Service Level Standards

- Continue to implement the proposed actions outlined in Northumberland County's Service Level Standard Action Plan.
- Consider options to expand rent supplement programming to gradually increase rent-geared-to-income units and preserve Strong Communities Rent Supplement Program.

Tenant Engagement

- Continue the delivery of tenant programming during COVID-19, including ongoing partnerships with the Northumberland Community Health Centres and fresh produce delivery to all NCHC tenants.
- Consider opportunities to expand tenant programming within the NCHC and the broader community housing sector.

Indigenous Engagement

- Implement the MOU and Service Agreement with the Nogojiwanong Friendship Centre, develop referral processes and procedures between the County and the Friendship Centre.
- Consider the provision of Indigenous Cultural Competency Training as required to external community agencies and other County staff.
- Continue to meet with Nogojiwanong Friendship Centre to plan and expand relationship and consideration of funding opportunities to bring expand urban Indigenous programming in Northumberland.
- Continue to work with Department staff to educate and provide awareness of the new relationship and support referrals.



Leadership in Change

Implementation of Housing Retention Framework

- Continue the implementation of the housing retention model of community housing, including the creation of tools, training, and policies.
- Continue to educate and raise awareness within the broader community housing sector, and seek opportunities to provide training and education on practicing and adhering to this framework.

Ten Year Housing and Homelessness Plan

- Upon receipt of ministerial approval, work is planned with the Community Services Division to develop an implementation plan for the 2019-2029 Housing and Homelessness Plan.
- Finalize the development of, and begin actioning, an implementation strategy including focus on data collection and securing support from key community agencies and their Board of Directors.
- Completion of the 2020 Annual Report and submission to County Council and the ministry for approval as legislatively required.

Service Manager RGI Directives and NCHC Policy Review

- Finalize the review of all existing RGI directives and the introduction of new directives to ensure alignment with new provincial legislation and provide further clarity to all community housing providers and tenants.
- Finalize the review of all existing NCHC policies and the introduction of new policies to ensure alignment with provincial legislation and provide greater clarity to tenants and NCHC staff as directed by the NCHC Board of Directors.
- Provide training to community housing providers on new directives and legislation.

Implementation of Rent-Geared-to-Income Simplification and the Community Housing Renewal Strategy

- Implement RGI simplification as required by the province, beginning on July 1, 2021.
- Provide training to County and community housing provider staff on the changes to rent calculation processes.
- Continue collaborating with OMSSA and AMO on providing feedback and advocacy points on the provincial changes to housing strategy and policy.



Review of Housing Services and NCHC File Management and Records Management Processes

- Initiate a file destruction project for all housing files scheduled for destruction.
- Consideration of file location and storage options for expanding caseloads as a result of a growing waitlist, new housing developments, expansion of rent supplement programming and the introduction of market rental housing.
- Continue working towards achieving TOMRMS compliance across all housing and NCHC electronic and hard-copy files.
- Expand use of the NCHC electronic drive, across departments to more effectively manage NCHC business.

Business Continuity Planning

- Continue working with the Health and Safety/Emergency Planning department to support focusing on business continuity activities in the event of an emergency.
- Continue planning and developing minimum service standards to ensure ongoing operations during an emergency or unforeseen incident which may impact the ability of continued operations.
- Continue planning for a second wave of the pandemic and began planning response and putting contingencies in place.

Effective Case Management and Collaboration

- Continue to work toward the long-term goal of recommending minimum standards for case management through both policy and referral reviews. It is further anticipated that recommendations will be provided for training and onboarding of future staff into case management roles.

Implementation of a File Audit Function

- Implementation of a file audit function focusing on accountability, training, review of service gaps and identification of service gaps and identification of areas of improvement. The launch of this initiative has been delayed due to COVID-19 but is anticipated to launch late 2020/early 2021.

Professional Development for Frontline Staff

- Continue building on the department's professional development training series, a focus will continue to be on customer service, the client experience, self-care and Emergency Response as it relates to Social Services.



- Learning and development opportunities will continue to be offered to staff within the department to further enhance skillsets required in providing quality customer service and case management planning.
- Training opportunities will be prioritized that support both Housing Services staff and staff in other departments working toward a successful implementation of the Housing Retention Framework alongside supporting the NCHC Purchased Services Agreement.

Fostering a LEAN environment

- Through participating in corporate initiatives and opportunities to learn about the LEAN methodology, Housing Services will continue working towards implementing a “Just Do It” attitude and is working toward continuous improvement throughout the full suite of programs and services.
- Consideration of opportunities to identify a more comprehensive LEAN project relating to the management of the NCHC Purchased Services Agreement.

Long Term Plan & Strategic Objectives

Economic Prosperity & Innovation

Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy

- Affordable rental stock in Northumberland County is increased. Low income residents can access safe, affordable and adequate housing in their community.
- Collaborate with Member Municipalities to encourage private development of affordable housing, while raising awareness around the scope of planning and the role municipalities play in encouraging the creation of new affordable housing.
- Creation of an Affordable Housing Taskforce bringing together leaders throughout the County to plan for long-term opportunities to create new affordable housing stock that reflects various needs throughout the County.

Sustainable Growth

Social Housing Master Plan

- Northumberland County is well positioned to respond to changing needs arising from the end of operating agreements and rent supplement funding, while maintaining service level standards.
- Community housing in Northumberland County is safe, affordable and adequate to meet the evolving needs of community members.



- Strengthen and build relationships with external housing providers to ensure strong accountability and planning is maintained. Strive towards positive landlord-tenant relationships that are mutually beneficial while moving towards an eviction prevention delivery of community housing.

