

2024 Housing & Homelessness Annual Report



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Message from the Warden

I am pleased to present the 2024 Housing and Homelessness Progress Report for Northumberland County. As we enter the sixth year of our 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan (2019–2029) we are more than half-way home in achieving the identified objectives. There is much to reflect on in this year's report regarding the progress made – but also on how dramatically the landscape of housing and homelessness has changed since the plan was first written, and the evolving challenges that lie ahead.



When we developed this plan in 2019, housing insecurity and homelessness looked very different. Today, these challenges have deepened significantly. Costs have risen, demand has surged, substance abuse has escalated, and more people are finding themselves on the brink of homelessness — or falling into it. We are facing the effects of a national crisis that is growing in scale and complexity.

We do have a strong plan that is serving us well and delivering results. We have made headway on expanding affordable housing options, moving people into – or keeping them in – stable housing, and modernizing emergency shelter services. Nevertheless – we find ourselves at a critical juncture: while we have made meaningful progress, we are losing ground in the face of rising need. The number of people facing housing instability is increasing more quickly than our current systems can respond.

Increasing visible homelessness in our communities is an indication of this trend. This has, understandably, left some residents feeling frustrated and concerned. People want to see positive change. They want to feel safe and supported in their neighbourhoods.

This requires new solutions; ones that are grounded in evidence and involve broad partnerships across jurisdictions. Over the last year, we have increased the type and depth of data that we are collecting to better understand the scope of need, track outcomes more effectively, and inform targeted interventions that create meaningful and lasting change. We have made significant progress on our strategies in 2024 and have identified key objectives for 2025 that reflect current realities and added pressures – to ensure we can move further, faster, with more targeted measures and supports in place. More information is available in the pages of this report.

We also know that we cannot address these challenges alone. That is why we continue to actively engage with the Province of Ontario — both directly and through municipal advocacy groups such as the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus (EOWC). We are calling for greater investment in deeply affordable housing, more flexible funding models, and stronger coordination across all levels of government. We know that sustainable, systemic change requires

provincial leadership and partnership, and we remain committed to being a strong, solutions-focused voice at those tables.

I am proud of the progress we've made to date. I know that, with the partnerships that have made this possible, we will be able to address the growing needs and challenges that we face. Together, we will continue to collaborate, accelerate our efforts, and strengthen our supports in order to bring our shared vision closer to reality: that every Northumberland resident has access to safe, appropriate, and affordable housing in a healthy, inclusive community.

Brian Ostrander
Warden, Northumberland County

Introduction: The Northumberland Context

About the 10-year plan

Northumberland County is entering year 6 of our 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan 2019-2029. The County's vision for Northumberland that "[by] 2029, the Northumberland housing and homelessness system is responsive to the needs of all residents, providing safe, appropriate and affordable housing options within healthy and inclusive communities."

With this plan, the County has established six strategies required to support improved outcomes in the system. These strategies include:

- 1. Increase Affordable Housing Options**
- 2. Implement Coordinated Access for Housing and Support Services**
- 3. Support Housing Stability**
- 4. Increase Supportive Housing and Supports**
- 5. Build a Diverse Housing Supply**
- 6. Optimize the Existing Housing Stock**

These six strategies are well aligned with Northumberland County's Affordable Housing Strategy, Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan and the Community Housing Master Plan. This annual report will begin to deep dive into each one of these strategies and provide concrete actions that have been taken, present data (where available), identify gaps where future attention will be required.

The County continues to wait for direction from the provincial government on the required update to the plan. Under legislation, the 10-year housing and homelessness plan is to be updated every 5 years and was due for an update in 2024. The province provided direction to Service Managers in 2024 that further information and guidelines would be shared with Service Managers to update plans in alignment with provincial priorities and requirements. Northumberland County looks forward to receiving this direction and undertaking a comprehensive review of its 10-year housing and homelessness plan.

A Home for Everyone...

