



# 10 YEAR

Housing and Homelessness Plan

# 2023

# Annual Progress Report

The County of Lambton



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The County of Lambton would like to thank the following community partners for their participation on the Lambton County Housing and Homelessness Advisory Committee:

Bluewater Health

Canadian Mental Health Association  
Lambton-Kent

Children's Aid Society Sarnia  
Lambton

Kettle & Stony Point First Nation

Community Legal Assistance Sarnia

Community Living Sarnia-Lambton

John Howard Society

Lambton County Developmental  
Services

Lambton Elderly Outreach

Lambton Public Health

Social Services Division

North Lambton Community Health  
Centre

Ontario Health

Ontario Provincial Police

Red Cross Sarnia-Lambton Branch

River City Vineyard

Ministry of the Solicitor General -  
Sarnia Jail

Sarnia Police Services

Sarnia-Lambton Native Friendship  
Centre

Sarnia-Lambton Rebound

The Inn of the Good Shepherd

The Salvation Army

United Way Sarnia-Lambton

Women's Interval Home



# FOREWARD



## Valerie Colasanti - General Manager, Social Services Division

I am pleased to present the 2023 Progress Report on the County of Lambton's Housing and Homelessness Plan (2020-2024).

In 2023, our community was faced with tremendous demand for housing and homelessness supports. As seen in other communities across Canada and Ontario, the level of housing precarity continues to rise, along with elevated levels of poverty and the ongoing opioid crisis. Despite these significant challenges, notable progress has been made towards increasing the supply of affordable housing, while maintaining the existing housing supply. Further, our community strengthened essential partnerships and coordinated programming to deliver as efficient and equitable homelessness prevention services as possible utilizing our available local resources.



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# VISION

The County of Lambton's 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan frames the planning and delivery of housing and homelessness supports within our community.

Each year Lambton collaboratively works towards the four strategic goals outlined by the plan to achieve the vision that;

***“Every person has an affordable, suitable and adequate home”.***

## STRATEGIC GOALS



**#1** Increase and sustain supply and appropriate mix of affordable housing.



**#2** Increase access to affordable housing and supports that meet people's needs to achieve housing stability.



**#3** Establish a coordinated housing and homelessness service system.



**#4** Ending homelessness.



# GOAL #1

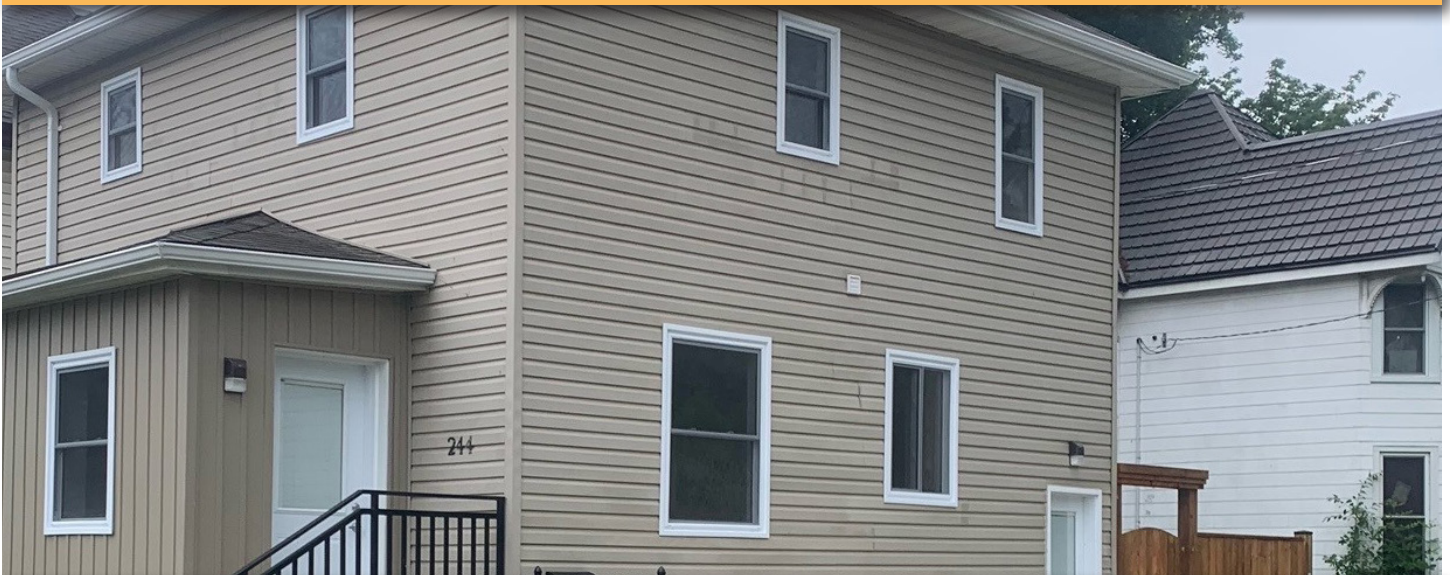


## INCREASE AND SUSTAIN SUPPLY AND APPROPRIATE MIX OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- Build more affordable, accessible, rental housing
- Partner with private sector to create mixed-income buildings
- Support sustainability of social housing providers

### Capital Asset Management and Funding Plan

2023 marked the 8th year of the County of Lambton's 10-Year Capital Asset Management and Funding Plan. **\$4M dollars annually assists in addressing identified capital needs of the 830 County owned social housing units.** Work is required for each of the major building components including substructure, shell, common area interiors, services (mechanical, electrical, plumbing, HVAC), site work and unit interiors.



### Affordable Housing

County of Lambton Housing Services purchased a duplex to add 2 Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) one-bedroom units to the social housing supply in Lambton. Occupancy occurred in 2023.



# GOAL #1



## Affordable Housing Reserve

In 2023, Council contributed \$2M to the affordable housing reserve. The Affordable Housing Seed Fund program was launched to complete pre-development work for new affordable housing developments for **3 non-profits**.

## Adequate, Affordable Housing

In 2023, Council approved the creation of 2 new units by converting non-residential spaces in existing buildings to residential space. Construction will begin and be completed in 2024.



# GOAL #1

216

households received the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB). Households were referred from the Centralized Waiting List, Integrated Team and Sarnia-Lambton Children's Aid Society (CAS).

71

households received a Portable Housing Benefit (PHB).

38

households received support through the Homemaker's Program. This program supports at risk members of the community to maintain their housing and independence.





# GOAL #1

24

households were supported in 2023, through the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Lambton Poverty Reduction Program which is funded with Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing Social Infrastructure Funding (SIF) dollars.

7

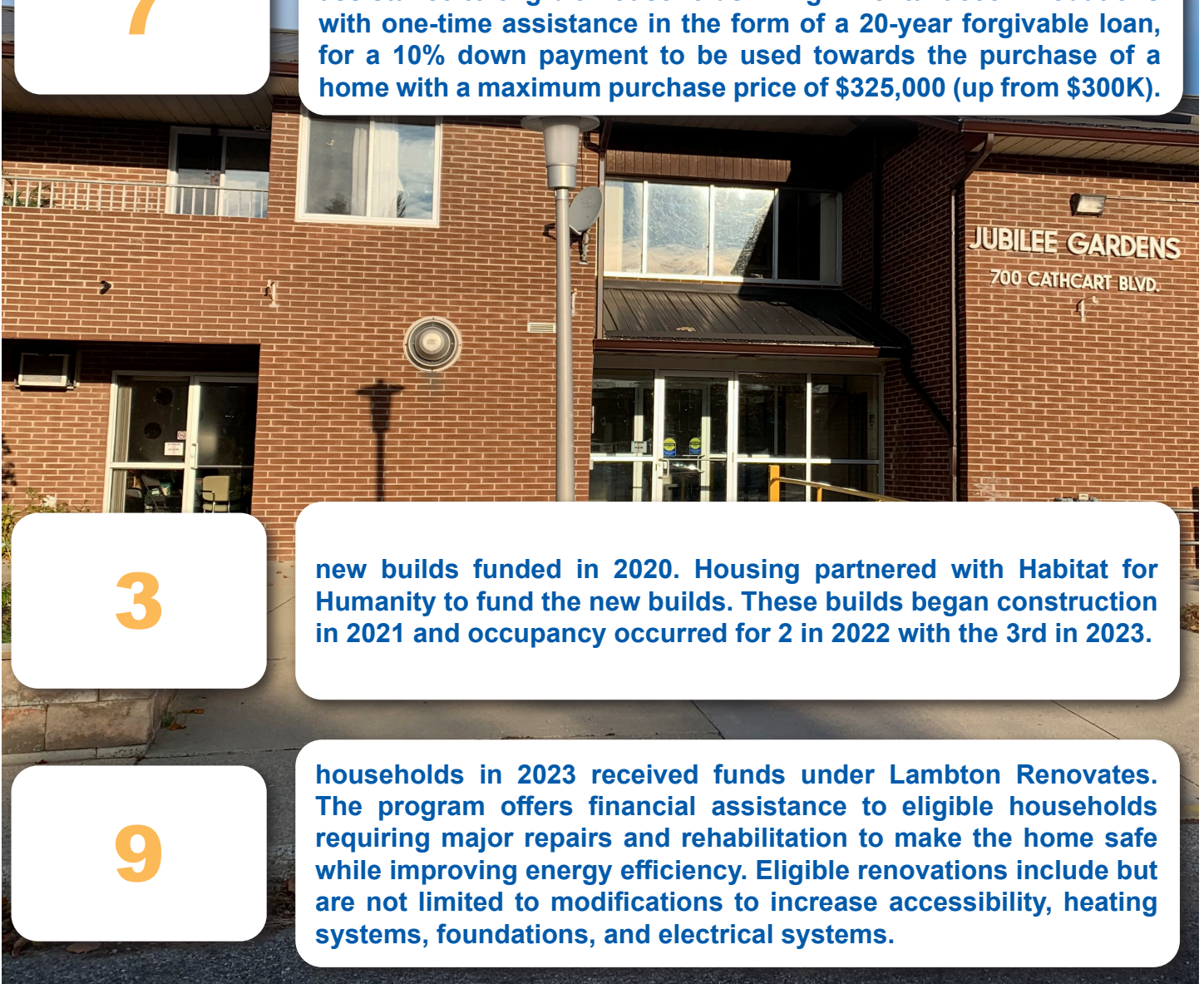
households in 2023 received funds under the Homeownership Down Payment Assistance program. The program offers financial assistance to eligible households living in rental accommodations with one-time assistance in the form of a 20-year forgivable loan, for a 10% down payment to be used towards the purchase of a home with a maximum purchase price of \$325,000 (up from \$300K).

