Staff Report to Council – for Information

Title: Housing Services 2024 Q3 Update

From: Tina Metcalfe, Director Human Services

Date: November 21, 2024

Report Number: HS-2024-029

Report Purpose:

This report is for information.

Report Summary:

As the Service System Manager, Bruce County is responsible for the delivery and administration of provincially mandated social and affordable housing programs, as well as initiatives to prevent and address homelessness.

Within the continuum of housing, the Housing Services division focuses on programs and services related to deeply affordable housing and housing stability supports, emergency shelter and homelessness solutions.
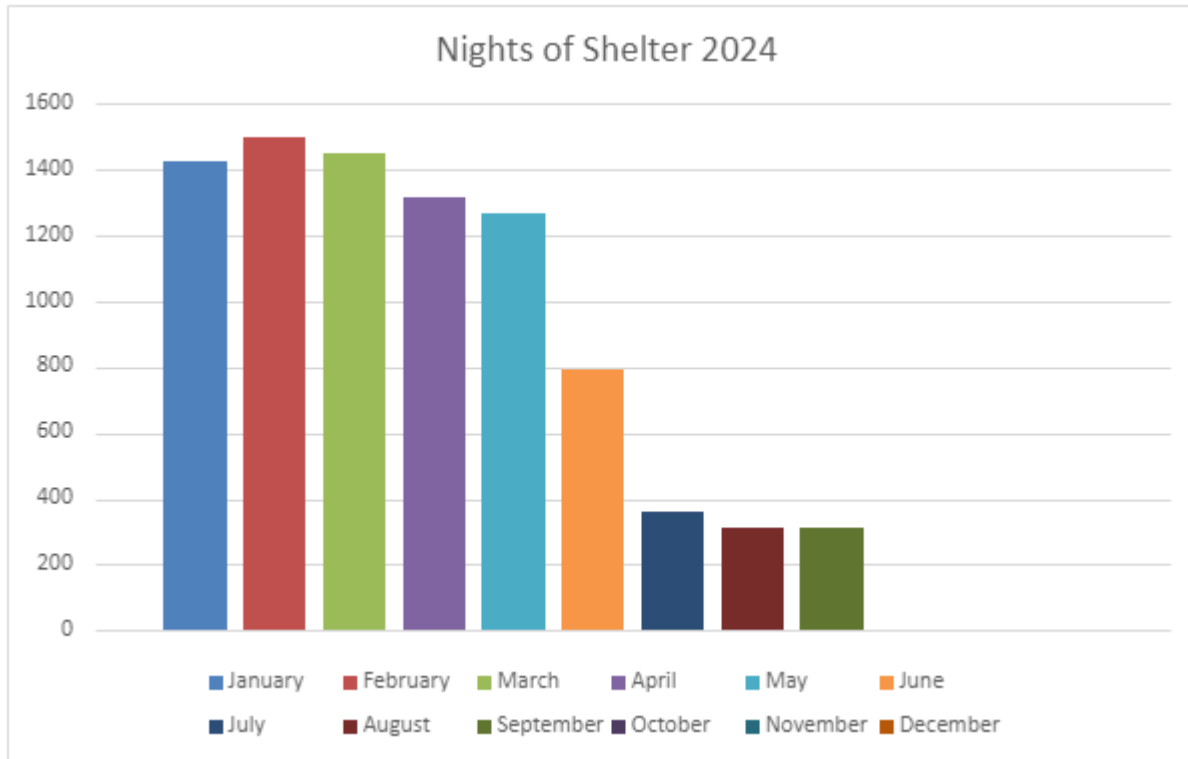
This report pertains to activities and information about programs and services between January and September of 2024.

Background:

Emergency Shelter Solutions

In Bruce County the YMCA of Grey Bruce delivers the emergency shelter solutions, under service agreement with the County, through partnerships with local motels throughout the region. The YMCA provides crisis response and housing supports to adults, youth, and families experiencing homelessness. Emergency shelter services include outreach support and shelter diversion. The YMCA uses a Housing First approach to assist clients in finding more permanent solutions quickly.

The graph on the following page provides information on the number of nights of shelter provided to individuals and families between January and September 2024. Low vacancy rates and high rental costs have made it difficult for individuals and families experiencing homelessness to secure more permanent housing in Bruce County or surrounding areas.