Northumberland County continues to raise awareness of key housing realities facing our community. Despite the fact that many of these realities have existed for several years, these challenges continue to become more acute:

Some key realities include:

- The average market rent in Northumberland for a one-bedroom unit is **more expensive than neighbouring communities**, including the City of Peterborough, the City of Kawartha Lakes, and Hastings County.
- The year-to-date average house resale price as of March 2025, was **\$676,307** and the monthly average resale price in March 2025 was **\$682,019**. While this represents a slight decrease from 2024, this remains unaffordable to all households in Northumberland except for the top decile of income earners.
- The waitlist for social housing continues to be **9 years** in some communities and has grown more than **300%** in the last 10 years, with over **1,300 households** on the waitlist.
- As of November 2024, the living wage for Northumberland County was **\$21.65**. This means that a single earner household earning a living wage in Northumberland County is unable to afford any rental unit at the CMHC AMR regardless of unit size.

Access to rental housing in Northumberland is limited, particularly in larger urban areas, where the rental market is characterized by high rents and low vacancy/availability rates. However, unaffordability and unavailability of rental units is expanding into all areas of the County. The weekly rental listings compiled by the Help Centre have demonstrated the lack of availability week over week.

Northumberland's vacancy rate is calculated using data from CMHC, which is available for three municipalities and limited in its reliability. In 2024, the average vacancy rate in Northumberland was **1.5%**. This vacancy rate is below the 2024 provincial average of 2.2%. Northumberland's vacancy rate is well below what is considered a healthy vacancy rate of 3%.

Measuring against our 10-year strategies (2024)

In the development of the renewed 10-year housing and homelessness plan, engagement with community stakeholders was completed which supported the County in prioritizing the various action items under each strategy. (for a full list of action items, please see Appendix A).

Strategy 1: Increase Affordable Housing Options

This strategy focuses on work required to increase the supply of rental housing which is affordable to households with low and moderate incomes and achieving a functional zero end to homelessness. This is a key strategy that supports not only the Housing and Homelessness Plan but also the Affordable Housing Strategy.

Progress toward action items

Over 2024, progress has been made to support this strategy and the identified 13 action items.

Key progress made toward these action items include:

- Continued discussions with member municipalities on land-banking opportunities to continue identifying shovel-ready and funding-ready projects. (Action item 1.2)
- Continued the expansion of the County-funded Made in Northumberland Rent Supplement Program, with a budget that grows annually. Seeking rent supplement units in up to 50% of all affordable units created under the Affordable and Rental Housing Program. (Action item 1.4)
- Shifted rent calculations away from rent-geared-to-income rent scales to maximum shelter rates for social assistance recipients to be able to support more affordable housing units. (Action item 1.4)
- Worked with the Northumberland County Housing Corporation (NCHC) to continue construction of Elgin Park Phase Two – realizing 20 units of affordable and market rental housing. (Action Item 1.6)
- Continued working with projects partners (Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services, and the NCHC) to continue moving development forward, including initiating Stage 3AA archaeological studies, and beginning the process of finalizing the schematic design for 473 Ontario Street, Cobourg. (Action Item 1.6)
- Launched the redevelopment plans for 123 King Street, Colborne with the goal of adding up to 60 units to the property (Action Item 1.6)
- Acquired 129 Kent Street, Campbellford Ontario with plans to construct at least three affordable units for the purpose of expanding transitional housing in Northumberland County (Action 1.6)
- Finalized the purchase of 699 Westwood Drive, Cobourg Ontario (Action 1.6)

- Support private and non-profit developers applying for incentives through the Affordable and Rental Housing Policy and Affordable Housing Grant Program for the creation of affordable housing units. This is done through letters of supports, and commitments under the Affordable and Rental Housing Policy. (Action item 1.7)
- Supported provincial advocacy efforts raising awareness to the need for consistent and stable funding supports from both the provincial and federal governments and the role service managers play in encouraging affordable rental development. (Action Items 1.9 – 1.13)
- Participated in local, regional and provincial housing tables to support advocacy efforts to improve outcomes of programs and policies. (Action Items 1.9 – 1.13)
- Associate Director serves as co-chair the Housing Services Strategic Committee to provide advice and recommendations regarding housing and homelessness system improvements to provincial advocacy associations and provincial staff. (Action Items 1.13)
- Participate in local, regional and provincial advocacy and networking tables to support system change and improvement to support housing and homelessness system improvements. (Action Items 1.10, 1.13)

Strategy 2: Implement Coordinated Access for Housing and Support Services

This strategy focuses on developing a ‘no wrong door’ approach for accessing all housing and homelessness related support services in Northumberland. This strategy supports the development of a person-centered coordinated system supporting members of our community that are the most vulnerable.