3

new builds funded in 2020. Housing partnered with Habitat for Humanity to fund the new builds. These builds began construction in 2021 and occupancy occurred for 2 in 2022 with the 3rd in 2023.

9

households in 2023 received funds under Lambton Renovates. The program offers financial assistance to eligible households requiring major repairs and rehabilitation to make the home safe while improving energy efficiency. Eligible renovations include but are not limited to modifications to increase accessibility, heating systems, foundations, and electrical systems.



# GOAL #1



**# of affordable rental units completed with federal, provincial and/or county funding**

**By 2024, an additional 75 affordable rental units will be built with the assistance of government funding. All of these new units will be barrier free or 10% will be fully accessible and common areas will be barrier free.**

Prior to 2023 there were **67 new affordable** housing units approved throughout the County of Lambton, which are progressing as follows:

Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services (OAHSSC)

**40 affordable units** were approved prior to 2023. Pending approvals construction is expected to start in 2024.

Maxwell Park Place - **24 Affordable units** were approved prior to 2023. Construction started on this project in 2021.

**3 affordable units** were approved with Habitat for Humanity prior to 2023. Construction occurred throughout 2021/2022 with the third unit having received occupancy in 2023.

## Additionally

County of Lambton Housing Services purchased a duplex at 244 Devine Street to add **2 RGI one-bedroom units** to the social housing supply in Lambton.

In 2023 Council approved the creation of **2 new units** by converting non-residential spaces in existing buildings to residential space. Construction will begin and be completed in 2024.



# GOAL #1



**# partnerships between social housing providers and the County of Lambton to provide RGI units (post mortgage / agreement)**

Social housing providers will continue/enter into partnerships with the County to continue to provide RGI units at the end of their agreements/ mortgage.

5 social housing providers have reached “end of mortgage” in 2023. Of the 5 providers, 4 will continue as a community housing provider under a new service agreement. There will be no loss of RGI units.



**# of vacant or government owned surplus properties secured for affordable housing**

Explore opportunities to use surplus County land for affordable housing.

In 2023 City of Sarnia declared a portion of the Victoria Street parking lot surplus to be donated to the County for affordable Housing. Many discussions underway to determine a path forward regarding this property. In 2023, County Council supported the motion to re-zone parkland/open space land on Kathleen Ave for a new build. Also, an examination of current County of Lambton land that would be suitable for future builds was completed with 3 parcels identified.



**Promotion materials for second units completed**

Promote second units as an opportunity to expand affordable rental housing.

Council approved the creation of an Additional Dwelling Unit program that would offer a forgivable loan to homeowners to assist in creating additional affordable dwelling units.



# GOAL #1



**% of social housing buildings deemed in a “fair” state of repair as per building condition assessment**

**Leverge federal, provincial and municipal funding to repair existing social housing units, and renovate to support accessibility, where feasible.**

2023 marked the 8th year of the County of Lambton’s 10-Year Capital Asset Management and Funding Plan. \$4M dollars annually assists in addressing identified capital needs of the 830 County owned social housing units. Work is required for each major building components including substructure, shell, common area interiors, services (mechanical, electrical, plumbing, HVAC), site work and unit interiors. Additionally, in 2023, Lambton received \$2.3M in funds under the National Housing Strategy Co-Investment Repair stream to complete necessary capital repairs.



In 2023 an application for \$5M in funding was submitted under the Housing Accelerator Fund to achieve 8 initiatives related to affordable housing.



# GOAL #1



## Family's Story

### BACKGROUND

This family of five is very close. Their children are actively involved in Cadets and love to give back to the community. One of their favourite activities is knitting and crocheting baby blankets and sweater sets to donate to the hospital's maternity ward, or gift to new families!

They were living in a rental unit managed by a local property management group. With one parent in receipt of Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and the other working, they could pay their monthly rent. However, they could not pay it on time due to different sources of income coming in at different times of the month. Their landlord had no issues with this and worked with them up until 2023 when they received an eviction notice due to late rent. They were unsure of what to do and stayed in their unit hoping for the best. The eviction was not resolved, and the family would have to leave before the end of the fall, when the eviction would be court-enforced. They did not want their children to witness this, so they quickly packed all their belongings into storage and contacted the local shelter for assistance.

### SUPPORTS

A County of Lambton Community Support Worker (CSW) was assigned to the family quickly after they moved, and they were able to meet and complete a housing readiness assessment. The largest barrier they faced was finding housing suitable for the size of their family. They could manage rent with budgeting and a small amount of subsidy once they were settled into a new home. The CSW reached out to a few local landlords and found a 3-bedroom apartment that would be available soon. The couple completed the application, and it was approved. They began moving shortly after and settled in to enjoy their first Christmas together in their new home.

### OUTCOMES

Through support with budgeting and funds from the Rental Assistance Program (RAP), their first month in their new home has been wonderful. The family is thriving, and the children are settled into new schools with new friends.



# GOAL #2



## INCREASE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND SUPPORTS THAT MEET PEOPLE'S NEEDS TO ACHIEVE HOUSING STABILITY

- Increase affordability assistance
- Support culturally appropriate housing and supports for Indigenous peoples
- Increase housing appropriate to youth
- Promote housing options for seniors
- Encourage housing with supports for people with disabilities
- Help with renovations of low-income ownership housing
- Help low-income individuals purchase affordable homes
- Facilitate support for landlords and tenants

### Homemakers Program

The Homemakers and Nursing Services program is offered by the OW Department through a Purchase of Services for individuals who are in need of assistance with tasks of daily living.

In 2023, **38** individuals were served through this program. Visits are typically 2 hours long and can range from 1-4 visits per month depending on the individual needs of each client.



### Domiciliary Hostels

The Domiciliary Hostels program provides supportive housing with 24/7 care to adults with physical and/or mental disabilities who require assisted living.

In 2023, **31** individuals were supportively housed through Lambton's two domiciliary hostels.



# SPOTLIGHT



## T's Story

### BACKGROUND

T has been receiving WSIB for a workplace injury sustained many years ago while working as a Nurse. T's health declined after having surgery and he is struggling with arthritis in his knees, hips, and shoulders. This led to numerous falls, resulting in injuries and pain that T managed through self-medicating with alcohol. T has been housed for years and has had no issues with his landlord until recently, when flies were noticed on the door to the apartment. The landlord was also concerned about T's numerous ambulance transports to the hospital. They contacted a Community Support Worker (CSW) for assistance and intervention before proceeding with an eviction due to concerns around cleanliness. T did not have CPP-Retirement income or OAS Pensions in pay and was relying on his WSIB Pension. He had also not completed his income taxes since 2013.

### SUPPORTS

The CSW met with T to review his situation and see what supports T needed to maintain his tenancy and improve his overall quality of life. The CSW arranged for contractors to work with T and return the apartment to an ordinary standard of cleanliness. T was given assistance filing his income taxes which resulted in him receiving over \$8300 back. Assistance was provided to obtain both CPP and OAS, resulting in a retroactive payment of \$11,000 and increasing T's ongoing monthly income. Arrangements were made with Red Cross for weekly cleaning, Meals on Wheels for food deliveries, and Home & Community Care for Personal Support Worker assistance. T was assisted to connect with his family doctor for pain management, and he was able to pay off some outstanding debt with the assistance of the retroactive payments and the increase to his monthly income.

### OUTCOMES

T remains living independently with supports in place and stays in regular contact with the CSW. T continues to attend doctor's appointments, and receive assistance from a Personal Support Workers and Red Cross to maintain his apartment cleanliness and provide daily meals. T is conscious of his monthly budget and ensures his bills are always paid. T has begun discussions with his CSW regarding withdrawal management for alcohol use. A Supported Retirement Home where 24-hour care is available if needed is being discussed as a future possibility for T.



# SPOTLIGHT



## Living Well Program

In April of 2023 the OW Department, in partnership with North Lambton Community Health Centre, facilitated a collaborative series of workshops that engaged people to enhance their well-being and learn about and connect to various community supports. This personal growth opportunity looked to empower individuals through skill building within a supportive, holistic, non-judgmental group setting.

The range of program modules included stress management, healthy meal planning, personal care, budgeting, maintaining a household and a hands-on cooking class. Participants learned about themselves, made healthy connections, and gained skills to improve their well-being in support of their long-term independence. Over the two-week period of in-class presentations, self-study activities and interactive learning experiences, people enhanced the skills needed to promote stability and work towards their goals.

7 registered

6 completed

2 perfect attendance

3 actively engaged with Employment Ontario providers to strengthen their job

3 moved to ODSP

2 employed





# GOAL #2



# of households in receipt of affordability assistance using new funding

By 2024, 350 more households will be in receipt of affordability assistance.

Canada Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) - **38 additional households** received COHB in 2023. Households were referred from the Centralized Waiting List, Integrated Team and Sarnia-Lambton CAS. The 2023/24 COHB allocation was **\$291,300**. At December 31, 2023 there were **185 households** in receipt of COHB with a total monthly entitlement of **\$91,000**.

