

A Message from the Chair of the Board

On behalf of the District of Parry Sound Social Services Administration Board, I am pleased to present our 2023-2024 Housing and Homelessness Annual Report.

The long-term impacts of the pandemic, the housing crisis, and high inflation has increased the pressure on our housing teams since the beginning of 2020, as evidenced by the growing number of applicants on the Centralized Wait List (CWL). This year, I'm pleased to report that the waitlist is showing less applicants in 2023 than in 2022, and it is our hope that this downwards trend continues as our teams continue to utilize programs like the Canada Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) to help renters maintain affordability in the private rental market.

We've been able to learn more about the issues facing local landlords through a Landlord Engagement Survey in 2023. The key priority identified through that survey was the concern about funding much needed repairs and maintenance to an aging housing stock. As the DSSAB acts as both the Housing Service Manager and as a landlord to 267 homes/units throughout the district, this is a concern we face ourselves. For this reason, we've partnered with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) to ensure that we are financially prepared to preserve and expand the lifespan of our aging housing stock. The District of Parry Sound and CMHC share the common goal of preserving existing affordable housing stock and housing Canada's most vulnerable. Therefore, through the National Housing Co-Investment Fund, CMHC has committed nearly \$1.84 million dollars to support the renewal of our social housing stock over the next three years. We would like to thank CMHC for their support and we look forward to continuing to develop this renewed relationship.

Over the last year, our dedicated housing staff have completed many repairs and upgrades to many units within our own community housing portfolio and have been thinking creatively about the best way to utilize our existing housing stock to effectively meet the needs of applicants waiting to be housed. This creative thinking has led to an increase in the number of units of housing stock in our portfolio, and it has led to the introduction of a NEW Transitional Housing Program designed to service eligible individuals on our By-Name List that require additional support to obtain and maintain safe and stable housing. I encourage you to read through the report for more information on this exciting project!

Finally, this year staff have really gone over and above to catch up with our tenants. With restrictions in place over the last few years due to the pandemic, this year has been all about reconnecting socially with tenants. In 2024, we will be utilizing provincial dollars to fund a part-time staff to support enhanced tenant outreach and educational seminars.

Our Board is hopeful that 2024 will bring more opportunities for collaboration and innovation. We look forward to proactively working with municipalities and community partners to empower the people we serve to improve their quality of life.



Rick Zanussi, Board Chair
District of Parry Sound Social Services Administration Board

FOR THE YEAR 2023-24

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS ANNUAL REPORT



Report Overview

The District of Parry Sound Housing and Homelessness Plans have provided us with a valuable opportunity to develop strategic priorities that help shape our response to the current housing crisis. Our plans highlight 6 core objectives of our housing strategy:

1. To focus on creating additional transitional units within the District to assist chronically homeless people.
2. To work with non-profit and private sector developers to increase market and affordable homes within the District.
3. To focus on building stronger relationships with our Indigenous communities. To utilize Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI) funding to support the sustainability of our Indigenous non-profit housing provider.
4. To provide Home Ownership and Ontario Renovates programs to assist homeowners in remaining in their homes. As well as supporting those looking to enter the homeowner market.
5. To continue to work toward development of innovative Housing First Strategies to reduce homelessness.
6. To focus on the development and maintenance of relationships with community partners and services across the District.

The purpose of each annual update is to review the impact of our programming over the last year and to determine if we are meeting our housing targets. We are very happy with the progress of our plan, especially given the breadth and complexity of challenges our teams face every day. This report will briefly summarize the progress and challenges of each of our housing departments:

Housing Programs	Tenant Services	Property Maintenance & Capital Projects	Income Support and Stability	Esprit Place Family Resource Centre
				

Housing Programs

Our housing programs team has been committed to finding efficient ways to use various housing funding streams to help keep our community members stably and affordably housed. In 2023 we supported 15 households through our rent supplement program and we supported 142 households through the Canada-Ontario housing Benefit (COHB). These types of programs are short term solutions that help us to prevent people from experiencing homelessness. However, we know that the private rental market is not as affordable as social housing, so we continue to prioritize repairs and retrofits to our existing housing stock to ensure no loss of units.