Northumberland County Housing Corporation Asset Management Plan

- Ensure responsible long-term capital planning of community housing units and buildings operated by the NCHC.
- NCHC's portfolio matches the long-term needs of the County and is growing alongside the changing and expanding need of the community.

Community Housing Growth, Regeneration and Intensification

- The number of Rent Supplement units is increased throughout the County.
- Elgin Park Redevelopment is implemented and reaches full occupancy.
- 473 Ontario Street is developed with project partners and reaches full occupancy
- A landbank is developed to support the ongoing and future development of additional community housing and market rental units across the County.
- Potential community housing projects and 'shovel-ready' 'funding-ready' affordable housing projects are identified, and financing is sourced for the fulfillment of this project.

Northumberland County Housing Corporation Governance

- NCHC is governed by a strategic and skills-based Board of Directors that provides direction in line with the Shareholder Direction and governing documents.
- The Purchased Services Agreement is successfully managed and implemented by County staff.

Housing Reserve Forecast and Planning

- Strategy in place for the long-term management of the Housing Reserves that includes:
 - Pre-construction financing of affordable housing projects
 - Implementation of the Affordable Housing Strategy
 - Ability to completed required studies, analyses, and contracted services to support County and Housing Services visions.
- Reinvestment strategies into the Reserve Account are established and actioned on an ongoing/long-term basis.



Thriving & Inclusive Communities

Indigenous Engagement

- Indigenous people living in Northumberland County have access to safe, culturally competent, and relevant mainstream and indigenous-specific supports.
- Community and Social Services staff and external partner agencies are trained in Indigenous Cultural Competency Training.

Ten Year Housing and Homelessness Plan

- Develop new, and nurture existing, partnerships and relationships to better support the availability of supportive resources to tenants and clients engaged with community housing in the County.
- Through community partnerships, work to meet the changing needs of the community and align with objectives, outcomes and targets of the plan.

Leadership in Change

Implementation of Eviction Prevention Based Community Housing

- Community housing in Northumberland County is administered, delivered and supported using an eviction prevention model ensuring that prospective tenants and current tenants have access to strong case management services and have needed supports to have a successful tenancy.
- When tenants are evicted from the NCHC, they have been provided with adequate case management and support ahead of the eviction, they have been given the option to relate to other homelessness prevention services.

Long term sustainability of Northumberland County Housing Corporation and Housing Services

- Business continuity planning has occurred and both the NCHC and Housing Services are well positioned to respond to changing provincial and federal policy, legislation and funding.
- Policies are developed and reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure housing retention frameworks are implemented. Processes are developed to support the NCHC Purchased Services Agreement by Housing Services and support departments.

2021 Issue Paper

Strong Communities Rent Supplement Program

Purpose

This is a request to continue the long-term strategic management for the ending of the Strong Communities Rent Supplement Program (SCRSP).

It is recommended that Northumberland County continue its commitment to prepare to fund the remaining rent supplement units when the SCRSP program ends in March 31, 2023, to count toward the provincially legislated service level standards (SLS).

Background

The SCRSP was announced in 2000 for an initial three to five year term, in 2004 the program was extended until March 31, 2023. The SCRSP provides Northumberland County with approximately \$247,052 of fixed annual funding (provided that the County is able to commit this funding each fiscal year). It is estimated that \$245,541 will be spent in 2020 of this fixed budget. Without any confirmation or commitment from the provincial government to continue funding past 2023, Northumberland County Council committed to prepare to fund the remaining rent supplement units as part of the 2020 budget.

In 2020, Northumberland County Council committed to the continuation of the SCRSP following the end of provincial funding on March 31, 2023 by beginning to gradually prepare for the funding requirement in 2023 through increasing the County budget by \$83,500 annually (or as programming costs require¹) until 2023 where increases would then cease and the full funding requirement would be met. As part of the 2020 budget \$83,500 was transferred to the housing reserves for the ongoing work of expanding community housing stock across Northumberland County. Based on County Council's decision in 2020, Northumberland County staff have worked to maintain the current 34 households within the allocated budget of approximately \$250,000 annually, and within the program funding structure. It is recommended that this commitment continue in 2021, through the increasing of the County budget by \$83,500 to continue the gradual preparation to continue the SCRSP following the end of the provincial funding on March 31, 2023.

¹ Programming Costs for rent supplement programming can vary based on fluctuation in tenant's income, annual increases to market rent, or changes to rent charged upon vacancy.



Northumberland County also has a legislative requirement to meet established SLS set by the Province. The SLS represent the number of qualified households in receipt of rent-geared-to-income (RGI) or a designated portable housing benefit that the County is required to administer. The SLS were established at the time of social housing download from the Province to municipalities and were intended to reflect the number of units transferred to the County. Northumberland County's SLS are found in *O. Reg. 367/11 Schedule 4*, the specific targets for the County are:

- 677 Households at or below household income limits
- 377 high need households
- 22 modified units

At present, SCRSP rent supplements are not counted toward the SLS as per ministry directive, however, should the County continue funding these units after March 31, 2023, it is anticipated that these units could then be counted toward the SLS.

Should the SCRSP funding not be continued, the loss of these units will have a detrimental impact to the growing need for subsidized housing. Since 2010, the number of households on the centralized waitlist (CWL) has grown by more than 260% and for some households the wait is over 10 years for a subsidized unit. While Northumberland County is encouraging the creation of new rental developments and the expansion of the existing Northumberland County Housing Corporation (NCHC) community housing stock, rent supplement programming should be continued and expanded where possible. Rent Supplements provide the opportunity for Northumberland County to increase the number of households that are able to receive RGI in private market rent settings that can complement the need to increase housing stock.

