
District of Parry Sound



Social Services
Administration Board

Chief Administrative Officer's Report

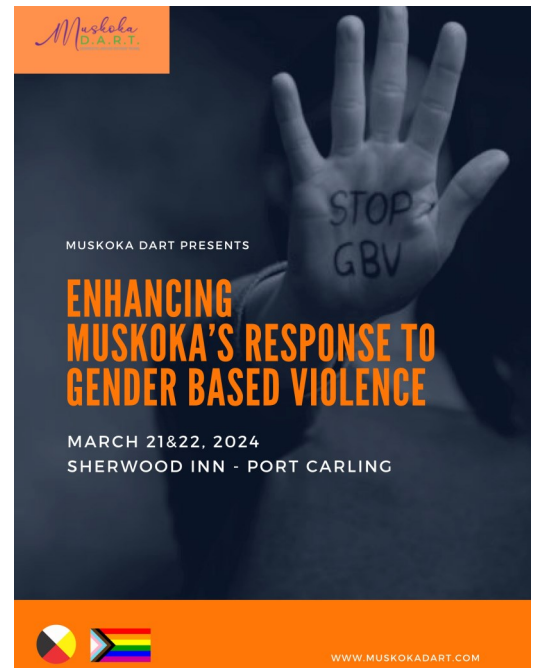
April 2024

Mission Statement

To foster healthier communities by economically providing caring human services that empower and enable the people we serve to improve their quality of life.

Enhancing Muskoka's Response to Gender Based Violence: Conference 2024

On March 21 & 22, I attended the 2024 conference hosted by Muskoka D.A.R.T (Domestic Abuse Review Team) along with our Director of Women's Services and several members of the Esprit Place and Income Support & Stability teams. One highlight of this event was an impassioned presentation from the White Ribbon Campaign about the importance of engaging men and boys as allies in promoting gender equality and healthy masculinity. It was also a great opportunity to engage with other social service agencies from across our region.



2024 Ontario Budget

On March 27, Finance Minister Peter Bethlenfalvy delivered the 2024 Ontario Budget. Of note:

- The government has said it will invest an additional \$152 million over the next three years to support individuals facing unstable housing conditions and dealing with mental health and addictions challenges. This money can be used to provide rent supplements and maintain dedicated supportive housing.
- No new funding is being provided for the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) or the Ontario Works (OW) program.
- This budget provides an additional \$13.5 million over three years to enhance initiatives that support women, children, youth and others who are at increased risk of violence or exploitation

Full budget: [2024 Ontario Budget: Building a Better Ontario](#)

Summary: [2024 Ontario Budget | In Brief](#)

MPP Graydon Smith meeting

On April 4, 2024, we welcomed Graydon Smith, MPP for Parry Sound Muskoka, into the DSSAB office in Parry Sound to provide current updates on our programs and services. Through these regular discussions, our goal is to keep our local provincial representatives informed about our successes and the challenges we face throughout the District of Parry Sound.

Ontario Minimum Wage

On March 28, 2024, the Ontario government announced it would be increasing the minimum wage from \$16.55 per hour to \$17.20, effective October 1, 2024, which is a 3.9 per cent annualized wage increase based on the Ontario Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Human Resources Update

The Human Resources department had a very busy first quarter. Recruitment continues, and we have been successful in staffing most programs. On March 1st, we successfully made the switch to Manulife for our benefits plan.

Our focus this spring for staff training is the second workshop in our commitment to enhancing indigenous training for all staff. Building on the Foundations of Cultural Competency workshop completed in 2023, this mandatory one-day workshop will focus on what it means to be an ally and how we can work towards being an ally to Indigenous people. Facilitator Kelly Brownbill has conducted countless cultural awareness training sessions across a broad range of service sectors and believes that enhanced knowledge is the key to successful Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relationships, whether it be employee/employer relations. or in collaborating with Aboriginal communities and organizations.

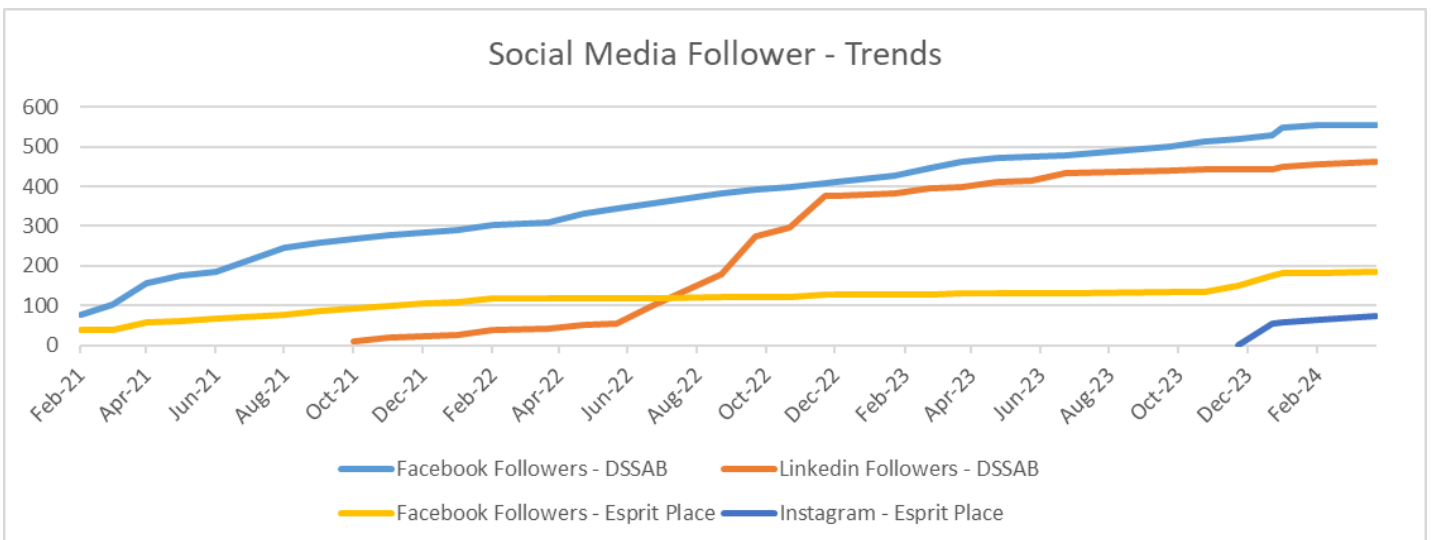
Of interest in the legal landscape, on March 21, 2024, Ontario’s Bill 149 Working for Workers Four Act 2023, received Royal Assent. Bill 149 amends several employment-related statutes including the Employment Standards Act, 2000 (ESA) and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 (WSIA). We will be completing a thorough review of the Bill, but upon first reading, there are no major changes that will affect our operations at the DSSAB.

