



**10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan**



**The County of Lambton  
2017/18 Progress Report**



## Acknowledgements

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## Message from the Warden

On behalf of Lambton County Council, it is my pleasure to introduce the 2017/18 Progress Report on the County of Lambton's 10-year Housing & Homelessness Plan (2014-2023).

County staff continues to work diligently alongside dozens of community agencies and partners in pursuit of the theme "Housing First, Housing Right". Supported by a 10 year, \$40 million commitment from County Council, we continue to realize significant results that reflect the County's commitment to homeless prevention, housing stability, and sustainability and the County's vision for a Caring, Growing, and Innovative Community.

As you read through this report, I trust you will be encouraged by the work being accomplished locally and will feel challenged to share with us in our goal of making opportunities available that will enrich our quality of life and the future prospects of our community.

Sincerely,



Bill Weber  
Lambton County Warden

## Message from the Medical Officer of Health

I am so pleased to see this progress report on the County of Lambton's 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan. Great strides are made in incremental steps, while this report shares achievements that have happened over the last year, it is really highlighting partnerships that have been building toward these outcomes for the last several years.

Housing that is safe and suitable, as well as accessible and affordable is a critical determinant of health. I am especially happy to see a growing recognition of the importance of housing for mental health, demonstrated by efforts to partner with the Canadian Mental Health Association and other community organizations to support people with mental illness and addictions. These kinds of cross-sectoral connections will be critical in building sustainable housing capacity and other innovations for healthy housing for Lambton residents now and in the future.



Dr. S. Ranade  
Medical Officer of Health

## Background

In 2013, the County of Lambton unveiled its 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan (2014-2023)<sup>1</sup>. This plan, required under the *Housing Services Act, (2011)* and the Ontario Housing Policy Statement, is designed to guide the work of the municipality in achieving its vision of providing safe and suitable housing to all residents of Lambton County. It includes twenty recommendations organized under three strategic directions:

- Homelessness Prevention
- Housing Stability
- Sustainability

Recognizing that safe, stable and affordable housing is an important determinant of health and well-being, the County of Lambton is committed to ongoing and long-term planning that improves, enhances and maintains services that prevent homelessness and stabilize housing in a variety of circumstances. The municipality relies on strong, collaborative and innovative partnerships with dozens of local agencies working together to help accomplish its vision. The County of Lambton also prioritizes an outcomes-based approach to measuring the collective impact of the activities undertaken in the plan.

Building upon the previous Housing and Homelessness Plan, the County of Lambton is currently working on updating the Housing and Homelessness Plan based on the shifting community needs. In this update, the County of Lambton is engaging County divisions, community partners and community input to assist in the update in early 2019.

### COUNTY OF LAMBTON VISION

Caring  
Growing  
Innovative

### COUNTY OF LAMBTON MISSION

Lambton County is a community dedicated to economic growth, environmental stewardship and an enhanced quality of life through the provision of responsive and efficient services and collaborative efforts with our municipal and community partners.



# Strategic Direction 1

## Homelessness Prevention Recommendations, Progress & Achievements

Investigate the development of a Rapid Rehousing Program for those who are homeless.

Canadian Mental Health Association Lambton-Kent and the River City Vineyard received Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) funding to assist individuals coping with mental health and addictions obtain stable housing and community supports.



Canadian Mental Health Association  
Association canadienne pour la santé mentale



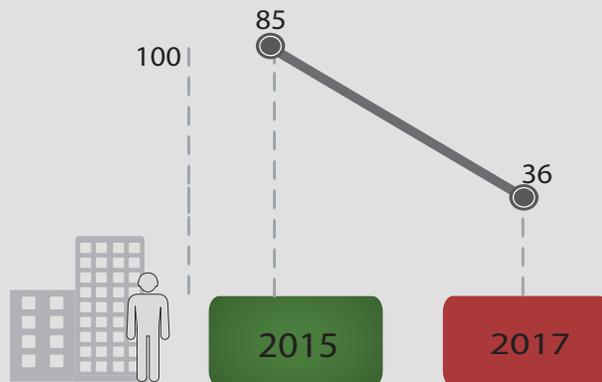
to date the total days of homelessness prevention for individuals involved is **9,490**

**100%**

of participants reported that since enrolling with the pilot:

- They feel safer in their housing
- Their housing situation has improved
- They have had an increase in community and mental health supports
- They have received intensive care management

Through the partnership between CMHA and Bluewater Health, BWH has been able to report that there has been a significant decrease in emergency room visits for the clients enrolled in the pilot.