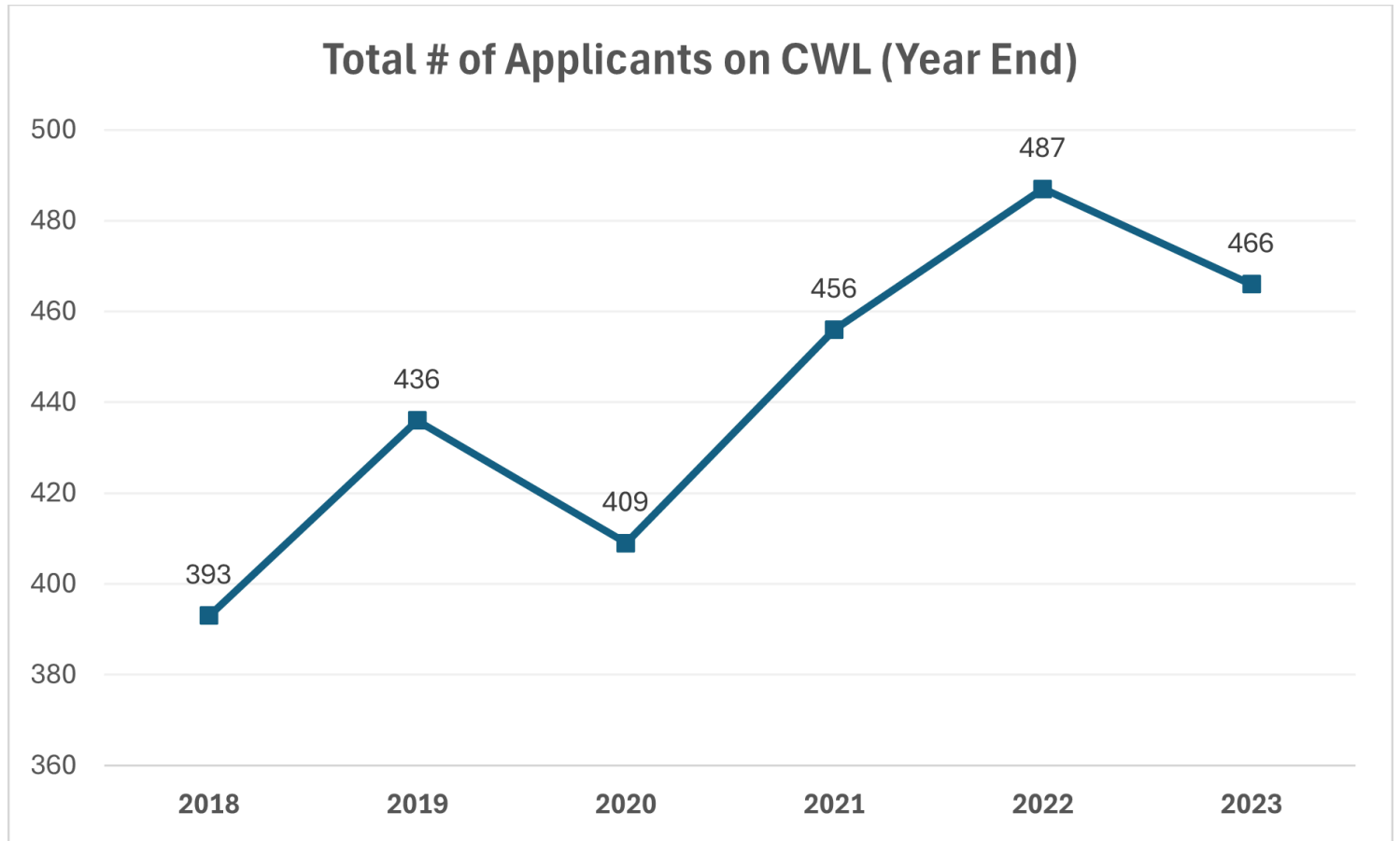
Objective Highlight: To provide Home Ownership and Ontario Renovates programs to assist homeowners in remaining in their homes.

Objective Highlight: To focus on building stronger relationships with our Indigenous communities. To utilize Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI) funding to support the sustainability of our Indigenous non-profit housing provider.