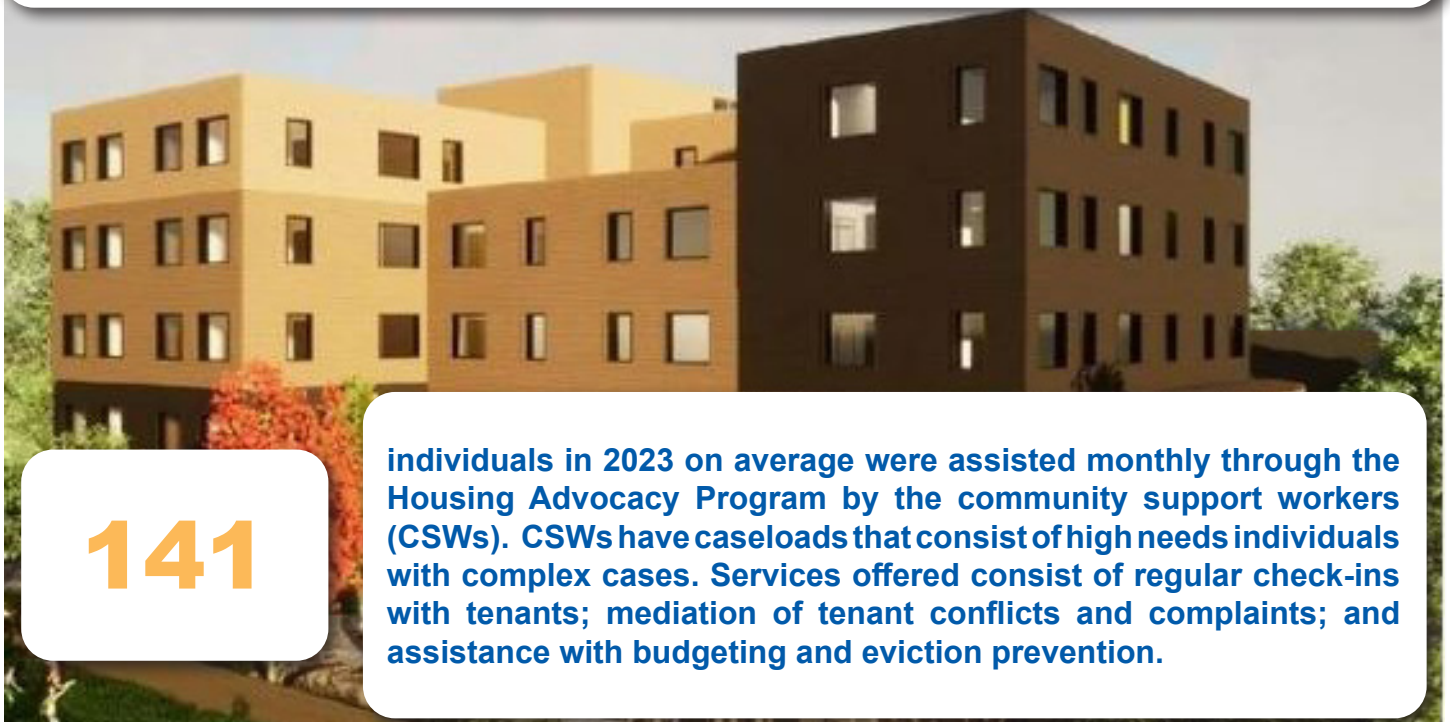
In 2023, **71 households** received County administered Portable Housing Benefit (PHB).



# of affordable rental housing units owned and/or operated by Indigenous communities and organizations completed and # of support services added

By 2024, a minimum of 20 affordable rental housing units owned and/or operated by Indigenous organizations will be created and supports will be expanded.

The Ontario Aboriginal Housing Supportive Services Corporation (OAHSSC) had **40 affordable units** approved prior to 2022. Pending approvals, construction is expected to start in 2024.



141

individuals in 2023 on average were assisted monthly through the Housing Advocacy Program by the community support workers (CSWs). CSWs have caseloads that consist of high needs individuals with complex cases. Services offered consist of regular check-ins with tenants; mediation of tenant conflicts and complaints; and assistance with budgeting and eviction prevention.



# GOAL #2

**# of people receiving supports and have maintained their housing with new initiatives since 2020**

**Between 2020 and 2024, more people will be receiving supports and their tenancy will be retained.**

There are various programs throughout the community such as Canadian Mental Health Association Lambton-Kent and the Inn of the Good Shepherd. Within the County of Lambton there are caseworkers and community support workers from Housing, Homelessness and Ontario Works assisting clients on life stabilization and life skills.

**At the time of the writing of this report, returns to homelessness supported through County housing case managers from 2023 are below 15%.**

**# of households in receipt of affordability assistance and housing-related supports (i.e., supportive housing) compared to 2019**

**By 2024, 130 more households will be in receipt of affordability assistance and housing-related supports (i.e., supportive housing).**

There are scatter-site supportive housing programs within the County of Lambton that include affordability assistance. These programs are run through community partners such as: Sarnia-Lambton's Children's Aid Society, Canadian Mental Health Association Lambton-Kent, Sarnia Lambton Native Friendship Centre and the Inn of the Good Shepherd.



## B's Story

BACKGROUND

B is living with significant ADHD and other developmental and behavioral conditions that make it difficult for him to find appropriate supports in youth shelters and supportive housing. B was matched with County of Lambton Community Support Worker (CSW), and the CSW was able to implement wrap-around supports that helped B successfully secure his own apartment.

SUPPORTS

After service providers met to support B through case conferencing, he received referrals to Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Adult Protective Service Association (APSW), Developmental Services Ontario (DSO) and Stepping Stones Support Services. These referrals have provided B with a comprehensive support system. B can now receive daily life skill development from CMHA at his own apartment and participate in court diversion services. He has also been able to receive a low-barrier psychiatric assessment through Youth Wellness Hubs Ontario (YWHO).

OUTCOMES

A trustee is in place and has been working with B on budgeting. B has also been able to access medications that are delivered right to his home. B's landlord recognizes the value of these supports and has been a key contributor to the success of B in his new accommodations.



# GOAL #2

# of low-income homeowners that received funding for renovation/repairs

By 2024, an additional 100 low-income homeownership units will be renovated/repaired.

In 2023, **9 households** received funds under Lambton Renovates.



## T & C's Story

### BACKGROUND

T and C are senior citizens who have owned their home since 1972. T and C wanted to remain in their home for as long as possible but were struggling to live in its current state of disrepair. Due to this, they stopped having their family over for visits or meals. A family member of T and C's was allowed in the home one day and was shocked at the extent of the repairs needed. Once they learned of the condition of the home, family members assisted T and C in determining a path forward.

### SUPPORTS

When the family investigated the extent of the disrepair of the home, it was determined that the following repairs would be required: Level III abatement for water staining and visible mold growth in the main living area of the home, replacement of the leaking roof, repair to damaged plaster throughout the home and replacement of leaking windows. T and C did not have the financial means to pay for these repairs. The family assisted the couple to apply for funding to complete the required repairs through the Lambton Renovates program.

### OUTCOMES

T and C receive \$25,000 through Lambton Renovates to help complete the repairs required and bring the home up to a safe level of occupancy for the couple. This allowed them to remain living in their home both safely and independently. They can now have their family over for visits and meals once again.



# GOAL #2

# of households that received down payment assistance

By 2024, an additional 30 households will be supported to purchase affordable housing.

In 2023, **7 households** received funds under the Homeownership Down Payment Assistance program. Housing Services department partnered with Habitat for Humanity (HFH) to fund 3 new builds in 2020. These builds began construction in 2021 and occupancy occurred for 2 in 2022 with the third in 2023.



# of long-term housing placements as a result of facilitated connections between landlords and tenants

Facilitated connections between landlords and tenants will result in 150 housing placements by 2024.

The Landlord Engagement Support Worker is a member of the integrated team. The role identifies new connections with landlords and assists in facilitating placements. The integrated team has progressed **181 individuals** into permanent housing.

# of tenants and # of landlords that received landlord and tenant education

An average of 50 tenants and 10 landlords will receive landlord and tenant education each year.

Through the Social Service Division Integrated team, individuals being placed into more permanent housing are offered tenancy skills training as part of their ongoing housing case management. This integrated team offered support to over **330 individuals**.



# GOAL #2



## A's Story

### BACKGROUND

A is 20 years old and lives with a parent. She has significant developmental delays and therefore is unable to work or live independently. A Community Support Worker (CSW) initially visited A and her parent's home to assist with another matter. However, during their visit the CSW inquired about A and her involvement with supports. At the time, she had no community supports in place. A indicated that she would like to participate in activities. The CSW started the process of securing supports through Developmental Supports Ontario and Regional Support Associates to have assessments completed.

### SUPPORTS

A was then approved for new supports and granted Passport funding for community participation activities. The CSW was able to support A's application to the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), and she now receives monthly income through ODSP. As A began going out in the community, the challenges she was experiencing at home became more evident. During a medical appointment, A reported physical and emotional abuse and refused to return home. This resulted in police interventions. The CSW reached out to many community resources looking for housing options, including Developmental Supports Ontario, Regional Support Associates, Community Living Sarnia-Lambton, Lambton County Developmental Services, the Ministry of Community and Social Services, Family Counselling Centre, and Bluewater Respite. A was then admitted to hospital.

### OUTCOMES

A has done extremely well in hospital and the outcome plan is for her to transition to a group home and be supported by Lambton County Developmental Services. An application has been completed and the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee will take over management of her finances. A's worker from Family Counselling Centre shared with the CSW that she had been to visit A and she appeared well and in good health. A was happy that she would be living in a safe environment where she can access supports and have greater capacity for self-determination.

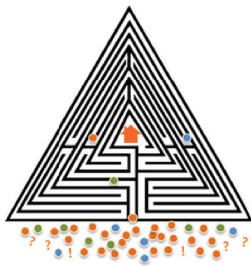


# GOAL #3

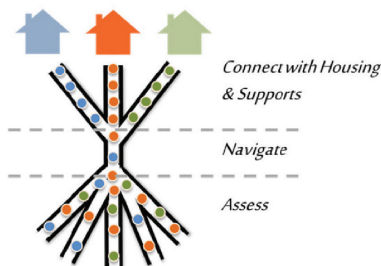


## COORDINATED HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS SERVICE SYSTEM

- Expand collaboration and partnerships
- Implement Coordinated Access to housing and supports
- Strengthen homelessness system management and governance
- Expand training of service providers



**Without**  
Coordinated Access



**With**  
Coordinated Access



For more information scan the QR code to visit the By-Name List and Coordinated Access website page.