Facebook Pages



A friendly reminder to follow our Social Media Pages

- ◆ [FACEBOOK - District of Parry Sound Social Services Administration Board](#)
- ◆ [FACEBOOK - Esprit Place Family Resource Centre](#)
- ◆ [FACEBOOK—EarlyON Child and Family Centres in the District of Parry Sound](#)
- ◆ [LINKEDIN—District of Parry Sound Social Services Administration Board](#)
- ◆ [INSTAGRAM—Esprit Place Family Resource Centre](#)



Social Media

Facebook Stats

| District of Parry Sound Social Services Administration Board | OCT 2023 | NOV 2023 | DEC 2023 | JAN 2024 | FEB 2024 | MAR 2024 |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Total Page Followers | 513 | 521 | 530 | 547 | 556 | 556 |
| Post Reach this Period (# of people who saw post) | 2,667 | 4,324 | 2,441 | 5,647 | 4,003 | 3324 |
| Post Engagement this Period (# of reactions, comments, shares) | 287 | 305 | 289 | 724 | 392 | 413 |

| Esprit Place Family Resource Centre | OCT 2023 | NOV 2023 | DEC 2023 | JAN 2024 | FEB 2024 | MAR 2024 |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Total Page Followers | 133 | 151 | 175 | 181 | 183 | 186 |
| Post Reach this Period (# of people who saw post) | 92 | 5,743 | 1,610 | 283 | 214 | 241 |
| Post Engagement this Period (# of reactions, comments, shares) | 16 | 624 | 292 | 14 | 3 | 127 |

| DSSAB LinkedIn Stats https://bit.ly/2YyFHIE | OCT 2023 | NOV 2023 | DEC 2023 | JAN 2024 | FEB 2024 | MAR 2024 |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Total Followers | 444 | 444 | 444 | 450 | 456 | 462 |
| Search Appearances (in last 7 days) | 49 | 52 | 25 | 20 | 69 | 68 |
| Total Page Views | 49 | 48 | 30 | 47 | 40 | 54 |
| Post Impressions | 1,036 | 570 | 368 | 815 | 575 | 697 |
| Total Unique Visitors | 22 | 18 | 16 | 15 | 21 | 25 |

| NEW! Instagram - Esprit Place Family Resource Centre https://www.instagram.com/espritplace/ | NOV 2023 | DEC 2023 | JAN 2024 | FEB 2024 | MAR 2024 |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Total Followers | 0 | 55 | 59 | 64 | 74 |
| # of posts | 0 | 18 | 19 | 21 | 23 |

Licensed Child Care Programs

Total Children Utilizing Directly Operated Child Care in the District February 2024

| Age Group | Fairview ELCC | First Steps ELCC | Highlands ELCC | Waubeek ELCC | HCCP | Total |
|----------------------|------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------|------|-------|
| Infant (0-18M) | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 18 | 24 |
| Toddler (18-30M) | 12 | 7 | 15 | 21 | 24 | 79 |
| Preschool (30M-4Y) | 17 | 13 | 20 | 32 | 52 | 135 |
| # of Active Children | 30 | 22 | 35 | 55 | 96 | 238 |

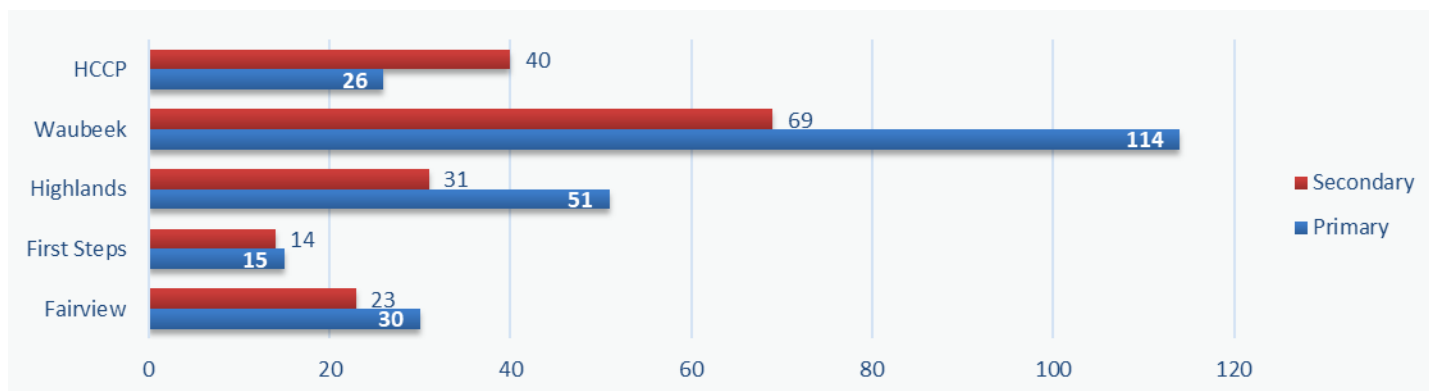
Staffing continues to be a struggle, with many opportunities for staff to move locations and programs as vacancies have become available. We are seeing a positive trend in the number of qualified applicants being received, and a slight increase in the casual staff roster. The programs are enjoying the warmer weather this past month, spending more time with the children outside exploring their environments. The child care centres are in the process of training more staff in the Seeds of Empathy program and will continue to offer the empathy-based learning opportunities to the preschool-aged children through adult-led visits with an infant from their community. The Home Child Care Program (HCCP) was able to open a new home in the town of Sundridge in January and a second new home in Novar could be open by the end of April. The HCCP staff have received an increase in the number of serious inquiries for potential providers, however, with the Ministry of Education’s Directed Growth Strategy now in effect, these enquiries have been placed on a waiting list in the event an opportunity to open a home in the future becomes available.

School Age Programs February 2024

| Location | Enrollment | Primary Waitlist | Secondary Waitlist |
|-----------------------------------|------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Mapleridge After School | 26 | 7 | 7 |
| Mapleridge Before School | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| Mapleridge Summer Program | N/A | 13 | 0 |
| Sundridge Centennial After School | 12 | 7 | 1 |
| Home Child Care | 32 | 2 | 2 |
| # of Active Children | 86 | 22 | 6 |

The Mapleridge Summer Program will be offered again this July and August with 13 spaces being filled by 4 –6-year-olds, with 9 children currently enrolled. The Mapleridge & Sundridge School Age programs are operating at capacity. All district school boards have distributed the 2024-2025 School Age Program needs survey and we will continue to work with them to ensure that both current programs are viable.

Directly Operated Child Care Waitlist by Program February 2024



The blue bar indicates the current number of children currently needing care that cannot be accommodated. The red bar shows the number of children that will be needing care in future months.

All program supervisors have updated the program waitlists, removing families that no longer required care in preparation for a centralized district-wide wait list program. Currently, there are 236 non-unique children listed on the Directly Operated Child Care Programs waiting lists and 178 non-unique children to be in need of care for 2025-2026. Families are starting to call program supervisors looking for Before and/or After School care in the fall of 2024 with 22 children on the immediate waitlist.

