



## SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>WARDEN AND LAMBTON COUNTY COUNCIL</b>
<b>DEPARTMENT:</b>	<b>Homelessness Prevention and Children's Services</b>
<b>PREPARED BY:</b>	<b>Melissa Fitzpatrick, Manager</b>
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<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	<b>May 1, 2024</b>
<b>INFORMATION ITEM:</b>	<b>Homelessness Prevention Department Funding</b>

### **BACKGROUND**

The Homelessness Prevention Department receives funding through three primary sources: The Federal Reaching Home Program (“RH”), the Provincial Homelessness Prevention Program (“HPP”), and Municipal levy dollars. Programs are delivered through purchase of service agreements with partner agencies or are directly offered by Social Services Division staff. The services delivered through RH, HPP, and levy funds have the central mandate to prevent and end experiences of homelessness. The Homelessness Prevention Department has Purchase of Services agreements with 15 agencies in Lambton County to deliver homelessness prevention programs and services through one of these funding streams.

The County of Lambton uses a coordinated and collaborative approach across multiple partner agencies to deliver a broad range of homelessness services. The multi-agency and multi-sector service delivery model focuses on the central objective of preventing and ending homelessness. Services are provided to individuals and families to address housing needs across the entire housing continuum, from those who are experiencing homelessness to those who require help to maintain their tenancy.

### **DISCUSSION**

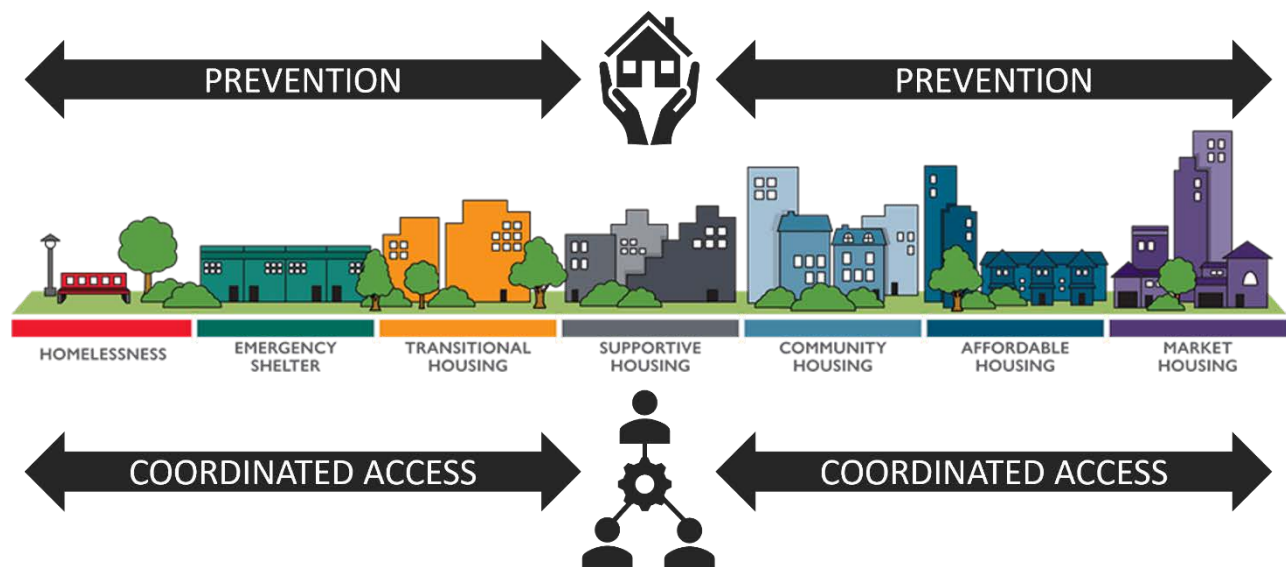
Reaching Home, Canada’s Homelessness Strategy, is a community-based program aimed at preventing and reducing homelessness across Canada using the Housing First approach. It supports the goals of the National Housing Strategy to support the most vulnerable Canadians to maintain safe, stable, and affordable housing, and to reduce chronic homelessness nationally by 50% by fiscal year 2027-28. Lambton County was one of only four new communities in Canada to receive Reaching Home funding in 2020. The use of these funds locally is supported by the recommendations of the Lambton County Community Advisory Board, with senior leadership representation from agencies including

the North Lambton Community Health Centre, Sarnia-Lambton Rebound, the Canadian Mental Health Association Lambton-Kent, the Sarnia Lambton Native Friendship Centre, the Women’s Interval Home of Sarnia Lambton, the Inn of the Good Shepherd, and the County of Lambton.