Nights of Shelter 2024

Legend: January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, December
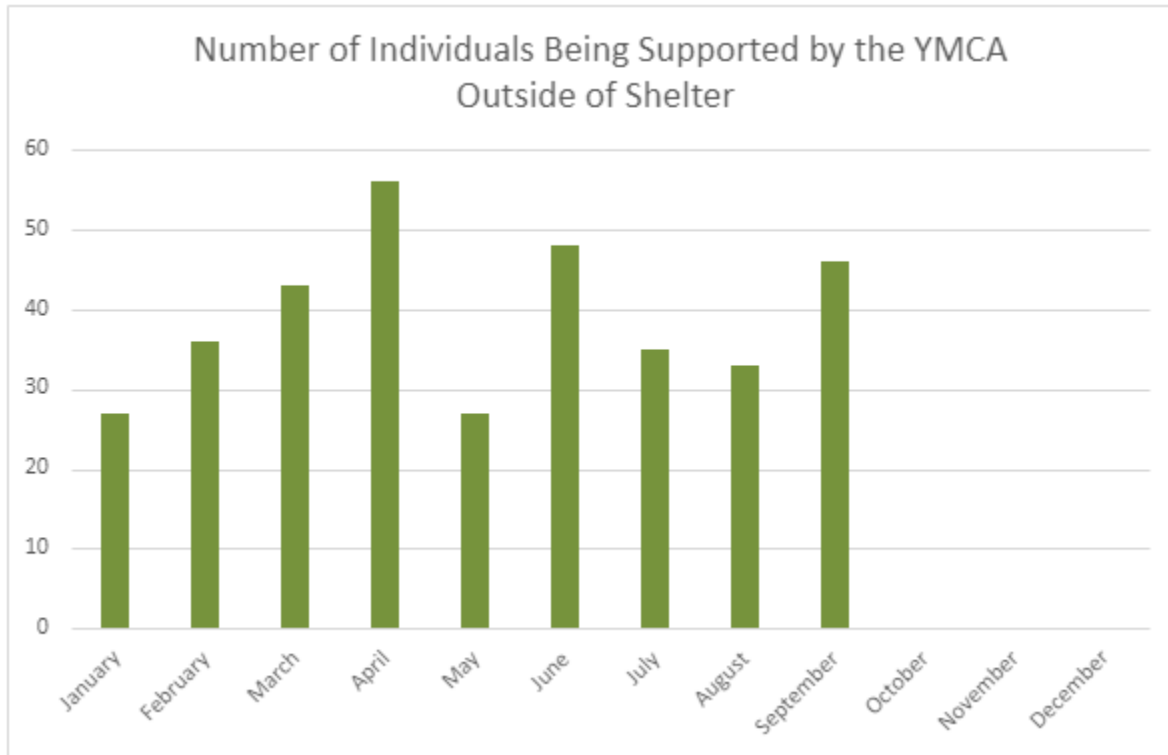
To mitigate this, Housing Services staff and the YMCA are redeveloping the homelessness response model to focus on diversion, shorter stays, faster re-housing and active involvement in individualized housing plans. These tools will help assess client need and ensure clients receive individualized support.

Diversion Model

The YMCA are using a diversion model to support clients in considering safe alternatives to emergency shelter that are appropriate to their circumstances. The diversion support takes place at intake and is an investment in staff time by dedicated people with specific problem-solving skills and access to flexible resources to develop solutions.

The YMCA staff continue to support unhoused or precariously housed residents across the region, even when there is no access to emergency shelter services, as indicated by the following graph.

Number of Individuals Being Supported by the YMCA Outside of Shelter

Transitional and Supported Housing

Over the past four years, there has been a significant increase in need for emergency shelter. To mitigate the need and work towards better outcomes for people experiencing homelessness, staff have partnered with the YMCA and CMHA, to begin fostering a transitional, supported housing model.