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

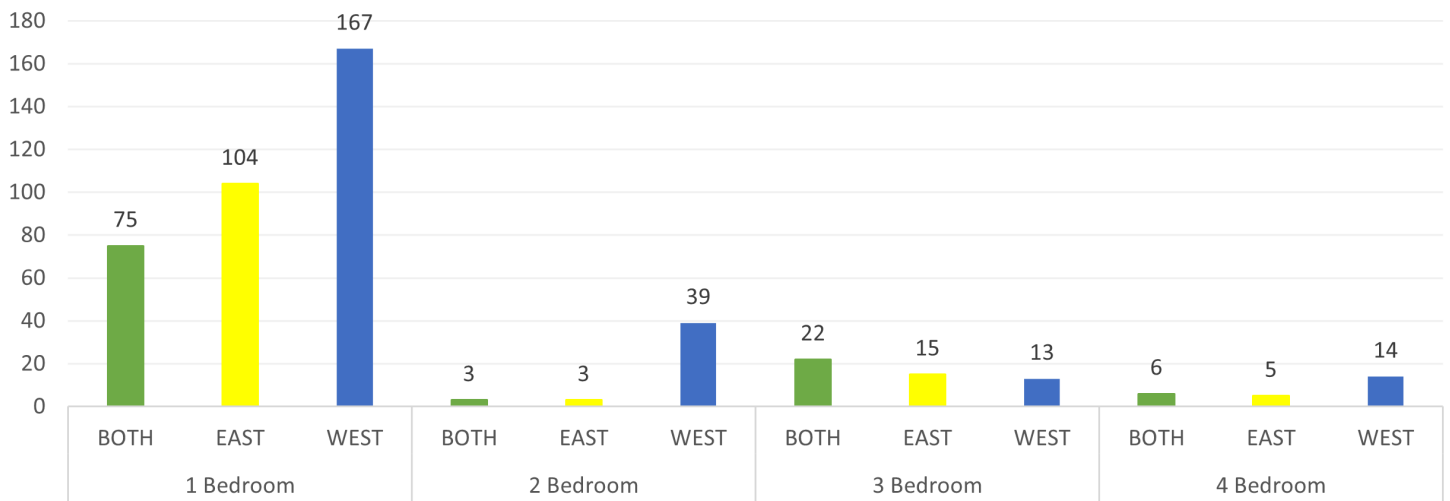
COCHI 5 funding for this year is being used for much needed repairs to 24 units at Georgian Bay Native Non-Profit Homes in Parry Sound. Repairs include health and safety upgrades such as new stairs and walkways, as well as energy efficiency improvements including new windows which will reduce operating costs for each building. OPHI 5 funding is being focused on repairs and retrofits to several seniors buildings within the District. These repairs also prioritize health and safety and energy efficiency upgrades as we continue to prioritize the longevity of our housing stock. This year will also be the first time we utilize the OPHI Support Services component in order to fund a part-time staff to provide tenant outreach and educational seminars.

In addition to our various funding projects, we continue to collect and analyze data relevant to the housing needs in the District of Parry Sound. Our Centralized Wait List (CWL) provides an overview of who is applying for subsidized housing and shows us the high demand for RGI housing in comparison to the relatively low supply subsidized units. The chart below shows the unduplicated year end total of the District of Parry Sound Centralized Wait List for rent-geared-to-income (RGI) housing.



The impact of the pandemic, the housing crisis, and high inflation put increased pressure on our housing teams as many households were unable to find affordable housing. This is reflected in our waitlist numbers, which increased in 2021 and 2022. We are starting to see the total number of applicants decrease again in 2023 and hope this continues as we utilize programs like COHB to help renters maintain affordability in the private rental market.