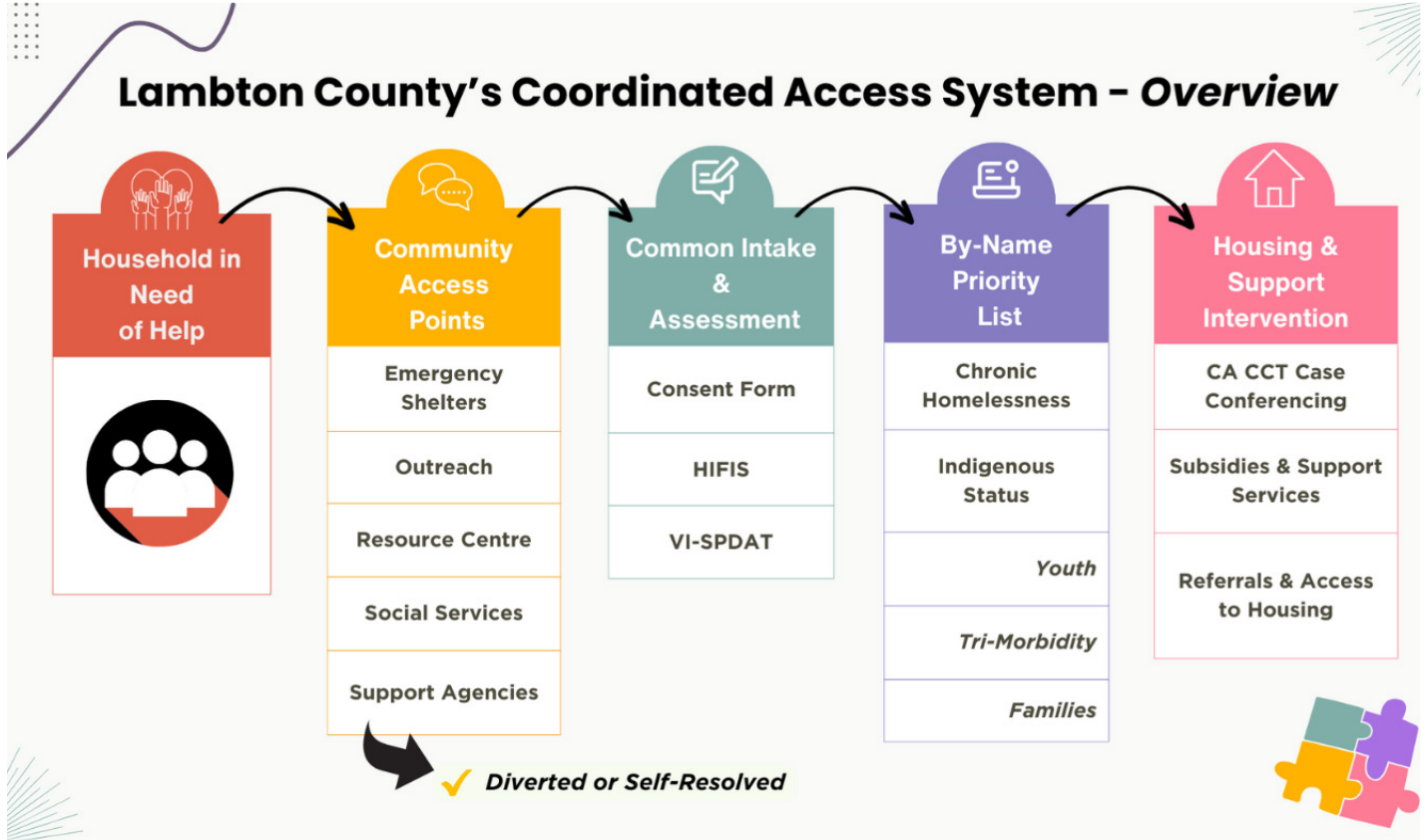
### Goals Achieved in 2023

- Continue to test, develop, and expand the various modules in Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) while ensuring data quality
- Establish a Coordinated Access Community Collaborative Table (CCT)
- Collaborate and update a CCT Collective Caseload Inventory
- Develop new policies and procedures related to the Vacancy & Matching Referral process
- Implement 1 in 10 Homelessness Housing Priority (Social Housing) tracked via the CCT Resource Inventory
- Integrate quality improvement feedback in operational procedures



# GOAL #3

## Lambton County's Coordinated Access System - Overview



## Coordinated Access Community Collaborative Table (CCT)

- Canadian Mental Health Association Lambton-Kent
- County of Lambton
- North Lambton Community Health Centre
- Sarnia-Lambton Native Friendship Centre
- Sarnia-Lambton Rebound
- The Inn of the Good Shepherd



# GOAL #3



## Coordinated Access Community Collaborative Table (CCT)

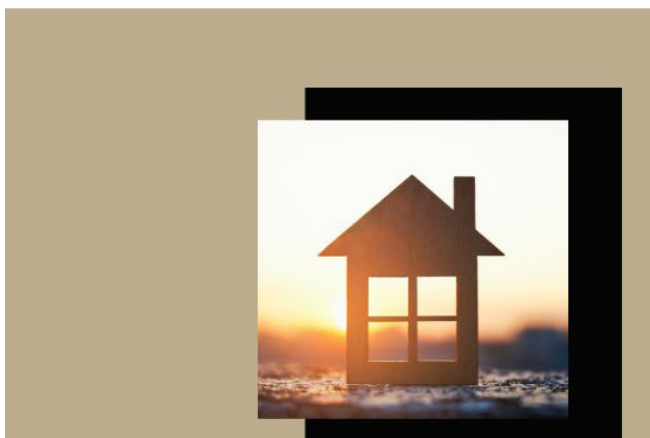
The Coordinated Access Community Collaborative Table (CCT) is an integrated case conferencing process comprised of leaders connecting homelessness services in Lambton County. The CCT leverages existing resources and expertise of a collaborative team to achieve optimal housing placements along with warm transfers to programs and supports for those experiencing or at risk of homelessness in Lambton County. CCT also approves protocols and policies for the Coordinated Access System and makes recommendations, as required.

Year 2024

 Process Guide

*Lambton County's*  
Homelessness Services  
**Coordinated Access System**

**New:** Coordinated Access Process Guide is now accessible via the web.





# GOAL #3



## HIFIS Milestones Achieved as of December 31, 2023

**1082**

CLIENT FILES

**114**

TRAINED HIFIS USERS

**12**

IN-PERSON TRAINING SESSIONS

HIFIS

HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES INFORMATION SYSTEM



SISA

SYSTÈME D'INFORMATION SUR LES PERSONNES ET LES FAMILLES SANS ABRI



## S's Story

BACKGROUND

S has been in an out of shelter for several years after losing her housing due to experiencing severe emotional trauma. She is an elderly woman with increasing mobility challenges, which cause her to require a mobility scooter. On the street and in the shelters, S was often the target of theft, which meant when Lambton County's Outreach staff started working with her, she had no ID and none of the financial information required to apply for housing.

SUPPORTS

Over the course of many interactions with S, Outreach was able to form a relationship and gain S's trust enough to begin the process of applying for housing. First, they were able to support her in getting a new status card, a process which was potentially triggering due to the trauma she experienced in her previous housing. After that they were able to get S caught up on her taxes and complete her application for County of Lambton Housing. Once the housing application was submitted, Outreach ensured she was qualified for the County's 1 in 10 homelessness prioritization program and advocated for her to be considered for any upcoming units.

OUTCOMES

Due in part to her age and mobility S was accepted for a 1 in 10 priority unit and was placed in one of the County's rent-geared-to-income units, where S continues to live successfully.



# GOAL #3



## Current State as per By-Name List (BNL)

A BNL is a comprehensive, real-time list of every known and consenting individual experiencing homelessness. This total number of more than 300 individuals includes everyone that is couch-surfing, accommodated in a shelter bed, transitional housing, and sleeping outside. It is not a static list. This is not the number of individuals living unsheltered. This is a real-time list that changes by more than 50 names every month as individuals newly experience homelessness or are progressed out of homelessness with local supports.

*The below data is a snapshot as of December 31, 2023.*

**318**

Individuals are experiencing homelessness in the County of Lambton

**24%**

of households have Indigenous ancestry

**318**

Experiencing Homelessness

**60%**

of individuals are experiencing chronic homelessness

**30%**

of households are aged 16-24 years



For more information scan the QR code to visit the Data Dashboard website page.



# GOAL #3

## By-Name List (BNL)



In collaboration with Built for Zero Canada and our Coordinated Access Service providers, Lambton progressed and collected fulsome data for the By-Name List (BNL) throughout 2023.



The BNL is a real-time list of individuals experiencing homelessness in Lambton. This tool assists with prioritization of clients to housing resources and provides community-level data for identifying needs and advocating for individuals.



In October of 2021, Lambton launched the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) across local shelters in order to centralize BNL data collection. This shared system between shelters allows clients to receive multiple services under one common consent. Lambton County has achieved a long list of quality domains, in addition to perfect data balancing, to attain a 'Quality By-Name List', thereby offering a high degree of confidence and accuracy in identifying households experiencing homelessness.

### Why have a BNL?

Through the By-Name List, our community can more accurately assess who is entering our homeless system on an ongoing basis, equitably serve households based on community-developed prioritization, and maximize limited local resources available to serve the most vulnerable.



# GOAL #3



## Housing, Homelessness and Addictions Summit 2023

On Tuesday, March 21, 2023, community leaders from across Lambton County gathered at Lambton College to discuss the current state of housing, homelessness, and addictions within the county, and collaborate on how to make lasting change in these areas.

The Stronger Together: Collaborating for a Vibrant Community summit brought together over 170 individuals from a variety of organizations related to housing, homelessness, and addictions.