In the year prior to the CHPI program, the 16 respondents resulted in an average of 85 visits/year to the emergency room. In 2017, there was a report of an average of 36 visits/year, which is less than half the original volume.

31% clients reduced their emergency rooms visits by 5+ days/year, which is a significant savings to the health care system.

75% of the clients, reduced their emergency rooms visits by 1 visit/year.

\*This data includes both mental health related and physical health visits.



71 individuals have used the services to date

At intake, individuals were assessed as to their housing over the last 3 years:



chronically homeless



at risk of homelessness

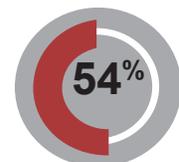


13 properties used for housing in Sarnia



22 individuals in Transitional Housing

The program resulted in:



of participants being able to obtain a lease on their own without a co-signer

## Support homelessness prevention services delivered by Community Support Workers in the County of Lambton's Housing Services Department.

- Community Support Workers continued to assist tenants with issues including: medical concerns, addictions, Landlord and Tenant Board hearings, pest infestation, hoarding, budgeting, cleanliness and assistance with forms and safety. An additional Community Support Worker was hired Fall 2017 to meet community demands.

The average caseload for CSW's is 121 clients per month

- The Sarnia-Lambton Response Collaborative's Annual Conference: Aging Together- A Community Response, was held April 2017. More than 100 people attended the conference to hear about opportunities for collaboration with caring for seniors in the community. Conference participants reported the following outcomes as a result of attending the conference:



95% had opportunities to network throughout the conference.

93% learned something that will help them in their daily work.

93% found opportunities to collaborate with other agencies in the future.

## Support innovative solutions to end homelessness.

- Ten (10) households were assisted under the Home Preparation Fund Program in 2017. Assistance was provided for 9 bed bugs infestations and 1 case of excessive filth.
- 23 individuals were assisted in 2017 through the Homemakers Services Program, which supports at risk members of the community to maintain their housing and independence. Given the positive impact and growing need, approval has been given by Council to increase the program in 2018 pending approval from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.



### Municipal Residency Benefit (MRB)

In 2017, there were 1348 requests for Municipal Residency Benefit (MRB). A total of \$968,878 was issued in an effort to prevent homelessness, a 7% increase from 2016. There were 941 households that were assisted for housing loss prevention and 396 households were assisted in moving forward on the housing continuum- moving from either emergency sheltered, provisionally accommodated or unsheltered into long-term housing.

