

2018 REPORT CARD

THE COUNTY OF LAMBTON

10-YEAR HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS PLAN (2014-2023)



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A special thank-you to our community partners:

Canadian Mental Health Association, Lambton-Kent
Canadian Red Cross, Sarnia-Lambton
Habitat for Humanity, Sarnia-Lambton
Lambton College of Applied Arts and Technology
Lambton Elderly Outreach
Neighbourhood Link Sarnia-Lambton
North Lambton Community Health Centre
River City Vineyard
Sarnia-Lambton Children's Aid Society
Sarnia-Lambton YMCA
Sexual Assault Survivors' Centre, Sarnia-Lambton
St. Vincent De Paul
The Inn of the Good Shepherd
The Salvation Army, Sarnia
The Women's Interval Home

The County of Lambton's Internal Housing & Homelessness
Plan Implementation Committee:

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MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER OF SOCIAL SERVICES

BACKGROUND

In 2013, the County of Lambton developed a 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan (2014-2023). This plan, required under the Housing Services Act, (2011) and the Ontario Housing Policy Statement, reflects the County of Lambton's vision of: Caring, Growing, Innovative. In keeping with the vision of the Social Services Division, "to make opportunities available that enrich lives and build a thriving community" this plan strives to provide a range of appropriate housing options as well as programs and services that support the housing continuum.



The plan includes twenty-four recommendations organized under three strategic directions:

1. Homelessness Prevention
2. Housing Stability
3. 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 stabilizes housing in a variety of circumstances. The county relies on collaborative and innovative partnerships with local agencies to help move strategies forward. The County of Lambton values an outcomes-based approach to measuring the collective impact of the activities undertaken in the plan.

¹ Corporation of the County of Lambton. (2014). County of Lambton Housing and Homelessness Plan 2014-2023. Wyoming, ON: Corporation of the County of Lambton. Retrieved from: <https://www.lambtononline.ca/home/residents/housingservices/Documents/Housing%20and%20Homelessness%20Plan%202014-2023.pdf>.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION ONE:

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION

2018 RECOMMENDATIONS, PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- ✓ Homelessness prevention programs are supported through Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) funding. CHPI-funded programs include domiciliary hostels, rent/utility banks, emergency shelters, soup kitchens and food banks.

In 2018, \$2,252,651 in CHPI funding was spent on homelessness programs and services:



749 unique individuals were housed in emergency shelter;
an increase of 9% from 2017

3,040 requests for assistance through homelessness programs

23,473 units of food were provided at the food bank;
a 17% increase from 2017

40,781 meals were served at the Soup Kitchen;
a 2% increase from 2017

\$181,450 was provided to 274 households to assist with paying
rent and utility arrears

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

- ✓ In 2016, five Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) funded pilots were developed to address the following service gaps within Lambton County: service navigation, mental health and addictions, rural transportation and supportive housing for seniors. In 2018, one of the mental health and addictions pilots and the supportive housing for seniors pilots became funded through Home for Good (HFG).

(See page 5 for community impact)

The following indicators highlight the positive impact these supports have on individuals who were experiencing homelessness or were at risk of homelessness:¹

Indicator 1: Movement along the housing continuum:

49% of the individuals served through one or more of the five agencies moved forward on the housing continuum within 4 months of intake.



The Housing Continuum in Lambton County:



Indicator 2: Increased housing stability:

An assessment of participants' housing for affordability, stability, safety, health and permanency indicated an improvement in housing qualities that support housing stability.



Indicator 3: Improved housing situations:

Of the individuals that received service from one or more of the Pilot programs:

32% of the participants reported that their new housing situation is permanent

28% reported that their housing situation had improved from the time of intake

35% reported feeling safe in their new housing situation, compared to 30% at intake

¹ The following information has been collected by all five participating organizations (Lambton Elderly Outreach, River City Vineyard, Canadian Red Cross Sarnia Lambton, Canadian Mental Health Association Lambton-Kent, and North Lambton Community Health Centre) since 2016 and is based on 4-month follow-up data. Due to the staggered nature of participants' intake into each pilot, follow-ups have been completed with 78% of the participants to date.