The program will provide an environment where support staff can spend time with tenants and enhance and build on daily living skills and case management. Research shows that better outcomes are possible when tenants have access to case management supports.
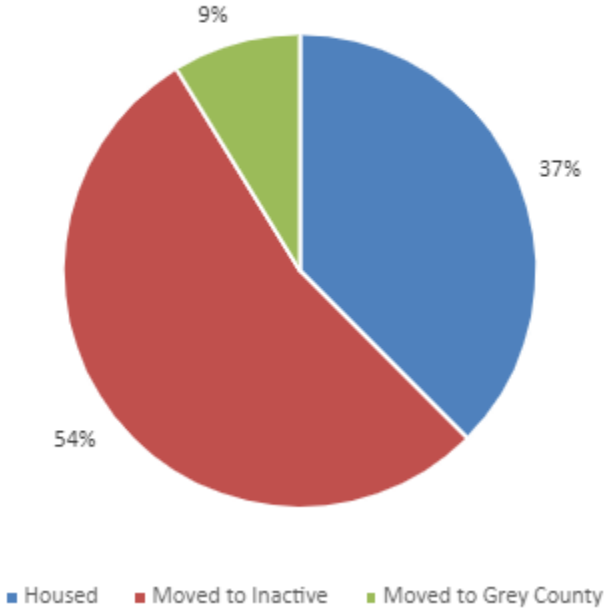
The goal of the program is to move people out of homelessness and along the housing continuum.
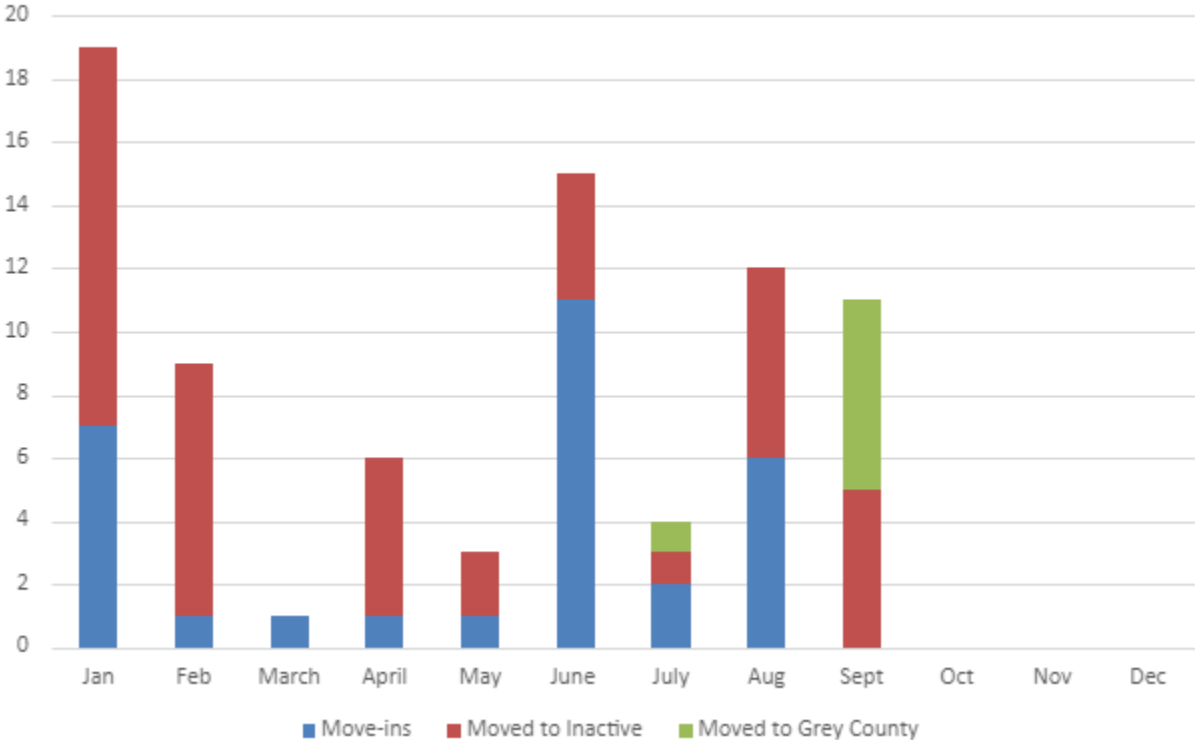
By-Name List

The By-Name List is a real-time list of all people experiencing homelessness and using homelessness response services in Bruce County. The By-Name List helps service providers prioritize needs, tracks changes in housing status, and provides information regarding demographics and chronicity.