28% eviction prevention, a 35% decrease from 2016

26% homeless prevention, a 4% increase from 2016

22% housing retention, a 29% increase from 2016

12% utilities reconnected, a 25% decrease from 2016

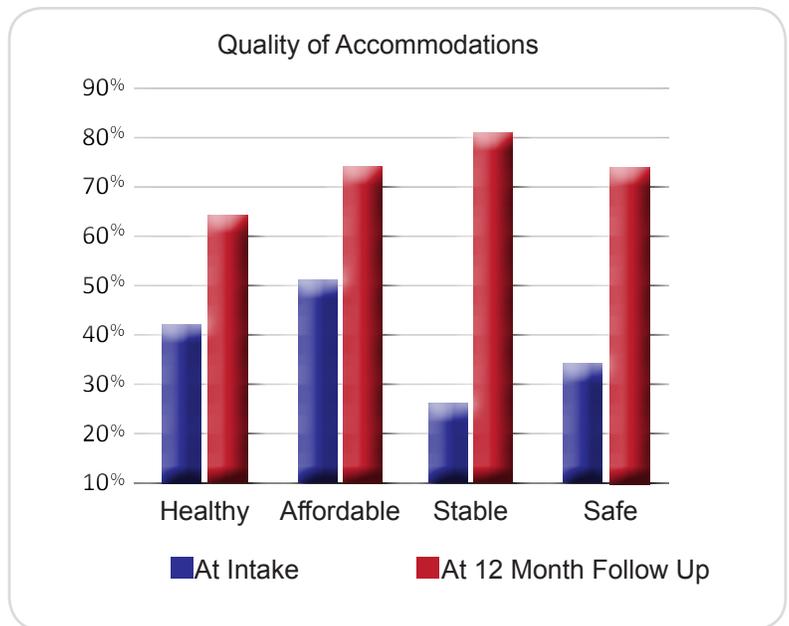
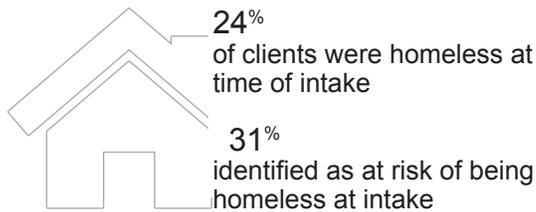
## Develop community systems that promote an integrated, cross-sector approach to ending homelessness.

CHPI funding is distributed to over 15 service providers within the community that work with individuals facing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. Since inception of the CHPI pilot programs in 2016, several indicators have demonstrated that the CHPI pilots have a positive impact on the following service gaps in community: service navigation, mental health and addictions, rural transportation, and supportive housing for seniors.

- Indicator 1: Participants were moving forward along the housing continuum.
- Indicator 2: Housing situations were improving for individuals.
- Indicator 3: Housing stability for participants increased as quality of housing improved.

The following information has been collected by all five pilot organizations from the beginning of the pilots in 2016. The illustration below outlines the significant impact the pilots have within the community as these organizations assist individuals moving forward on the Housing Continuum away from homelessness. The impacts of the pilots in assisting individuals in finding affordable, stable, healthy and safe accommodations were shown to be significant.

599 individuals have participated in the pilots as of February 2018. These individuals have reported the following data based on their quality of accommodations at intake, in addition to a 12 month follow up:



### The Housing Continuum in Sarnia-Lambton:



36% of individuals, served by one or more of the pilots, have moved forward on the Housing Continuum within one year of intake. 33% identified an improvement in their new accommodations and 17% have moved from being homeless to finding accommodations in a Private Market Rental.

## Support community agencies that provide programs and services to individuals at risk of becoming homeless.

✓ The County of Lambton maintains existing agreements with community agencies that assist with Rent and Utility Banks, Emergency Shelters and Food Banks. The overall investment for these services in 2017 was \$106,693.

- 19, 415 units of food were provided, a 3% increase from 2016
- 40, 061 meals were served in the soup kitchen, a 6% decrease from 2016
- 685 people were housed in emergency shelters, a 9% decrease from 2016

The County of Lambton Housing Services Department provides property management to over 800 units within the County of Lambton. The following statistics were reported for 2017:

- 1,185 households on assistance as of December 2017
- 17.8 average number of families housed monthly
- 333 households on the wait list as of December 2017

\*The County of Lambton proudly partners with Women's Interval Home to provide funding to survivors of domestic violence via the Portable Housing Benefit.



households receiving Survivors of Domestic Violence Portable Housing Benefit\*

average wait times by the unit size:



one bedroom  
18+ months



two bedroom  
24+ months



three bedroom  
18+ months



✓ The Hub, a program operated through Rebound Sarnia-Lambton, offers a collaboration of community services and support for youth aged 16-24. The purpose of the Hub is to assist youth in navigating the system. Since opening its doors in February 2017, the Hub has been a valuable service for youth in the community.

In 2018, the County of Lambton invested \$75,000 in funding to assist the Hub continue programming within the County.



