

ANNUAL REPORT

2015

OBJECTIVE UPDATES



Supportive Housing and Service Coordination

In partnership and participation at numerous community committees such as Poverty to Prosperity, The Hoarding Coalition and The Mental Health and Addictions Network, Huron County staff continue to focus on expansion of a supportive housing system. Coordinated support systems are key to stable housing for clients. Funding to the Addiction Supportive Housing Program through Choices for Change is one such program seeing positive outcomes for clients; *"Addiction Supportive Housing is affordable housing that provides opportunities for individuals that stabilizes in their recovery from substance abuse and work, to establish connections within the community."* *"...the program has helped multiple clients become more successful in their substance use goals, stable housing, budget skills, problem solving, obtaining and maintaining employment, awareness in education within their communities, decreased hospital visits, decreased involvement and developing stable plans..."* — Hailey Hedden, Intensive Addictions Case Manager from Choices for Change



Homelessness Prevention and Emergency Services

In line with provincial priorities, Huron County continues to focus on homelessness prevention initiatives. Dedicated funds are used to aid in stabilizing precarious housing, such as utility arrears, rental assistance, start up cost and supplemental health care. Partners in a coordinated system of emergency supports had this to say of the community Homelessness Prevention Initiative funds allocated to them to assist people remain housed. *"We make this money go very far...we are able to say, yes I can help you instead of saying I'm sorry there is nothing I can do..."* — Debra Morrison from the Salvation Army



People Centered System of Housing & Homelessness

The pathway into housing instability is far from linear, nor is the pathway out. Engaging with clients to address each unique set of needs is critical to success in sustaining stable housing. Steps have been taken to enable agencies to expand capacity to provide intensive and tailored services focused on empowering clients with choice. A program participant from Safe Homes for Youth stated, *"lots of people have given up on me, but she hasn't."* A volunteer offering room and board reflected on their experience of the last year. *"I am not sure what would of happened if I didn't take him in. We could have easily lost him to an overdose or suicide without the support of Safe Homes for Youth"* The Huron County Housing Outreach Worker, whose role is to support clients in the following domains of housing stability; community connections, budgeting, hoarding, mental health and addictions referrals, health care advocacy and supports and evictions prevention steps has had a successful first year. *"Each and everyday the work I do makes a difference in the lives of our clients by improving their overall quality of life, keeping them housed with the supports and services they require and ensuring that clients do not fall through the cracks."* — Amandeep Heer, Housing Outreach Worker



MEET... One of Your Neighbours

TRANSPORTATION

"Lack of transportation is a barrier in Huron County to providing services to people who need them. Getting to the grocery store, medical appointments, to work, job interviews..." -Huron Transportation Task Force 2008



FOOD

In order to purchase nutritious food, a single person on OW is required to use 40% of their income or if on ODSP, 25% of their income.

-Huron County Health Unit Nutritious Food Basket 2015



HOUSING

36.4% of tenants and 15.5% of home owners spend **30%** or more of their income on housing.

-Statistics Canada 2011



OW & ODSP Shelter Allowance

A single person receives the following maximum amount for their Shelter Allowance:

- OW: \$376 - ODSP: \$479



WAIT LIST

Waiting list for a single bedroom apartment in Goderich is 5 years. There are 52 households on the waiting list for housing in Exeter and 69 households on the Clinton wait list.



LIVING WAGE

52% of Huron County residents earn less than the living wage.

-Statistics Canada 2011



{ MOBILIZING CHANGE }

Low-income households are severely limited in their ability to sustain their housing affordably. Most usually these households are in 'extreme core housing need'. Options that might bring relief are almost not-existent. For those fortunate enough, social housing yields affordability. But social housing is finite with a perpetually long wait list. So-called 'affordable units' offering 80% of market rents are beyond the financial capability of these households.

-Affordable Housing Action Committee

To date, Huron County has 52 housing allowances, 17 rent supplement units and 5 supportive housing units.

Low-income households require assistance to reduce their housing burden. This help could come in the form of rent supplements. Supplements are small, monthly injections of dollars that enable people to pay rent and eat and pay utilities. But rent supplements are extremely limited in respect of the number of households who need them.

-Affordable Housing Action Committee

The strength in the community lies in its ability to support its people. Each person's story is unique, which is why it's critical that we come together collectively to ensure the basic human rights of safe, affordable and secure housing from which people have a greater opportunity in securing employment, raising a family and contributing to building a strong community.

In 2015-2016, Huron County Ontario Renovates Program supported 11 households in accessibility repairs that enabled them to remain housed.



A warm **THANK YOU** to the members of the Housing & Homelessness Steering Committee and their incredible teams who share best practices, for the completion of the housing and homelessness plan. These individuals provide the backbone to ending homelessness in the County of Huron.

*United Way Perth-Huron: Ryan Erb - Huron County Health Unit: Janice Dunbar - Safe Homes for Youth: Vicky Parent
Huron County Planning Dept.: Susanna Reid - The Women's Shelter/Second Stage Housing: Donna Jean Forster-Gill
Huron-Perth Canadian Mental Health Association: John Robertson - Choices for Change: Catherine Hardman*