The By-Name List also tracks inflow and outflow of households. The outflow refers to households who are housed or moved to inactive. Staff added a third category, moved to Grey County to track the fluidity of the Grey/Bruce boarder.
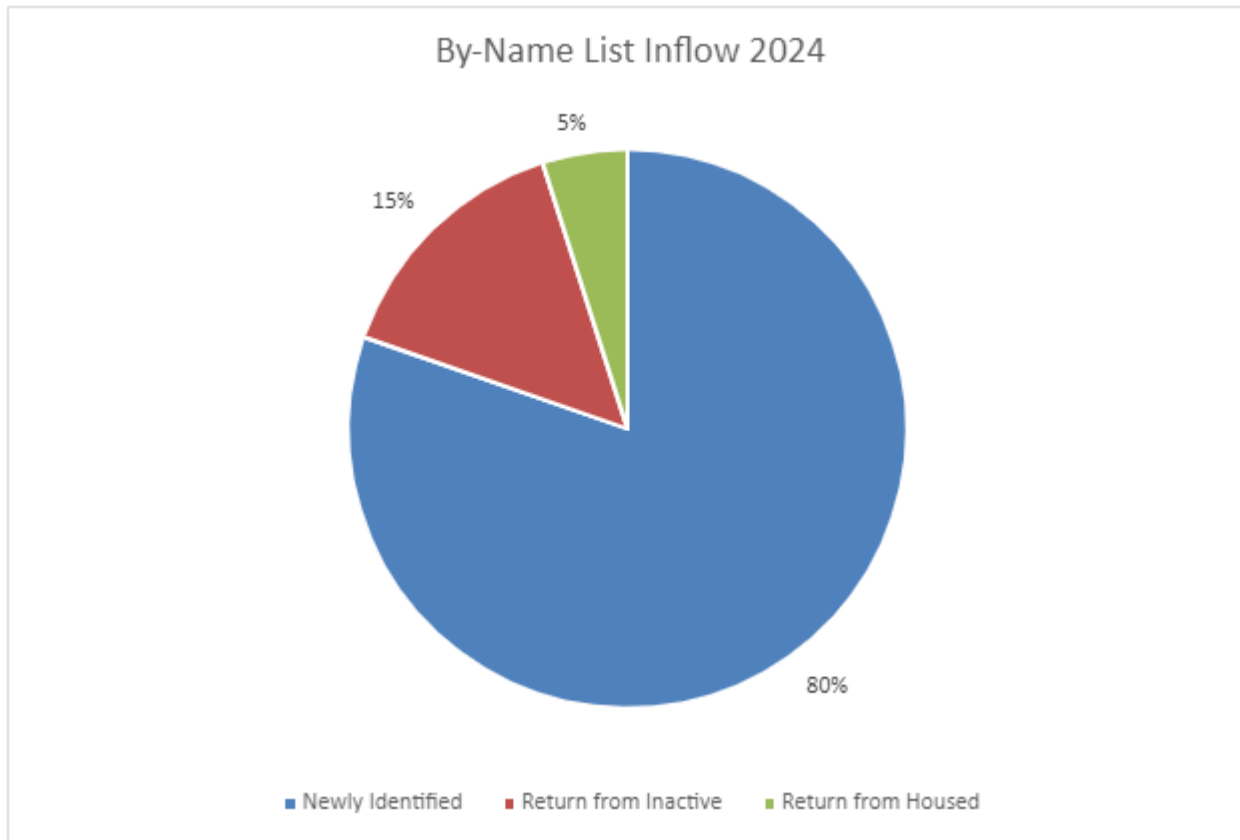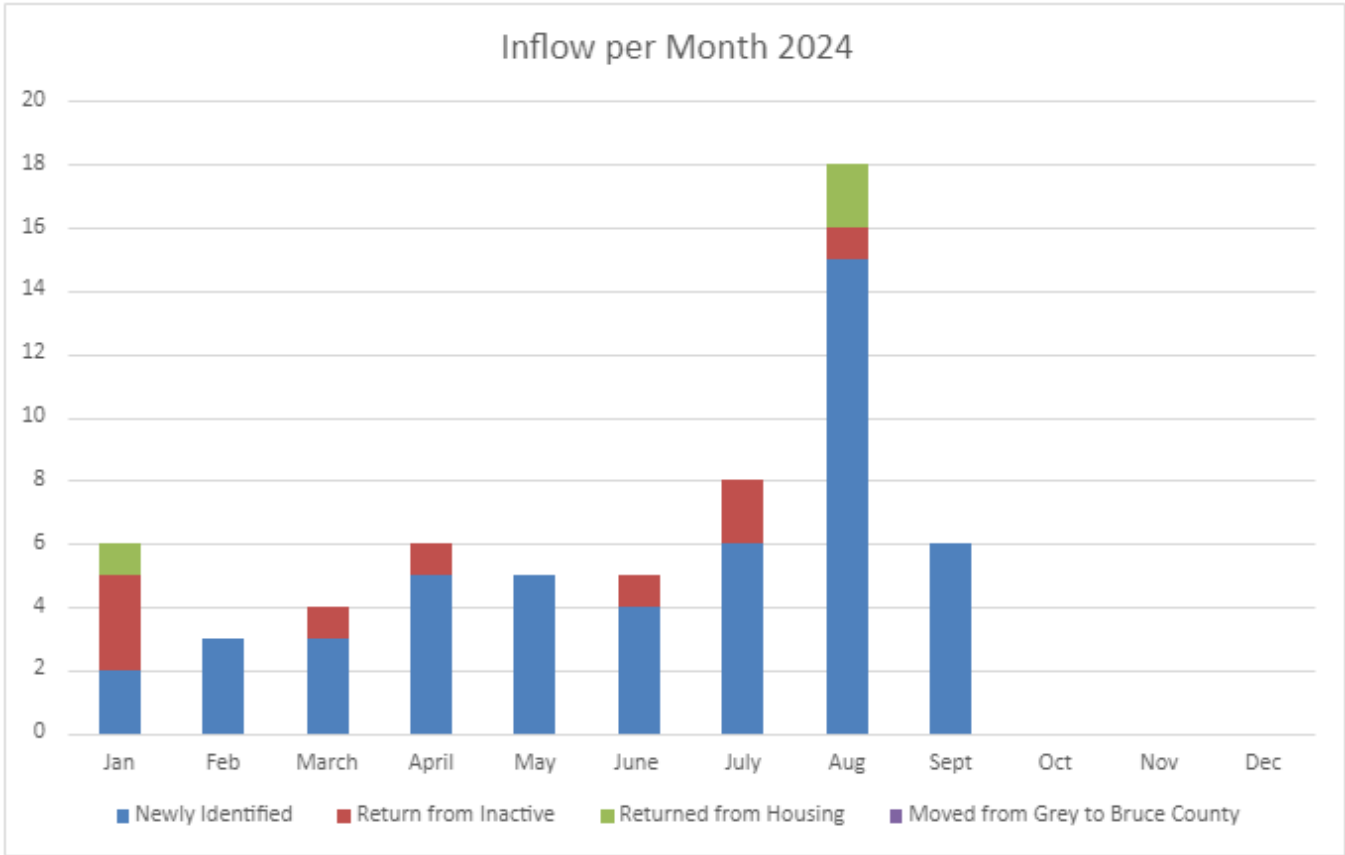
By-Name List Outflow 2024