# Strategic Direction 2

## Housing Stability Recommendations, Progress & Achievements

**Increase supports to maintain housing for the following priority populations; seniors, special needs, special priority, formerly homeless persons and victims of domestic violence.**

 The County of Lambton is working in partnership with the Sexual Assault Survivors' Centre Sarnia-Lambton to provide survivors of human trafficking with options to receive a housing benefit. The Anti-Human trafficking Community Support Fund provides an opportunity to increase support for survivors to obtain and retain housing. Funding will allow eligible households timely access to affordable housing by decreasing the wait times for housing assistance.

The County of Lambton operates three long-term care homes and two Adult Enrichment Centres (AECs) to care for seniors' psychological, social, cultural, and spiritual needs. The following are the long-term care services by the numbers for 2017:



### Long-Term Care Homes:

- 467 residents served
- 128 new residents

### Long-Term Community Services:

- 107 individuals served in AECs
- 5,885 meals served

 Home for Good (HFG) is a homelessness-focused program, which will provide housing assistance and support services to people within priority homelessness areas. The County of Lambton successfully obtained \$861,028 in funding for supportive housing programs in funding via application and lobbying. In addition, the County of Lambton received \$1,029,000 HFG funding for the purpose of 7 youth transitional supported units.

 In 2017 a new partnership between two CHPI funded organizations, Lambton Elderly Outreach and Canadian Red Cross, was initiated to assist in the transportation to and from Country Manor Estates Retirement Home. The aim of the partnership is to decrease the amount of social isolation the senior population is experiencing in rural parts of the county. The CHPI funded program led by LEO assisted 13 seniors who were homeless or at risk of homelessness find a long term home.

### Lambton Elderly Outreach

#### Subsidized Retirement Home Program

**48**

seniors have been serviced as of February 2018:

**11**

were homeless

**18**

came from ALC beds experiencing homelessness

**36**

had a disabling condition

From participating in the pilot program:

**13**

have transitioned out of the program:

**46%**

moved into Long Term Care

**23%**

moved into Independent Living

**78%**

reported a decrease in their emergency department visits

9 participants that have exited the program completed the one year survey tool:

**100%**

- of clients sustained housing in their first choice
- resulted in feeling safe and connected to their home and community
- result in their housing situation improved
- result in feeling satisfied with eating healthy, maintaining personal hygiene and enjoying meaningful social opportunities

## **Increase cooperation, participation and leadership at the local level to increase the affordable housing stock and the supportive housing stock.**

The development of affordable housing has continued with 86 households supported through the Operating Component of the Investment in Affordable Housing (IAH) Program.

The Nasr Townhomes Project at 747 Copland Road is a 14 unit, one-bedroom townhome project which was completed in late 2017 and new residents have moved in effective January 2018.

Three additional builds have been approved for Forest, Petrolia and Sarnia and will be ready for occupancy Fall 2018.



## **Create private developer and home builder roundtable to develop a plan to increase private involvement in increasing affordable housing across the County of Lambton.**

- ✓ In August 2017, the Ministry of Housing announced Lambton's Social Infrastructure Funding in the amount of \$678,900. In November 2017, staff explored partnerships with community agencies to deliver the Operating Component of the Social Infrastructure Funding (SIF) program based on a Housing First model to priority groups identified in the Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy and the County of Lambton's Housing and Homelessness Plan. This Housing First approach required successful community agencies to support people who are homeless to find and keep housing and to administer the rent allowances.

## **Support a comprehensive continuum of services to meet the needs of all individuals and families with a focus on Housing First, Housing Right.**

- ✓ Domiciliary Hostels provided long-term and transitional housing to 36 individuals, a 29% increase from 2016.
- ✓ CHPI funded pilots, CMHA and RCV, align with the County's *Housing First, Housing Right* focus and are highlighted in more detail on page 4.