Participants heard presentations from representatives with the County of Lambton's Social Services and Public Health Services divisions, the Canadian Mental Health Association Lambton-Kent, the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, and from a local individual with lived experience who was willing to share her story. Indigenous partners also shared reflections, cultural knowledge, and offered song throughout the day.



# GOAL #3



## Housing, Homelessness and Addictions Summit 2023

There are several community planning tables and committees that, in various capacities, are working towards the top 5 identified priorities including The Poverty Reduction Network, the County of Lambton Housing and Homelessness Advisory Committee, the Community Housing Information Network and the Lambton County Drug and Alcohol Strategy and recognized this work does not need to be duplicated. The Poverty Reduction Network has taken the lead on poverty awareness for many years.

It is recognized that there is a significant gap in public relations and communications regarding housing and homelessness issues. Overall, there is a sense that the public lacks awareness of the ongoing efforts and advancements made by the various agencies including the County that provide housing and homelessness prevention services. Moreover, many individuals in the public express a desire to assist with addressing the housing and homelessness crisis but may not know how to effectively contribute.

A dedicated public relations and communications plan is needed to effectively inform the public about ongoing initiatives and actively engage them for valuable input and ideas to be a part of the solution. The strategy should encompass a range of options for individuals to contribute, acknowledging the various ways they can assist, from donating basic needs, to supporting fundraising efforts for affordable housing, to those interested in developing affordable housing.

Using funds from within the allowable administration amount of Provincial and Federal grants, the Social Services Division will purchase consultant services to create, coordinate and implement a multimedia campaign including:

- promoting how the community and all partners can be part of the solution, debunking myths, promoting best-practices, and amplifying lived experience voices.
- engaging the broader community, including those with lived experience.
- facilitating community engagement sessions, in person and virtually.

This work will commence in 2024.

Below are the 5 top priorities identified.



For more information on Stronger Together Summit scan QR code above.



# GOAL #3



## A Better Tomorrow (ABT)

The committee, “A Better Tomorrow”, was developed to ensure the inclusion of lived and living experienced voices to service system design and delivery. ABT examines and offers recommendations on items related to our local housing and homelessness service system.

Co-chairs from the Homelessness Prevention team facilitate committee meetings and reach out to community members with lived experience of homelessness. Other related community agencies that offer services are invited to present and create a platform for those with lived expertise to offer feedback.

Across 2023, the committee assisted in preparing for and participating in the Housing, Homelessness, and Addictions Summit. Further, they examined such issues as the local shelter standards which provide guidelines for operating shelters within the County of Lambton. This valuable feedback enables the inclusion of this essential perspective on strategy and front-line service delivery.

**Scan the QR code for  
A Better Tomorrow's  
reflections at the**

**March 13, 2023**

**Housing, Homelessness &  
Addictions Summit.**



# GOAL #3

The County's Homelessness Prevention Team and Housing Services department implemented a local housing policy in 2022 that ensures 1 in every 10 vacancies in County owned community housing units will be offered to households experiencing homelessness. Four households were successfully supported into community housing directly from an experience of homelessness through this initiative in 2023. All individuals receive ongoing intensive case management and have been supported to retain their housing.

1 in 10



## Family's Story

BACKGROUND

L and his children had been experiencing homelessness and were in a transition period, staying at a local motel. The family had been staying at the motel since June of 2023 after a wrongful eviction. L is a single dad to five children and had been trying to get by with no income for quite some time. He and his Community Support Worker (CSW) from the County of Lambton were able to work together to obtain financial support for him and his children.

SUPPORTS

L has been working with his CSW to find adequate housing for him and his five children since October of 2023. They attended four viewings, placed four housing applications, and all were denied. L never gave up and always showed gratitude for the support provided.

OUTCOMES

L finally received good news regarding an available unit in subsidized housing. After months of denial and struggle, his family was finally placed in an affordable unit that met their needs. After residing in a motel with his children, L's family finally has a place they can call home.



# SPOTLIGHT



## Housing and Homelessness Resource Centre (HHRC)

The Housing and Homelessness Resource Centre (HHRC) opened in June 2023. The centre's hours of operation began at 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. but have since expanded.

The centre provides a low barrier safe space for clients experiencing homelessness. The centre is staffed by 3 County of Lambton Caseworkers who support clients with: completing Social Housing applications; No Fee Birth Certificate applications; rental applications; applications for social assistance as well as connecting clients to other supports within the community to support them in their goal of finding stable and sustainable housing.

The centre has several community partners who visit to provide supports to clients. These partners include the Mobile Care Bus (bi-weekly), North Lambton Community Health Centre Hep C and Housing Teams, Lambton Public Health Harm Reduction, County of Lambton Community Support Workers, and Canadian Mental Health Association.

The centre allows clients to have a sense of community, a place to not only obtain assistance with supports, but a safe environment to socialize.





# SPOTLIGHT



## Housing and Homelessness Resource Centre (HHRC)

Quote: *“Friendly staff and a welcoming non-judgemental atmosphere.”*  
-2023 HHRC Survey Participant.



### M's Story

#### BACKGROUND

M was placed in the Halfway to Home Program through the Inn of the Good Shepherd (IOGS), a partner agency with The County of Lambton's Homelessness Prevention Department. While in these temporary accommodations, M began visiting the Housing & Homeless Resource Centre (HHRC).

#### SUPPORTS

M met with an HHRC Worker who built a rapport with M and was able to assist them in securing housing. The HHRC worker coordinated with the County's Landlord Engagement Support worker and a well-known landlord. They worked through a previous difficult tenancy to come to a resolution and were able to house M.

#### OUTCOMES

M is transitioning to Old Age Security (OAS) from Ontario Works (OW) social assistance, and their payments were set up to automatically transfer towards rent at the start of each month. The HHRC worker coordinated changes in rent payments with M and the landlord. M was also assisted with registration for online banking and ongoing rental payment after OAS was in place. There is ongoing tenancy support with an aim for successful and sustainable placement.



# SPOTLIGHT



## Housing and Homelessness Resource Centre (HHRC)

Quote: *“They actually go out of their way to help those who have issues getting the most important stuff done in our hectic lives and don’t judge you for being misguided or have emotional outbursts, or push you away when you need to find time just for you. I don’t go anywhere but here and I love it.”*

– 2023 HHRC Survey Participant.



### G’s Story

BACKGROUND

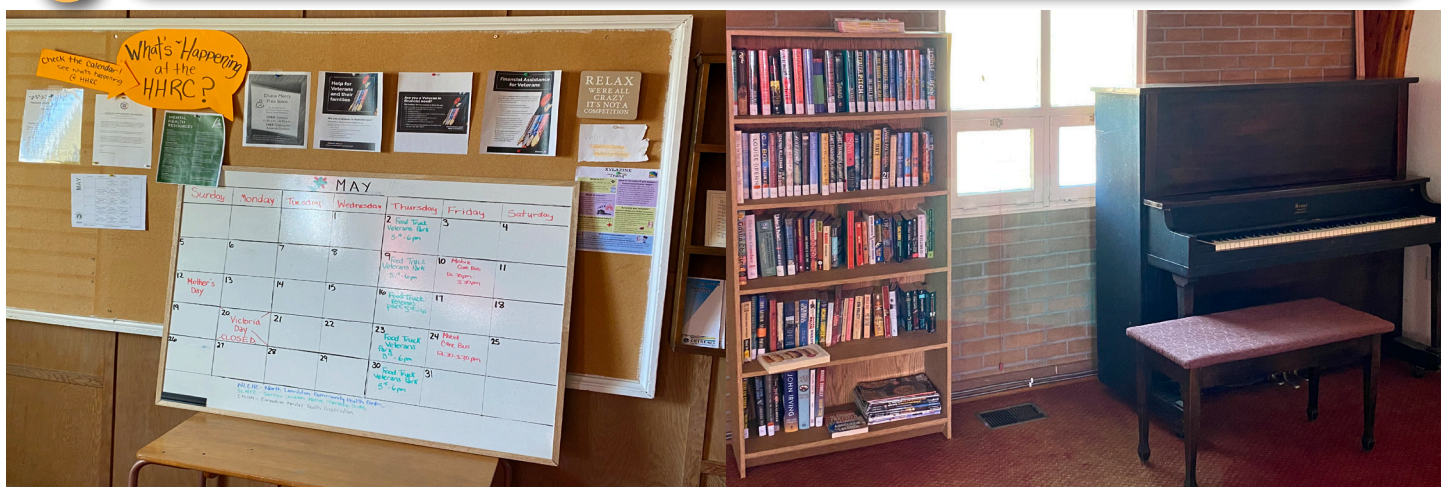
G was coming in regularly to spend time at the Housing & Homelessness Resource Centre (HHRC). He was placed at a local motel under the Inn of the Good Shepherd’s (IOGS) Halfway to Home program.

SUPPORTS

G sat down regularly with HHRC staff and applied to numerous market rentals. New units became available at an old church, so G and the HHRC worker called and were able to set up a viewing. The HHRC worker spoke with the Inn of the Good Shepherd Program Coordinator regarding this, as rent was above G’s Ontario Works (OW) shelter entitlement.

OUTCOMES

The Inn of the Good Shepherd was able to provide G with a rent subsidy for 12 months to secure and maintain accommodations. G moved in but started to struggle with tenancy and behaviour. The HHRC worker was able to visit him daily to work on tenancy supports and facilitate a connection between his landlord and the County of Lambton’s Landlord Engagement Support Worker.



# GOAL #3



## Housing and Homelessness Resource Centre (HHRC)

*From June to December 2023:*

Unique Clients

204

Client Visits

1,709

Total Partner Visits

81



Successful Referrals to Services

33

Basic Needs & Supplies Offered

1,000+

Harm Reduction Supplies Offered

100+

The County of Lambton's Integrated Team has 3 Community Support Workers (CSW) who also operate at the HHRC. Between June and December 2023, the County of Lambton Homelessness Integrated Team including these CSW's progressed

**69 households into more permanent housing.**



# GOAL #3



## Emergency Shelter and Overflow

An emergency shelter for homelessness is a temporary facility that provides immediate accommodation and basic services to individuals or families who are experiencing homelessness. These shelters are designed to offer a safe and secure place to stay, especially during times of crisis or extreme weather conditions. They typically operate on a short-term basis, offering beds, meals, hygiene facilities, and sometimes additional support services such as counseling, job training, or referrals to other social services. The goal of emergency shelters is to provide a temporary solution while individuals work towards securing more stable housing options.