Inclusion Support Services February 2024

| Age Group | EarlyON | Licensed ELCC's | Monthly Total | YTD Total | Waitlist | New Referrals | Discharges |
|--------------------|---------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|----------|---------------|------------|
| Infant (0-18M) | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Toddler (18-30M) | 6 | 6 | 8 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Preschool (30M-4Y) | 6 | 31 | 37 | 37 | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| School Age (4Y+) | 4 | 20 | 24 | 22 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Monthly Total | 10 | 56 | 66 | - | 6 | 4 | 1 |
| YTD Total | 10 | 56 | - | 68 | 13 | 5 | 2 |

The ISS Resource Consultants are currently supporting 3 newcomer children from India and the Ukraine as they transition to the licensed child care programs. The program is in the process of expanding services to include Indigenous-led Child and Family settings and are making active connections through joint planning with the Indigenous partners, which will include Resource Consultant support for children in their communities.

**EarlyON Child and Family Programs
February 2024**

| Activity | February 2024 | YTD |
|--|---------------|-------|
| Number of Children Attending | 1028 | 1909 |
| Number of New Children Attending | 42 | 65 |
| Number of Adults Attending | 690 | 1276 |
| Number of Virtual Programming Events | 12 | 22 |
| Number of Engagements through Social Media | 413 | 1130 |
| Number of Views through Social Media | 10544 | 30451 |

In February, the EarlyON Virtual Program staff started to offer wellness checks, upon request, using the virtual platform. These checks provide isolated families the opportunity to speak with an EarlyON facilitator and receive individualized support and resources on a variety of topics including child development, community services, and other topics of interest (ie. toileting, feeding and nutrition, socialization, behaviour challenges, etc). A Family Fun Night was held at the Sound Community Hub with over 60 people in attendance, and staff are currently collaborating with the Town of Parry Sound to host a family Earth Day event. We are happy to share that, in February, a program staff member was able to start visiting EarlyON locations across the district to offer French programming and we are receiving very positive feedback regarding this initiative.

Child Care Service Management Update

As we move into 2024, we are working to find quality professional development opportunities for educators and providers in our district. As workforce funding has now concluded, the focus for professional development will be around providing training opportunities that will benefit the whole sector, rather than individual educators & providers. Along with training opportunities, educators and providers now have access to the expansive Padlet resource lending library. The library contains resources and early learning kits to support and assist educators both personally and professionally.

As we continue to navigate CWELLC funding we are also learning new billing and attendance processes for child care. These new processes have led to some barriers and challenges and have brought forward new questions and conversations from operators and families. We are continuing to work through these challenges to keep families and operators informed. Maintaining ongoing communication is the priority moving forward.

In March, the quality assurance supervisor and program support worker visited the Great Beginnings program to do a short presentation on finding child care in the district of Parry Sound. Present during the workshop were 28 new moms and their babies. The feedback from the session was focused on the ongoing struggles of finding child care in our area. The group wanted to learn more about what child care options are available in our district and how best to find quality care.

Funding Sources for District Wide Childcare Spaces

February 2024

| Active | # of Children | # of Families |
|--------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| CWELCC* | 82 | 79 |
| CWELCC Full Fee | 206 | 202 |
| Extended Day Fee Subsidy | 1 | 1 |
| Fee Subsidy | 40 | 27 |
| Full Fee | 23 | 21 |
| Ontario Works | 5 | 4 |
| Total | 357 | 334 |

| Exits | # of Children | # of Families |
|--------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Extended Day Fee Subsidy | 2 | 2 |
| Total | 2 | 2 |

* CWELCC – Canada-Wide Early Learning Child Care; eligible for children 0 - 6

| Funding Source - New | # of Children | # of Families |
|----------------------|---------------|---------------|
| CWELCC | 1 | 1 |
| CWELCC Full Fee | 1 | 1 |
| Fee Subsidy | 1 | 1 |
| Ontario Works | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 11 | 11 |

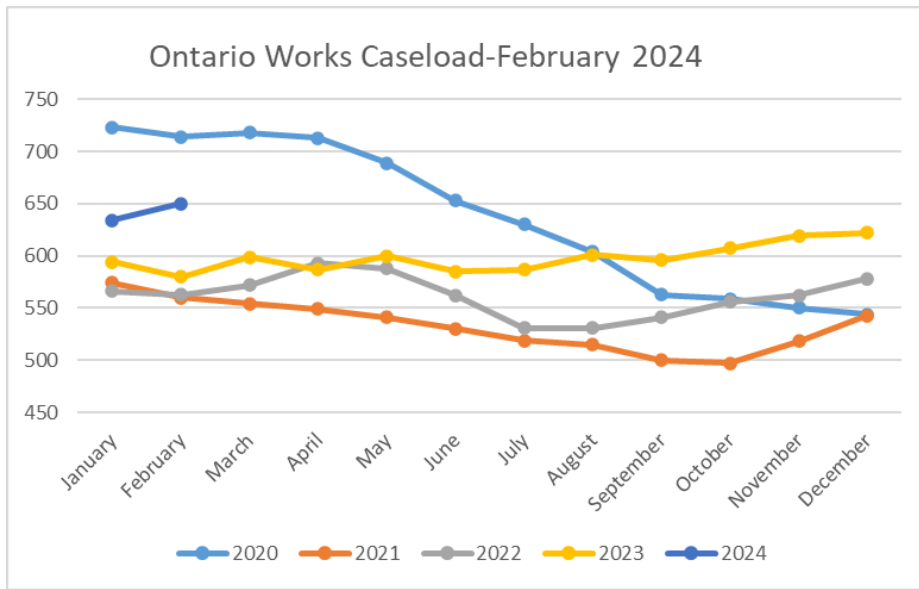
Income Support & Stability Divisional Update

Bridges Out of Poverty/Transformational Case Management Training – In preparation for Employment Services Transformation, we submitted a one-time funding request to MCCSS (which was approved) in late 2023 to secure a new training opportunity offered through the City of Peterborough Ontario Works in conjunction with Aha Training. This training would support the agency as a whole, and the income support and stability team, in preparing for Employment Services Transformation (EST) with a common language. This training program utilizes the Bridges Out of Poverty foundation, framework, and coaching skills. The training is divided into 4 parts. It aims to provide staff with a deeper understanding of poverty dynamics and equip them with tools to better support clients from impoverished backgrounds. We have chosen to make this training available to all staff to further support integration and help us speak a common language. By adopting this approach agency-wide, we strive to enhance our effectiveness in serving marginalized communities and promote sustainable pathways out of poverty. We also invited our community partners to attend the Bridges Out of Poverty sessions and had attendance from 14 participants from partners such as CMHA, Employment North and Almaguin Adult Learning Centre.