- ✓ The Hub, a program operated through Rebound Sarnia-Lambton, offers a safe space with a collaboration of community services and supports for youth aged 16-24. In 2018, the County of Lambton provided \$60,000 in funding for the continuation of programming within the county. Since opening in 2017, the Hub has been a valuable service for youth within the community.

Rebound reported the following community impacts since opening in 2017: ³

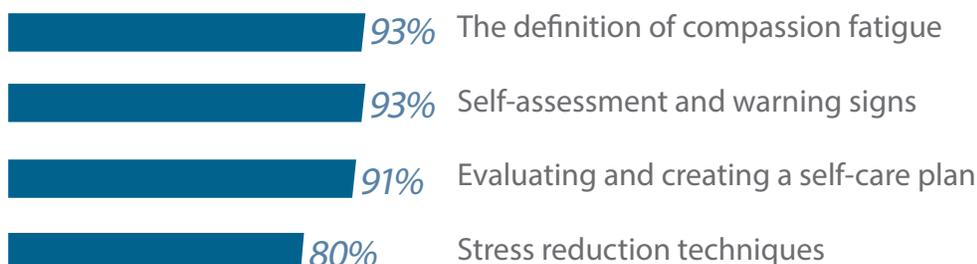
- 271 youth intakes
- 5,773 total visits
- 4,917 meals served
- The emergency food bank was accessed 3,724 times
- 65 individuals accessed the nurse practitioner for services
- 37 individuals found stable employment or enrolled in education
- 29 youth found stable housing

Support homelessness prevention services delivered by Community Support Workers (CSWs) in the Housing Services Department

- ✓ Community Support Workers continue to provide outreach and support to tenants to improve their quality of life and maintain rental housing. Caseloads consist of hard to serve individuals with complex needs. Case planning to prevent homelessness included supports related to Landlord & Tenant Board hearings, pest infestation, hoarding, budgeting, cleanliness, assistance with forms and safety concerns.



- ✓ 105 individuals attended the annual Sarnia-Lambton Home Response Collaborative Conference: *The Cost of Caring: How to Defeat Compassion Fatigue*. Conference participants reported an increased knowledge in the following learning objectives:



³ https://reboundonline.com/sites/default/files/2017-2018%20SL%20Rebound%20Annual%20Report_1.pdf



Support innovative solutions to end homelessness

- ✓ \$4,073 was issued to 6 households were assisted under the Home Preparation Fund Program. Assistance was provided for 4 bed bugs infestations and 2 households with excessive filth.
 - ✓ Recent regulatory amendments made to Ontario Regulation 367/11 under the Housing Services Act, 2011 (HSA) allowed the introduction of a locally funded portable housing benefit. The County of Lambton implemented a Portable Housing Benefit which provides applicants with the ability to choose rental units based on their specific needs and required supports. Having this flexibility expands housing choices and offers the opportunity of affordable housing options where none existed before. There are currently 19 households in receipt of the portable benefit.
 - ✓ In 2018, Lambton County Divisions including Social Services and Lambton Public Health provided support and consultation to the following community partners for innovative solutions to end homelessness:
- ✓ The Municipal Residency Benefit (MRB) is a homelessness prevention strategy delivered by Ontario Works staff for recipients of Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program in Lambton County. Caseworkers advocate and negotiate with entities such as landlords, utility companies, emergency shelters or motels and other community agencies in order to support people in retaining current housing or securing new housing. In 2018, 1,951 households were assisted through the provision of MRB assisting with items such as utility arrears and connection fees, rental arrears or last month's rent, furniture, moving costs and pre-treatment for pest control.
 - ✓ An RFP was issued for Housing Allowances to Maintain Successful Tenancies to create new housing opportunities using allowances to offset the cost of rent. The Housing Services Department asked for proposals that would best support housing stability and improve health and well-being, delivered by community agencies which could leverage their existing resources to provide appropriate supports. The RFP was awarded to CMHA and the program began April 1, 2018. Currently there are 27 individuals receiving support through this program.