One of the key housing gaps identified in the Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy was a need for affordable rental housing options for households with low incomes. It is important that Northumberland County take steps to ensure the current stock, while insufficient, of affordable rental housing options is not lost – specifically the role of existing rent supplement programs through various Northumberland County rent supplement programs, including the SCRSP. The current 2020 budget for SCRSP represents an average annual cost of approximately \$7,000 per household. This annual cost is within the general range of current and potential rent supplement units, and in fact is affordable compared to rent supplements agreements made more recently. This is reflective of the rising rental rates in Northumberland County. It is important that these affordable rental rates are maintained through the end of the SCRSP as the cost of maintaining rent supplement units into the future will likely continue to grow based on the current rental market.



Consultation/Options

During the budget and business planning cycle ongoing consultations with the Director of Community and Social Services, Department of Finance and the CAO have occurred. In addition, the broader service manager network continues to be consulted in order to monitor and advocate for the continuation of the SCRSP.

Other options considered as part of the 2020 budget cycle included ending the SCRSP in 2023. Should the decision be made to no longer commit to this funding, Northumberland County staff would be required to develop a strategic plan to begin immediately to prepare tenants, landlords and community agencies for the end of funding. This option would also likely increase the number of individuals on the CWL and may result in an increase to individuals experiencing homelessness if subsidized housing was not available prior to the end of SCRSP funding.

The proposed investment supports the decisions made as part of the 2020 budget, and is well positioned to support Northumberland County's requirements to meet or exceed the legislated SLS. In addition, this proposal supports the continuation of critical affordable housing stock in the private rental market that would otherwise be unaffordable to low income homeowners. The proposed option also supports community agency partners in supporting clients in maintaining secure housing.

Financial Impact

The financial impact of growing rent supplement programming in Northumberland County is substantial. In order to maintain the current 34 units funded through SCRSP after March 31, 2023, the funding required will be approximately \$250,000 annually. Market rent increases can impact the overall budget, both for new tenants and accounting for provincially set annual market rent increases. It is important to note that upon the completion of provincial funding, should these units be maintained through levy funding, 34 units would be added to the SLS. This would be a significant contribution to begin to meet, and in the future, exceed Northumberland County's SLS.

It is recommended that Northumberland County continue its commitment to prepare for the 2023 end to SCRSP through the continued gradual increase to the County budget to offset a significant increase in the 2023 fiscal year, representing an ongoing increase to the budget of \$83,500 annually until 2023 where the increases would then cease and the full funding requirement would be met. It is recommended that the budget increases in fiscal years 2020-2022 be transferred to housing reserves for the creation of additional community housing stock in Northumberland County.



Risk Considerations

It is important that the County continues its commitment to prepare for the likely end of the provincial SCRSP on March 31, 2023. The risk in not continuing to fund the SCRSP is the loss of critical affordable units in the private market that house individuals from the CWL. Without continued funding, the housing security of impacted households may also be jeopardized.

The proposed method of a gradual increase to reach the full funding requirement is intended to mitigate a significant financial requirement between fiscal years 2022 and 2023. It is recommended that the budget is increased by \$83,500 to continue to support this work.

Northumberland County staff have begun to action County Council's commitment in 2020 to continue funding SCRSP after the end of provincial funding by continuing work on an action plan to begin to meet or exceed the SLS as legislated by the province. The continuation of this funding will also provide a consistent and clear message to community agencies, existing tenants and landlords that the program will continue and that the funding is stable.

Impacts to Member Municipalities/Partners

At present, SCRSP units are located in five of seven municipalities. The continuation of SCRSP will support low income residents in these municipalities in continuing to achieve housing security. With the continuation of the program, new landlords will likely also be added that can support residents throughout the County. In addition, the continuation of SCRSP will continue to support additional units that can be used to house applicants on the CWL. The continuation of the SCRSP will also support community agencies to continue to support clients housed under the SCRSP.

Included in 2020 Long Term Plan: YES/NO

Yes – following County Council's decision in 2020 to begin the gradual preparation to take over the funding of the SCRSP at program end in 2023, this funding increase has been included in the long-term plan.

2021 Issue Paper

‘Made in Northumberland’ Rent Supplement Program – Affordable Housing Strategy Units

Purpose

This is a request to expand the ‘Made in Northumberland’ Rent Supplement Program to include units supported through the implementation of the Affordable Housing Strategy (AHS), as signaled in the 2020 budget process.

It is recommended that this local program be guided by the Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy, the proposed targets and interim Affordable and Rental Housing Program Policy.

Background

Northumberland County has a legislative requirement to meet established service level standards (SLS) set by the Province. The SLS represent the number of qualified households in receipt of rent-g geared-to-income (RGI) or a designated portable housing benefit that the County is required to administer. The SLS were established at the time of social housing download from the Province to municipalities and were intended to reflect the number of units transferred to the County. Northumberland County’s SLS are found in *O. Reg. 367/11 Schedule 4*, the specific targets for the County are:

- 677 Households at or below household income limits
- 377 high need households
- 22 modified units

Northumberland County, like many other service managers are unable to meet the SLS with community housing stock alone, and has begun the creation of new SLS eligible units through the creation of a county-funded rent supplement program in 2020. Northumberland County is unable to meet its SLS due to a number of reasons, including inaccurate levels at time of download, vacancies at time of reporting, households in receipt of RGI but who are above the Household Income Limits, and gaps in agreements between service manager and housing providers whose operating agreements/mortgages have ended. It is estimated that in order for Northumberland County to be able to meet its SLS over the next 5-10 years, a minimum of 50



units should be created, although in 2019, the County failed to meet its SLS by 60 units, and as such even more units may need to be created.

