
2021 Department Overview

Community & Social Services

Service Description

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

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

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

Helping People – Building Connections – Strengthening Communities

Mandatory Programs

Community Services Team

Community Services is the systems manager, responsible for Provincial and Municipal Homelessness initiatives that support reducing homelessness and the risk of homelessness. By collaborating with community partners, Community Services leads the design of programs that improve access to adequate and suitable housing, targeting services for groups within the community who are at most risk (e.g. Victims of domestic violence, veterans, people with mental illness, people with disabilities, indigenous populations and others). The Community Services Team manage the By Name list, which is the real-time list of all people experiencing homelessness in our community. It includes a robust set of data points that support coordinated access and prioritization at a household level and an understanding of homeless inflow and outflow at a system level. The Team also manages the Homelessness Coordinated Response Committee, which involves a range of partners and is a consent-based collaborative case conferencing model for people experiencing homelessness. This work also involves leading



the collection and analysis of homelessness related data including the requirement to undertake homelessness enumeration and publishing the results.

Community services is also responsible for the development and implementation of the mandated Community Safety and Well-Being plan for Northumberland. As of January 1, 2019, the Province legislated municipalities under the Police Services Act to develop and adopt Community Safety and Wellbeing (CSWB) Plans and provided a framework that supports the mandatory legislative requirements. This framework outlines the tasks, roles and timelines that are required for the Region to take in order to be following the new legislation. The plan requires that we identify priority areas to address community needs and existing programs and services that support community safety. Community Services will also lead the community engagement to identify assets, gaps and risks across the County and coordinate the action planning to address priority areas

Early Years Services

As the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager, Early Years Services is the childcare service system manager responsible for planning and managing licensed childcare services in Northumberland County. Childcare services are managed by the department through a local service planning process that reflects current childcare legislation, regulations and policies/directives, as well as engagement with local licensees.

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

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

Housing Services

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

Housing Services is specifically responsible for the administration of Community Housing programs and non-mandated affordable housing programs in the County to ensure housing providers and other housing system stakeholders are meeting obligations in compliance with Social Housing legislation, County policies, municipal standards and various operating



agreements. Housing Services is also responsible for systems-based planning for housing initiatives throughout the County and leads strategic initiatives relating to housing stock, affordability, viability and housing security. In addition, Housing Services is responsible for the oversight of the Purchased Services Agreement with the Northumberland County Housing Corporation (NCHC). Housing Services works to implement the strategic vision of the NCHC Board of Directors while implementing housing retention models of community housing.

Ontario Works Services

The Ontario Works Program is committed to providing an innovative program that reflects the overall vision of quality social assistance services that respect people's dignity, self-esteem and self-reliance, while fostering independence, community contribution and participation. We promote the development of a wrap-around supports model that focusses on life stabilization for people who would not immediately benefit from employment and training services. The supports will help address barriers to employment through various services and community referrals that will encourage individuals to gain self-sufficiency by addressing urgent needs, such as health, legal, social supports, family support and human services.

Customer Services Unit

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

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

Discretionary Support

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



Discretionary Programs

Community Services

Community Outreach Program

This program is designed to assist low income earners and residents on fixed incomes with services and supports and identifies the social support needs of residents (i.e. health, transport, recreation, and housing) and connects people with the appropriate County, community and other government service systems. Community services also builds community capacity to develop models and systems that enhance and sustain support to residents in the community. This work includes training and support, building and developing new partnerships, networking and community development activities. The Community Services Division promotes community engagement and including the voices of people with lived and living experience of using services

Food Security Services

Food 4 All

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

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

Partnerships

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

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



Environmental Scan

Population & Demographics

Economic Context and Income

Profile

- According to the 2016 census, Northumberland County has a population of about 85,500, and there are approximately 35,000 households. It is projected that the number of households will continue to grow by 28.4% by 2041.
- The County has an older age profile than Ontario, with fewer residents aged 25 to 44 years and a higher percentage of residents over the age of 65. In fact, 26% of the county population is aged 65 and older. The growth of senior households has grown significantly faster than the overall household growth in Northumberland, 37.5% compared to 13.1% between 2006 and 2016
- Northumberland County has a larger proportion of smaller households compared to Ontario (68% compared to 58.7%) and smaller households are increasing while larger households are decreasing.
- Couples without children or persons living alone made up 62.6% of Northumberland census households. These households are increasing, while households consisting of couples with children decreased between 2006 and 2016 by 9.5%.
- There has been a decline in Northumberland County's younger population between 2006 and 2016, with the youth population (24 years and younger) decreasing by 11.8% and adults between 25 and 44 years of age decreasing by 11.7%.
- About 33 percent of census households include children; 37 percent are couples without children at home; and 25 percent are singles or other "non-family" households. This is relatively more singles and couples without children than for Ontario, and most growth is in these categories.
- Population forecasts from provincial sources (consistent with the County's Growth Management Strategy) project future households over the decade 2011-2021 will be approximately 4,000 net additional households, an average of 400 per year.
- The total number of children and youth (age 0-19) in the Northumberland population is forecasted to increase 0.1% from 15,683 in 2019 to 15,704 in 2020.
- Local food banks assist an average of 2100 unique individuals on a monthly basis, approximately one third of these individuals are under the age of 18.
- School nutrition programs provide more than 85,000 meals and snacks to approximately 6000 students per month.