Number of Applicants on CWL by Unit Size and Desired Location

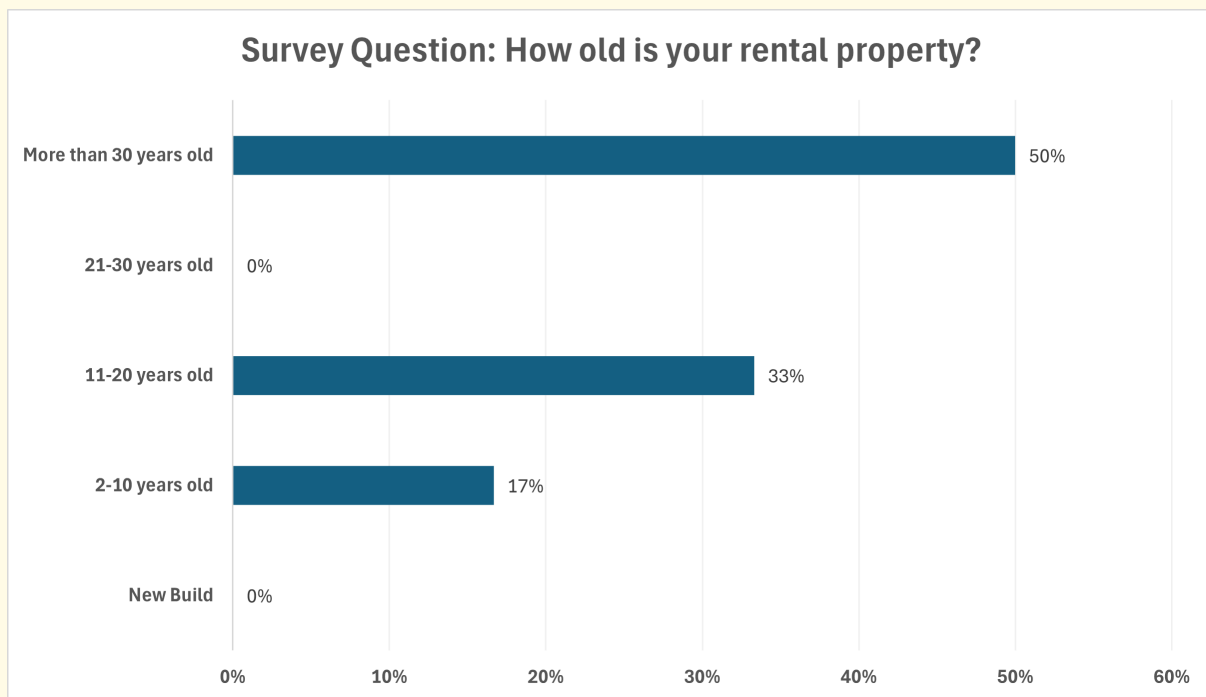


The above chart shows the unduplicated number of CWL applicants, divided by the unit size for which they qualify and the location of the buildings they have selected on the waitlist (whether they have selected buildings on the East or West side of the District, or both). The chart demonstrates the extremely high demand for one bedroom units, especially on the West side of the District, in particular the Town of Parry Sound.

Objective Highlight: To work with non-profit and private sector developers to increase market and affordable homes within the District of Parry Sound.

Landlord Engagement Survey 2023

Our 2023 Landlord Engagement Survey was an opportunity to reach out to local landlords and learn more about their housing portfolios, the issues facing local landlords, and their thoughts on how to address the housing crisis. This generated many meaningful discussions and helped us continue with the development and maintenance of strong relationships with local landlords. The chart below shows that half of survey respondents own rental units that are more than 30 years old. Therefore, repairs and retrofits continue to be a high priority for local landlords. We saw a lot of interest in opportunities to improve energy efficiency and most respondents indicated interest in working with the Parry Sound DSSAB, but only if funding levels were sufficient.



Tenant Services

Our Tenant Services team has been working hard to build strong relationships with our tenants and to provide support wherever possible. One important highlight for the year was revamping our standard leases to be more user friendly and understandable. Our tenants expressed to us that many of the documents they receive are full of legal jargon and outdated acts and that they have trouble understanding their rights and responsibilities as a result. Our new leases take this feedback into account to reduce barriers to understanding for our tenants. We continue to work hard to catch up after years of minimal relationship-building and maintenance completed on units due to restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. We also continue to advocate for increased funding for tenant support services as we assist a growing number of aging tenants with increasing health and mental wellness challenges.

In 2023 our Tenant Services team completed 224 tenant home visits, 194 mediations, and 99 tenant engagements/education sessions. We work hard to stay engaged with our tenants so that we can be receptive to their changing needs.

We have worked hard to reconnect with our tenants and improve our community.



The above photos show some of our tenants participating in educational activities with our Tenant Services staff and a tenant celebrating her 102nd birthday!

Property Maintenance and Capital Projects

In 2023 Building Condition Assessments were completed on all buildings within the Parry Sound District Housing Corporation. This information is critical to ensure both preventative planning can happen, along with planning for capital improvements on the aging housing stock. Asbestos abatement continues to be a priority, and in 2024 an Asbestos Management Plan will be formally introduced.