In 2020, County Council approved the creation of a 'Made in Northumberland' Rent Supplement Program that incrementally increases rent supplement units in the County on an annual basis, beginning with an allocation of \$16,000 in 2020, with an annual increase tied to the provincially released market rent increases (in 2021 this has been set at 1.5%).

This issue paper recommends that this program be supported through the creation of rent supplement agreements in 50% of all County-supported affordable rental units created under the Affordable and Rental Housing Program Policy and the Municipal Housing Facilities By-law up to a maximum of 50 rental units per year over a rolling average, as was signaled in the 2020 budget process.

Since 2010, the number of households on the centralized waitlist (CWL) has grown by more than 260% and for some households the wait is over 10 years for a subsidized unit. While Northumberland County is encouraging the creation of new rental developments and the expansion of the existing Northumberland County Housing Corporation (NCHC) community housing stock, rent supplement programming should be continued and expanded where possible. Rent Supplement provides the opportunity for Northumberland County to increase the number of households that are able to receive RGI in private market rent settings that can complement the need to increase housing stock, particularly for households already residing in reasonable priced rental units.

One of the key housing gaps identified in the Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy was a need for affordable rental housing options for households with low incomes. According to the Strategy there is a need to create 90 affordable housing units each year, predominately rental options, over the next 10 years. Of these 90 units, 52 units should be affordable to households in the first and second income deciles (in 2018 this represents households earning \$37,250 or less, meaning that rent charged would need to be approximately \$930 or less). In order to create these units, it is likely that rent supplements or other forms of subsidies will be required to ensure that units created are affordable to this demographic, in particular for households in the first income decile.

County provided support to housing developers through the provision of Tax Increment Equivalent Grants (TIEGS) as a part of the Affordable and Rental Housing Program and Municipal Housing Facilities By-law provide Northumberland County with the right to enter into rent supplement agreements within all supported affordable units in new rental developments that receive County support through TIEGs or other incentives.

It is recommended that Northumberland County aim to establish rent supplement agreements in 50% of all affordable rental housing units, beginning in 2021, supported through the



Affordable and Rental Housing Policy and Municipal Housing Facilities By-law. As private market rental units continue to increase in price, this will support Northumberland County in securing reasonably priced rent supplement units, while also allowing affordable market rents to be available to households who are able to afford these units without subsidy and/or do not qualify for rent-geared-to-income (RGI). Currently a rent supplement unit can cost between \$6,000 and \$10,000 annually, depending on the market rent amount and the household's income. The higher cost of market rent has also increased the cost of a rent supplement, with most recent units nearing \$10,000 annually. Units supported through the Affordable and Rental Housing Program will be required to adhere to a rent ceiling as agreed to in the Municipal Housing Facilities Agreement between the proponent and the County. This ceiling will allow for some stability in rent supplement levels required for these units over the next several years.

Over 2019 and 2020, two organizations have sought County investments through TIEGs in rental housing development proposals for a total of 28 affordable rental units. Construction on both of these projects is slated to begin in 2020, and occupancy is expected to occur in late 2021/early 2022 for 14 of these units, with the remaining 14 units anticipated to be occupied in 2022. As a result, it is recommended that 7 rent supplement units (50% of affordable housing units supported by the County) be created in 2020 for an approximate budget of \$31,250 dependent on tenant's income and affordable market rents at time of occupancy. It is anticipated that this investment will support the 2021 portion of the rent supplement commitment required for 50% of these units. Upon entering into a Municipal Capital Facilities agreement with the proponents, staff will seek Council's approval to add to the base levy for the full annual commitment required.

Consultation/Options

During the budget and business planning cycle ongoing consultations with the Director of Community and Social Services, Department of Finance and the CAO have occurred. In addition, the broader service manager network continues to be consulted in order to understand best practices.

Other options considered included not expanding the rent supplement program in Northumberland County. This option would result in the lost opportunity of partnering with housing developers seeking County funded support through the Affordable and Rental Housing Program. In addition, this option would not provide a supportive option to meeting SLS or affordable housing targets as per the Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy.

The proposed option of expanding the 'Made in Northumberland' Rent Supplement program is well positioned to support Northumberland County's requirements to meet or exceed the legislated SLS. In addition, this proposal supports the Northumberland County Affordable



Housing Strategy goal of creating new affordable rental housing stock that is affordable to households in the first- and second-income deciles.

Financial Impact

The financial impact of growing rent supplement programming in Northumberland County is substantial. In order to expand the 'Made in Northumberland' Rent Supplement Program as signaled in the 2020 budget process, the impact to the 2021 budget is approximately \$31,250 to secure approximately 7 new rent supplement units. It is recommended that the 'Made in Northumberland' Rent Supplement Program budget be increased annually to reflect the market rent increase guideline established by the provincial government.

It is anticipated that this investment will support the 2021 portion of the rent supplement commitment required for 50% of these units. Upon entering into a Municipal Capital Facilities agreement with the proponents, staff will seek Council's approval to add to the base levy for the full annual commitment required.

Through the County's Affordable and Rental Housing Program Policy, Northumberland County has committed to supporting up to the full target of affordable housing units as per the Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy through the provision of Tax Incremental Equivalent Grants. This commitment means that over a rolling average of 10 years up to a maximum of 90 affordable rental units per year. As a result, up to 50 rental units per year over a rolling average can be considered for rent supplement agreements.