## **Create a task force to investigate innovative solutions that address the needs of individuals with developmental delays and physical challenges have in order to allow them to remain at home as long as possible.**

- ✓ The County of Lambton continues to participate in the Special Needs Working Group which focuses on the services of high needs young adults, long-term care residents, and hospitalized patients with serious behavioral and neurological conditions. The Sarnia- Lambton Special Needs Working Group includes membership from:

- Community Care Access Group
- Long Term Care Homes
- Community Living Sarnia-Lambton
- Southern Network of Specialized Care
- March of Dimes
- The County of Lambton
- Erie St. Clair Local Health Integration Network
- Bluewater Health
- Ministry of Community and Social Services
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- Pathways Health Centre for Children

**Advocate and work with other levels of government for changes in legislation and regulations that support initiatives and direction of this plan and which build momentum on existing programs that have proven to be successful in Lambton County.**

- ✓ Representatives from the County of Lambton continue to have an active role in the Ontario Municipal Social Service Association (OMSSA) Service Manager Housing Network which provides opportunities to network with municipalities across Ontario.
- ✓ The Community Homelessness Initiatives Network (CHIN) continues to look at growing difficulties of housing in the Sarnia-Lambton area. In 2017, a sub-committee has been formed, the Housing Availability Committee, to discuss current housing trends in regards to the lack of housing availability and affordability in the Sarnia-Lambton area.

**Initiate a Working Group to explore the creation of culturally appropriate Off-Reserve Aboriginal Housing.**

- ✓ Housing Services has been contacted by Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services to discuss a partnership opportunity for supportive off-reserve affordable housing in collaboration with Sarnia-Lambton Native Friendship Centre.

**Work with community agencies, non-profit providers and other sectors of government to increase the number of and improve access to accessible and/or supportive housing.**

- ✓ The Age Friendly Sarnia committee has developed an action plan to meet the needs of the aging population in Sarnia. One of the eight essential elements to meet this goal is to focus on housing and housing options that meet the needs and circumstances of the aging population. The County of Lambton continues their role as a partnering agency and has since recommended the development of an internal Age-Friendly Community Planning working group, for the purpose of collaboration and joint planning across County divisions and departments.

**Expand housing options for lower income households.**



The Homeownership Program issued \$363,665 to assist 23 households with down payment assistance, moving these households along the Housing Continuum to Home Ownership. There was a 53% increase in households assisted from 2016 .



The County of Lambton partnered with Habitat for Humanity for a second year with the Lambton Builds Program which involves the construction of a local home using a volunteer crew consisting of individuals in receipt of Ontario Works. 9 volunteers completed the build:



**56%** of participants indicated an increase in their self-esteem from participating in Lambton Builds.

**67%** of participants felt confident in finding employment from the skills they obtained from participating.

# Strategic Direction 3

## Housing Sustainability Recommendations, Progress & Achievements

**Support the development of new housing stock or retro-fit of old stock, which should include sustainable materials and technology where appropriate and economically feasible.**

- ✓ Lambton Renovates Program dispersed \$269,358 to assist 16 households with household repairs for making homes more accessible through modifications.
- ✓ In 2017, the County of Lambton committed \$4M in capital dollars to maintain and preserve existing housing assets.
- ✓ Social Housing Improvement Program (SHIP) is a capital program that aims to improve and preserve the quality of social housing. Work continued with the Non-Profit Housing Providers to address critical repairs and renovation work that will extend the long term physical sustainability of the social housing projects.

**Increase housing options and improve access to accessible and/or supportive housing for special needs through: innovative partnerships; maintaining and preserving existing housing assets; proactive measures to seize opportunities to improve housing stock.**

- ✓ Through the Habitat for Humanity Handy Man Program, 39 households were approved for repairs in order to assist homeowners maintain their homes and increase their housing stability. The demand for these services were increased by 130% from 2016. The following feedback was reported through a customer satisfaction survey:

100% surveyed agreed that they would use the services again

100% stated the project was completed to their satisfaction

- ✓ The County of Lambton proceeded with the CMHA proposal in the amount of \$644,955 for Housing Allowances to Maintain Successful Tenancies which would assist approximately 30 individuals with a monthly housing allowance of approximately \$350.00 to promote housing stability for a period of up to six years. In addition to receiving the housing allowance, CMHA will assist clients to locate and secure housing, provide case management, coordinate services, provide advocacy and assistance to maintain housing.