Progress toward action items

Over 2024, progress has been made to support this strategy and the identified 6 action items.

Key progress made toward these action items include:

- Obtained access to HIFIS as a method of sharing real time information with participating agencies and to enhance coordinated access to the homelessness system. Over 2024 the IT infrastructure required for HIFIS was realized and data provision agreement with Infrastructure Canada was signed. Full implementation expected in 2025. (Action item 2.2)
- Maintained a ‘Quality By Name List’ status based on the Built For Zero-Canada scorecard. The list is updated in full monthly. (Action item 2.3)
- Continued implementation of the Homelessness Leadership Table (HLT) as a next step towards examining homelessness services to identify opportunities to coordinate service delivery. (Action item 2.4)

- Developed coordinated selection process for transitional housing units through HCRT and support agencies. (Action item 2.4)
- Opened 310 Division Street to support a coordinated entry into the homelessness system in Northumberland, collaborating with Transition House Emergency Shelter and members of the HLT to support individuals experiencing homelessness through access to a 24/7, 365 day drop in centre, low-barrier emergency shelter beds and transitional housing. (Action item 2.1)
- Partnered with Northumberland County Housing Corporation to introduce transitional housing units that support individuals experiencing homelessness achieve housing security. (Action item 2.6)
- Partnered with a private addictions and recovery facility to support individuals seeking substance use treatment access to services. (Action item 6.4)
- Developed a resource list of supports available in the community and shared with member municipalities for supporting local responses to homelessness. (Action item 2.5)
- Coordinated responses to encampments at Brookside with the HLT, HCRT and other agencies to support vulnerable individuals access safe and appropriate services and support. (Action item 2.1).

Strategy 3: Support Housing Stability

This strategy focuses on creating a system of support service providers and landlords to enable successful transitions into housing stability for people who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness. This strategy is also supported by the goals outlined in the Affordable Housing Strategy.

This strategy also includes work to ensure people that are housed are able to remain housed, including those with affordable rents in the private sector and community housing sector.

Progress toward action items

Over 2024, progress has been made to support this strategy and the identified 13 action items.

Key progress made toward these action items include:

- Continued implementing the COHB, including working with internal department stakeholders, community partners and the broader housing and homelessness systems to refer eligible households. (Action item 3.1.)
- Continued implementing the Housing Stability Program, which provides monthly rent subsidies to households experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of homelessness access permanent housing. (Action item 3.1)

- Continued the expansion and implementation the Made in Northumberland Rent Supplement Program, to support households on the centralized waitlist and those at risk of homelessness obtain affordable and/or subsidized housing. (Action item 3.1.)
- Continued the implementation of eviction prevention policies and processes for the NCHC. (Action item 3.3.)
- Ongoing work with the Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services, and partners on the development of affordable housing at 473 Ontario Street, based on the principles of reconciliation, including completing Indigenous Cultural Competency Training with project staff. (Action item 3.4.)
- Delegated to provincial Ministers at AMO and ROMA on expanding street outreach and community paramedicine to support individuals experiencing homelessness 24/7. (Action item 3.13)

Strategy 4: Increase Supportive Housing and Supports

This strategy focuses on expanding the supply of housing with supports in appropriate locations throughout Northumberland. This goal is relevant to not only the Housing and Homelessness Plan, but also the Affordable Housing Strategy.