The Centralized Wait List shows that demand is greatest for 1-bedroom units within the district. With this in mind, we are being more creative about how we can best utilize our existing housing stock to effectively meet the needs of applicants. As a result, in early 2024, three family homes were retrofitted into 4 one-bedroom units, and 2 two-bedroom units. In partnership with the Income Support and Stability division of the DSSAB, the newly renovated units in South River (2 one-bedroom, and 2 two-bedroom) will be utilized for their NEW Transitional Housing Program. The other 2 newly renovated one-bedroom units are located in Burk's Falls and will be rented as Rent Geared to Income (RGI) and offered to those on the Centralized Wait List.

In 2024, windows will be replaced at the 50-unit seniors building in Parry Sound. We continue to consult our Building Condition Assessments to ensure upgrades and repairs are completed as needed.

There remains the challenge of affordability regarding supplies and materials required. The team continues to explore funding opportunities and programs to assist with this challenge. More streamlined communication with tenants will continue to be a priority; ensuring response times, and needs are met. In early 2024, we launched a new software program to be used by both the Tenant

Services program and the Property Maintenance & Capital Project program. This software will modernize the way in which our teams create and complete work orders, inspections, and receive repair requests. The new program will also provide tenants the ability to pay their rent online through the Resident Portal. This will be more efficient for the department and will create a direct line of communication for the tenants.

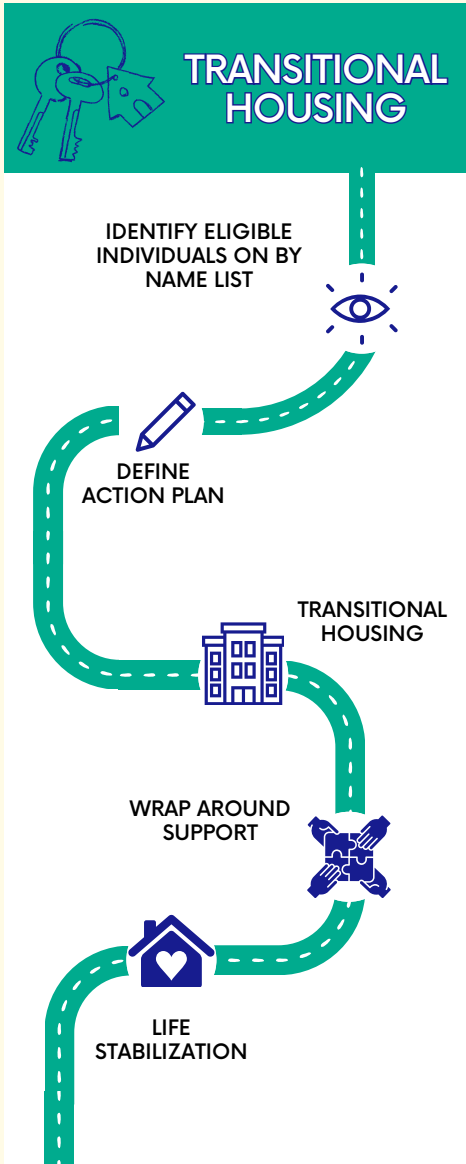
- Newly renovated kitchen of one of the new transitional units in South River.
- These units come with wraparound supports for each tenant. These supports have been designed to help with life stabilization, with the ultimate goal of transitioning tenants to successful long-term tenancies
- Eligible tenants are selected for the transitional housing program from our By-Name List



Income Support and Stability

2023 has been a year of immense change for our Income Support and Stability team. We began weekly meetings between Ontario Works, Housing Stability and Esprit Place Family Resource Centre with the goal of enhancing support for visitors to the shelter and creating safe transitions out of the shelter and into housing. Our goal is to eliminate program silos and work together to create life stabilization plans for service users. We have been working to reorganize these departments to increase efficiency and reduce barriers to support .

Objective Highlight: To focus on creating additional transitional units within the district to assist chronically homeless people.