Risk Considerations

Risk has been considered throughout the proposed expansion of the 'Made in Northumberland' Rent Supplement Program. The risk associated with not expanding rent supplement programming in Northumberland is that Northumberland County will continue to be challenged in meeting its legislated SLS.

In addition, consideration was given to establishing a precedent for future investments in rent supplement agreements for projects that receive County support through the Affordable and Rental Housing Program and Municipal Housing Facilities By-law.

With a commitment to creating a 'Made in Northumberland' Rent Supplement Program, Northumberland County will signal its support of the Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy and will be able to better serve households on the centralized waitlist for community housing. The signal to creating additional rent supplement units under the Affordable and Rental Housing Program will support County staff in articulating the potential



investment that may be available to current and/or future proponents seeking County support in the development of affordable housing.

Impacts to Member Municipalities/Partners

At present, rent supplement units are located in five of seven municipalities. The proposed expansion is focused on affordable housing units created by the non-profit and private sector. The two projects considered for this funding are located in the Town of Cobourg. It is likely, that as other municipalities consider options for implementation and support of the Affordable Housing Strategy, that projects will continue to be considered and developed in other municipalities in the County.

Included in 2020 Long Term Plan: YES/NO

Yes – this expansion of the Made in Northumberland Rent Supplement Program was considered in the long-term budget.

2021 Issue Paper

Continuation of ‘Made in Northumberland’ Rent Supplement Program

Purpose

This is a request to continue the incremental expansion of the County-funded ‘Made in Northumberland’ rent supplement program as committed in the 2020 budget.

It is recommended that the program continue to be guided by the Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy, the proposed targets and Affordable and Rental Housing Program Policy.

Background

Northumberland County has a legislative requirement to meet established service level standards (SLS) set by the Province. The SLS represent the number of qualified households in receipt of rent-geared-to-income (RGI) or a designated portable housing benefit that the County is required to administer. The SLS were established at the time of social housing download from the Province to municipalities and were intended to reflect the number of units transferred to the County. Northumberland County’s SLS are found in *O. Reg. 367/11 Schedule 4*, the specific targets for the County are:

- 677 Households at or below household income limits
- 377 high need households
- 22 modified units

Northumberland County, like many other service managers are unable to meet the SLS with community housing stock alone, and has begun the creation of new SLS eligible units through the creation of a county-funded rent supplement program in 2020.

In 2020, County Council approved the creation of a ‘Made in Northumberland’ Rent Supplement Program that incrementally increases rent supplement units in the County on an annual basis, beginning with an allocation of \$16,000 in 2020, with an annual increase tied to the provincially released market rent increases (in 2021 this has been set at 1.5%). It was initially anticipated that this allocation would allow for the funding of 2 rent supplement units in 2020. Despite a delayed implementation as a result of COVID-19, the 2020 allocation has



been able to support 4 households receive rent-geared-to-income and as a result have been removed from the centralized waitlist.

As contemplated in the 2020 budget process, an incremental increase to the Made in Northumberland Rent Supplement program of \$16,000 will support an average of an additional 2 households per year of rent supplement units. As a result, Northumberland County will be able to support households in existing non-profit housing providers, affordable housing providers and other reasonably priced private market landlords, on the waitlist for subsidized housing. These units may also be able to support the County's SLS for modified units through the creation of rent supplement agreements in modified units in existing affordable housing developments. It is recommended that County Council continue the incremental increase of the Made in Northumberland Rent Supplement program by an additional \$16,000 in 2021, and continuing the work to try to meet the SLS.

Since 2010, the number of households on the centralized waitlist (CWL) has grown by more than 260% and for some households the wait is over 10 years for a subsidized unit. While Northumberland County is encouraging the creation of new rental developments and the expansion of the existing Northumberland County Housing Corporation (NCHC) community housing stock, rent supplement programming should be continued and expanded where possible. Rent Supplement provides the opportunity for Northumberland County to increase the number of households that are able to receive RGI in private market rent settings that can complement the need to increase housing stock, particularly for households already residing in reasonable priced rental units.

One of the key housing gaps identified in the Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy was a need for affordable rental housing options for households with low incomes. According to the Strategy there is a need to create 90 affordable housing units each year, predominately rental options, over the next 10 years. Of these 90 units, 52 units should be affordable to households in the first and second income deciles (in 2018 this represents households earning \$37,250 or less, meaning that rent charged would need to be approximately \$930 or less). In order to create these units, it is likely that rent supplements or other forms of subsidies will be required to ensure that units created are affordable to this demographic, in particular for households in the first income decile.

Consultation/Options

During the budget and business planning cycle ongoing consultations with the Director of Community and Social Services, Department of Finance and the CAO have occurred. In addition, the broader service manager network continues to be consulted in order to understand best practices.



Other options considered included not expanding rent supplement program in Northumberland County. This option would not provide an incremental supportive option to meeting SLS or affordable housing targets as per the Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy.

The proposed option of continuing to incrementally increase the 'Made in Northumberland' Rent Supplement program is well positioned to support Northumberland County's requirements to meet or exceed the legislated SLS. In addition, this proposal supports the Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy goal of creating new affordable rental housing stock that is affordable to households in the first and second income deciles.

Financial Impact

The financial impact of growing rent supplement programming in Northumberland County is substantial. In order to continue the implementation of the 'Made in Northumberland' Rent Supplement Program as considered in the 2020 budget process, the impact to the 2021 budget is \$16,000, in addition to the provincially mandated market rent increase (in 2021 this rate has been set at 1.5%). With this investment, Northumberland County can secure at least 2 additional units of affordable housing for households on the centralized waitlist, and begin to immediately count these units toward the SLS. The 1.5% increase required for the existing \$16,000 commitment represents a potential increase for the existing program units of \$240.