Progress toward action items

Over 2024, progress has been made to support this strategy and the identified 4 action items. Key progress made toward these action items include:

- Continue providing training opportunities for key County staff supporting the NCHC to ensure services provided support housing retention framework, including Mental Health First Aid, Eviction Process Training, Trauma-Informed Care. (Action item 4.1)
- Designed and launched a transitional housing program in partnership with community partners, ensuring coordinated service delivery, wraparound supports. (Action item 4.2) / (Action item 6.3)
- Continue working with community housing tenants to connect them with supports needed, including Community Paramedicine support, Northumberland Hills Hospital hoarding support, the Help Centre and Community Health Centres Northumberland. (Action item 4.1)
- With COCHI/OPHI Year 5 funding, identified community housing providers with similar capital repair needs and supported capacity building through partnering with HSC for project management and bulk procurement initiatives. (Action item 4.4.)
- Worked with program partners to seek provincial funding for a Homelessness Addiction Recovery Treatment Hub in Northumberland. This funding application was unsuccessful. (Action item 4.2)

Strategy 5: Build a Diverse Housing Supply

This strategy focuses on encouraging and supporting the development of a diverse housing stock, including the need for more purpose-built rental, smaller units, accessible housing options, and differing tenures and other ways to support a strong, robust and diverse housing supply across the County. This strategy also supports the goals of the Affordable Housing Strategy.

Progress toward action items

Over 2024, progress has been made to support this strategy and the identified 3 action items.

Key progress made toward these action items include:

- Continued to implement the Affordable Rental Housing Grant Program, interest in program continued to increase of 2024 with interest shifting to smaller developments and additional dwelling units.
- Worked with member municipalities to introduce shared housing opportunities that provide transitional housing supports to residents living in units.

Strategy 6: Optimize the Existing Housing Stock

This strategy focuses on existing housing stock and ensuring that dwellings are well-maintained and in good condition. It includes the considerations of finding new uses for existing dwellings and non-residential uses which are vacant or under-utilized. This goal also corresponds to the Affordable Housing Strategy.

Progress toward action items

Over 2024, progress has been made to support this strategy and the identified 6 action items.

Key progress made toward these action items include:

- Continuation of the Affordable Rental Housing Grant Program which in addition to the creation of new affordable housing units, supports the rehabilitation and renovation of existing affordable housing stock in need of critical repair. (Action item 6.1)
- In alignment with the NCHC Asset Management Plan, continued the development of the 10-Year Capital Plan in collaboration with Housing Services Corporation (HSC).
- Introduced a Financial Housing Specialist position to support in setting the foundation for the creation of an End of Mortgage framework and approach.
- Continuation of Northumberland Renovates and providing supports to low-income homeowners to make critical renovations to their homes to enable aging in place and affordable accommodations. (Action Item 6.1)

- Funded Capital Repair needs in the local sector, including with the NCHC and other community housing providers using County levy investments and COCHI/OPHI program funding from the provincial and federal governments.

Reporting on Progress

Strategy 1: Increase Affordable Housing Options

- At the end of 2024, Elgin Park Phase One was fully occupied, and Elgin Park Phase Two development was underway.
- As of 2024, there are 81 permanent rent supplement units, the number of rent supplements has remained relatively consistent since 2018.
- The number of housing allowance recipients in 2023 was reported to be 115, which is an increase from the previous two years.
- In 2024, 1,348 households were reported to be on the waitlist with 58 of these households housed. In 2023, the waitlist consisted of 1,090 households, with 59 housed off the list. Of these, 16 households were in receipt of the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB), which provides a Portable Housing Benefit to assist with rental costs.

Strategy 2: Implement Coordinated Access for Housing and Support Services

- The Homelessness Coordinated Response Team (HCRT) is a case conferencing group that shares their knowledge and resources to support individuals experiencing homelessness. This group meets every two weeks and updates the By-Name List (BNL).
 - 10 member organizations attend the meetings.
- Access to emergency accommodation continues to operate through Transition House – where eligibility and availability is determined.
- In 2024, 10 agencies continued to use common intake processes, as well as sharing tools and data. This has remained stable since the previous year.

