

AMO 2024 Delegation Meetings



Paramedic Services



Small Business Centres



Workforce Housing



Early Childhood Education



Ontario Works





Strengthening Paramedic Services

Community paramedicine provides support to more than **1,000** active clients in eight municipalities.

Of 130 paramedics, **12** full-time community paramedicine providers.

48 paramedicine pilot programs across Ontario.

We have one community paramedicine dog named Ivy.



Community Paramedicine Reduces Healthcare Pressures

Northumberland's community paramedicine program is one of 48 paramedicine programs across Ontario that provides mobile in-home healthcare services around the clock to more than 1,000 active clients. This service is invaluable. It helps prevent unnecessary calls to 911, emergency room visits, lengthy hospital stays, offload delays, helps seniors remain safely in their homes longer, and knocks down barriers to healthcare for homebound individuals.

We provide services such as remote monitoring, blood testing, and assessment of acute symptoms and conditions. This allows patients to remain in their homes and guide their own care, while easing the responsibility of care for family members, and addressing physician shortages.

Our community paramedicine program is highly successful. To continue providing this service, Northumberland needs a commitment from the province beyond 2026. Without stable and predictable funding, Northumberland cannot plan long-term for its community paramedicine program, or make its 12 full-time positions permanent. This instability reduces staff morale and leaves the department in limbo. A long-term funding agreement between the Ministry of Long-Term care and municipalities is needed, with a buffer for proper implementation.

The Ministry of Long-Term Care must commit to a permanent, sustainable and predictable funding model for community paramedicine by making the funding allocation for Northumberland paramedic services permanent beyond March 2026.

Additional Benefits of the Community Paramedicine Program in Northumberland

Reduction of 911 calls: In 2023, we were able to help reduce 134 ambulance calls with just 25 of our clients for a cost savings of at least \$31,160. This estimated cost savings is based on \$240.00 per ambulance call as per the Ambulance Services Billing document from Ministry of Health and Ministry of Long-Term Care last modified October 25, 2023.

From January 1 to June 30, 2024, Community Paramedics have responded to at least 195 urgent requests for assessment due to various concerns by clients, family and caregivers. This corresponds to an approximate cost savings of \$366,111 for the top 6 illnesses/injuries (UTI, chest infections/COPD, cellulitis, dehydration, wound care and congestive heart failure). These cost savings are based on the Canadian Institute for Health Information patient cost estimator from 2021-2022 for patients who are at least 60 years of age.

The total number of clients served since the beginning of CPLTC in 2022 is 2006 and approximately 5000 since the overall Community Paramedicine program began in 2020.

Surveys from the first half of 2024 show that 87% of respondents feel that the Community Paramedic program has helped to prevent avoidable emergency room and/or hospital visits. 85% of respondents feel that being in the CP program has helped decrease their use of 911.

Our client testimonials speak for themselves:

"My experience has been extremely positive. The medical checkups I have received through the program have provided me with a sense of security, and reduced my reliance on 9-1-1 services. The Community Paramedics have a very prompt response time. It is clear that they love what they do and wish to perform at their best. I appreciate the connections I have formed with paramedics through this program."

"This program has helped keep my mom out of the hospital. Since we have been on the program, she has improved, her anxiety is down, and she is doing much better since her medication change and being at home."

Northumberland County thanks the province for their commitment to the modernization of Northumberland's 911 dispatch system to better prioritize calls and overall level of service. Our updated 911 system will help Northumberland manage intake for its community paramedicine programs more effectively.



Small Business Enterprise Centres

A Diverse Business Landscape Requires Flexible Funding Options

Northumberland's Business & Entrepreneurship Centre (BECN) provides support, guidance and micro grants to more than 600 clients a year. As the centre continues to evolve, so does its clientele. In 2023, more than half of our clients were established business owners.

The Province is currently undergoing a comprehensive review of 54 Small Business Enterprise Centres across Ontario. This is a key time to implement changes that have the most impact locally.