It is also recommended that the number of rent supplement units in this program continue to be incrementally increased by approximately 2 units (\$16,000) annually dependent on future years budgetary approvals.

It is recommended that the 'Made in Northumberland' Rent Supplement Program budget be increased annually to reflect the market rent increase guideline established by the provincial government. It is further recommended that all year-end surpluses in rent supplement programming be transferred to the Non-Profit and Service Level Standard Reserve Account.

Risk Considerations

Risk has been considered throughout the development of the proposed 'Made in Northumberland' Rent Supplement Program. The risk associated with not expanding rent supplement programming in Northumberland is that Northumberland County will continue to be challenged in meeting its legislated SLS.

With a commitment to continue an incremental increase to the 'Made in Northumberland' Rent Supplement Program, Northumberland County will signal its support of the Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy and will be able to better serve households on the



centralized waitlist for community housing, while also slowly building capacity to begin meeting and/or exceeding the SLS.

Impacts to Member Municipalities/Partners

At present, rent supplement units are located in five of seven municipalities. The creation of the 'Made in Northumberland' Rent Supplement Program will support low income residents throughout the County. The four program units created in 2020, are located in three member municipalities.

Included in 2020 Long Term Plan: YES/NO

Yes – following County Council's decision in 2020 to begin the incremental increase of the Made in Northumberland Rent Supplement program, this was worked into the long-term budget.



2021 Business Plan & Budget

Ontario Works & Customer Service Unit

Prior Year Accomplishments

Thriving & Inclusive Communities

In 2019, the former Ministry of Training, Colleges & Universities (MTCU now under the direction of the Ministry of Labour, Training & Skills development) and the Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services (MCCSS) announced the transformation of Employment Services across the province that was to commence in October 2020 with three prototype regions. Northumberland County is part of a prototype region that includes the City and County of Peterborough, the City of Kawartha Lakes, the County of Haliburton and the District of Muskoka. In February 2020, it was announced that the Service System Manager selected for the Muskoka-Kawarthas region would be Fleming College. Due to the COVID19 Pandemic, the full transition of Employment Services has been delayed to January 1, 2021.

In addition to the changes to the delivery of employment services in Northumberland, the Ontario Works division has been an active participant in various committees and sub-groups with the Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services, as it relates to modernization and the transition to life stabilization. While formal launch of the Service System Manager has been delayed to 2021, planning continues to be underway in 2020 on the new framework and expectations of Ontario Works delivery agents, once the transition occurs.

Due to the global pandemic, and the economic shut-down that followed, many Employment Ontario and other training sites moved their programming to online or virtual settings. In addition, limited employment opportunities have resulted in reduced options for clients to move forward. Throughout 2020, the Ontario Works team has been working closely with clients to ensure their needs are being met, but also connecting them to online resources to assist them in their journey to reach their goals. It is anticipated that there will be an increase to the Ontario Works caseload commencing in September/October 2020 as the federal employment benefits come to an end. The role of the division will be to continue to connect recipients to the resources within their home community, as well as further federal and provincial labour initiatives.

Community & Social Services continues to operate the Service Locations located in Port Hope, Brighton, Colborne and Campbellford in order to meet with clients in their home community. The Community Service Hubs are also used by many non-profit agencies and service providers



at no cost to the agency in order to further serve our communities. While the pandemic has restricted our ability to meet off-site, these locations continue to provide opportunities to engage with our local communities and partners. Tracking on non-profit membership and usage for 2019 and 2020 has been completed by the Customer Service Unit.

Despite the pandemic, the Ontario Works division moved forward with initiatives outlined in the Social Assistance Modernization Strategy Roadmap. Late in 2019, Northumberland County joined with the provincial launch of the MyBenefits online service for clients. This web-based portal allows clients to view information relating to their file and submit changes to their caseworker, without the need to attend the office. In the first half of 2020, approximately 25% of the Ontario Works caseload has registered for this service.

In June 2020, the Ontario Works division, with the support of the Customer Service Unit, launched Reloadable Payment Cards, an alternate method of payment to cheques. In the first two weeks of this launch, 12% of current cheque recipients were registered for a Reloadable Payment Card.

Through a collaborative funding opportunity with the Early Years and Homelessness Programs, the Trusteeship program continued through Rebound Child & Youth Services. The program continues to provide financial support and coaching for individuals and families served through the Social Services department who have identified struggles with budgeting and specifically the youth under the age of 18 years (as mandated under the *Ontario Works Act*). The Trustee representative from Rebound Child & Youth Services is a member of the Homelessness Co-Ordinated Response Team (HCRT).

In an effort to assist all members of Northumberland County to obtain the resources that may be available to them through the various federal programs, funding was provided through Ontario Works Employment Programming to the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program delivered by the Help Centre of Northumberland. In 2019, the program assisted in the completion of 2,310 income tax returns, returning approximately \$5.48 million to residents of Northumberland County. As of the end of June 2020, 876 tax returns have been completed, returning approximately \$2.03 million to residents of Northumberland County.

The Customer Service Unit continues to provide the administrative infrastructure to ensure that all Community & Social Services programs can provide services, while continuing to grow and improve the delivery of mandatory and discretionary services. The team continues to be the first point of contact with the public, whether by phone, in-person at reception, by text or email.

In 2020, the Customer Service Unit has been tracking the work completed in each division to ensure each program is allocated an appropriate level of support to achieve departmental goals.