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

- ✓ The CHPI-funded pilot led by River City Vineyard continued to assist individuals with mental health and addiction issues to obtain stable housing and community supports. In 2018:



43 new individuals participated in the program

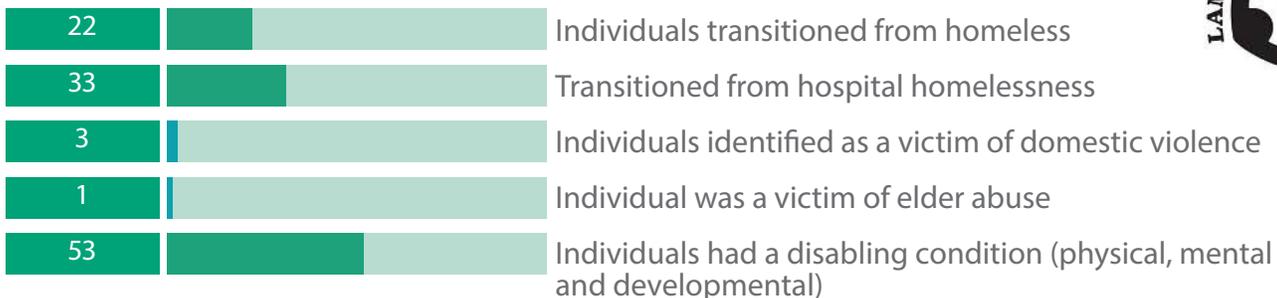
22 individuals moved into transitional housing managed by River City Vineyard

43 individuals were able to find housing on their own without a co-signer

- ✓ The Retirement Home Support Program (RHSP) assists individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness secure and maintain housing with appropriate supports. Offered through Lambton Elderly Outreach, and funded through the rent supplement component of the HFG program, RHSP provides low income individuals access to supportive housing that is safe, equitable and sustainable.

To date, 68 vulnerable persons have participated in the program which includes 53 seniors over the age of 65 and 15 adults with disabilities. Without subsidy, these individuals would not have been able to afford or maintain housing at a retirement home.

Demographics of Participants:



Since 2016, 22 individuals have transitioned out of the program:



2018 Outcomes reported by Lambton Elderly Outreach:

- Sustained housing for clients
- Improved transitions into Long-Term Care
- Improved patient flow
- Reduced ED visits

Retirement Home Subsidy can prevent extended hospital stays while individuals are waiting for a more permanent location. This has the potential to provide savings to the health care system¹:



The cost of a hospital stay (ALC patient) = \$358.35/day = \$130,797.75/year

The cost of Retirement Home Subsidy= \$26.92/day = \$9,825.80 /year/RHSP recipient

\$120,972 savings to the local healthcare system per individual



¹ https://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/attachments/costofhomelessness_paper21092012.pdf

HOUSING STABILITY

2018 RECOMMENDATIONS, PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- ✓ County Council has supported staff recommendations for the creation of affordable housing development through the Investment in Affordable Housing Program (2014 Extension), Social Infrastructure Program and Home for Good. In 2018 this added an additional 48 affordable housing units in Lambton County. Builds are underway for 26 additional units that will be completed in 2019. Support Services are, or will be, available in 21 of these units.

Advocate and work with other orders of government for changes in legislation and regulations that support initiatives and directions 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 Services Association through the Service Manager Housing and Homelessness Network meetings.
- ✓ The Community Homelessness Initiative Network continues to look at issues impacting homelessness in Lambton County. The Affordable Housing Working Group, which is a subcommittee, continues to address the lack of affordable housing within Lambton County.

Initiate a Working Group to explore the creation of culturally appropriate Off-Reserve Aboriginal housing

- ✓ The Housing Services Department has continued to work with the Ontario Aboriginal Housing Support Services Corporation regarding the creation of off-reserve affordable housing units.