Currently, our funding is broken down into (approximately):

- \$86,753 for Core Program delivery
- \$122,400 for the Starter Company Program delivery & grants
- \$46,800 for the Summer Company Program delivery & grants
- \$184,000 through Northumberland County

Funding for core programming has remained unchanged for many years and lacks the flexibility needed to meet regional requirements. Implementing new, tailored funding programs that encourage innovation in programs and services at the local SBEC level would benefit entrepreneurs and strengthen our collective network.

Small Business Enterprise Centres work closest with clients and understand the varied needs within our communities. For example, at the BECN, we have seen an increase in:

- business expansion,
- sector-specific ventures,
- longstanding youth-run businesses, and
- women-owned businesses.

Additionally, the Ministry has limited understanding of local economic conditions. This stems from program management that is largely transactional. Instead of increased reporting responsibilities, staff want a genuine relationship between the Centre and provincial representatives. The current disconnect hinders our ability to truly advocate for the needs of our BECN and prevents our provincial representatives from seeing what's happening at the ground level.

We are asking the Province to consider:

- a. Improving collaboration and connectivity with the Ministry in the form of a committee or roundtable to better connect local SBECs and the Province, and to provide an avenue for constructive feedback, discussions around funding and programming, and to promote timely and effective communication.
- b. Enhancing funding for SBECs in addition to core program funding, for tailored regional programs that offer flexibility for SBECs to determine needs and fill gaps within their own business communities

75
new businesses
started in the last year.

60%
of clients already own
established businesses.

628
clients served in 2023.

140
new jobs added
in the last year.





Workforce Housing

\$725,000

Average home cost in Northumberland.

1.3%

current vacancy rate in Northumberland.

\$1,800

monthly cost of a one bedroom apartment.

Bringing Economic Prosperity to Northumberland

Economic prosperity in Northumberland County depends on attracting a talented, skilled labour force to live and work in the region. As the GTA is expanding east, there's potential for new industries and commercial businesses to look at Northumberland as the ideal location for long-term growth and success. We are at a pivotal moment in time.

Efforts to recruit and retain employees have proven to be challenging – particularly because of skyrocketing housing costs.

Research conducted by the County in collaboration with local employers indicates two major challenges:

1. Commercial and industrial employers are forced to bus workers from the GTA to Northumberland to fill skilled labour positions.
2. The shortage of workers has deterred prospective commercial and industrial employers from setting up shop.

A Proactive Solution: The Northumberland Workforce Housing Corporation (NWHC)

The (NWHC) was formed in 2022 to develop and implement a strategy to build more housing targeted to attracting and retaining Northumberland's workforce. The NWHC's Workforce Housing pilot project is based off a similar and successful model used in Calgary, Alberta.

Our model:

- Northumberland works with local tier municipalities to secure available land at no cost
- Developers are secured through a transparent RFP process to build housing at a reduced cost
- NWHC buys homes in blocks to resell to qualified buyers, and to allow developers to build more homes, faster
- Buyers meet specific criteria to purchase a home, including (but not limited to):
 - » Securing steady employment in Northumberland County
 - » Having a gross income of \$135,000 annually
 - » Securing pre-approved bank/lender financing
 - » Providing a \$2,000 down payment
- NWHC provides a no interest loan for the balance of the down payment and is on title.

NWHC has hired a Chief Executive Officer with a wealth of experience in planning, contract negotiations and new home construction to implement the project. This project is shovel ready. It has a strong model and implementation plan, and Northumberland has already secured commitments from local-tier municipalities willing to provide land.

To deliver on provincial housing targets, we are seeking a no-interest loan commitment from the province. This will allow the Northumberland Workforce Housing Corporation to bulk-buy between five and 10 new-construction homes.



Early Childhood Education

404

spaces to be added by year-end 2026.

1,170

spaces in County-operated daycare spaces for kids 0-5.

This accounts for

28%

of children under five.

3,053

children on a waitlist with an average 12 month wait.