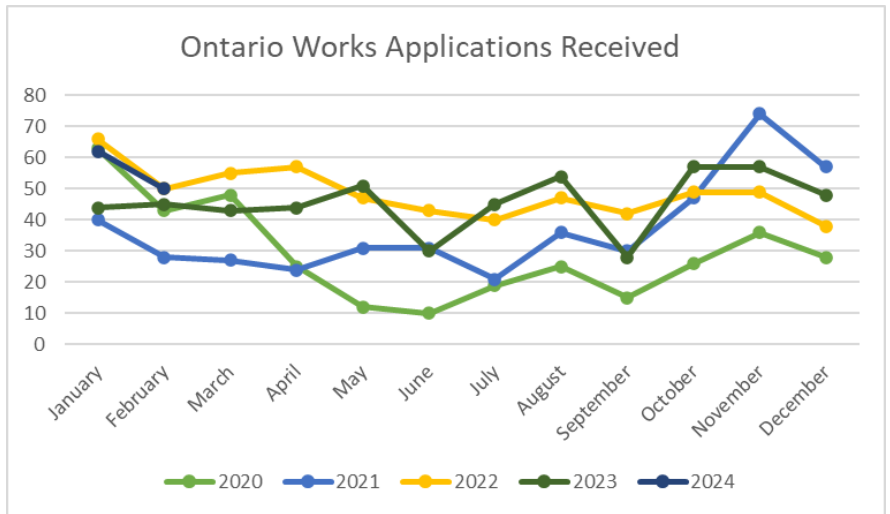
The four parts of the training program are 1. Bridges out of Poverty – Individual Lens, 2. Bringing your Best Self to Human Services, 3. Coaching for Life Stabilization, 4. Creating a Person-Centered Workplace Culture. These sessions began in February and will conclude in September.

Additionally, as the nature and scope of our work continues to shift towards life stabilization and coordinating person-centred supports, we continue to train new and ongoing staff with other foundational training such as Trauma Informed Care and Trauma Informed Care Leadership. Provided to our staff in late 2022 (along with Motivational Interviewing), Trauma Informed Care was attended by our new hires in February and facilitated by the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA). Trauma Informed Care Leadership was run in March and facilitated by OMSSA. The importance of these foundational concepts builds and renews the staffs understanding of trauma, and its impacts, so that staff can provide more effective and empathetic supports. It will assist in preventing re-traumatization, and it allows for an enhanced collaboration when working with those individuals who have experienced trauma. Staff will be able to recognize trauma and refer to appropriate supports and community partners. These trainings will also reduce employee burnout while offering professional development. Trauma Informed Care Leadership sets the foundation for a workplace that plays a role in fostering trauma informed culture, modeling empathy, prioritizing staff well being and allocating resources for training and other supportive initiatives.

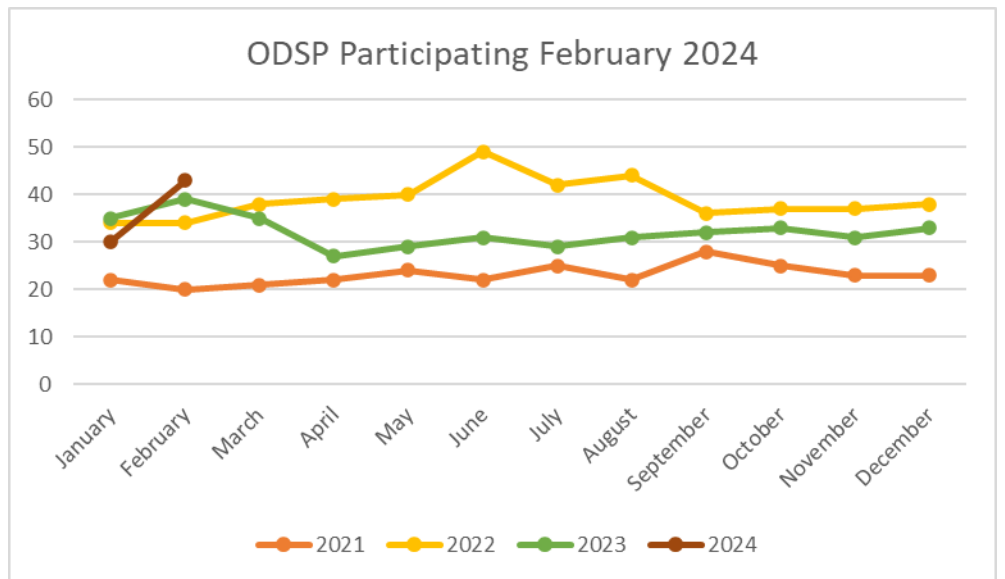
Mental Health First Aid - On February 22nd, Income Support and Stability staff from across the district joined up with Employment North for a full day of virtual training on Mental Health First Aid. This training aligns and supports our shift towards life stabilization case management with Ontario Works and Housing Stability clients. Staff learned how to identify signs of mental illness, offer initial support, and guide individuals towards appropriate professional help. The training also covered a variety of mental health disorders, crisis intervention techniques and self care strategies. The hope is that it will equip staff to better support those experiencing mental health difficulties and contribute to reducing the stigma that a large majority of our Ontario Works & Housing Stability clients must deal with.



Ontario Works Intake - Social Assistance Digital Application (SADA) & Local Office Ontario Works Applications Received