**18,800**

**Bed nights spent in shelter 2023**

**14,879** - Permanent Adult Emergency Shelter

**1,694** - Permanent Youth Emergency Shelter

**2,227** - Additional “Out of the Cold” congregate care site



# GOAL #3



## “Out of the Cold” Overflow Site

In March of 2023, the County and the Inn of the Good Shepherd opened a temporary shelter. The purpose of this congregate care site - referred to as “Out of the Cold” - was to create a more affordable shelter solution as the need for overflow beds decreased, and to offer centralized, on-site supports to clients through a collaborative network of homelessness service providers. Additional specialized supports were offered by community partners including on-site health supports from NLCHC and CMHA.

Opened the beginning of March 2023 to the end of April 2023 and opened again in October 2023.

**95**

**Unique individuals served.**

**2,227**

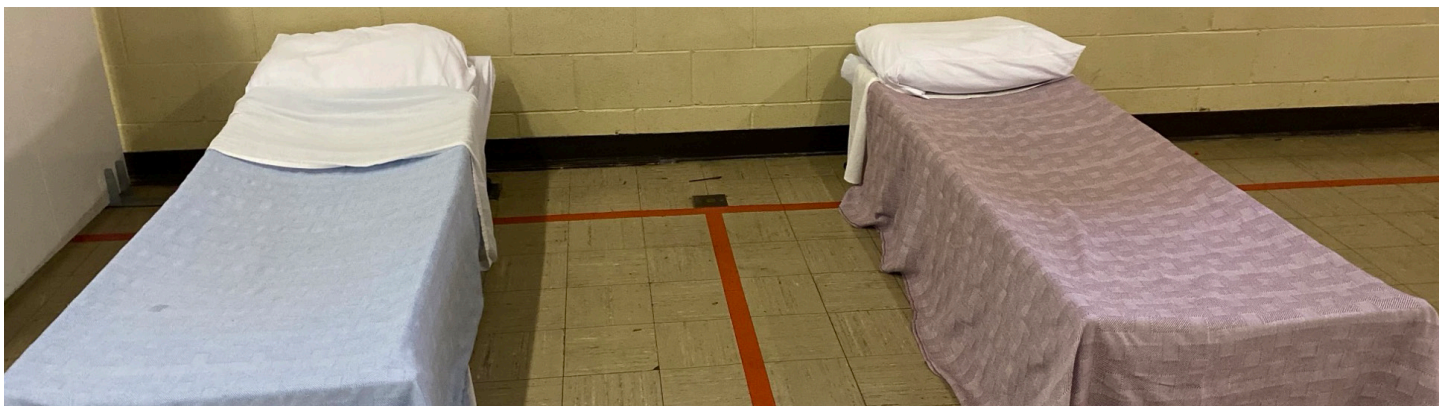
**Overnight stays supported.**



Canadian Mental  
Health Association  
Lambton Kent



North Lambton  
Community Health Centre



# GOAL #3

**Coordinated access process for housing and supports implemented**

**By 2021, a coordinated access process for housing and supports will be implemented.**

In 2022, all system mapping for coordinated access was completed. In early 2023 the Coordinated Access Community Collaborative Table (CCT) met for its inaugural meeting. This table will connect households experiencing homelessness with the appropriate resources.

**% of County funded homelessness service providers consistently using standardized assessment tool**

**By the end of 2020, a standardized assessment tool will be implemented among 100% of County funded homelessness service providers.**

Service Providers within the County utilized the VI-SPDAT tool to understand individual vulnerabilities to be better connected to appropriate resources. The VI-SPDAT is a survey administered both to individuals and families to determine risk and prioritization when providing assistance to homeless and at-risk of homelessness persons.



## C's Story

BACKGROUND

Before C entered the housing program, this 19-year-old individual was experiencing homelessness, residing at a shelter for youth in Sarnia while awaiting admission to an addiction's treatment centre. Once admitted, C was treated for alcoholism and substance use.

SUPPORTS

Upon discharge from treatment, he secured an apartment in Sarnia through the Homes for Good, Youth program via Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA). Since C's intake into the program, C has successfully maintained sobriety as well as his apartment.

OUTCOMES

C continues to strengthen his connections with community supports, which include the Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) community, case management supports, and services at a local health centre. C receives income support from Ontario Works (OW) and hopes to apply to the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) soon. Most recently, he has successfully obtained part-time employment.



# GOAL #3

**By-Name List and joint prioritization, matching and referral process established**

**By the end of 2020, a By-Name List and joint prioritization, matching and referral process will be established.**

Our community established a prioritization framework utilizing a Coordinated Access system of care. The matching and referral process consists of the By-Name List matching resources as they become available, prioritized to meet a households needs.



## Family's Story

BACKGROUND

In 2021, amidst the challenges of the COVID-19 Pandemic, one of the County of Lambton's Community Support Workers had the privilege of meeting M and her family. Facing homelessness due to familial strife and job loss, they found refuge in the Overflow shelter through the Lodge at SunBridge. Getting to know them during their stay, workers learned that M is a wonderful mother to two children.

SUPPORTS

Our Homelessness Prevention staff assisted M in securing housing, which unfortunately fell through due to her relationship ending. Consequently, M and her children found temporary residence at one of the local overflow shelters. Together, M and her worker navigated the complexities of the County's Homelessness Prevention system, working on essential tasks such as obtaining birth certificates, completing housing applications, and sorting out taxes so that she and her family could be considered for the 1 in 10 homelessness prioritization program.

OUTCOMES

Since transitioning into stable housing, M's children have thrived in school, seldom missing a day. They relish their time playing outdoors with neighborhood friends, though they're not fans of tidying up their rooms in their new home! M herself has taken great pride in their newfound stability, even taking up gardening to beautify their surroundings. Furthermore, M has become an active member of a group called A Better Tomorrow, where she shares her firsthand experiences of homelessness, advocating for change and providing insight into the challenges faced by those in similar situations.



# GOAL #3



## K's Story

### BACKGROUND

The Youth Housing Case Manager from Sarnia-Lambton Children's Aid Society began working with K, then 17 years old, in June 2023. K was experiencing homelessness and was requesting support finding permanent housing for himself. K had been pre-approved for Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) due to a cerebral palsy diagnosis, however decided to continue working with SLCAS for continued support as he entered adulthood and independence. K has described his past as unstable and unhealthy, as he struggled with substance misuse, unhealthy relationships and had no goals for his future.

### SUPPORTS

K was able to secure temporary housing with the intent of finding a place of his own. Unfortunately, K experienced a domestic violence incident which led him to become homeless once again. Although discouraged by the event and his situation, K was able to use bravery and his support system to complete a Special Priority Status housing application. K was accepted and recently moved into his own apartment.

### OUTCOMES

K has been able to complete the job support program and has begun setting up appointments with employers to secure a job. He has a lot of excitement and a positive outlook on what this will hold for his future. K has really stepped up to the plate and made a lot of great changes for himself. Having his own home has allowed him to aspire to new goals, such as getting a part-time job, continuing to decrease his substance use, and work on his personal relationships. When the Youth Housing Case Manager asked K if he would tell his story, how being housed has led to a positive outcome for him, he felt in disbelief that he was being asked to be a story of positivity. He said, "I've never had a good story to tell about myself until now". Although it was a long road to secure his own housing K has flourished and can finally see great things for himself.



**% of service providers participating in coordinated access that use HIFIS**

**By 2022, HIFIS will be implemented in 100% of service providers participating in coordinated access.**

Those agencies in system of care (coordinated access) are utilizing the HIFIS system. Work is underway to expand all agencies into the HIFIS system.





# GOAL #4



## ENDING HOMELESSNESS

- Expand prevention approaches
- Shift to housing focused emergency and transitional accommodation
- Using a Housing First approach, increase housing and supports for people who have experienced homelessness



### Homelessness Prevention Resources

The Rental Assistance Program (RAP) is administered through Ontario Works at the County of Lambton. Households approved for RAP receive a temporary rental supplement to meet the difference between their income and the rent of their unit.

RAP is a short-term homelessness prevention solution, to secure or maintain affordable housing while households are waiting for other rent solutions to begin. It prevents those who are at-risk of or experiencing homelessness from missing housing opportunities because they've just begun a new job or have just begun receiving appropriate supports.

#### RAP

- **155 RAP** applications approved
- **96 single** applications approved
- **59 family** applications approved
- **55** to **secure** housing
- **100** to **maintain housing**



# GOAL #4

## Mental Health and Social Services Team (MHASST)

The Mental Health and Social Services Team (MHASST) is comprised of staff from Ontario Works and the Canadian Mental Health Association, Lambton-Kent branch. Working collaboratively, MHASST provides brief services to adults (16 and over) in receipt of Ontario Works funding or in receipt of rent-geared-to-income assisted housing. Through outreach, relationship building, assessment and liaising with other key community resources, MHASST links vulnerable individuals directly to the appropriate services and supports to address complex needs.

### MHASST

- **86** individuals accepted into MHASST
- **68** individuals connected to supports and services



### L's Story

#### BACKGROUND

L was previously receiving Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) until 2016 when his file was closed due to employment income. He applied for Ontario Works (OW) in 2023 when he found himself unemployed and experiencing homelessness. When meeting with his OW Caseworker, L stated mental health concerns as a reason for the housing issues he was experiencing. To support L in achieving life stabilization, the OW Caseworker referred him to the Mental Health and Social Services Team (MHASST).