9%

37%

54%

■ Housed   ■ Moved to Inactive   ■ Moved to Grey County

Outflow per Month 2024

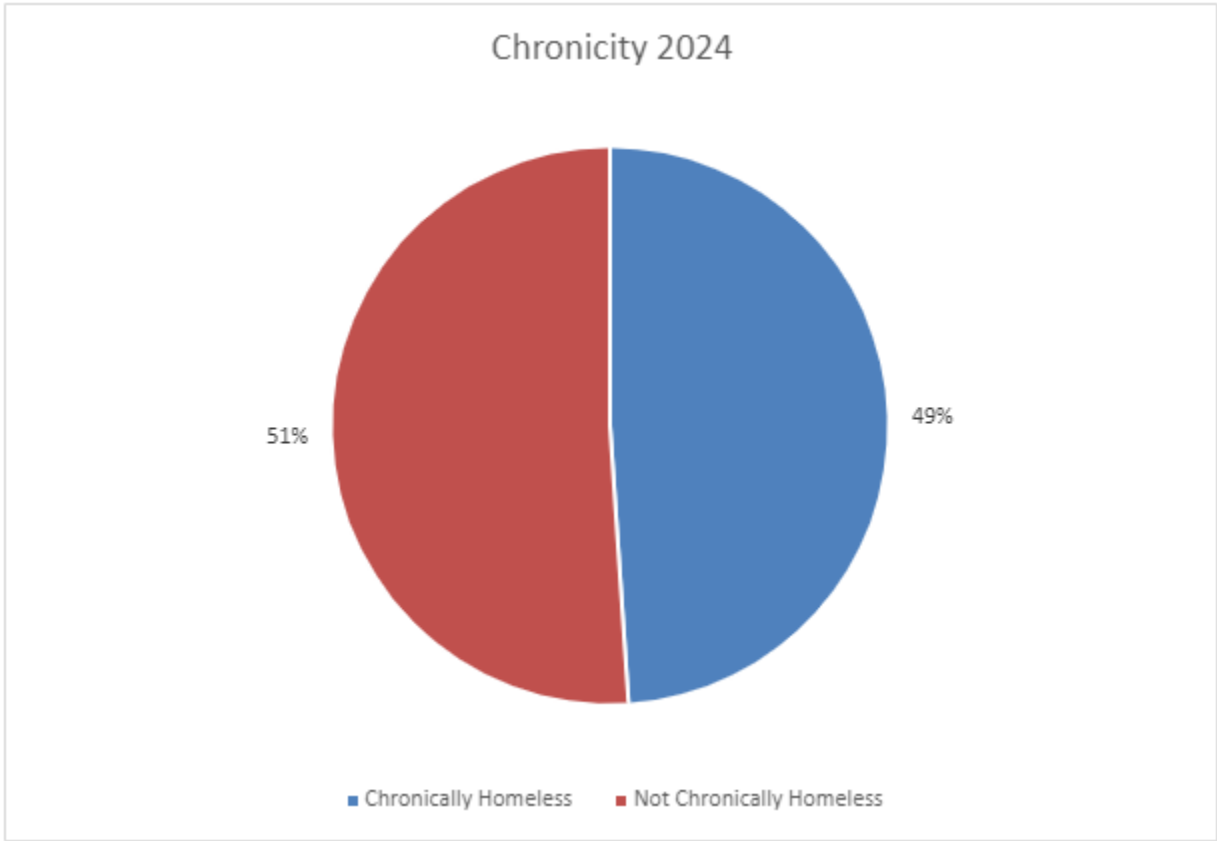■ Move-ins   ■ Moved to Inactive   ■ Moved to Grey County

Inflow refers to someone who enters the system for the first time or is reactivated on the By-Name List. There are three categories of inflow: return from inactive, return from housed, and newly identified.