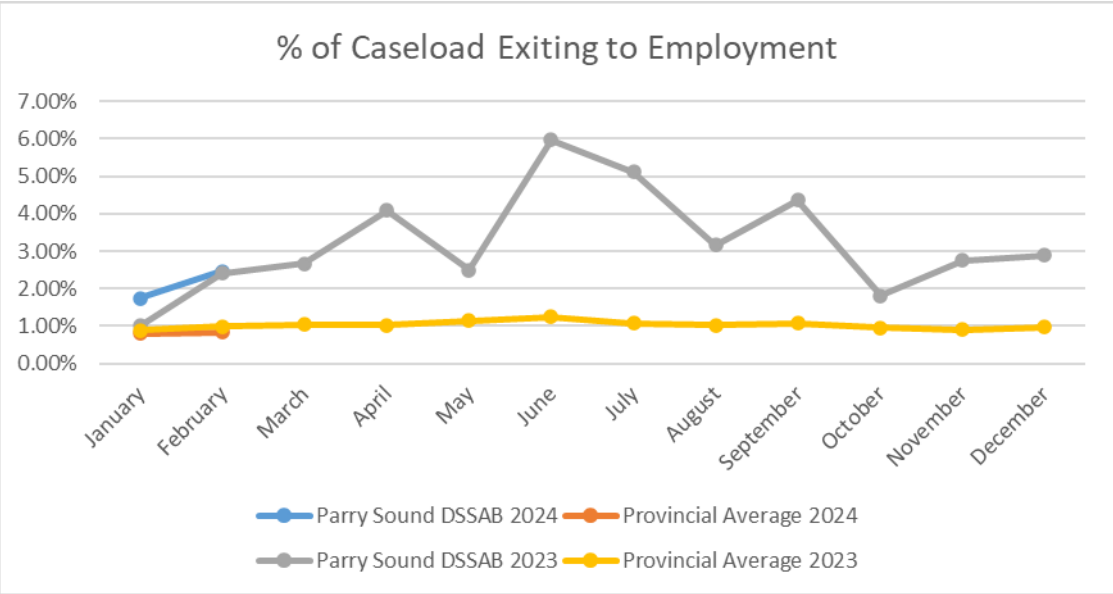
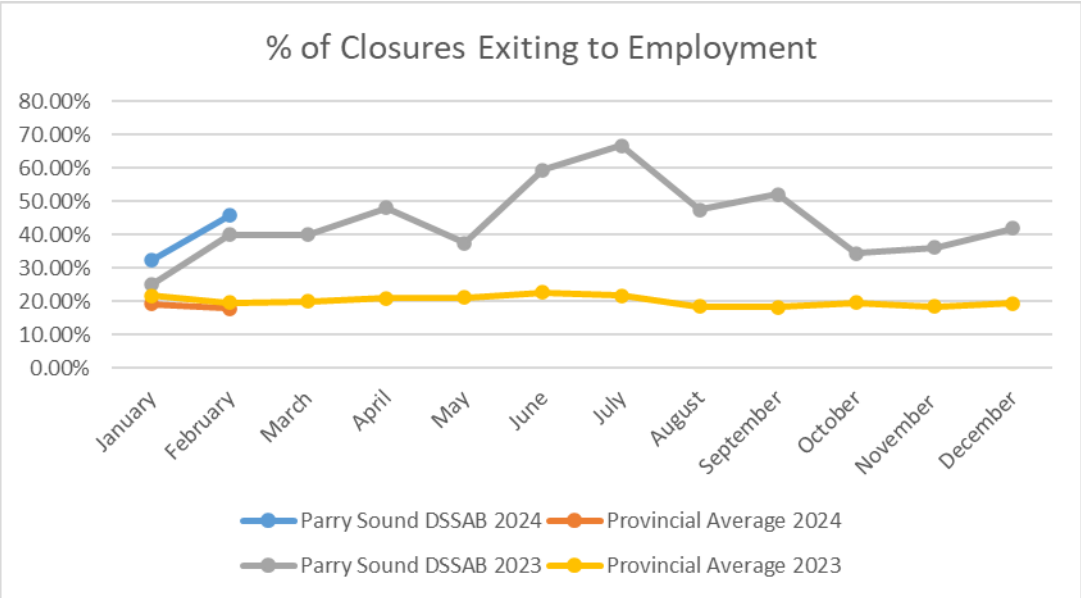


ODSP Participants in Ontario Works Employment Assistance



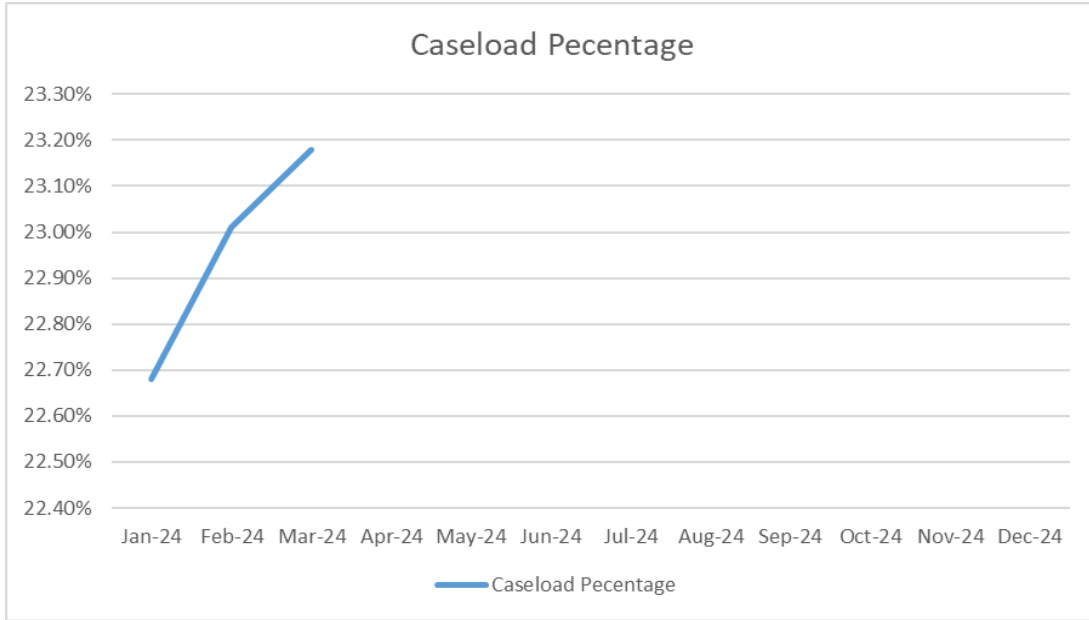
The OW Caseload as of the end of February is **650**. We are supporting **43** ODSP participants in our Employment Assistance program. We also have **54** Temporary Care Assistance cases. Intake was steady month over month. We had **50** Ontario Works Applications (33 of those online through SADA) in the month of February.