Strategy 3: Support Housing Stability

- In 2024, benefits were issued to 130 unique at-risk households to support them in remaining housed. These benefits may include arrears, utilities and other items.
- Via the NCHC, there were 72 households at risk of experiencing homelessness that were stabilized through utilization of the eviction prevention model in 2024 including 21 tenants currently owing arrears with active payment plans.
- In 2024, 61 households were reported to move from homelessness or temporary housing into permanent or long-term housing. There were 105 individuals/families who provided consent to be added to the BNL and 178 were active on the list at any given time in 2024.
- Additional funding allocations through council to support homelessness response efforts in increasing security presence and ECE compliance.

- Implement HSP program, offering 115 rent subsidies to support individuals and families maintain or attain permanent, safe, and affordable housing with Northumberland County.

Strategy 4: Increase Supportive Housing and Supports

- 55 spaces, including overnight, shelter beds, and warming room spots, were made available in 2023.
- Opening of the new Hub at 310 Division St. This includes shelter beds, warming/cooling space, transitional housing, and a resource centre for those experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Strategy 5: Build a Diverse Housing Supply

- In 2024, 25 net new units of affordable housing were added to the supply.
- The NCHC is building 123 new housing units.
- The NCHC in collaboration with Northumberland County is in the preliminary stages of site planning at 699 Westwood Drive, Cobourg.
- Approximately 250 new affordable housing units and rent supplement units will be brought online over the next few years.

Strategy 6: Optimize the Existing Housing Stock

- The Renovate Northumberland program supported 6 households in 2024.
- County Council committed to increase investment into the state of repair of the NCHC, doubling its annual allocation to capital repair to \$1,200,000 annually by 2026.

Looking Forward

Looking forward to 2025, Northumberland County will seek to stabilize the housing and homelessness system and increase availability of supports for clients using the services at 310 Division Street in Cobourg.

In 2025, housing and homelessness leads will review the implementation plan in detail and develop key goals over the next several years to further progress on the critical strategies and action items identified in the housing and homelessness plan. In addition, work will be taken to refine data sources and ensure baseline metrics are clearly established.

Some key goals in 2025 include:

- Continue working with member municipalities and other sources to develop a land bank of shovel-ready and funding-ready projects.
- Invest further into programs that educate and provide food options to the support communities with food insecurities.
- Continue to work alongside the Community Liaison Committee to support the successful implementation of 310 Division into the community, by supporting the 18 community partners providing necessary services to homeless individuals within Northumberland County and working with Transition House staff and clients on a continued “good neighbour” protocol.
- Continue to engage with the broader community on Cobourg, and throughout the County, to support the successful integration of housing and homelessness services.
- Expansion and more focus on our outreach team supporting at-risk or homeless clients in all municipalities.
- Update the KPI dashboard quarterly.
- Continue pre-construction work for the construction at 473 Ontario Street with Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services and seek external funding sources.
- Continue to support community housing providers in meeting goals and priorities of the Service Manager, which include housing retention practices.
- Continue to expand the Made in Northumberland Rent Supplement Program.
- Continue opportunities for shelter benefit programs to be operated through community partners.
- Ensure that NCHC assets are well maintained through a thorough capital repair program.
- Coordinate with community partners in developing supportive housing options.

- In partnership with the NCHC, deliver Equity Diversity and Inclusion, Indigenous cultural understanding, and gender-based violence training to the Board and all staff who support the NCHC.
- Continue to work with the Homelessness Leadership Table to enhance wrap around services.
- Implement a Capital Repair Program on NCHC buildings for better planning and accurate data collection.
- Full HIFIS implementation with community partners trained and adding real time updates to the system for better tracking of the homelessness population in Northumberland.

For a list of housing and homelessness resources available, visit our website:
Northumberland.ca/HousingAndShelter

Alternative formats of this report are available upon request.