After completing our Hotel Pilot Project on December 31st, 2022, we identified transitional housing as a service gap in our housing continuum. To address this gap, our Income Support and Stability team has worked with the Parry Sound District Housing Corporation (LHC) to convert two duplexes into four smaller apartments (2 one-bedroom units and 2 two-bedroom units) which will operate as transitional housing beginning in Spring 2024.

This intensive program will serve eligible individuals on our By-Name List (BNL) that require additional support to obtain and maintain safe, stable housing. Each participant will develop an Action Plan with their Community Relations Worker or Case Worker and progress meetings will take place at least once a week.

We understand that the success of program participants is dependent on support from across the community. The program provides wraparound support with the help of several community partners, including the West Parry Sound Health Centre, Community Paramedicine, local food banks, and Employment Ontario programs. These transitional units are located in close proximity to support systems in the town of South River, including our office on Toronto Avenue.

Objective Highlight: To continue to work toward the development of innovative Housing First strategies to reduce homelessness.

As an agency we prioritize learning and growth for our staff and have made it a goal to provide professional development opportunities for our staff so that we are equipped with the most up-to-date best practices of homelessness response. In 2023 we submitted a one-time funding request to MCCSS 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 and 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

speaking 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.

Our teams also completed additional training in Mental Health First Aid in February of 2024 and we continue to train our staff in Trauma Informed Care as we focus our programming on life stabilization and person-centred supports.