By-Name List Inflow 2024

5%
15%
80%

■ Newly Identified ■ Return from Inactive ■ Return from Housed

Inflow per Month 2024

Legend: Newly Identified, Return from Inactive, Returned from Housing, Moved from Grey to Bruce County

The goal of the By-Name list is to end chronic homelessness. A person is considered chronically homeless when they have been living without a home for six months (not consecutive) in one year.
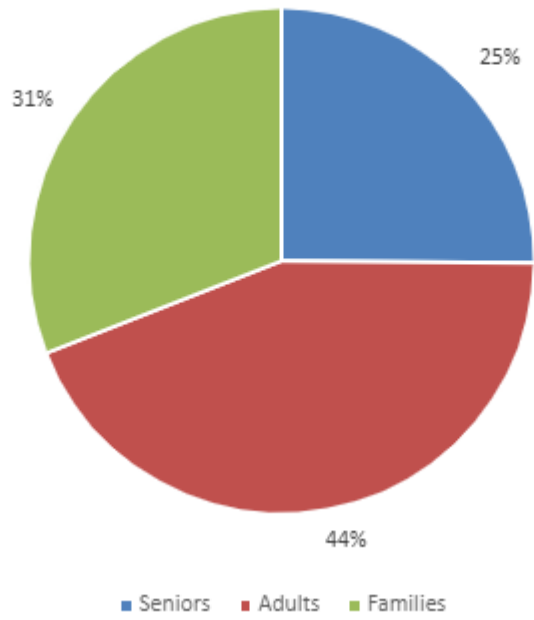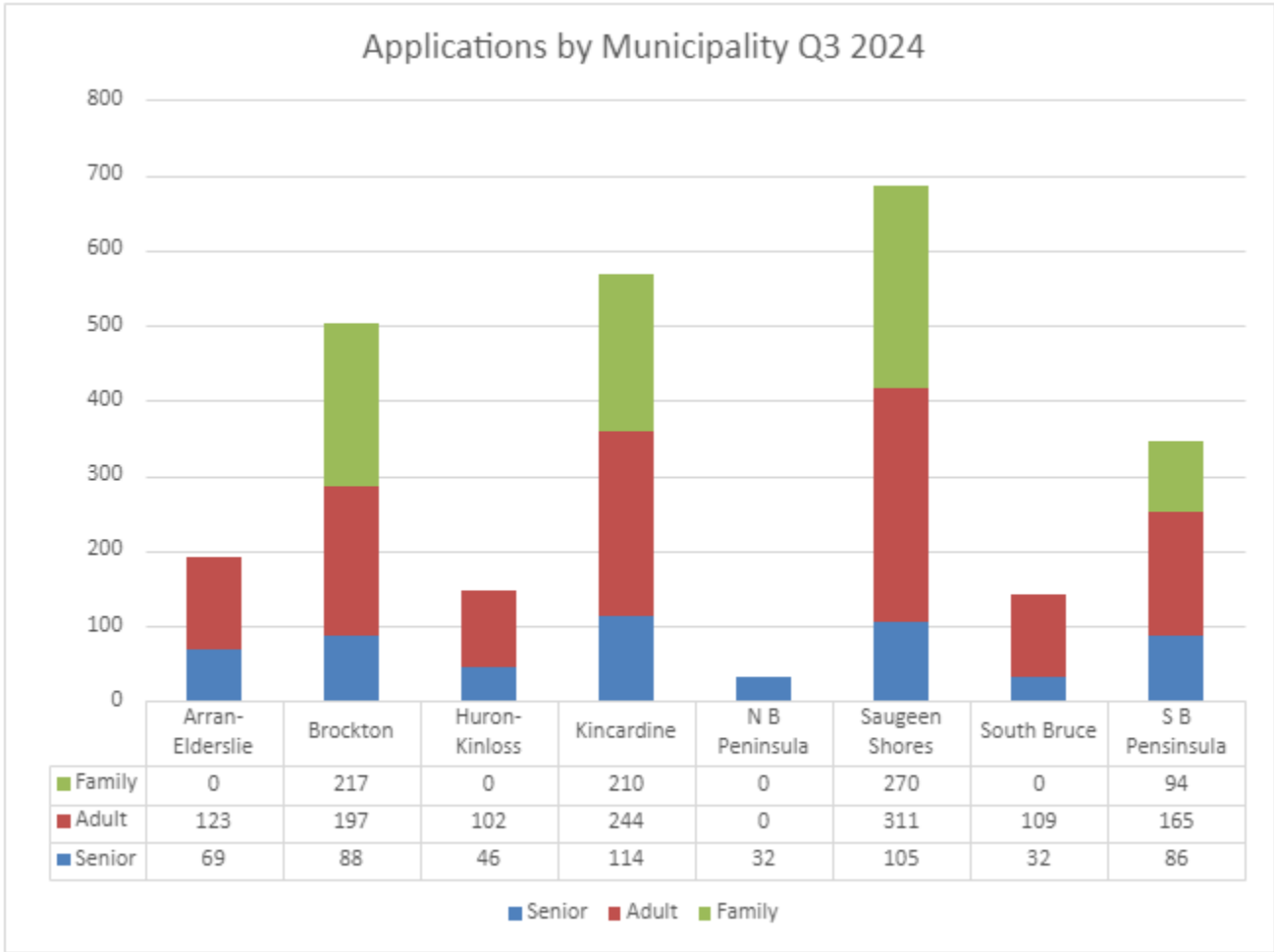
Chronicity 2024

