

BRUCE COUNTY

Housing & Homelessness Plan Progress Report

2023



BRUCE
county



Background and Vision

Over the past year, council, staff, community partners, non-profit providers, local municipalities, and the private sector have worked diligently to advance housing initiatives through ongoing partnerships, collaboration and community participation.

In 2019, we developed Bruce County's Housing & Homelessness Plan Update to reevaluate the housing goals and actions.

Housing & Homelessness Plan Strategies

In conjunction with community partners and residents we identified five strategies:

- Increase Affordable Housing Stock
- Explore Rural Mobility Model
- Better Understand the Needs of Youth and Indigenous Groups
- Increase Housing Support Options
- Maintain a Coordinated System and Strong Partnerships





2023 Highlights



\$45,000

distributed to 3 homeowners for energy efficiency and accessibility upgrades

Over \$243,536

distributed for first or last month's rent, rent, and utility arrears

\$25,000

distributed for Westario Power's Low Income Energy Assistance program (LEAP)

39 Applicants offered community housing in 2023

25 Bruce County residents receiving the Canada Ontario Housing Benefit

27 Bruce County residents receiving the Municipal Housing Allowance, as well as the addition of the Saugeen Shores Municipal Housing Allowance that added 10 households to the program

Completed research entitled Exploring Options and Opportunities Seniors Home Sharing in Bruce County



Became a Build for Zero Community



Completion of Bruce County's First Annual Housing Forum with elected official and municipal staff



In partnership with Grey County, continue to develop a coordinated response to homelessness through the Grey Bruce Homelessness Prevention Steering Committee

In partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Association maintained a Housing Support Worker to prevent evictions for tenants at risk of homelessness



Coming in 2024

Completion of the 2024-2034 Housing & Homelessness Strategy, includes stakeholder forums, key informant interviews, community surveys etc.

Continuation of the Housing Stability Fund to assist households with first or last months rent, rent arrears, utility arrears and/or moving expenses

Continuation of the Homelessness Response Steering Committee to enhance the community homelessness response system

Continued development of a Coordinated Access System

Development of a Rural Response to Homelessness model

In partnership with the Community Development Office, host a 2nd annual Housing Forum for local council and municipal staff

Housing Action Plan

Additional Residential Unit (ARU) pilot project



Progress on Addressing Actions

A healthy, coordinated and integrated housing and homelessness system relies on the efforts of all partners to help advance solutions. Based on community feedback regarding the current housing issues facing Bruce County, the following five goals that were identified are listed below:

Increase Affordable Housing Stock

Bruce County understands there is a lack of available housing stock throughout the region. Bruce County is committed to working with the non-profit housing providers and the private sector as well as lower-tier municipalities to increase the affordable housing stock, including supportive housing, in Bruce County.



Accomplishments

- \$2 million in capital repairs, including funding to two Non-Profit Housing Providers
- Provided pertinent information to council members and municipal staff during a one-day Housing Forum

What's Next

- Engage with municipal councils to seek local commitment to prioritize surplus land for affordable housing development
- Continue to promote the development of additional residential units in existing homes and new builds
- Respond to regular inquiries from developers who want to build affordable housing
- Continue to work with municipalities to leverage flexibility for affordable housing development
- Build on the 2023 Housing Forum and offer a second annual forum for municipalities

Explore Rural Mobility Model

Bruce County has limited transportation options either within communities or between communities. Although solving the transportation concerns is outside the scope of the Plan, we will work with community partners, private and public sector employers, and lower-tier municipalities to discuss transportation barriers and solutions.

What's Next

- Continue to bring the voice of the Plan to discussion on integrated mobility and transportation



Better Understand the Needs of Youth and Indigenous Groups

As suggested in the Bruce County's 2018 Homelessness Enumeration, youth and Indigenous groups were identified as priority groups for further exploration and deeper understanding.

Accomplishments

- Ongoing collaboration with our service sector partners serving the needs of Youth and Indigenous Groups to build capacity for the research project to better understand the needs of Youth and Indigenous Groups

What's Next

- Beginning phases of a research project to understand the needs of Youth and Indigenous groups



Increase Housing Support Options

Bruce County will review and determine how best to meet the needs of individuals and families at greatest risk and help them access services quickly, by exploring and leveraging supportive housing options.



Accomplishments

- Initiate discussions with health partners regarding the development of a rural supportive housing
- Continued support of the Homelessness Response Steering Committee to develop strategies to increase supportive housing
- Continued partnership with VON Aging at Home Supportive Housing in community housing units

What's Next

- Partner with Bruce County Community Paramedics to provide opportunities for outreach for people experiencing homelessness
- Staff are partnering with community agencies to offer regular outreach programs across the region

Maintain a Coordinated System and Strong Partnerships

Navigating the system can be a confusing and daunting task. Bruce County and its community partners are aware of the need for a coordinated system with a no wrong door approach. Bruce County is committed to strengthening collaborative partnerships to streamline and transform services as well as explore a Housing First Approach for rural communities to assist with rapid rehousing and ending homelessness.



Accomplishments

- Continued representation on the Homelessness Response Steering Committee, Community Safety and Wellbeing - Housing Action Table, and Bruce Grey Poverty Task Force
- Community Support Program to provide support for residents on the By-Name list while they wait for housing
- Housing Support Program proving support for tenants at risk of eviction

What's Next

- Maintain collaborative partnerships with community partners and health care provider to increase access to housing supports



Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP)

The vision for the Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) is a better-coordinated and integrated service delivery system that is people-centered, outcome-focused and reflects a Housing First approach to prevent, reduce and address homelessness in communities across Ontario.

Components

- **Housing Stability Fund**
To assist individuals, couples and families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless to secure affordable permanent housing in Bruce County.
- **Sheltering And Homelessness Supports**
The YMCA Grey Bruce Housing Program provides sheltering and support services for the homeless and those at risk of homelessness.
- **Community Support Coordination**
Provide financial counseling and supports related to affordable housing to individuals who are at risk of eviction.

HPP's Objectives include:

- To assist people experiencing homelessness obtain and retain housing
- To assist people at risk of homelessness to remain housed

In 2023

\$1,536,900

of provincial funding was spent on these programs to assist residents of Bruce County who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.





Summary

Bruce County has remained committed to its vision and has cultivated and developed strong partnerships within the community to broaden awareness and acceptance of the need for more affordable housing.

A special thank you to County Council, County staff, local municipal councils and staff, and all of our community partners and developers for their dedication, commitment, and innovation that is resulting in Better Housing Choices for all for our residents who call Bruce County Home.





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