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

- ✓ Through the collaborative partnership between Lambton Elderly Outreach and Canadian Red Cross, transportation was provided to 26 residents of Country Manor Estates for medical, wellness and social isolation appointments. Access to these particular services and supports are critical in sustaining housing for vulnerable seniors and persons with disabilities.
- ✓ The Homemakers Program supported 23 at-risk households maintain their housing and independence through homemaking services. This provided the necessary supports to ensure these individuals were able to retain their current housing.

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 continues to work in partnership with the Sexual Assault Survivors' Centre Sarnia-Lambton to provide survivors of human trafficking with options to receive a portable housing benefit.
- ✓ The Home for Good Program is a homelessness focused program which provides housing assistance and support services. Funded through the Home for Good fund capital grant of \$980,000 construction has started on 7 affordable housing units, which will provide youth transitional housing.
- ✓ The County of Lambton operates three non-profit Long-Term Care homes and two Adult Enrichment Centres (AECs) to address the psychological, social, cultural and spiritual needs of seniors in care.

Throughout 2018:

- 443 individuals resided in the three Long-Term Care homes
- The Adult Day programs provided services to 122 individuals and extended the days of service in both Petrolia and Sarnia. The expanded services were made possible through a \$50,000 grant from the Erie St. Clair LHIN under the Ontario Dementia Strategy.



Expand housing options for lower income households

- ✓ The Homeownership Program assisted 12 lower income households purchase affordable homes by providing down payment assistance in the form of a forgivable loan. The total expenditures were \$85,259
- ✓ Lambton Builds saw the completion of *The Guthrie Drive Affordable Seniors Project* using a volunteer crew consisting of individuals in receipt of Ontario Works. This provided 7 volunteers an opportunity to develop on the job training and to increase their employment related skills. As a result of these increased skills, individuals in receipt of Ontario Works receive an opportunity to pursue employment opportunities in the field of construction.

The 2018 volunteers reported the following impacts:



Skill Development

100% of individuals reported that through their participation in Lambton Builds, they feel confident about the prospect of employment.

57% of participants reported that they completed at home renovations after participating in Lambton Builds. Confidence levels in abilities increased by 25% from the start of the program.

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

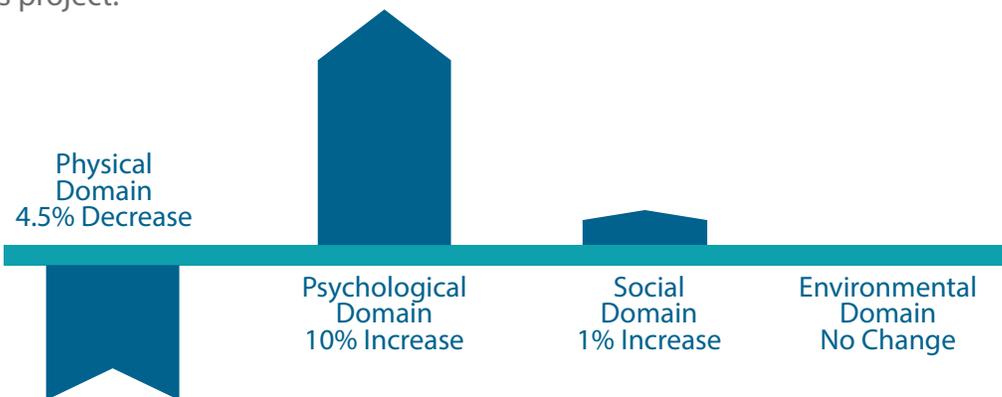
The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale is administered before and after participating in the Habitat Build. By asking participants 10 questions the assessment allows some understanding of their level of self esteem. 86% of participants had increased scores in the second assessment, indicating an increase in their self-esteem from participating in Lambton Builds.





The World Health Organization Quality of Life (WHOQOL-BREF)

The WHOQOL-BREF assesses individual's perception of their position in life in four domains: Physical Health, Psychological, Social Relationships and Environment. Prior to the build, the average quality of life score was 79; upon completion the average score was 80, a 1.25 increase. There was the most significant impact in the Psychological domain. It is not known if the physical domain was impacted due to the physical labour involved in this project.