In March 2022, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (“**MMAH**”) introduced HPP as an amalgamation of several preceding housing and homelessness funding programs. The goals of the HPP align with ongoing work and goals of the County of Lambton’s 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan to ensure everyone in Lambton County has an affordable, suitable, and adequate home. The HPP builds on the provincial government’s mandate to introduce a local By-Name List of individuals and families experiencing homelessness as a tool to measure major indicators such as placements into more permanent housing and retention of housing. The Lambton County By-Name List enables County staff to apply common intake, assessment, referral and matching processes for households experiencing homelessness, furthering the community capacity to follow best-practices and apply equitable housing and homelessness services to those in need.

A smaller proportion of local homelessness services are supported through municipal funds. The flexibility enabled by this funding allows for the delivery of locally significant programming that may not otherwise be available through either Federal or Provincial funding sources.

Homelessness and housing services are provided to individuals and families to address needs across the entire housing continuum.



When considering the cost of addressing homelessness, it is more cost effective to provide people who experience homelessness with the housing and supports they need,

rather than simply provide them with emergency supports through shelters and soup kitchens. Evidence points to the fact that if resources are focused on upstream prevention and support services, we not only achieve better social outcomes, but we also save money. While emergency services will always be necessary because of personal crises, preventing people from becoming homeless in the first place and rehousing people who are already experiencing homelessness is both a humane and cost-effective solution.

### Prevention

Currently, \$2,677,714 is allocated to prevention services that support individuals at risk of homelessness to retain housing and prevent an experience of homelessness. Social Services Division staff along with staff from nine community partner agencies deliver a range of preventative supports and services. Programs include rent and utility arrears assistance, rent supplements to provide a subsidy to help make rental accommodations more affordable, community support workers to provide tenancy supports for such things as apartment upkeep, budget management, landlord mediation, food security and transportation supports for low-income households, legal supports for tenants to maintain housing, and specific programs to prevent homelessness for youth.

Purchase of Service Agreements to deliver these programs are in place with the following community partners:

- The Inn of the Good Shepherd
- Canadian Red Cross
- Family Counselling Centre
- Salvation Army
- St Vincent De Paul
- Neighbour Link
- Community Legal Assistance Sarnia
- Canadian Mental Health Association Lambton-Kent Branch
- Sarnia Lambton Children's Aid Society

### Coordinated Access

Currently, \$200,785 annually is allocated to a community-wide coordinated access system that streamlines the process for people experiencing homelessness to access housing and supports. A coordinated access system is essential to a smarter, faster, more coordinated housing system. Coordinated access is mandatory and an obligation of the Homelessness Prevention team under funding guidelines from both the Federal and Provincial governments.

### Homelessness and Emergency Shelter Services

Currently, \$2,643,024 annually is allocated to services that support individuals and families experiencing homelessness or are accessing emergency shelter. Social Services Division staff along with staff from five community partner agencies offer supports such as emergency shelter, including overflow and the Haven Shelter for youth, staff to support emergency shelter by completing common intakes, a common triage assessment, as well as conduct diversion with the goal to help the individual or household find safe alternative housing immediately. Additionally, funds support street outreach and community navigation to connect individuals to appropriate supports, assistance with transportation, food security, rent supplements, the Housing and Homelessness Resource Centre, and supports for individuals of Indigenous ancestry, youth, and 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals experiencing homelessness.

Purchase of Service Agreements to deliver these programs are in place with the following community partners:

- The Inn of the Good Shepherd
- North Lambton Community Health Centre
- Canadian Red Cross
- Salvation Army
- Sarnia Lambton Native Friendship Centre

In addition to the above funded programs, the Ontario Works Department also assists in the homelessness response by issuing emergency assistance funds and by providing intensive case management supports to individuals in receipt of Ontario Works experiencing homelessness.