Housing Stock and Supply

- Most dwellings in Northumberland County are single detached, 79.4% compared to 54.3% in the province, it is anticipated that this focus will remain based on building permits issued between 2013 and 2018.
- Rented dwellings make up a much smaller share in Northumberland County compared to Ontario (18.9% compared to 30.2%), however the proportion of renter households are increasing.
- Northumberland County's vacancy rate in 2019 was approximately 1.2% and has remained below 3% since 2010.
- Most rented dwellings have been in the secondary rental market.
- 19 percent of housing stock dates from 1920 or earlier, compared to 8 percent for Ontario.
- 7 percent of homes are rated as needing major repair (12 percent for rental). This is slightly higher than the Ontario figures and associated with the older age of dwellings.

Affordability

- More than a fifth of households in Northumberland County were facing housing affordability issues in 2015. With 22.2% spending 30% or more on housing costs, while 8.7% spend 50% or more on housing costs, and low-income households were more likely to facing housing affordability issues (55.7% spending 30% or more and 27.2% spending 50% or more).
- Some household types are more likely to be facing housing affordability issues including renters, youth, persons living alone, lone parent households, people with a cognitive disability.
- 11.9% households in Northumberland County are in core housing need, slightly below the Ontario average; however, there is a greater share of households falling below the affordability standard compared to Ontario.
- Based on the provincial definition of affordable housing, the affordable rental threshold is \$1,019 and the affordable ownership threshold is \$316,190.
- Based on the average rental costs of available units in Northumberland County, the current rental market is unaffordable for all low-income households, most moderate-income households and in some cases for high-income households.
- Average household incomes in Northumberland County are not keeping up with the increase in house prices. Between 2005 and 2015, house prices have increased by 45.9% compared to 29.1% increase to average household incomes. The average house price in 2018 in Northumberland County was \$451,720, well above what the average household income can afford.



- Wait times for social housing are up to 10 years, with the highest demand for one-bedroom units. The centralized waiting list has more than doubled in the last 10 years.
- The average market rent in Northumberland is more expensive than neighbouring communities, including the City of Peterborough, the City of Kawartha Lakes and Hastings County.

Homelessness

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

Early Years Supports

- Based on the results of the 2016 Canadian Census, there are estimated to be 4820 children between the ages of 0 and 6 in Northumberland County. Statistics Canada reports that 43% of parents in Ontario use daycare centres, which equates to approximately 2072 children that may use childcare in Northumberland County (“Child Care in Canada” report). Of those who use childcare in Ontario, 36% enroll their children in centre based care, 19% use home childcare, and 32% use private childcare. The remainder use preschool or other arrangements.
- Currently, there are 583 licensed spaces in Northumberland County for children 0-6 years old (i.e., infant, toddler, and preschool care, including profit and non-profit centres). As of February 2020, there were approximately 373 Children on licensed childcare centre waitlists in Northumberland County. Most of the children on the waitlist needed childcare as soon as possible. Many families are already on waitlists for care in 2021. Thirty-nine percent of children on waitlists were infants, 33% toddlers, 21% preschoolers, and 7% school-age.
- On average, families pay \$35-42/ day for full day centre childcare and \$39-42/day for home childcare (depending on age). Centre fees are below provincial averages, and home fees are like provincial averages.



- In 2019, there were, on average, 318 Children receiving fee subsidy each month. Most (42%) of children receiving fee subsidy are school age (older than 5.8 years old), although a high proportion (22%) are preschool age (31 months to 4 years).
- In summer 2019, the Ministry of Education released the results of the 2017-2018 Early Development Instrument (EDI), which measures children's ability to meet developmental expectations at school entry. The EDI assesses five domains of child development. Overall, the rate of vulnerability in Northumberland (i.e., the proportion of children not meeting expectations) has decreased since 2015. Specifically, improvements were noted in the domains of Physical Health and Well-being, Social Competence, and Emotional Maturity. Developmental trajectories for Language and Cognitive Development, as well as Communication Skills and General Knowledge, remain stable.