Leadership in Change

As a division that serves the residents of Northumberland County in both ongoing financial assistance and in events of emergency situations, it is important that planning focusses on business continuity in the event of emergency circumstances. Continuity planning has begun with the Health & Safety/Emergency Planning department. The Global Pandemic has tested our planning and demonstrated the gaps that needed to be filled. While not finalized in 2020, Business Continuity planning is well underway.

As a result of the pandemic, the main Community & Social Services office remained open while reducing the necessity for in-person visits by members of the public. Community & Social Services was required to shift services and adapt to new technologies to continue to provide urgent, emergency and ongoing supports to the community. This included:

- Collaboration with the Information Technology team to deploy Virtual Desktop Infrastructure and update to Windows 10 in order to support tele-commuting for staff, while reducing service delays for the public;
- Development of Standard Operating Procedures for the use of the interview rooms and lobby by staff and visitors to the department;
- Collaboration with Facilities, Health & Safety and Corporate Services on the installation and implementation of a video/intercom system for the main building doors
- Shifting caseworkers to telephone interviews and follow-up;
- Implementation of acceptance of digital documents, including documents sent by email or text to staff to reduce in-person visits to the office; and
- Increased awareness of physical distancing and emphasis on cleaning common touchpoints throughout the office

In 2020, planning began on an Audit function within the Ontario Works program, focusing on accountability, training, review of service gaps and identification of areas of improvement. The launch of this initiative in April 2020 was delayed due to the pandemic, it is anticipated that it will be launched in September 2020.

Learning and Development opportunities in 2020 have moved to the virtual environment. All staff have access to webinars offered through the Ontario Municipal Social Service Association (OMSSA) on a range of topics, including Time Management, Vicarious Trauma, and Mental Health awareness. We continue to review opportunities for staff to participate in various learning and development opportunities.

The Ontario Works division collaborated with other department resources to build and maintain appropriate data sources that will support future programming. While still in its infancy, we continue to share information and learn of new methods of tracking data that is



relevant to the department and the community that we serve, to continue to inform evidence-based planning. In 2020, the Community & Social Services department, with the assistance of the Customer Service Unit, launched a monthly report that is posted to the department website of key metrics for the department.

2021 Service Objectives & Initiatives

Thriving & Inclusive Communities

In 2021, the full transition of Employment Services will be completed for the prototype sites, and a new model of service delivery will be introduced to Ontario Works. It is expected that a Common Assessment tool will be available to Ontario Works delivery partners to complete with all recipients in order to determine the appropriateness of a referral to the Employment service providers. Recipients who are not ready to work with a provider, or who are completing basic education/upgrading, will continue to work with an Ontario Works caseworker, developing an Action Plan with identified goals and objectives. Financial supports will continue to be available to recipients to achieve their goals. Over the next year, the Ontario Works team will be testing various methods of service delivery and reporting back to the Ministry to further refine the future of service delivery for Social Assistance Recipients.

As the focus for Ontario Works shifts from an employment lens to life stabilization, our targets and metrics will also be shifting. At the time of preparation of this Business Plan, further details on targets and metrics under a life-stabilization framework are not available.

With the shift from employment to life stabilization in the prototype regions, participation in academic upgrading and the Learning, Earning & Parenting (LEAP) will remain with Ontario Works. Planning has commenced in 2020 on developing a virtual parenting program in collaboration with the Early Years team and Early Years Centre. It is anticipated that this program will be formally launched and refined in 2021 and will be open to LEAP participants and other interested Ontario Works participants.

In Northumberland, planning for the implementation of Electronic Document Management (EDM) for active Ontario Works files is currently underway, with an anticipated launch in 2021. Electronic Document Management allows for the imaging and electronic storage and retrieval of required Social Assistance recipient documentation. This will improve the user experience for both staff and the people we serve, promote administrative efficiencies and process optimization through digitization of paper into digital records accessible through the Social Assistance Management System (SAMS). This project will align with Lean management principles. The Customer Service Unit will be integral to the successful launch of this process.



As these changes are occurring, front-line Ontario Works staff will be part of the discussion and will help shape the implementation and roll-out to the people that are to be served.

Leadership in Change

Learning and development opportunities will continue to be offered to staff within the department to further enhance the skill set in providing quality customer service and case management planning. With anticipated changes to program delivery and potential legislative changes, there will be a focus on providing staff with opportunities to learn and understand what the new role will be. Continuing with previous Professional Development plans for the department, a focus will continue to be on customer service, the client experience, self-care and emergency response as it relates to Social Services. Both in-person and virtual learning will be considered in 2021. The Customer Service Unit will continue to provide support in scheduling and managing attendance for future training initiatives.

In addition to sector specific training, Corporate training initiatives for staff, including Lean management, will continue to be promoted and supported.

Business Continuity planning for the Ontario Works division, alongside the Community & Social Services department as a whole, will continue in 2021. This planning will include a review of the divisional level response to COVID19, as well as a detailed review of minimum service standards in the event of an emergency. Current plans will be updated to address solutions that were implemented in 2020, and to provide awareness for staff of the requirements during an emergency.

The local Ontario Works file audit process, while delayed in 2020, will continue to be refined in 2021. It is anticipated that the Audit review will be completed monthly and include 1% of the Ontario Works ongoing caseload, selected using the Integrated Case Report provided through the Social Assistance Management System (SAMS) on a monthly basis. The Audit will be separate from the Ministry-mandated Eligibility Verification Process (EVP) that is currently conducted by the Ontario Works Caseworkers.