#### SUPPORTS

In addition to helping L receive mental health supports, the MHASST team focused on getting his Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) file reinstated. L agreed with this plan as it was understood a higher level of social assistance income may help in securing a home. The MHASST team worked with the local ODSP office and connected L with a physician to complete the steps required for a file reinstatement. They were successful in doing this as well as helping him get his income taxes up-to-date, and receive ID and an Ontario Health Card.

#### OUTCOMES

L is currently in Transitional Housing at The Good Shepherd's Lodge and being supported by a Community Support Worker from the Integrated Team to secure a home. The outcomes achieved by the MHASST team have provided L with a stronger sense of stability and will assist towards the efforts to help him find permanent housing.



# GOAL #4

## Municipal Residency Benefit (MRB)

The Municipal Residency Benefit (MRB) is administered through Ontario Works to recipients of social assistance who are at imminent risk of homelessness. MRB may be provided to households who require assistance to access new accommodations that are sustainable, or prevent households from losing current accommodations.

### MRB

- **892** households assisted in 2023
- **411** households assisted to maintain housing
- **481** households assisted to obtain housing



## Family's Story

### BACKGROUND

H and K relocated to Sarnia with their two children in 2023 to be closer to their doctor. Unfortunately, the new rental unit they secured was no longer available and they could not return to their previous home. As a result, the family became homeless and contacted The Good Shepherd's Lodge for help. The Lodge placed them at a local motel for temporary shelter relief.

### SUPPORTS

Shortly after the family settled into their motel room, they were connected to a Community Support Worker (CSW) on the Integrated Team. The family and the CSW developed a working relationship with the common goal of securing an affordable home based on their Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) income. The CSW searched for and reviewed available housing opportunities with them to ensure an appropriate fit. After four months in the motel, H and K secured a new rental unit for their family to call home. As with most rental units, a deposit was required before the family could obtain the unit. The CSW supported the family by accessing funds through the Municipal Residency Benefit (MRB) which covered the entire amount of the deposit. MRB funding was also used to assist with the costs of furniture and moving expenses.

### OUTCOMES

The family has lived in their new home for one year now. With support from The Lodge, their CSW and MRB funds, their experience of homelessness was short. As a result of achieving housing stability, K was able to pursue and finish her studies in Early Childhood Education.



# SPOTLIGHT



## Diversion

Diversion is a best-practice approach used to prevent individuals and families from entering emergency shelter, through offering timely homelessness prevention supports. These supports are specific to the household's situation, but may include services such as conflict mediation, or assistance with rental arrears.

Lambton County offers diversion at all access points where an individual presents having an experience of homelessness. In particular, this includes all emergency housing locations, community outreach workers and directly at service providers.

## In 2023, Lambton County facilitated:

**145**

successful  
diversions



**770**

instances  
of diversion  
services



## Integrated Team

The County of Lambton Integrated Homelessness Team seeks to secure permanent housing for those experiencing homelessness, and to support new or at-risk tenancies to prevent homelessness. The team is primarily comprised of Community Support Workers (CSW's), that offer both intensive case management and rapid rehousing services to chronically and newly homeless households respectively. The team also contains two Community Outreach Workers who offer assertive community outreach to unsheltered households. Further, the team is supported by a Landlord Engagement Support Worker, who liaises with landlords and property managers to strengthen connections to private market housing opportunities. This team is shared across both the Ontario Works, and Homelessness Prevention and Children's Services departments, to deliver the focused service coordination for all households on their housing journey.



# GOAL #4



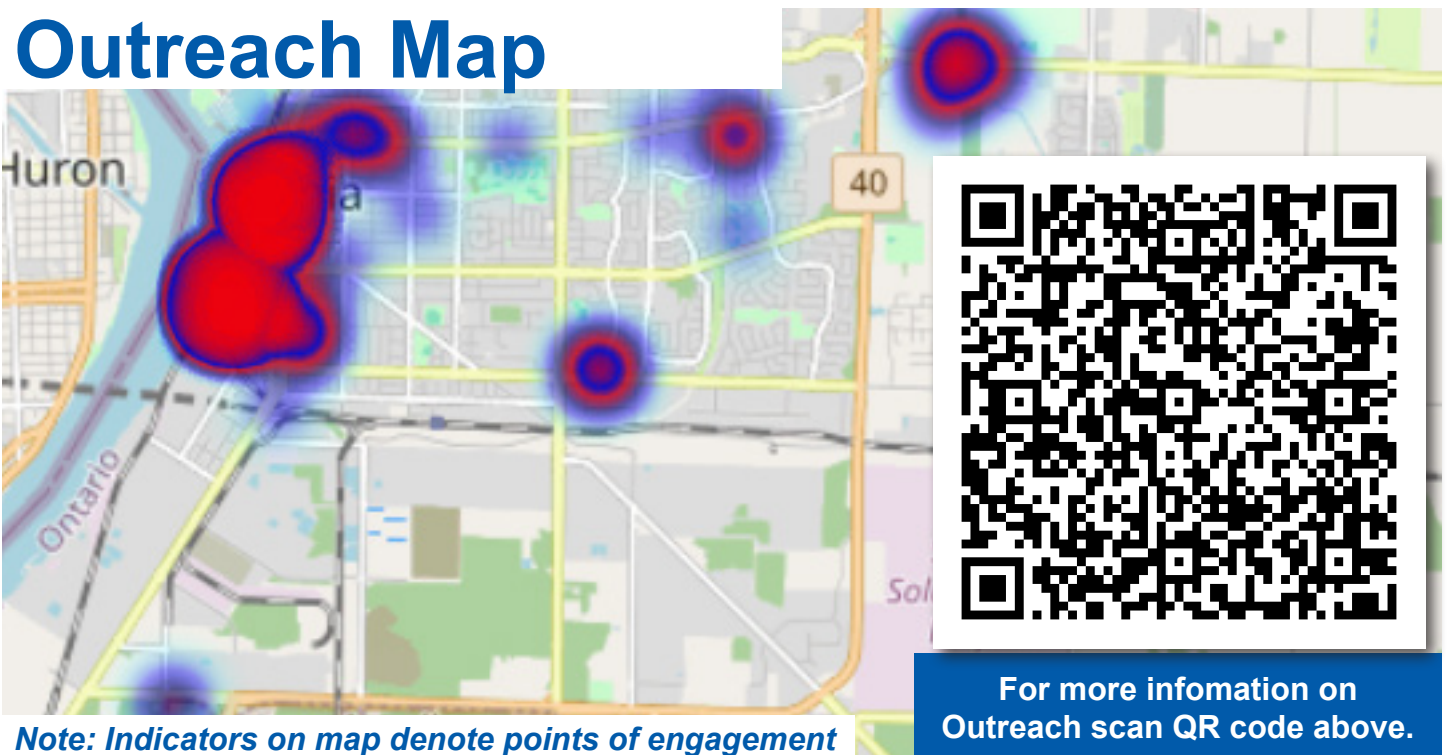
## Outreach Team

One of the many homelessness services directly offered by the County of Lambton is community outreach. Lambton County continued to offer mobile case management to unsheltered households in 2023, through two Community Outreach Workers. This team works closely with individuals who are sleeping rough. This team seeks to house individuals directly from the street and connect them to other essential services. They offer assertive community outreach and progress individuals into more permanent housing.

There are multi-disciplinary efforts coordinated with partner agencies such as Lambton Public Health, the North Lambton Community Health Centre, and Sarnia Police Services IMPACT to ensure households are better connected to primary care services, are offered harm reduction tools and services, and can receive supports wherever they are living.

The barriers to accessing permanent housing from an individual living unsheltered are immense. Financial, communication, transportation, stigma, health, credit and rental history, and document readiness all pose significant challenges to this population. Despite these challenges the community outreach team was able to progress **27 individuals directly into more permanent housing from an experience of unsheltered homelessness.**

## Outreach Map



For more information on Outreach scan QR code above.



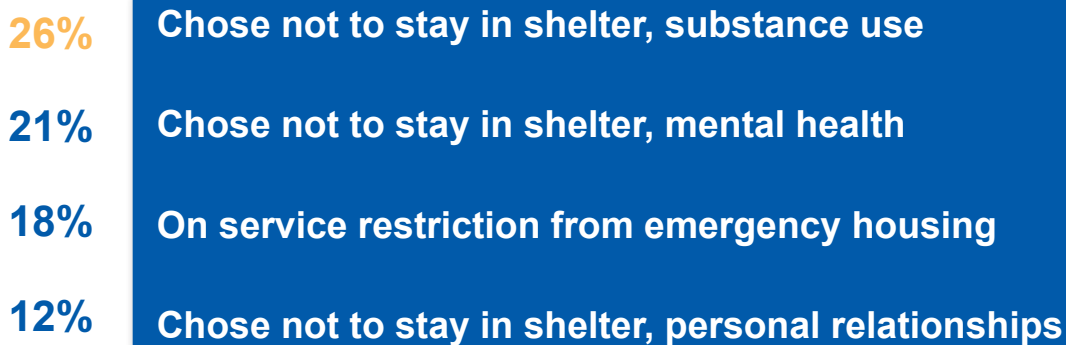
# GOAL #4



## Community Outreach Outcomes

While many individuals briefly experience unsheltered homelessness, it is a much smaller group that consistently slept outside in 2023. Throughout 2023, the team was consistently engaging 60-70 unique individuals within each month, who at some point slept outside. This cohort of individuals was relatively consistent, with some new individuals being identified at roughly the same rate as were progressed into housing. The majority of these individuals only occasionally slept outside. Approximately one quarter of these individuals slept outside every night. This trend was consistent to the end of 2023.

Not every household chooses to access the available emergency housing solutions available within Lambton County. Community outreach staff are deployed to reach these households. The trauma experienced by these individuals results in very complex needs and challenges in effectively serving them. Common reasons for not accessing available shelter include being unable to follow a curfew, particularly while suffering from a substance use disorder, complex mental health concerns, restrictions due to violence or unsafe behaviours, or personal relationships. This graphic depicts the most common reasons cited by individuals for living rough.