Employment Assistance & Performance Outcomes

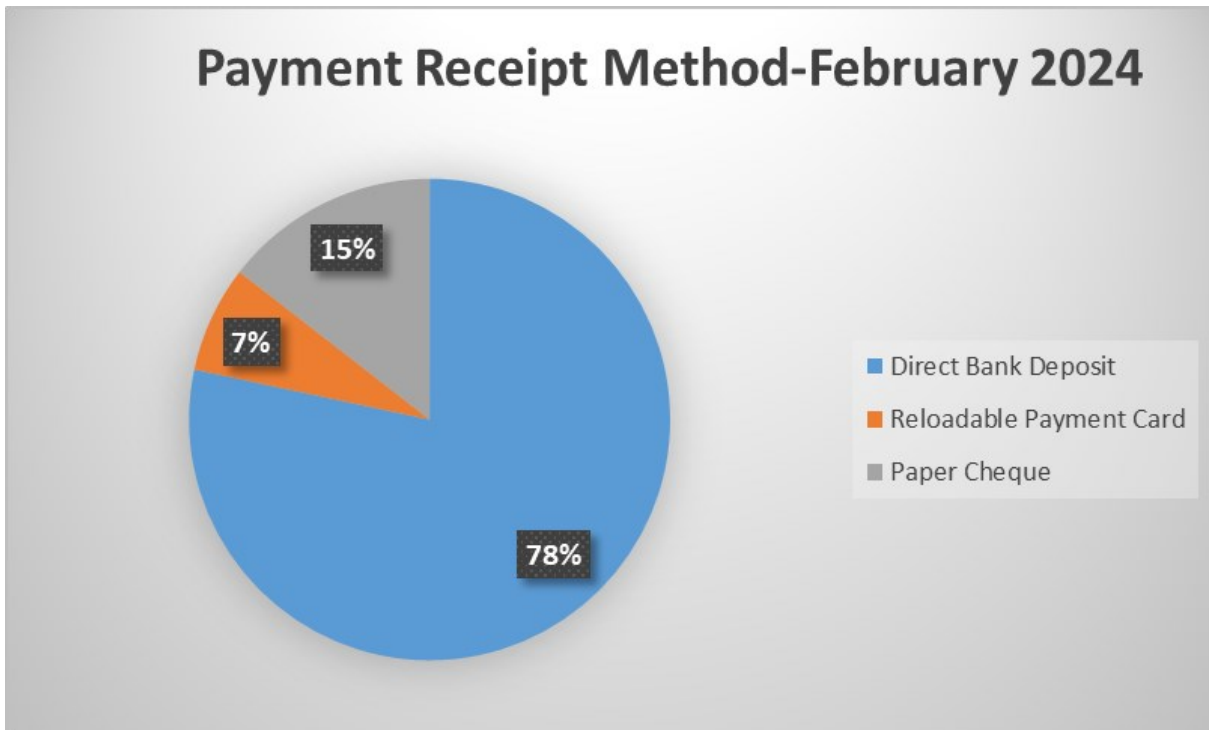


Our Employment Outcomes performance remains strong as we continue to trend above our 2023 performance and well beyond the provincial average. Additionally, 5.4% of the caseload exited the program.

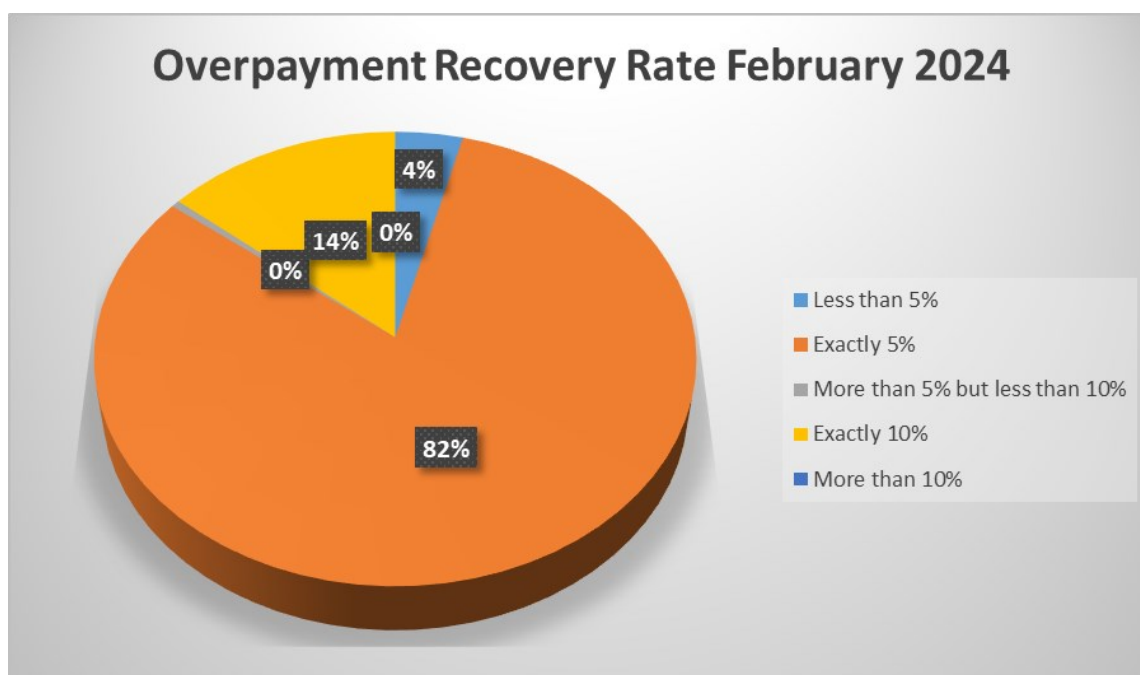
MyBenefits Enrollment 2024



DBD Enrollment



Overpayment Recovery Rate



Ontario Works Update

The Employment Placement Program, in collaboration with Employment North, was renewed for another year. This year the program will allow for 6 new clients and placements.

The goal of this initiative is to entice employers by offering incentives for hiring these individuals. This not only benefits the clients by providing employment opportunities, but also helps strengthen the local workforce.

Participant Record Management is a new Ministry led initiative which went live on February 26th. Income Support & Stability worked on establishing new processes and policies to align with the ministries expectations. This initiative aims to streamline the data entry of new records in SAMS to reduce duplications and confusion when issuing payments.

NOSDA OW Directors Meeting The Director of Income Support & Stability, along with the other Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association (NOSDA) Ontario Works Administrators, attended an Employment Services Transformation information session with Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) in anticipation of our onboarding to the new model as part of Phase 3 SSM selection.

Partnership with Elizabeth Fry of Simcoe/Muskoka To continue to support our Under 18 Ontario Works participants, we have renewed our service agreement with the Elizabeth Fry Society of Simcoe/Muskoka to provide trustee support to those participants, as required by the Ontario Works Act.

Housing Stability Program - Community Relations Workers

Support

All services performed, provided, or arranged by the Homelessness Prevention Program staff to promote, improve, sustain, or restore appropriate housing for individuals active within the Homelessness Prevention Program, periodically within the month, not requiring intense case management.

| February 2024 Income Source | East | West |
|--------------------------------|------|------|
| Senior | 12 | 14 |
| ODSP | 11 | 26 |
| Ontario Works | 5 | 15 |
| Low Income | 23 | 33 |

Intense Case Management

Intense Case Management involves the coordination of appropriate services and the provision of consistent and on-going weekly supports, required by the individual to obtain, and sustain housing stability.

| February 2024 Income Source | East | West |
|--------------------------------|------|------|
| Senior | 13 | 18 |
| ODSP | 4 | 14 |
| Ontario Works | 8 | 15 |
| Low Income | 9 | 54 |

Contact/Referrals

| February 2024 | East | West | YTD |
|--------------------------|------|------|-----|
| Homeless | 1 | 4 | 8 |
| At Risk | 1 | 7 | 13 |
| Esprit Outreach Homeless | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Esprit Outreach at Risk | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Esprit in Shelter | 0 | | 3 |
| Program Total | 21 | | |

Short Term Housing Allowance

| | Active | YTD |
|---------------|--------|-----|
| February 2024 | 3 | 3 |

Housing Stability: Household Income Sources and Issuance from HPP:

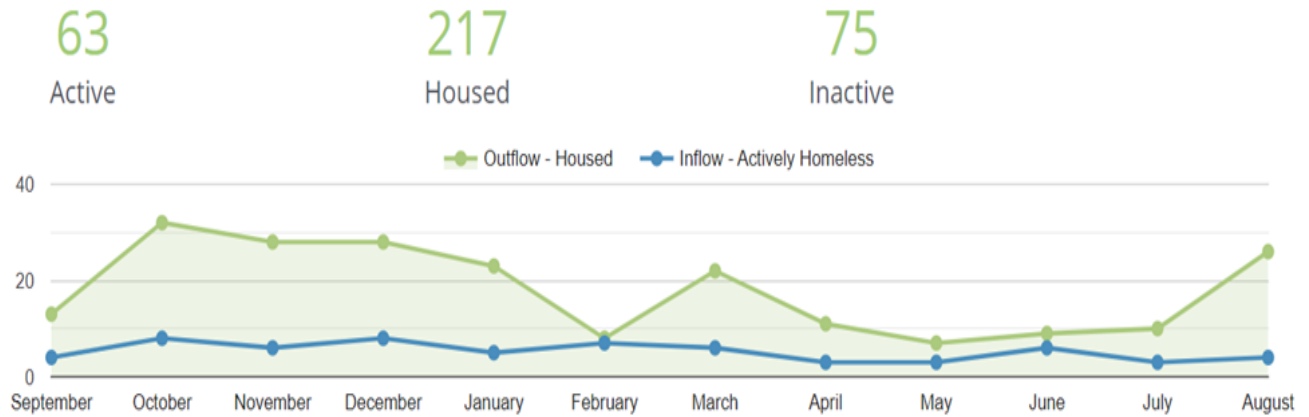
| February 2024 Income Source | Total | HPP | February 2024 Reason for Issue | Total |
|--------------------------------|-------|------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| Senior | 5 | \$1,227.00 | Rental Arrears | \$5,275.00 |
| ODSP | 2 | \$59.00 | Utilities/Firewood | \$732.19 |
| Ontario Works | 3 | \$1,429.00 | Transportation | \$ |
| Low Income | 1 | \$1,075.80 | Food/Household/Misc | \$6,494.69 |
| | | | Emergency Housing | \$ |
| | | | Total | \$12,501.88 |

Ontario Works: Household Income Sources and Issuance from HPP

| February 2024 Income Source | Total | HPP |
|--------------------------------|-------|------------|
| ODSP | 8 | \$8,438.69 |
| Ontario Works | 5 | \$4,063.19 |

| February 2024 Reason for Issue | Total |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| Rental Arrears | \$5,275.00 |
| Utilities/Firewood | \$732.19 |
| Food/Household/Misc. | \$6,494.69 |
| Total | \$12,501.88 |

**By-Name List Data
September 1, 2021– February 29, 2024**



Housing Stability Update

Encampment Tracking – In response to the need for a more effective management of homeless encampments in our district, our organization has developed and implemented a new approach for tracking within our own internal system called FIIT. This method aims to track the homeless population in conjunction with our By Name List. This new tracking system will enhance our ability to provide targeted support and resources to those in need. The benefits will have real time updates and data integration with our collaborative platform that can be viewed by anyone in the agency that has access to our program.

Northern Cohort CAEH – The Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH) established a working group that focuses on housing and homelessness solutions in Northern Ontario. This group is facilitated by CAEH and acknowledges the region's unique needs and demographics. Income Support supervisors attend these meetings quarterly with the intention of building relationships with other members of the cohort. The group aims to strategize and implement tailored solutions to effectively address homelessness in the area. By bringing together representatives from the other northern District Social Services Boards (DSSAB's) and Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSM's), the group seeks to coordinate efforts and leverage resources to provide comprehensive support to individuals experiencing homelessness in Northern Ontario. The goal of this group is to share ideas, leverage expertise and bring awareness to the challenges faced to the northern Ontario population and human services workers.

Income Tax Clinics- A free income tax clinic was held at our office in Parry Sound on March 12th. This clinic was able to support over 45 individuals with their personal tax needs. Many social assistance recipients are eligible for various tax credits and benefits such as Canada Child Benefit, GST, Trillium, Climate Action Incentive, one time housing top up to the Canada Housing Benefit and many more. By assisting recipients in filing their taxes accurately and claiming all available credits, it empowers individuals to better manage their finances and help alleviate financial stress. Many recipients that access low-income housing are required to file their taxes. This clinic allows for seamless annual rental reviews, ensuring their rent is not impacted for failing to complete the reviews. This clinic was a huge success thanks to frontline staff and Sudbury Credit Counseling.

Housing Programs

**Social Housing Centralized Waitlist Report
February 2024**

| | East Parry Sound | West Parry Sound | Total |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------|
| Seniors | 47 | 132 | 179 |
| Families | 124 | 431 | 555 |
| Individuals | 493 | 197 | 690 |
| Total | 664 | 760 | 1424 |
| Total Waitlist Unduplicated | | | 459 |

**Social Housing Centralized Waitlist (CWL) 2023 - 2024 Comparison
Applications and Households Housing from the CWL**

| Month 2023 | New App. | New SPP | Cancelled | Housed | SPP Housing | Month 2024 | New App. | New SPP | Cancelled | Housed | SPP Housing |
|---------------|-------------|------------|-----------|--------|----------------|---------------|-------------|------------|-----------|--------|----------------|
| Jan | 5 | 1 | 13 | | | Jan | 3 | | 2 | 1 | |
| Feb | 5 | 1 | 10 | | | Feb | 5 | | 11 | 1 | |
| Mar | 6 | | 35 | | | Mar | | | | | |
| Apr | 11 | | 17 | 6 | | Apr | | | | | |
| May | 13 | 2 | 9 | 2 | | May | | | | | |
| June | 9 | 1 | 2 | 1 | | June | | | | | |
| July | 5 | 1 | 5 | 1 | | July | | | | | |
| Aug | 14 | 1 | 3 | 1 | | Aug | | | | | |
| Sept | 12 | | 4 | | | Sept | | | | | |
| Oct | 8 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 2 | Oct | | | | | |
| Nov | 12 | | 3 | | | Nov | | | | | |
| Dec | 1 | | 2 | 3 | 3 | Dec | | | | | |
| Total | 101 | 8 | 104 | 18 | 5 | Total | 8 | | 13 | 2 | |

SPP = Special Priority Applicant

Housing Programs Update

Housing Programs has been busy in the first quarter of 2024 working on a centralized waitlist update. We are working through each file to ensure that all information is accurate and those on our list remain eligible. Updated forms were due back at the end of February, however, we have received just over 100 of the nearly 400 updates we sent out, so there is more work to come in contacting applicants to update their files. In February, we saw 5 new applications, and 11 cancelled, with one due to being housed. The other files were cancelled at the applicant's request, or we were informed they had passed away.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing recently sent out a Social Housing Notification regarding Special Priority and Rent Geared to Income assistance. They have released a guide that is intended to support both Service Managers who administer the policy, and service providers who work with survivors of abuse and trafficking. The guide includes information on the following:

- Special Priority Policy rules and related RGI assistance rules
- Supports and services for survivors, and
- Training opportunities for Service Managers and service providers

The ministry has also released a webpage on Ontario.ca for survivors of abuse and trafficking, the public, and service providers who work with survivors. The webpage includes general information on the Special Priority policy, RGI assistance and how to apply. The webpage can be found by following this link: [Priority access to housing for survivors of abuse and trafficking | ontario.ca](https://www.ontario.ca/priority-access-to-housing-for-survivors-of-abuse-and-trafficking)

We have seen an increase in Special Priority applications since COVID. From 2020 into the first quarter of 2024, we have received over 60 applications to the special priority program. Of those, 38 applications were complete, and 23 were approved. Of those approved, 22 were domestic violence incidents, and 1 was human trafficking. We have seen 14 of those applicants housed. These numbers speak to the increase we have seen in domestic violence, as well as the state of the housing crisis we are experiencing.