The Ontario Works division will continue to work collaboratively with other department resources to build and maintain appropriate data sources that will support future programming and operational needs. This will include determining metrics and streamlining collection methods to provide demographic information that will inform evidence-based planning.

In 2021, the Customer Service Unit will continue to modernize and improve customer service through improvements to the main points of contact for those requiring service. This will include reviewing options to improve both online supports and telephone services. Further to



these activities, considerations to the set-up of the reception area to maximize space and workflow while considering health and safety elements will be taken into consideration

Long Term Plan & Strategic Objectives

Thriving & Inclusive Communities

Through collaboration with other divisions within the department and the greater community, a continued focus on supporting improved outcomes for clients through life stabilization:

- Following up with all changes through the Employment Services Transformation, and other activities relating to the delivery of Ontario Works;
- Following up with all changes through the Social Assistance Services Modernization Strategy;
- Enhancing and expanding services throughout the community, specifically through use of Community Service Locations;
- Building partnerships and utilization of Early ON Centres and resources;
- Reviewing opportunities surrounding the continued operation of the trusteeship program joint with Early Years and Housing & Homelessness Services;
- Building greater connections for clients who are experiencing homelessness to community programs; and
- Modernizing the Social Services facilities and service locations to be more inviting and client-centred, including safety, technology and infrastructure improvements.

Leadership in Change

The continued viability of the Ontario Works program is dependent on Ministry plans and objectives. Locally, continued monitoring and planning to ensure quality customer service and realization of full provincial funding is completed.

In addition, the Ontario Works division & Customer Service Unit will continue to:

- Build internal capacity through learning and sharing opportunities across the division and department;
- Review and discuss client-centred case management model in a collaborative environment; and

Find efficiencies utilizing Lean approaches to examine internal processes in order to meet targets and outcomes.

2021 Issue Paper

Ontario Works Reserve Draw for Electronic Document Management

Purpose

This is a request to draw from the Ontario Works Reserves, in the amount up to \$75,000 in 2021 to support the launch of Electronic Document Management (EDM) for the Ontario Works division of the Community and Social Services department. This would be a one-time draw on reserves for 2021 only, with ongoing maintenance costs of approximately \$2,000 annually, being built into the existing budget for Ontario Works beginning in 2022.

Background

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services Modernization Strategy has identified opportunities for the Ontario Works delivery sites to move to a paperless file management system. The Electronic Document Management strategy has been launched with the provincial programs and has now been extended to interested municipalities. Individual Municipal Delivery Agents are responsible for the initial start-up costs, as well as developing the appropriate Request for Proposal. Municipal Service Delivery Agents will also be responsible for the ongoing maintenance costs, through their Administration budget (at a 50% cost share with the province). The Ministry holds the license and maintains the data storage system, including the information and privacy security and back-up required for the database.

The successful proponent would not be establishing their own database but would be connected with the Ministry Document storage system (OPSDocs). Start-up costs include:

- Establishing a provider to digitize currently active records (no archived files);
- Costs associated with digitization; and
- Establishing a digitization schedule that includes pick-up and physical storage of paper records

Consultation/Options

During the budget and business planning cycle ongoing consultations with the Director of Community and Social Services, the Finance Team, and the CAO have occurred.



In addition, the Director of Information Technology was consulted on the long-term plan for the Corporation on digitization of records. The Purchasing and Risk Management Services Manager was consulted for direction on the RFP process.

The EDM project will align with existing corporate Lean Management framework.

Financial Impact

All start-up costs associated with this proposal will be drawn from the Ontario Works Reserves. Ongoing maintenance and expenses would be budgeted annually under the Ontario Works Administration budget, with a 50% cost share with the Province.

Long-term, there will be further cost-savings related to the annual destruction of records at the end of the retention period. In addition, staff resource time spent on records management and maintenance will be achieved and refocused on higher-impact department activities.

While the intention is to launch this initiative in 2021, should there be a delay, it is requested that this amount from reserves continue to be dedicated to the future digitization project associated with Ontario Works client records.

Risk Considerations

While the province is not mandating digitization and paperless strategies amongst the municipal delivery partners, they have signaled that there will be changes to the Administration budget allocation provided at the municipal level. There is a risk that there will be reductions to the Administration budget allocation, the impact of which could be minimized by reducing reliance on paper and physical files. Currently, the Ontario Works division spends approximately \$3,000 per year on file folders alone to maintain records in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and in accordance with records required for eligibility determinations under the Ontario Works Program. In addition, without a provincially supported database, we continue to be reliant on paper and the associated reproduction costs to maintain records.

Maintaining physical files for the Ontario Works program has also proved to be onerous. Currently, there are two file rooms containing approximately 10,000 physical files. Annually, a portion of the files are destroyed or decommissioned under the retention standards established under MFIPPA/FIPPA and TOMRMS. In 2020, the Ontario Works division was able to destroy/decommission 1,116 files, at a cost of \$370.79 for shredding, plus staff time to retrieve and review (approximately 25 hours of management time to review the files and 10 hours of staff time for retrieval and destruction). The risk of lost or misplaced physical files is both a reality and a challenge. In addition, duplication of records is also common. While the



digitization plan for Northumberland County will not include archived files, moving to a digital system in 2021 will reduce the number of files that will need to be maintained over time. In addition, the digital platform will have a destruction schedule embedded that will not result in added costs for the physical destruction at the end of the retention period.

Impacts to Member Municipalities/Partners

There is no direct impact on member municipalities or partners.

Included in 2020 Long Term Plan: YES/NO

Yes. This item was identified in the 2020 Ontario Works Business Plan as an area to investigate. It also aligns with the Provincial modernization strategy.