By-Name List

64

Active

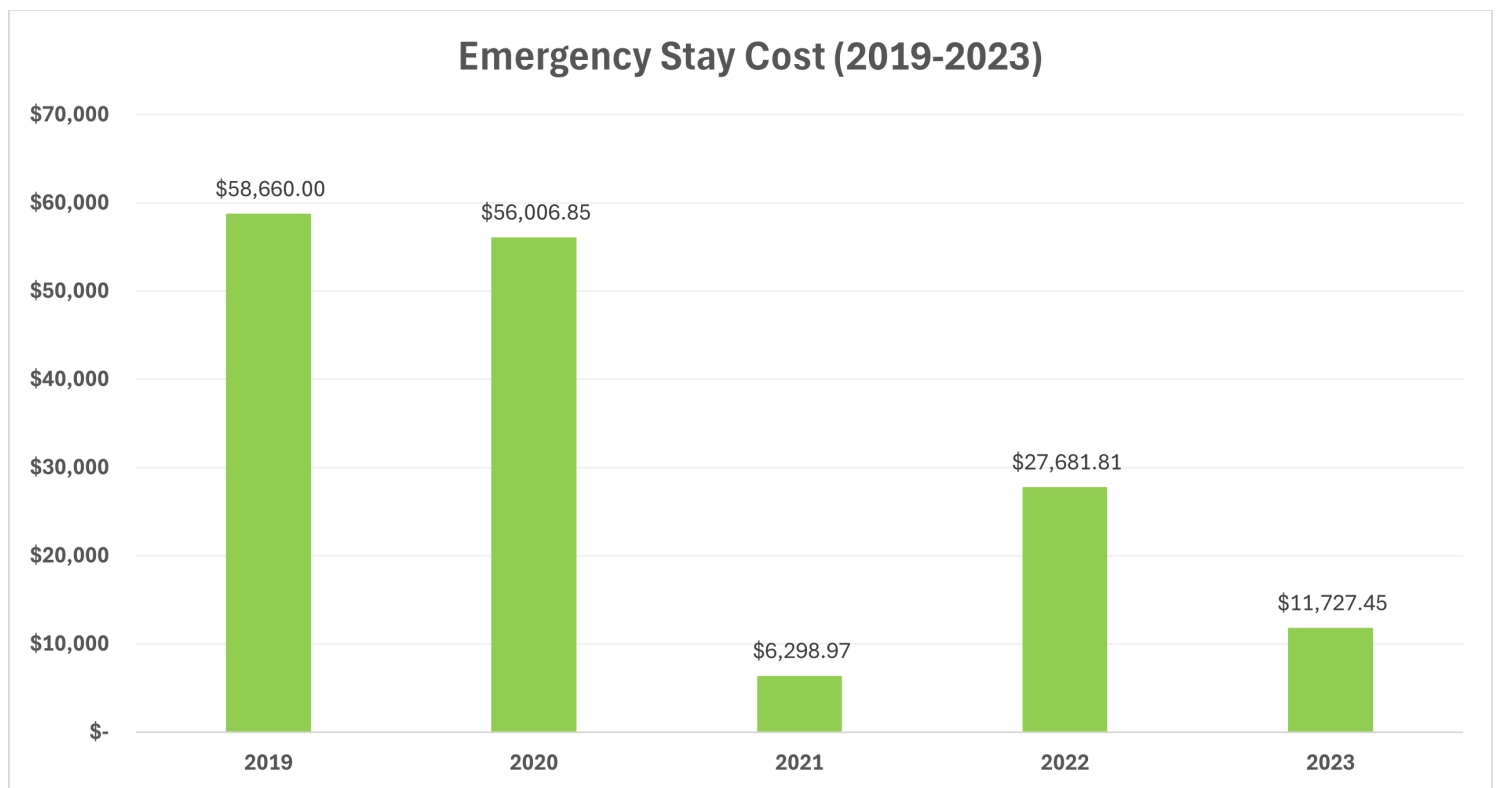
208

Housed

75

Inactive

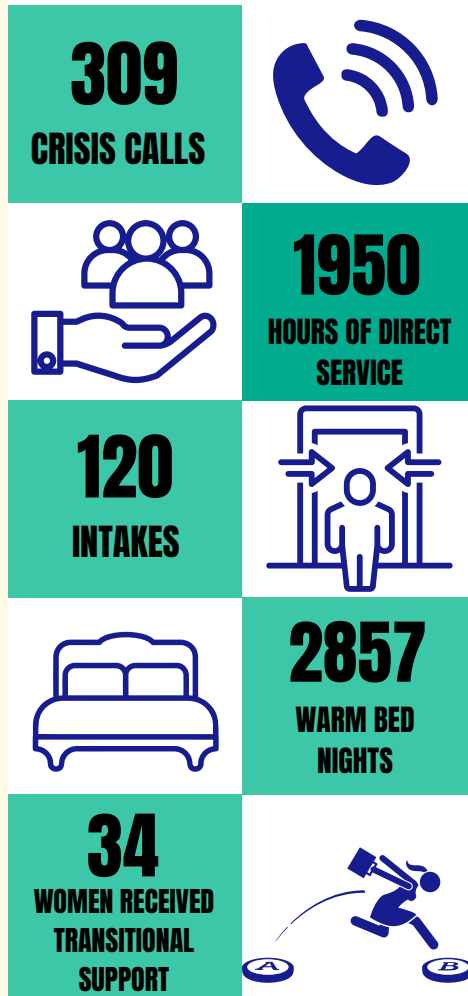
We continue to utilize the By-Name List in order to ensure we have an accurate picture of homelessness in the District. As of December 31, 2023, there were 64 active individuals on the By-Name List, and 75 were listed as inactive. Between its creation in September 2021 and December 2023, we housed 208 people from our By-Name List.



The above chart demonstrates a large reduction in the amount spent on emergency overnight stays for our service users. This is very encouraging as we have worked hard to adjust our services to focus on homelessness prevention rather than just response. Increases in funding and in outreach workers both contributed to this large reduction in our emergency stay cost.

Esprit Place Family Resource Centre

Statistics for the Year 2023



From the Director of Esprit Place:

Esprit Place Family Resource Centre continues to be very busy supporting women and children fleeing violence, as well as women experiencing homelessness from across the District of Parry Sound. Our residential program remained at or over capacity for much of the year, resulting in an 84% capacity rate overall. We also spent 92 calendar days over capacity, making use of all our bed space, and in some cases using hotels for overflow.

During the last year Esprit Place has focused on creating strong partnerships with CMHA to better serve the complex needs of our clients. CMHA has supported an Addiction's Counsellor to be present at the shelter a half day a week. This partnership increased access to timely addiction and mental health support for our clients and has strengthened the relationship with this important community partner. As a direct result of the success of this arrangement, CMHA also committed an additional Crisis Counsellor to work in the shelter for one half day bi-weekly. This individual meets with all new residents to ensure that appropriate referrals are made to CMHA programs and partner programs across the district.

Objective Highlight: To focus on the development and maintenance of relationships with community partners and services across the district.