Personal Impacts

- 86% of volunteers reported an increase in social and communications skills
- 100% reported increased friendships
- 86% reported an increased sense of being included
- 81% reported an increase in employment related skills such as confidence in abilities, motivation, and vocation related skills
- 69% reported increased health benefits such as mental health and well-being and physical health

Long-Term Impacts

In order to measure the long-term impacts of Lambton Builds, updates on the participants are completed 12 months after completion of the build.

In 2017, 8 volunteers participated in Lambton Builds. One year after completion:

- 3 individuals closed their OW files as a result of employment
- 1 individual closed their files; reason unknown
- 1 individual remained ongoing however enrolled in an adult education program
- 2 individuals remained ongoing however obtained part time employment
- 1 individual was transferred onto ODSP

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/or transitional housing for 38 vulnerable adults. These individuals had limited financial resources and required varying supervision and support with the activities of daily living. Without these services, these individuals would face significant barriers finding suitable housing.
- ✓ The HFG-funded pilot led by the Canadian Mental Health Association Lambton-Kent provided 30 individuals coping with mental health and addictions with stable housing and wrap-around supports.

A total of 38 individuals have been involved in this program. Within 4 months of enrollment 89% of the participants had moved along the housing continuum into a private market rental.



2018 Outcomes reported by CMHA:

- One individual, with an extensive history of episodic homelessness, has been permanently housed since July 2016. As a result, this individual has reported a reconnection with family members.
- One individual, with a history of frequent hospitalizations, has been permanently housed since July 2016 with no reported hospitalizations since.
- One individual, with a history of chronic homelessness and addiction concerns, has been housed since August 2016. This individual received 3 years of sobriety in December 2018.



The program has resulted in a large decrease in emergency room visits:

One year prior to the program, the 38 participating individuals had visited the emergency room a total of 113 times.
In 2018, there were 5 total visits from these same 38 individuals.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION THREE:

SUSTAINABILITY

2018 RECOMMENDATIONS, PROGRESS AND 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

- ✓ The Housing Services Department is currently in Year 4 of a 10-Year Capital Asset Management and Funding Plan to address the aging social housing stock. In 2018, \$4M in capital dollars were spent addressing building components including substructure, shell, common area interiors, services (mechanical, electrical, plumbing, HVAC) site work and unit interiors.
- ✓ The Ontario Government announced funding opportunities for the GreenON Social Housing Program. In April 2018 the County of Lambton had been selected to receive a funding allocation of \$2,226,834 under the program. Unfortunately in July 2018, the County of Lambton received notification advising the Ontario Government canceled the Cap and Trade Program and terminated the GreenON Social Housing Program. The County of Lambton did not receive the funding allocation for greenhouse gas reducing retrofits in the social housing apartment buildings. Staff have since reviewed the originally planned projects and determined which projects could be included in the 10-Year Capital Asset Management and Funding Plan.

Seek innovative partnerships to build new housing stock

- ✓ Habitat for Humanity received \$264,910 of IAHE funding through the Rental Housing Component for a deferred homeownership program specific for seniors. This project added 5 new affordable housing units to assist in meeting the needs of low and moderate income residents. This five unit complex was the first of its kind build for a Habitat affiliate in Canada.



Maintain and preserve existing housing assets and seize opportunities to renovate and improve other housing stock for the purpose of affordable and special needs housing

- ✓ Lambton Renovates provided \$309,340 in funding to assist 16 low income homeowners to make repairs or improve accessibility in their homes.
- ✓ Habitat Handyman, a second component of the partnership with Habitat for Humanity, completed home repairs for 38 households. The completion of these repairs assisted homeowners to maintain their homes and increase their housing stability.

 39% of these were low income households

 66% of these households were needing the repairs for more than one year

 44% of the clients reported they do not know what they would have done without Habitat Handyman's help.