COVID-19 Pandemic: Supports for Families

- On March 17, 2020, the provincial government declared a State of Emergency and ordered the closure of all licensed childcare centres, and all facilities providing indoor recreational programs including EarlyON Child and Family Centres. The province subsequently announced that, in order to support health care and front-line workers in securing care for their children, Emergency Child Care could be offered at select centres.
- The Early Years Division implemented several initiatives to support children, families, operators and the community during this time. Two main areas of focus were:
 - The creation and implementation of Emergency Child Care
 - Supporting virtual EarlyON child and family support services
- Emergency Child Care was available from April 6 to June 26, 2020 via three agencies in Northumberland. In total, 83 children and 50 families were supported through Northumberland County's Emergency Child Care.
- Virtual programming has been well received by children and families in the region. Twice daily, videos from our creative and enthusiastic Early Childhood Educators, Resource Consultants, and Indigenous Partners are uploaded to Northumberland's EarlyON Facebook pages. Interactive live performances are also provided, allowing children and families to comment/engage in real-time.

Economic Context and Income

- Approximately 38% of the Ontario Works caseload has been on assistance for 2 years or more, with 11% of the caseload having been on assistance for more than 5 years.



- The Sole Support Caseload has increased slightly over the last year, representing 30% of the total caseload and the singles caseload sits at 64% of the total caseload.
- Approximately 35% of our caseload is between the ages of 16 and 29 with 58% being single.
- Approximately 17% of the Ontario Works caseload is between the ages of 50 and 65.
- 37% of our recipients are children under the age of 18, with 19% of our total recipients under the age of 6 years.
- The Northumberland economy has a diverse range of sectors, but is weighted to agriculture, construction/utilities, and manufacturing.
- The local labor market continues to be dominated by precarious employment, including part-time, seasonal, contract/temporary employment in the retail and service industry.
- 2020 has proven to be a challenging year for employment due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, with Unemployment Rates in the province at 12.2%, more than double the rate of 5.5% in February 2020.
- Provincial Poverty Reduction focuses on Ending Chronic Homelessness through Housing First strategies; renewed Federal interest in developing a National Housing Strategy emphasizing Homelessness initiatives and potential investments in successful Housing First models.
- Certain household types are more likely to have low incomes compared to Northumberland County as a whole, specifically renter households, youth households, persons living alone, lone parent households, Indigenous households, senior households, physical disability mental health issues and households with a member with cognitive issues.

Funding

Community Services

Homelessness Programs are funded through the Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) which is provincial funding although programs are determined based on local need and designed to meet community needs. There is also a levy contribution to ensure service provision. Other funding is utilized for programs and services when available. In 2020 this has included Federal Reaching Home funds, provincial Social services relief funding, Cannabis funding and other small grants.

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

Early Years Services



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

Food Security Services

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

Housing Services

The Housing Services budget projection is based on annualized Federal and Provincial allocations, and subject to new funding as part of any new initiatives. In addition, funding is provided through the County levy and rental and laundry revenue. In addition, Housing Services has received funding specific to applications submitted for the completion of Building Condition Assessments and the pre-construction work for Elgin Park Redevelopment project.

Ontario Works

Since January 1, 2018, the Province provides full subsidy for the mandatory components of the program, such as basic needs, shelter, and mandatory benefits. There will still be a cost shared portion of delivery for administration, discretionary funding and employment programming. The Province acknowledges that Municipal and First Nations Ontario Works delivery agents are best suited to maximize existing relationships with other local service providers.

As a municipality included in the Employment Services Transformation Prototype region (Kawartha-Muskokas), there will be changes to the delivery of employment services within Northumberland County. Fleming College will be the Service System Manager for the delivery of Employment Services within the Kawartha-Muskokas prototype region. Starting in January 2021, the role of the Ontario Works program will be to refer eligible individuals to the employment services, while continuing to work with individuals facing barriers to successful integration in employment services.

Legislative

Community Services

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



The Province of Ontario legislated municipalities under the *Police Services Act* to develop and adopt Community Safety and Wellbeing (CSWB) Plan in January 2019.

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

Early Years Services

Early Years programs are governed by the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014. The Act is supported by a set of principles and is meant to provide strategic direction to our early years partners both within and outside of government.

Food Security Services

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

Housing Services

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

Ontario Works

Service is planned according to the requirements of the Ontario Works Act and directives that are established by the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Local planning is through the approved Ontario Works Service Plan for 2019-2020.

The Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services is committed to reforming the delivery of Social Assistance across the province. In 2021, there will be changes to the delivery of Employment Services as Northumberland County is included in the prototype phase of the Employment Services Transformation. In addition to changes to the delivery of employment services, there may be legislative changes with respect to eligibility for programs, including ODSP. During the 2021 budget and business planning cycle, there has been no announcement regarding a rate increase to Social Assistance.