- Chronically Homeless
- Not Chronically Homeless

51% — 49%

Bruce County's Centralized Waitlist

As Service Manager, Bruce County is responsible for managing the Centralized Waitlist. As of June 3, 2024, there was 1242 applicants on the waitlist: 1190 rent-geared-to-income (RGI), and 52 market rent applications. There are 365 families, 534 adults, and 291 senior applications on the waitlist. The number of applicants on the waitlist has increased 24% since June 30, 2023.

There have been 36 applicants housed between January 1, 2024, and June 30, 2024.

Applicants by Type Q3 2024

25%
31%
44%

■ Seniors ■ Adults ■ Families

Applications by Municipality Q3 2024

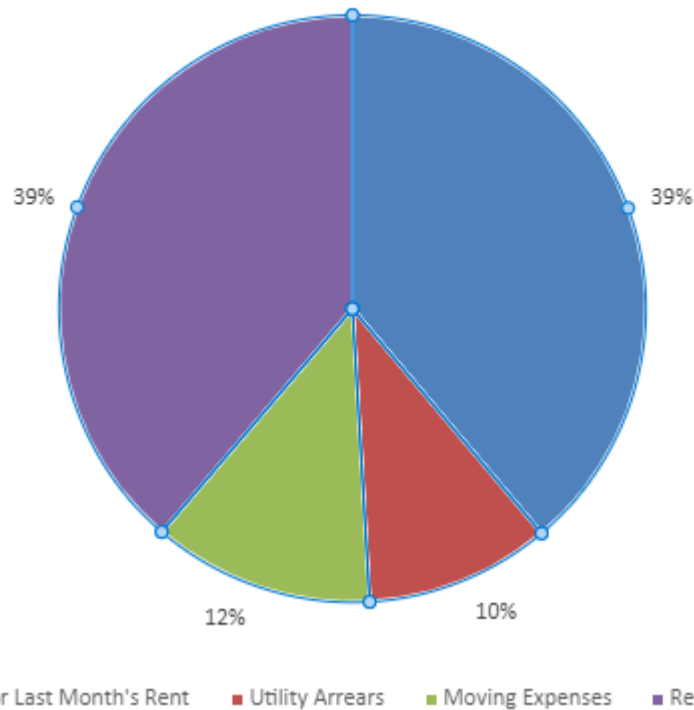|	Arran-Elderslie	Brockton	Huron-Kinloss	Kincardine	N B Peninsula	Saugeen Shores	South Bruce	S B Pensinsula
Family	0	217	0	210	0	270	0	94
Adult	123	197	102	244	0	311	109	165
Senior	69	88	46	114	32	105	32	86

The number of applicants per municipality varies across the County and is based on availability of units in the area. For example, in Northern Bruce Peninsula there is only a senior's building, and family units are available in Kincardine, Brockton, Saugeen Shores, and South Bruce Peninsula only.

Housing Stability Supports

Bruce County provides housing stability support for residents who require assistance with rental arrears, utilities arrears, first or last month's rent, and/or moving expenses. Between January 1, 2024, and September 30, 2024, 202 eligible applicants have received $162,224.87 in funding to sustain their current housing or transition to more affordable housing.

The graph below outlines the percentage of funding by category.