Client Satisfaction Reported:

- 100% reported the services were completed to their satisfaction
- 100% reported they would use Habitat Handyman again
- 100% reported that the services were completed in a reasonable time

Advocate for enhancements to the Housing and Homelessness sector

- ✓ The CHPI-funded pilot led by Canadian Red Cross Society Sarnia-Lambton (CRC) aims to increase reliable and safe transportation to individuals experiencing homelessness or that are at risk of becoming homeless.



CRC reported the following outcomes for 2018:

170 new clients requested services.

CRC provided 1,559 rides for participants of the program (425 were for rural community members).

96% of the survey participants reported that they were able to stay in their current housing due to CRC transportation services.

100% of the survey participants reported increased access to daily necessities.

✓ As housing is recognized as a fundamental condition for health, Lambton Public Health (LPH) continues to offer services and supports to the Housing and Homelessness sector:

- LPH staff provided outreach supports 56 times at Mobile Markets:
Dental Hygienists and Dental Assistants provided dental education, resources, and supplies (toothbrushes, floss, etc.)
Public Health Inspectors provided food safety information
Registered Nurses provided general health information, resources, and referrals to community agencies
- LPH began to work toward a community drug and alcohol strategy.
- In 2018 there were 4 cold alerts and 6 heat warnings issued through the Extreme Temperatures Stakeholders Group (ETSG). The ETSG, chaired by LPH, consists of community agencies and organizations working with vulnerable populations. The purpose of the ETSG is to share ideas, resources, and practices that protect vulnerable individuals from temperature extremes. The ETSG focuses on preventative actions to prevent severe cold and heat related illnesses. During Heat Warnings and Extended Heat Warnings, temporary cooling center locations are opened by community partners (e.g. recreation centers, health centers, and other public buildings). LPH staff includes information on the cooling center locations in each media release issued.

✓ In 2018, The CHPI-funded pilot led by North Lambton Community Health Centre (NLCHC) assisted 200 individuals to navigate the system as a means to prevent homelessness through the Community Connector program.

NLCHC reported the following outcomes for 2018:



1,596 client issues were resolved

Top 5 Resolving Issues:

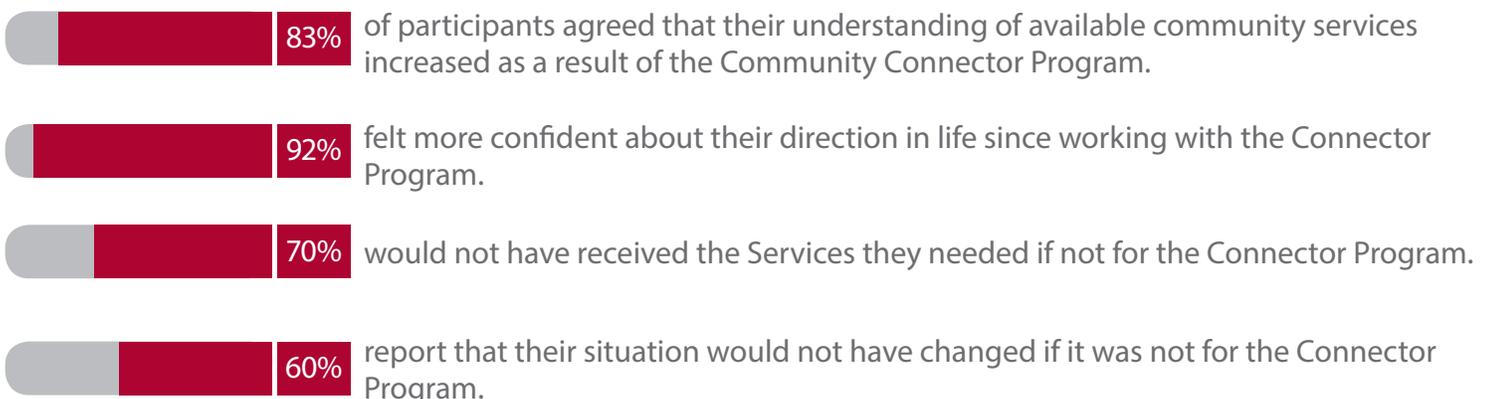
1. Request for Advocacy
2. Visit for Advice on Community Resources
3. Visit for Assistance with Forms
4. Inadequate Housing
5. Financial Problem