This was the second year that the County of Lambton invested \$80,000 to Lambton College's Construction Fundamentals Board of Governors Certificate which provided 15 individuals with low income an opportunity to increase their ability to find employment in the field of construction.

**33% of the students found employment after participating in the program**

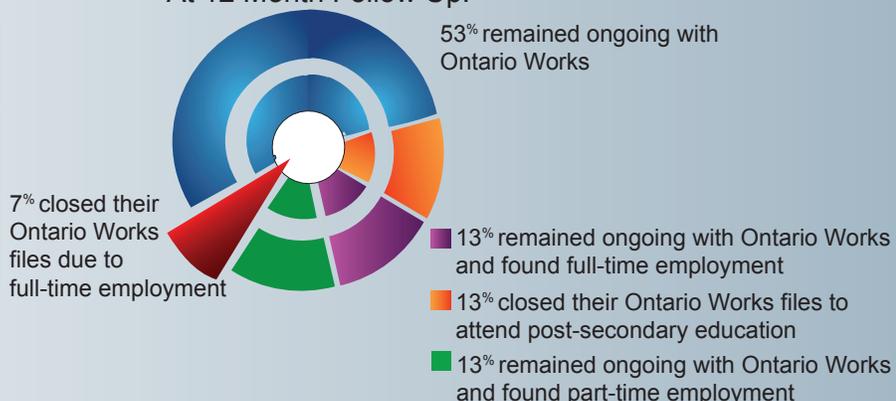
After Completion of the Program:

100% of the students reported an increase in their sense of motivation

100% indicated the course increased their confidence in abilities

50% indicated participating in the course increased their overall self-esteem

At 12 Month Follow Up:



## Create supports for enhancements to the housing and homelessness sector.

✓ Lambton Public Health offers a range of services throughout the County of Lambton:

- Lambton Public Health staff provided outreach at 34 Mobile Market locations in 2017.
- The Student Nutrition Program supports food costs for 42 school-based programs that feed more than 8,000 Lambton students every day.
- Lambton Public Health staff are part of the Youth Hub Committee and have been providing support to develop data collection methods and co-ordinate other Public Health support/services for the Youth Hub.

✓ To support individuals in attaining positive life outcomes, including maintaining their home, a short term counseling program was piloted in 2017 in partnership with the Family Counselling Centre. As a result of the positive results an investment of \$40,000 has been committed over the next 2 years.

The findings of the pilot were positive including:

- 91% having an increase in the hopefulness for their future
- 84% experiencing an increase in the awareness of their problem and tools to resolve it.



The CHPI-funded pilot led by North Lambton Community Health Centre assisted 409 new clients for the 2017 year in order to assist individuals to navigate the system to prevent homelessness. (see page 13 for Community Impact)



The CHPI-funded pilot led by Canadian Red Cross Society Sarnia-Lambton provided transportation to a total of 211 clients to date, which is nearly double that of 2016. There have been over 1990 rides offered to members of the community.

## Seek innovative partnerships to build new housing stock.

✓ The Guthrie Drive Affordable Seniors Project will see Habitat build five one-floor, accessible seniors' housing units. Seniors would rent-to-own, paying rents that were 80% of the average market rent for Lambton County. This senior's project is the first of its kind built by a Habitat affiliate in Canada.



## Canadian Red Cross-LIFT: Housing and Homelessness Transportation Pilot

### Trip Breakdown:

1990 rides provided to date

- 106 food security
- 118 housing related
- 421 wellness related
- 709 medical related

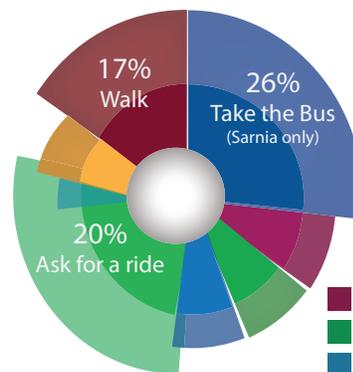
Other appointments not listed were related to: life skills, government office appointments, correctional service and professional services



### Client Impact:



Without the services from Red Cross, how would you have attended your appointment?