### Transitional Housing

Currently \$241,320 is allocated to transitional housing through partnerships with River City Vineyard and Sarnia-Lambton Rebound. Transitional housing refers to a supportive, yet temporary type of accommodation that is meant to bridge the gap from homelessness to permanent housing by offering structure, supervision, addictions and mental health support, life skills, and in some cases, education, and training. It is an intermediate step between emergency crisis shelter and permanent housing. River City Vineyard offers transitional housing to nine individuals and Sarnia-Lambton Rebound supports nine youth through transitional housing at Ohana Landing. In addition, independently, the Inn of the Good Shepherd offers a transitional housing program for up to 20 individuals.

### Supportive Housing

Currently \$1,675,602 is allocated to supportive housing, which combines rental or housing assistance with individualized, flexible, and voluntary support services for people with high needs related to physical or mental health, developmental disabilities, or substance use. It is an option to house chronically homeless individuals with medium to high acuity. Social

Services Division staff along with teams from six community partners, provide standard and enhanced levels of supportive housing to enable successful placements into permanent housing, reduce evictions, and decrease the number of individuals who return to homelessness.

Purchase of Service Agreements to deliver these programs are in place with the following community partners:

- Lambton Elderly Outreach
- Saini Domiciliary Hostels
- Sarnia Lambton Native Friendship Centre
- The Inn of the Good Shepherd
- Canadian Mental Health Association Lambton-Kent Branch
- Sarnia Lambton Children's Aid Society

### Community Housing

Currently \$341,888 is allocated annually to support Community Housing, sometimes referred to as social housing, or housing that is offered at below market rates so that it is more affordable. This funding allows staff to provide support to tenants and their families. They also advocate on behalf of individuals to improve quality of life and maintain housing.

Additionally, the Housing Services Department provides significant resources and support through both rent supplements and community support workers who assist tenants in remaining housed to community housing.

### Affordable Housing

Currently \$893,922 is allocated to Affordable Housing. Housing is affordable when a household spends less than 30% of its pre-tax income on adequate shelter. Largely, these funds are allocated to rent supplements to several private landlords and non-profit providers throughout the County of Lambton.

Additionally, the Housing Services Department provides significant resources and support for affordable housing.

This following chart summarizes the allocation of program funds for the Homelessness Prevention Department:

Program Revenue (2024)	(\$)
County Levy	1,827,558
Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP)	5,615,600
Reaching Home (RH)	1,772,769
Total Revenue	9,215,927

Program Expenditures (2024)	(\$)
Prevention	2,677,714
Homelessness & Emergency Shelter	2,643,024
Transitional Housing	241,320
Supportive Housing	1,675,602
Community Housing	341,888
Affordable Housing	893,922
Coordinated Access	200,785
5.8% Program Administration (data analysis, IT, social planning, research, general operating expenses)	541,673
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>9,215,927</b>

\*The above allocation reflects only the Homelessness Prevention Department funding. Additional dollars are allocated in the Ontario Works and Housing Services departments to homelessness and housing programs.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no new funding impacts to the County of Lambton as a result of this report. The Reaching Home Program is funded 100% by the Government of Canada, the HPP is funded 100% through the provincial Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and the 2024 levy funds are approved through the annual budget process.

### **CONSULTATIONS**

Consultations have taken place with members of the County of Lambton Housing and Homelessness Advisory Committee, the Lambton County Community Advisory Board, the General Manager of Social Services, the Manager of Homelessness Prevention and Children's Services, and the Manager of Housing Services.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN**

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 Housing and Homelessness Advisory Committee (HHAC) was established in 2020 and is a collaborative body with representation from many service providers who, to various degrees, offer supports and services to individuals and families experiencing homelessness. A coordinated and collaborative approach across 15 community partner agencies is utilized in Lambton County to deliver a broad range of homelessness supports. The 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan identifies the clear need to invest in upstream preventive solutions as much as possible. Investment into preventative services leads to drastically improved client-level outcomes and cost savings both within and beyond human and social service agencies. County of Lambton staff, in close partnership with local service providers, will continue to work to meet the drastically elevated need in Lambton for housing and homelessness services.