We work closely with the West Parry Sound Health Centre's Rural Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic to provide mental health support to our tenants and service users. In 2023 this program resulted in 213 client encounters which led to 36 referrals to community partners. These partners include the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), The Friends, Legal Aid, Harvest Share Community Food Programs, Addiction Support Services, The Salvation Army, and many others. These partnerships allow us to provide wraparound supports that help service users reach life stabilization by providing help at a community level rather than an individual level.

We have also partnered with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) to ensure that we are financially prepared to preserve and expand the lifespan of our housing stock. The District of Parry Sound and CMHC share the common goal of preserving existing affordable housing stock and housing Canada's most vulnerable. Therefore, through the National Housing Co-Investment Fund, CMHC has committed \$1,846,045 to support the renewal of our social housing stock over the next three years. We would like to thank CMHC for their support and we look forward to continuing to develop this renewed relationship.

Conclusion

As we continue to grapple with the ongoing effects of the pandemic and the housing crisis we are striving to create innovative solutions to help people in our community find and maintain safe, attainable housing. Our District is changing quickly and so are its needs. We remain committed to providing the best possible support for our service users by utilizing research of best practices, community partnerships and the expertise of our staff to build programs that address our plan priorities and help us to meet and exceed our housing targets.



Appendix A: Annual Reporting Template

Reporting on the Progress of the Plan

Objectives	Outcomes	Measures	Targets	Annual Progress
To focus on creating additional transitional units within the District to assist chronically homeless people.	Increase transitional housing including supports.	Number of transitional units created per year.	Increase by one unit per year.	We have converted 2 family homes in South River into 2 one-bedroom units and 2 two-bedroom units. All 4 of these new units are being used by our Income Support and Stability Division for our Transitional Housing Program.
To work with Non-Profit and private sector developers to increase market and affordable homes within the District.	To improve access to housing for people across all levels of the housing spectrum.	Number of market and affordable homes created per year.	Create 10 affordable units per year.	Due to the age of our local housing stock, funding has been allocated to Non-Profit Housing Providers for repairs that preserve and expand the lifespan of their portfolio to ensure no loss of units.
To utilize COCHI funding to support the sustainability of our Indigenous Non-Profit housing provider.	Working toward a Memorandum of Agreement to increase partnerships, coordinated access to services with culturally based services with Indigenous Partners.	Number of Indigenous rent-geared-to-income units supported by COCHI.	Repair 5 units through COCHI.	COCHI5 funding has been utilized for much needed repairs to 24 Indigenous RGI units. Repairs include energy efficiency upgrades such as new windows to reduce future operating costs. Repairs will also focus on improvements to health and safety, as well as improving the general quality of life for our tenants.
To provide Home Ownership and Ontario Renovates programs to assist homeowners in	To assist with the excessive cost of purchasing a home &	Number of households supported through Home	Complete 2 Home Ownership agreements &	In 2023, Housing Programs issued 6 Ontario Renovates Grants for a total \$24,711.33. Due to insufficient funding, we were unable to complete any Home Ownership agreements

<p>remaining in their homes & supporting those looking to enter the homeowner market.</p>	<p>the costs associated with aging housing stock.</p>	<p>Ownership & Ontario Renovates programs.</p>	<p>8 Ontario Renovates projects over 5 years.</p>	<p>in 2023 but we continue to prioritize repairs to preserve our existing housing stock, including the introduction of an Asbestos Management Plan in 2024.</p>
<p>To continue to work toward development of innovative Housing First strategies to reduce homelessness.</p>	<p>To continue rapid rehousing & providing the supports necessary to achieve long-term housing stability.</p>	<p>CHPI statistics including number of people housed.</p>	<p>Successful interventions as determined by the number of people housed.</p>	<p>Our Housing Stability and Income Support divisions have combined to streamline programming and services. Between September 2021 and December 2023, we housed 208 people from our By Name List.</p>
<p>To focus on the development and maintenance of relationships with community partners and services across the District.</p>	<p>To continue to build and maintain coordination and communication networks to further support clients.</p>	<p>Ongoing commitment to participating in networks.</p>	<p>Continued active participation in community networks.</p>	<p>We continue to work closely with the West Parry Sound Health Centre Rural Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic to ensure access to mental and physical health supports. We also maintain ongoing collaboration with CMHC and with community groups such as Harvest Share, the Salvation Army, Community Paramedicine and the Parry Sound Friendship Centre.</p>