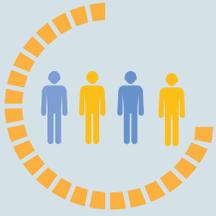


- 14 % Cancel Appointment
- 14 % Reschedule Appointment
- 14 % Unsure of what they would do
- 11 % Take a cab
- 2 % Not show up to appointment

## North Lambton Community Health Centre (NLCHC) Community Connector Program

NLCHC generated 389 referrals to 26 agencies

196 referrals were made to NLCHC from other agencies



In 2017, there were **4X** the participants than in 2016



33% of the clients had their concerns resolved through the Connector Program

### Service Agency Coordination Survey

Agency providers reported that if their agency had not worked with the Connector Housing project, their clients would not:



73% have the tools or resources they need



100% have received the services they needed



43% have known what other services were available to help

100% of respondents agree that:

The project has helped to streamline housing supports for the people their agency works with

The connector housing project has helped to support the people their agency works with

### Participation Service Coordination Evaluation

Individuals reported that if it had not been for the program they would not:



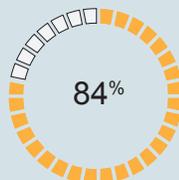
56% have the tools or resources they need



64% have received the services they needed



77% have known what other services were available to help



84% feel more confident about their direction in life since working with the program.



## Increase community awareness about the range of issues related to housing and homelessness and to develop solutions that meet the needs of the community.

- ✓ In 2017, Circles completed 17 Bridges Out Of Poverty workshops, which helps professionals and community members to better understand the challenges and strengths of people living in poverty.

## Support community inclusion by engaging the community in the housing and homelessness conversation and develop solutions that meet the distinct needs of Sarnia-Lambton.

- ✓ The Community Paramedicine Program pilot, involving Lambton County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Bluewater Health, started August 2017. The purpose of the program is to decrease emergency room visits from frequent users, which allows these individuals to remain in their homes while accessing necessary medical treatment. The pilot provided funding for 12 patients to receive medical care.
- ✓ As part of the Province's efforts to end chronic homelessness by 2025 and the long-term goal to end homelessness, the Ministry of Housing is introducing a provincial requirement to conduct local enumeration of people experiencing homelessness. The Social Planning Department has collaborated with over 11 community agencies to strategically plan the implementation of the enumeration in May 2018.

## Develop municipal capacity to support the housing continuum.

- ✓ Funding of \$275,000 was approved to deliver mental health supports within County-owned social housing and for at risk individuals in receipt of social assistance as a strategy to assist with supporting housing stability and improved health and well-being which will be implemented in 2018.

## Support the County of Lambton's role as Service Manager for Housing and Homelessness.

- ✓ The County of Lambton continues its role, designated by the Ministry of Housing, as the Service Manager and remains responsible for delivering the Housing and Homelessness Plan.

## Update the Housing and Homelessness Plan.

- ✓ The Housing and Homelessness 10 Year Plan will be updated early 2019. The County of Lambton is engaging with community partners and County Divisions in order to make the updates to the plan to capture the community's needs.

Special thanks to Community Partners:

Sexual Assault Survivors' Centre Sarnia-Lambton  
Canadian Mental Health Association Lambton-Kent  
Sarnia-Lambton Children's Aid Society  
Lambton College of Applied Arts and Technology  
North Lambton Community Health Centre  
Canadian Red Cross Sarnia-Lambton  
Neighbourhood Link Sarnia-Lambton  
Women's Interval Home

River City Vineyard  
Salvation Army Sarnia  
Sarnia-Lambton YMCA  
St. Vincent De Paul  
Inn of the Good Shepherd  
Lambton Elderly Outreach  
Habitat for Humanity Sarnia-Lambton