*Data is from January 1st to December 31st 2023*

**234**

# of Unique individuals served

**1,007**

# of engagements

**22%**

Proportion of Indigenous households

**54**

# of coordinated trips with partner agency staff

**1,157**

# of instances of harm reduction supplies offered



# GOAL #4

**By-Name List (BNL):**  
is a comprehensive, real-time list of every known and consenting individual experiencing homelessness.

**318**  
Individuals on the  
BNL as of  
December 31, 2023

This total number of more than 300 individuals includes everyone that is couch-surfing, accommodated in a shelter bed, transitional housing, and sleeping outside.

**It is not a static list. This is not the number of individuals living unsheltered.**

This is a real-time list that changes by more than 50 names every month as individuals newly experience homelessness or are progressed out of homelessness with local supports.

**Within the total BNL during 2023, each month:**

- 10-15** Individuals slept outside almost every night
- 10-15** Additional individuals slept outside many nights
- 30-40** Additional unique individuals are engaged each month by outreach who slept outside at some point



## P's Story

### BACKGROUND

Outreach met P in the early spring of 2023. He was briefly staying with a family member, but the relationship broke down, and he ended up living in a tent. It took staff many months of consistent engagement to rebuild some of the trust he had lost in service providers, following nearly a decade of negative experiences while being homeless.

### SUPPORTS

Once this trust was established Outreach was able to support this client to replace all of his ID, open a new bank account, fully complete his housing application and get him qualified for the 1 in 10 homelessness prioritization program. As the weather got colder, staff were able to support this client with a move into an emergency shelter bed, and a referral to North Lambton Community Health Centre (NLCHC) to access medical care, enabling him to access primary care for the first time in over nine years. With Outreach's assistance P was successful in applying for multiple private market units, and was eventually successful in retaining his own unit, moving into his own place during the fall. After his successful retention of housing, P was referred to a Community Support Worker from the County of Lambton for ongoing tenancy supports.

### OUTCOMES

Since receiving his own unit P has significantly stabilized both his life and mental health, is now receiving supports for an acquired brain injury, is receiving ongoing medical care, and is in the midst of transitioning to Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). He is thrilled to be maintaining his own apartment, for the first time in over 10 years.



# GOAL #4

**Diversion approach implemented in all emergency accommodation**

**By 2021, a diversion approach will be implemented within all emergency accommodations.**

Diversion was introduced system-wide in 2020. This process was significantly enhanced in 2021. The consistent application of diversion and its underlying best practices were further enhanced in 2022. In 2023, a new diversion tool was administered to better capture all individuals seeking assistance.



## W's Story

### BACKGROUND

Following a COVID-19 induced stroke leaving the left half of his body significantly paralyzed, W fell on hard times and ended up having to live outside, unsheltered. Due to mobility issues and challenging behaviors related to his decreasing mental health, he was slowly barred from accessing emergency shelter beds and other community services.

### SUPPORTS

With very few options, and ongoing medical challenges including a newly broken shoulder following a fall, W's access to the hospital for supports became a revolving door. After experiencing significant frost bite this past winter he required amputation of his toes, further impairing his mobility. Following this surgery, Outreach was able to successfully negotiate a hotel room for him to stabilize in while receiving ongoing medical treatment. Staff were able to arrange for him to receive ongoing wound care, and transportation every other day to such appointments.

### OUTCOMES

Following a brief hotel stay, Outreach was successful in arranging for a Home and Community care assessment for ongoing supports, and involving Lambton Elderly Outreach (LEO) to help support his care. W was successfully placed by LEO in his own unit and is currently healing from a second surgery to address infection that had developed in his foot. W expressed deep gratitude, indicating it had been over 7 years since he lived in stable housing.





# GOAL #4

# of households that were previously homeless that are in receipt of permanent supportive housing, Assertive Community Treatment, Intensive Case Management, or rapid re-housing (with affordability assistance)

By 2024, an additional 160 households that were previously homeless will be in receipt of affordability assistance and housing-related supports.

There has been a significant increase in local housing case management capacity, including rapid re-housing and intensive case management by community support workers, in addition to the introduction of community outreach workers that offer affordability assistance and housing-related supports. There are **528** individuals on the Co-ordinated Access Community Collaborative table caseload.

## H's Story

### BACKGROUND

H entered the emergency shelter program in August of 2023. She was living at a local motel in Sarnia with her two young children. She also found herself pregnant again and it was very important to get her, and her family housed as soon as possible. This client was added to a County of Lambton's Community Support Worker's (CSW) caseload to help her find accommodations that fit her family needs.

### SUPPORTS

While H was in the emergency shelter program, her CSW worked with the Landlord Engagement Support Worker and a landlord that he worked with. Her CSW put her name forward for a unit that became available with this landlord. The application and all supporting documents were filled out. The CSW was present for the viewing and supported with any questions and answers the landlord had for H.

### OUTCOMES

H was successfully chosen for this unit with the understanding that her CSW would continue to support her tenancy. There has been nothing but positive comments from the landlord regarding H's tenancy. She is very happy that she was able to find suitable housing for herself and her young children. Shortly after moving into the unit, H gave birth to a healthy baby she could bring into a positive environment.



# GOAL #4

# of youth that were previously homeless that are in receipt of permanent supportive housing, Assertive Community Treatment, Intensive Case Management, transitional housing, or rapid rehousing (with affordability assistance)

By 2024, an additional 45 youth will be in receipt of affordability assistance and housing-related supports.

Local youth housing programs have the collective capacity to serve youth on the BNL. All programs are supported through rent supplements from the County of Lambton. There are **68** youth being served through these programs.



## BACKGROUND



## O's Story

O experienced a period of homelessness after a family breakdown. She was staying with friends and later at the Haven, a short-term shelter for youth. She was selected for the Home for Good Youth program in early spring of 2023.

## SUPPORTS

In May, with the support of the CMHA Housing Program, she signed the lease on a 1-bedroom apartment, where she has consistently maintained a successful tenancy.

## OUTCOMES

O has learned the budgeting skills required to maintain a home and live an independent life, including paying her own utilities and tenant insurance, purchasing groceries, and saving for larger purchases, such as a new office desk. She is now working 40 hours per week in a long-term care facility and has a goal of completing post-secondary education at Lambton College. Since working with the CMHA Housing and Home for Good Youth programs, she describes feeling a sense of wellbeing and is happy in her new home. O has consistently worked toward her goals and has hope for her future.



# GOAL #4



## F's Story

### BACKGROUND

F was living in a basement unit when she became pregnant. Due to limited space to care for a child, F had to search for a new place to live. She and her mother, a person who recently experienced homelessness, decided to share the cost of a 2-bedroom apartment in Sarnia. Using her employment income she received while on maternity leave, F was able to pay her portion of the rent with minimal issues. However, when her mother moved out, paying the full amount of rent was a challenge with her limited income.

### SUPPORTS

Faced with an increasing amount of rental arrears, F decided to contact the County of Lambton Community Support Worker (CSW) who had previously helped her mother with tenancy supports. This CSW, who is part of the Integrated Team, met with F, assessed her needs, and offered the Rental Assistance Program (RAP) as a possible solution to the problem. F agreed to receive this monthly rent supplement program funding to cover the full amount of her rental arrears. In addition to this support, the CSW helped F with income tax completion and receiving items for her baby, such as diapers and wipes.

### OUTCOMES

RAP assistance helped F to pay rent on time and have more income for other basic needs items. Not having to worry about rental arrears accumulating helped F to focus on part-time schooling and increasing her level of education. She has recently returned to work and is expected to be able to manage her full rental expenses with her employment and Canada Child Tax Benefit income.



# GOAL #4



## R's Story

R struggles with methamphetamine addiction. Her drug use and associated behaviors made it difficult for her to access the shelter beds available to her. When R did access shelter, she often faced service restrictions. Frustrated with the system, she elected to get a tent and stay in a public park.

### BACKGROUND

Living outside during the winter caused an increase in her use, which made it even more difficult to access shelter beds. R was caught in a cycle of staying outside in the cold because of her use and using methamphetamine to cope with living outside in the cold. Outreach staff checked on her regularly, bringing her food, blankets, and warm clothing. Helping R was a challenge, because she was unable to access shelter, and was rarely mentally well enough to complete paperwork. Sarnia By-Law and Sarnia Police were getting calls regularly about her site, but they too were at a loss about how to help her.

### SUPPORTS

Concerned that R was going to freeze to death, Outreach staff called a case conference with Sarnia Police's IMPACT team, the individual's mother, and the Aamjiwnaang Addictions & Diversion Outreach team. With help from community partners a plan was made to place R in a motel room until her upcoming court date, where it was expected she would be sentenced to some time in jail. Finding a motel willing to take her was a challenge. R faced discrimination because she was unhoused, and in one instance, overt racism.

### OUTCOMES

With help from the IMPACT team, Outreach were eventually able to find her a room. R stayed out of the cold until her court date. This allowed By-Law to clean up the park, and Outreach to meet with her regularly and safely. As expected, she was sentenced to some time in jail. In jail she was able to get sober and upon her release, R chose to enter long term addiction treatment program. She continues to be successful in her treatment, and if she chooses to return to the area, there will be supports in place to ensure she does not end up back on the streets and succeeds in continuing to make positive steps for her future.



# CONCLUSION



## 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan, 2023 Annual Progress Report

In 2023, the rate at which households newly experienced homelessness continued to outpace the intensive and coordinated supports to divert them from shelter and progress them into housing. Resultantly, the number of individuals experiencing homelessness in Lambton County continued to rise, including the demand for limited local resources. 2023 was also a challenging year for access to affordable housing. Lambton continued to see the waitlist and wait times for subsidies increase. As the demand for supports grows, more households will continue to age into an experience of chronic homelessness, resulting in a further need for more accessible, and supportive housing.

Looking ahead to 2024, our community will continue to leverage all available local resources and partnerships to promote efficiency, equity, accessible service, and make strides towards long-term goals for gains in affordable housing and deeply supportive housing solutions. With the endorsement of Council, the County of Lambton will continue to move forward with enacting its multi-year portfolio scale supportive and affordable housing strategic plan.