869 referrals were made to service provider within Lambton County

Top 5 External Referrals:

1. Lambton County Housing
2. Inn of the Good Shepherd
3. Ontario Works
4. Landlords
5. Red Cross

Individuals reported the following information in the NLCHC Participant Service Coordination evaluation:



Develop municipal capacity to support the housing continuum

- ✓ The Social Services Division issued an RFP to develop a Mental Health Supports Program. This was awarded to CMHA and has resulted in an Integrated Mental Health Support Program that is set to begin in April 2019. The Canadian Mental Health Association and the County of Lambton's Social Services Division will work collaboratively using an integrated team approach to support individuals that are marginalized and vulnerable with complex issues.

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 housing and homelessness services and supports within Lambton County.

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 2018 Lambton Public Health provided a "lunch and learn" style presentation about the social factors that impact health to 12 clients that use the Community Connector program at West Lambton Community Health Centre.
- ✓ Lambton Circles® is a transformative, community collaborative, poverty alleviation strategy. Since inception in 2009, Lambton Circles® has supported 173 families through three Circles: one in partnership with Lambton College and the other two in the Sarnia community. In 2019, through a partnership with North Lambton Community Health Centre, a fourth Lambton Circles® was launched in Forest to support the rural surrounding communities.



Key Outcomes to Highlight:

- 68 Lambton Circles® Leaders have reached their goal of self-sufficiency
- Lambton Circles® has been supported by over 149 Allies, over 50 community volunteers and community partners who assist with meals provision, childcare and advocacy
- 231 children have participated in Lambton Circles®
- Circles Children's Programming focuses on activities that enhance a child's life experience, removes barriers and fosters the development of future goals and dreams

Lambton's Circles® 2018 Outcomes:

- 64 Active Circles Leaders
- 71% Leaders with increased Earnings
- 56% Leaders with increased Education
- 61% attending or have graduated from post-secondary
- 7 Leaders reached self-sufficiency
- 12 Circle Leaders graduated from Lambton College in 2018, careers include: Nursing, Information Technology, Developmental Services Worker, Social Services Worker, Child and Youth Counselor, Personal Support Worker and Office Administration

Support community inclusion by engaging the community in the Housing and Homelessness conversation

- ✓ The Age-Friendly Sarnia Committee continues to meet and work on action plans for the needs of the aging population in Sarnia. This includes a housing subcommittee focusing on 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 developed an Internal Age-Friendly Community Planning Working Group.
- ✓ CHPI-funded pilot agencies complete an annual Partnership Self-Assessment Tool (PSAT) that measures inter-agency relationships. This allows for a greater understanding of community impact. Results from the 2018 PSAT indicate positive impacts as a result of these partnerships:
 - 100% Development of valuable relationships
 - 100% Enhanced ability to affect public policy
 - 100% Enhanced ability to meet the needs of constituency or clients
 - 100% Increased contribution to the community
 - 80% Development of new skills
- ✓ A comprehensive enumeration of the County of Lambton's homeless population was conducted in May 2018. A total of 10 community agencies assisted with data collection within 5 municipalities of Lambton County.



Key Findings:

- 123 Individuals identified as homeless.
- 20% Indicated that they were episodically homeless.
- 37% Identified as chronically homeless.
- 28% Were youth between 16-24 years.
- 36 Years was the average age.
- 63% Identified as white.
- 27% Identified as Indigenous/Aboriginal.
- 56% Reported Ontario Works as their source of income.
- 22% Reported ODSP as their source of income.
- 9% Reported that they were employed.
- 67% Identified their gender as male.
- 39% Reported staying at someone else's place.
- 21% Reported staying at emergency shelter.
- 9% Reported staying at a motel or hotel.
- 14% Indicated that addictions and/or substance abuse was the leading factor to their homelessness.



Report written and developed through the collaboration of Maggie Elliott, Social Planner and the County of Lambton Internal Housing and Homelessness Plan Implementation Committee