



SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION

REPORT TO:	CHAIR AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS
DEPARTMENT:	Homelessness Prevention and Children's Services
PREPARED BY:	Lorri Kerrigan, Social Planner Melissa Fitzpatrick, Manager
REVIEWED BY:	Valerie Colasanti, General Manager Ronald G. Van Horne, Chief Administrative Officer
MEETING DATE:	November 17, 2021
INFORMATION ITEM:	2021 Homelessness Enumeration

BACKGROUND

The County of Lambton Social Services Division is a designated Reaching Home Community and partners with Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) to meet the objectives of this program. Additionally, the County is the Consolidated Service System Manager (CMSM) for the delivery of Housing and Homelessness Programs for the County of Lambton and receives funding from the Province of Ontario to administer community homelessness programs. Both ESDC and the Province of Ontario required that communities complete a Homelessness Enumeration in 2021. Data collected by ESDC will be used to inform a national profile of homelessness issues and a provincial profile will be compiled by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

DISCUSSION

The County of Lambton conducted a Homelessness Enumeration during the week of June 21-25, 2021. The Enumeration served two key objectives:

1. Participating in the national and provincial Point-in-Time (PIT) Count activities as required by both Employment and Social Development Canada and the province of Ontario; and
2. Conducting a Registry Week which assisted in the creation of a local By Name List to better serve those who are experiencing homelessness with the programming and supports they need to end their homelessness.

The PIT Count provides a snapshot of homelessness in the community and it includes collecting demographic information about people experiencing homelessness using a set of 17 common questions used by both the Federal and Provincial government. The

information collected during Homelessness Enumeration will assist staff in supporting the goals outlined in the County of Lambton's 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan.

Staff from the Social Services Division, the Sarnia Lambton Native Friendship Centre, and the North Lambton Community Health Centre worked throughout the week to assist with the enumeration. Two surveys were used, the PIT Count and the Vulnerability Index—Service Prioritization Decision Assessment Tool (VI-SPDAT).

236 PIT surveys and 210 VI-SPDAT surveys were completed. Tally Sheets were used to count individuals who either declined to complete the survey or were unable to do so. The data collected will be used to inform local program and policy development and deliver appropriate services to those who are experiencing homelessness. The data collected from the PIT Count surveys is anonymous while the data from the VI-SPDAT is person specific.

Key Findings from the Point-in-Time Count

- 236 Individuals and Families (11) were experiencing homelessness
- 61% male
- 37% Female
- 44 - average age
- 78% have lived in Lambton County for more than 20 years.
- 80% were in receipt of OW or ODSP
- 78% were sheltered (shelter or motel)
- 66% identified as white
- 33% identified as First Nations, North American Indigenous Heritage or Metis
- 66% identified a mental health issue
- 78% reported substance use (includes tobacco, alcohol, opiates, etc.)

The number of Individuals and Families experiencing homelessness increased by 193% over the 2018 enumeration. This information will assist County staff and community partners in developing appropriate responses to the needs identified by those experiencing homelessness during the enumeration. Full details of the findings are in the attached report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial impacts associated with this report.

The County of Lambton receives funding from both the federal and provincial governments to administer and deliver homelessness programs. The data collected during the Homelessness Enumeration will assist local decision makers to make relevant and timely decisions regarding the investment in programs and services for those who are experiencing homelessness.

CONSULTATIONS

Consultations have taken place with members of the County of Lambton Housing and Homelessness Advisory Committee, Manager, Homelessness Prevention and Children's Services, General Manager Social Services, Social Services Division staff, Org Code Consulting and Built for Zero Canada Improvement Advisor.

STRATEGIC PLAN

The work of the Homelessness Prevention team is delivered in keeping with the County's Mission to promote an enhanced quality of life through the provision of responsive and efficient services accomplished by working with municipal and community partners.

The activities of the Division support the Community Development Area of Effort #3 in the County of Lambton's Strategic Plan, specifically:

- Advocating in a manner that raises the profile of the County and its needs in order to secure improved government supports, funding, grants, and other resources.
- Developing programs and initiatives that address poverty reduction and promote social belonging.
- Planning for and responding to the ever-changing needs of an aging population, homelessness and retaining young people in the community while supporting their transition to being employed community members and future leaders.
- Actively pursuing joint opportunities with community partners that contribute to the well-being of the Lambton Community.

CONCLUSION

The data collected during the 2021 County of Lambton Homelessness Enumeration using the PIT Count surveys will help to prepare national, provincial, and local profiles of homelessness. This data will also be utilized to create programs and services that meet the needs of those experiencing homelessness. The information collected from the VI-SPDAT will assist local staff to provide appropriate and relevant services to help end chronic homelessness. As the Social Services Division continues work on the goals and objectives of the 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan, information obtained during enumeration serves as an excellent resource and will be used to inform policy and program decision making.