Housing Stability Fund Expenditures by Category Q3 2024

- First or Last Month's Rent
- Utility Arrears
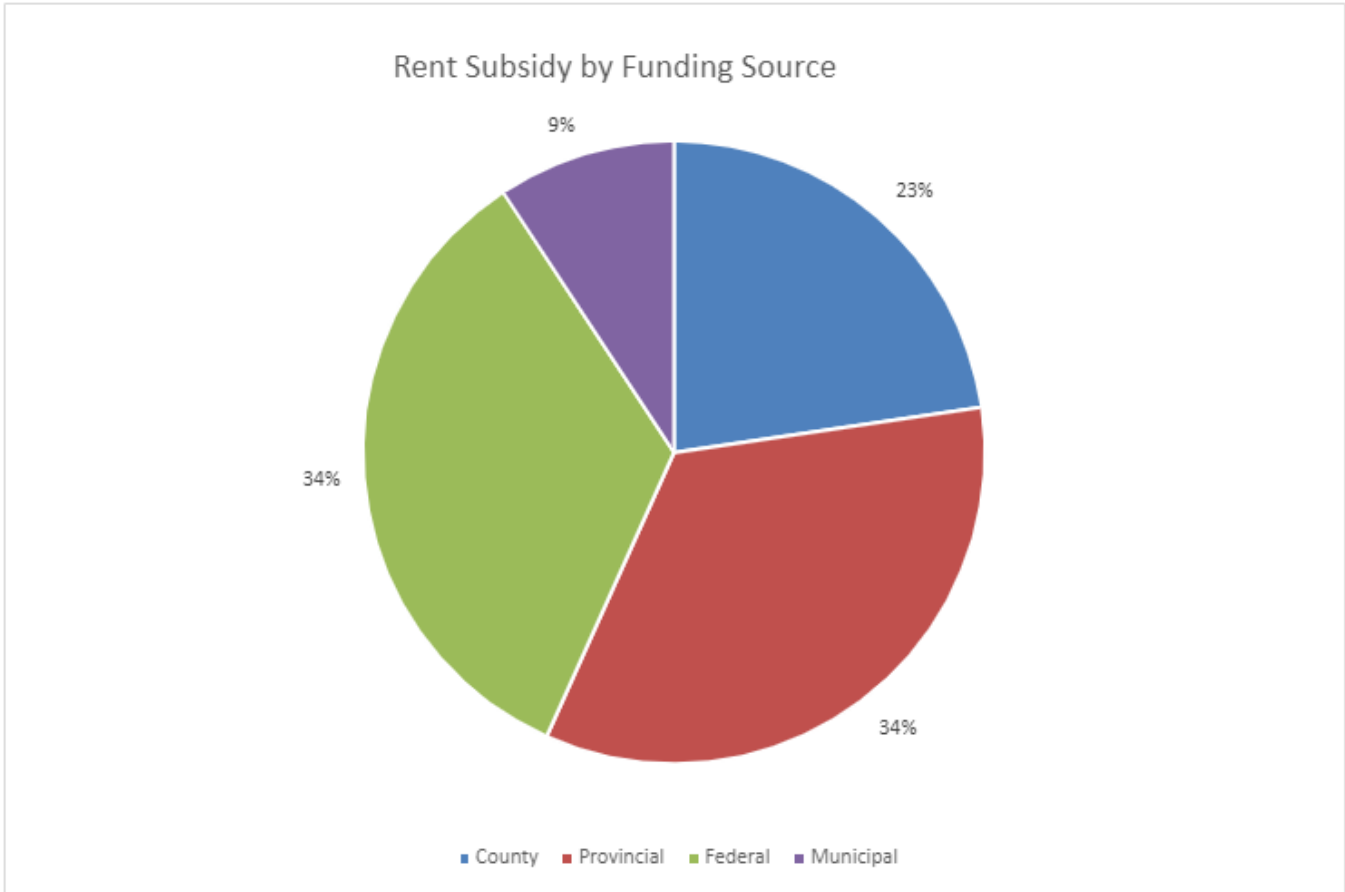- Moving Expenses
- Rent Arrears

Rent Subsidy

A rent subsidy is a form of financial assistance provided to individuals and families who pay rent directly to private landlords. The goal of a rent subsidies is to ensure individuals and families with lower incomes can access safe and stable housing in the private market and prevent the rise of homelessness while improving overall quality of life.

Bruce County, directly funds and administers a municipal rent subsidy program as well as administering subsidy in partnership with the provincial and federal government under various programs. Bruce County receives and administers additional rent subsidy from one local municipality (Saugeen Shores) for the delivery of rent subsidies specific to residents of that municipality.

Over 200 households in Bruce County are currently receiving $1,200,948 in rent subsidies. The average rent subsidy per household is $525.42. The current funding source is outlined in the pie graph below.

Rent Subsidy by Funding Source

Bruce County Outreach

In May of 2024, staff launched the first Bruce County Outreach. Bruce County Outreach is a staff led initiate that provides drop-in events throughout the region. Bruce County Outreach provides opportunities for residents to connect with various community agencies and provides knowledge and awareness of services and supports available. Staff attending Bruce County Outreach will connect people to supports and services that will enhance their quality of life.

Currently, Bruce County Outreach is available in Brockton, Kincardine, Saugeen Shores, and South Bruce Peninsula. Agencies that are currently represented at Bruce County Outreach include CMHA, YMCA, Public Health, United Way, Salvation Army, the legal clinic, the school board, Bruce County paramedics, Metis Nation, VPI, and Women's House.

Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Considerations:

There are no financial, staffing, legal, or IT considerations associated with this report.

Interdepartmental Consultation:

There is no interdepartmental consultation associated with this report.

Link to Strategic Goals and Objectives:

Community and Partnerships - Build a strong and inclusive community

Link to Departmental Plan Goals and Objectives, if any:

The coordinated management of deeply affordable housing and housing stability supports, emergency shelter, and homelessness solutions is in alignment with [Bruce County's Housing and Homelessness Plan Update 2019-2023](#).

Report Author:

Tania Dickson, Housing Services Manager

Departmental Approval:

Tina Metcalfe, Director of Human Services

Approved for Submission:

Christine MacDonald, Chief Administrative Officer