New Funding Model: Uncertainty is Undermining Planning

The Province is implementing a new funding model for 47 early years system planners, who are responsible for planning and supporting the child care system, across Ontario. The new funding model aims to financially stabilize Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) enrolled child care centres whose educators care for children aged newborn to five years old.

Northumberland has been provided a tentative roll out date for the new model of September 2024, with expected implementation of the model by January 2025. This is a year later than previously indicated. While Northumberland's Early Years team have been able to review a draft of the new funding model, there has not been a clear directive on timelines, change management, or budgeting. The County needs to provide direction and certainty for child care providers who operate a CWELCC enrolled child care centres under its Early Years Services umbrella.

Mandated Expansion of Childcare Spaces are at Risk

Northumberland County has been mandated by the Province to increase spaces for children aged five and under by 404 by the end of 2026. Given the uncertainty around this new funding model, Northumberland is struggling to meet this mandate.

The Early Years Sector in Northumberland requires at least 30 Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) by the end of 2024, and an additional 30 by 2026 be able to meet these targets. However, the uncertainty, insufficient funding and low wages has resulted in a severe shortage of qualified RECEs willing to work in centres across the County.

Additionally, the Province is providing a one-time funding allocation for administration to support the implementation of the new funding model. This funding must be spent by the end of 2024. Without a concrete implementation date for the new funding model, it's difficult to properly allocate the administrative funding by year-end. For Northumberland County, this makes it difficult to determine what positions are needed and what skillsets are required to hire. It's also challenging to budget year-to-year with inconsistent and unpredictable funding allocations from the province.

The Ministry of Education has also reduced Early Years administration funding to approximately 2.5 per cent of the overall County funding allocation for the Early Years department. This accounts for an approximate decrease of \$300,000.

With a waitlist of more than 3,000 children, the demand for additional spaces will only grow.

We need the province to:

- Provide the time and resources for administrators and child care providers to properly roll out the new funding model.
- Extend the one-time funding for Administration into 2025 for the County and implement consistent, regular funding for Administration year-over-year.
- Ensure Early Childhood Educators are provided a fair, living wage to encourage attraction and retention of staff.



Ontario Works

65%

of Northumberland's Ontario Works caseload is single individuals.

\$70:

the amount the rates have increased over 30 years.

\$733:

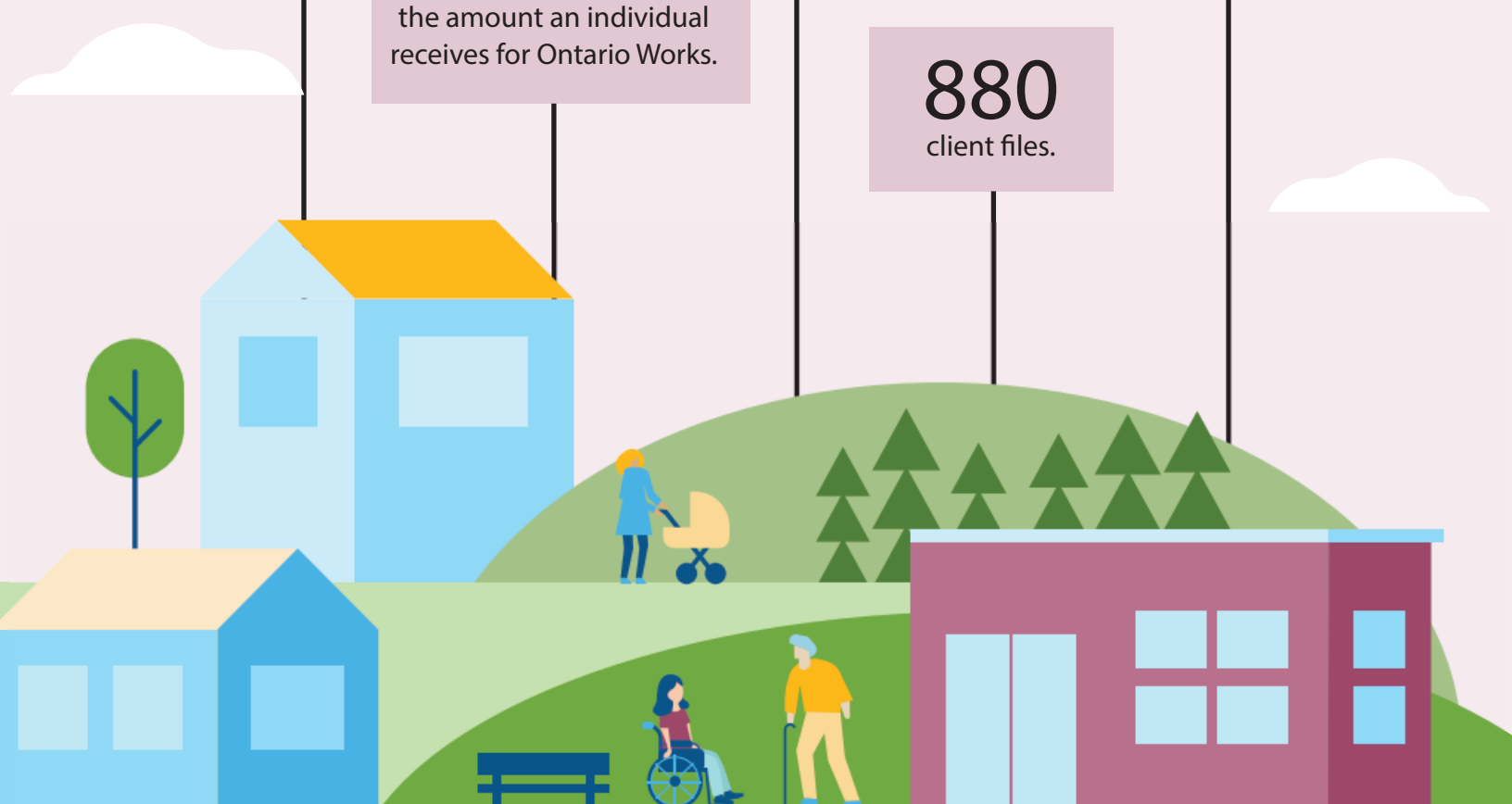
the amount an individual receives for Ontario Works.

20%

of social assistance recipients in Northumberland are on Ontario Works.

880

client files.



Ontario Works Rates: A Barrier to Success

Across the province, families and individuals are struggling to make ends meet with a high cost of living and inflated costs for food and other necessities. Northumberland County's Community and Social Services department is seeing increased dependency on social assistance programs, including Ontario Works (OW), and a significant uptick in high-needs clients.

The department currently manages 880 files, the majority (65%) are single adults.

While the Province has made significant changes to the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), Ontario Works is failing to meet current-day needs. Today, the ODSP benefit is almost double that of OW. In fact, over the last three decades, monthly rates for OW have only increased by \$70. As a result, individuals on OW in Northumberland are resorting to shared living spaces that are often illegal or unsafe and are choosing between rent and food.

OW's red tape and complex eligibility process further make the system more challenging for clients to navigate and the County to operate.

One of the key components of the OW program is fostering independence and graduating from the assistance program. Current OW rates are a huge barrier to this. Additionally, the monthly exemption for up to \$833 in financial gifts (support from family, for example), is not helpful. The department is finding, overwhelmingly, that people with family members in the system do not have the financial capacity to offer additional monthly support.

We are calling on the province to:

- Adjust the OW rate structure for inflation over the past five years, with a yearly increase for inflation moving forward.
- Streamline the rules under Ontario Works. The rules are much too complex. When someone asks who is eligible for assistance – there isn't a straight answer.
- Implement a flat rate eligibility process.

The logo consists of two stylized, flowing lines. The top line is blue and the bottom line is green, both curving from left to right.

Northumberland County