Our department recently received and approved an application to our Additional Units Program. The funding comes in the form of a forgivable loan and allows for the creation of an affordable unit within the homeowners' main place of residence, or property. The rent for the additional unit must remain 20% below the average market rent for the area and must maintain affordability for a period of 15 years. Potential tenants for the additional unit are screened by Housing Programs to ensure that they meet the eligibility criteria for affordable housing. This program is a great resource for the residents of the District of Parry Sound to access to provide more affordable housing options for their loved ones, friends, and community members.

Housing Programs has also continued to receive and approve Ontario Renovates Accessibility Grants. These grants provide funding to homeowners to complete renovations that increase the safety and accessibility of their home, allowing them to remain in their homes as they age. In 2023, and the first quarter of 2024, we approved 6 grants, and provided almost \$30,000 in funding. Most requests are for wheelchair ramps, but also for accessible showers and tubs, grab bars, and widened doorways.

**Parry Sound District Housing Corporation
February 2024**

Activity for Tenant and Maintenance Services

| | Current | YTD |
|--|---------|---------------------------|
| Move outs | 2 | 7 |
| Move in | 2 | 4 |
| L1/L2 forms | 1 | 1 |
| N4 - notice of eviction for non payment of rent | 1 | 1 |
| N5 - notice of eviction disturbing the quiet enjoyment of the other occupants | 1 | 2 |
| N6 - notice of eviction for illegal acts or misrepresenting income for RGI housing | 0 | 0 |
| N7 - notice of eviction for willful damage to unit | 0 | 1 |
| Repayment agreements | 5 | 28 (19 carried from 2023) |
| No Trespass Order | 0 | 3 |
| Tenant Home Visits | 11 | 37 |
| Mediation/Negotiation/Referrals | 20 | 42 |
| Tenant Engagements/Education | 0 | 2 |

Tenant Services Update

During the first quarter of 2024, Tenant Services has been very busy with the tenant and maintenance software update. We continue to work closely with the Finance Department in efforts to streamline rent charges, payments, and tenant ledgers to mitigate rental arrears. Also, with new modules of YARDI being implemented, Tenant Services is preparing to support tenants with obtaining email addresses, setting up accounts for the upcoming launch of the new Tenant Portal. This Portal will allow the tenant to pay rent, make maintenance requests, and view their payment history. This is a large project, therefore will take a while to roll out fully, but we are excited to share this with our tenants.

We look forward to building our team to help accommodate some additional tasks related to the above changes, and other initiatives including coordinating educational opportunities for tenants.

Over the spring and summer months Tenant Services will be offering educational opportunities to tenants, with a focus on our family units . For many families, the dynamics of the household has changed significantly since they originally moved in, and they are in need of support to restore a healthy understanding of Rent Geared to Income (RGI) intentions and purpose. There is also a need to work on strengthening their relationships with the Community Relations Workers so that they can access assistance with paperwork or navigating other programs and community services.

**Property Maintenance
February 2024**

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|----|---|
| Pest Control | | 3 buildings are currently being inspected monthly for bedbugs; 14 units have been treated |
| Vacant Units | 14 | one-bedroom (10); multiple bedroom (4) (not inclusive of The Meadow View) |
| Vacant Units - The Meadow View | 3 | one-bedroom market units available |
| After Hours Calls | 10 | After hours for February: Wellness check, Reliance requiring access, Fire Supervisory, signal trouble, reset required. On call contracted to outside service provider. |
| Work Orders | 42 | Work orders were created for maintenance work and related materials for the month of February |
| Fire Inspections | | In the month of February, annual inspections were done for 1 apartment building |

**Maintenance Quarterly report
February 2024**

Staff attended the Bridges Out of Poverty and Bringing Your Best Self to Human Service Delivery. Both training opportunities were relevant to the services delivered by the Housing Operations Department.

The Maintenance Program was busy within the month of March initiating annual inspections of all units within the Parry Sound District Housing portfolio.

**Capital Projects
February 2024**

Duplex Project: Deficiency walk through was done in January, with minimal deficiencies. Final Occupancy signed off in March.

Esprit Renovation Project: Finalizing drawings, tender review and final tender posted in March.

Window Replacement Project: 5 storey building in Parry Sound; Tender posted to the public in March.

Underground water pipe leak investigations occurred; development of remedial plan in place; work to be carried out in April 2024.

Asbestos abatement, and mould remediation carried out within family homes, resulted in one family temporary displacement.

Drain repair for a childcare center.

**Esprit Place Family Resource Centre
February 2024**

| Emergency Shelter Services | February 2024 | YTD |
|--|----------------------|------------|
| Number of women who stayed in shelter this month | 8 | 14 |
| Number of children who stayed in the shelter this month | 1 | 3 |
| Number of hours of direct service to women (shelter and counselling) | 291 | 568 |
| Number of days at capacity | 0 | 0 |
| Number of days over capacity | 0 | 0 |
| Overall capacity % | 33% | 49% |
| Resident bed nights (women & children) | 95 | 294 |
| Phone interactions (crisis/support) | 20 | 37 |

| Transitional Support | February 2024 | YTD |
|---|----------------------|------------|
| Number of women served this month | 1 | 1 |
| Number of NEW women registered in the program | 1 | 1 |
| Number of public ed/groups offered | 0 | 0 |

| Child Witness Program | February 2024 | YTD |
|--|----------------------|------------|
| Number of children/women served this month | 2 | 2 |
| Number of NEW clients (mothers and children) registered in the program | 1 | 1 |
| Number of public ed/groups offered | 0 | 0 |

Esprit Place Family Resource Centre Update

Esprit Place experienced a bit of a slowdown in admissions to the shelter during the early part of this year. This has provided a much-needed reprieve for Esprit Place staff and has allowed them to focus on supporting current shelter clients, shelter upkeep, policy development and review, and ongoing training and professional development. Outreach clients, crisis calls, and connection with community partners have continued to be busy during this period.