Appendix A: List of Action Items

Strategy 1: Increase Affordable Housing Options

- 1.1 **PRIORITY** Building on the actions in the Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy, work with member municipalities to implement the recommended Northumberland Affordable and Rental Housing Program.
- 1.2 **PRIORITY** Building on the actions in the Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy, work with member municipalities to develop a County-wide approach to securing land for affordable housing development, including exploring a policy to give priority to affordable housing development in the disposition of surplus land, land banking, and land sharing.
- 1.3 Consider waiving interest charges on the deferred development charges for market-rate rental housing developments.
- 1.4 **PRIORITY** Consider the feasibility of a County-funded rent supplement program to support households with incomes in the first and second income deciles.
- 1.5 **PRIORITY** Consider developing County-wide design guidelines and alternative standards for affordable housing to encourage the development of more innovative housing options.
- 1.6 **PRIORITY** Explore the feasibility of expanding Northumberland County Housing Corporation's (NCHC) role to developing mixed income buildings (including market rental and affordable rental units) to increase supply of affordable housing while maintaining financial viability.
- 1.7 Support non-profit organizations who are applying for federal and/or provincial funding to build affordable housing.
- 1.8 Explore the feasibility of building container or modular homes and/or tiny homes as affordable housing units.
- 1.9 Advocate to community partners, such as school boards and faith groups, to contribute to the development of affordable housing in Northumberland. Contributions can be in-kind, such as land, or financial.
- 1.10 Advocate to the federal government to expand the Co-Investment Fund, or similar future programs, to provide increased capital funding for affordable housing projects, including increased funding to allow for deeper levels of affordability.
- 1.11 Advocate to the federal government to improve timelines for approvals and execution of agreements, including the release of funds, for the Co-Investment Fund.
- 1.12 Advocate to the federal and provincial governments to fully exempt charitable non-profit organizations from HST for new affordable housing projects.
- 1.13 Advocate to the provincial government to expand the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative program, or similar future programs, to provide increased capital funding to build new affordable housing projects. Funding amounts should be reflective of

the needs of Service Managers, including increased building costs in small, rural communities.

Strategy 2: Implement Coordinated Access for Housing and Support Services

- 2.1 **PRIORITY** Building on the Homelessness Coordinated Response Team (HCRT) work, design and implement a coordinated access system for housing and homelessness services to better help people needing assistance.
- 2.2 Ensure all housing and homelessness service providers use a common approach to collecting and sharing data, including a common intake assessment process using the VI-SPDAT tool and a cloud-based database.
- 2.3 **PRIORITY** Continue utilizing a quality By-Name List based on the Built for Zero scorecard and update this list on a monthly basis at a minimum.
- 2.4 **PRIORITY** Convene a table of community agencies providing housing and homelessness services to examine current services to determine how each contributes to the housing and homelessness system and identify opportunities to coordinate service delivery.
- 2.5 Building on the actions in the Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy, increase awareness of all housing and homelessness services available for Northumberland residents through a common website, mobile app, brochures, and monthly e-newsletters to all community agencies. This should include the weekly rental listings.
- 2.6 Building on the recommended action in the Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy, engage and work with private landlords to facilitate access to private rental units, even for the population who may be considered 'hard to house'.

Strategy 3: Support Housing Stability

- 3.1 Continue to work with community agencies to provide education on basic life skills, such as being 'rent ready' and budgeting, as a standard part of the process for people who are moving from homelessness to permanent housing.
- 3.2 Work with community agencies and high schools to develop a training module to provide basic life skills training, including budgeting and being 'rent ready'.
- 3.3 Consider implementing the Host Homes Program as a shelter-diversion strategy for youth.
- 3.4 Consider implementing the Homeward Bound Program for female-led lone-parent families.
- 3.5 Building on the recommendations in the Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy, encourage and support social enterprises which provide employment opportunities for people with disabilities, mental health issues, addictions, youth, and people who are currently receiving Ontario Works benefits.

- 3.6 **PRIORITY** Building on the recommended actions in the Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy, provide County-funded and County-administered housing allowances and rent supplements, such as the Canada Ontario Housing Benefit, to individuals and families who are chronically homeless and those who have low acuity scores and only need affordable housing.
- 3.7 Develop and enhance partnerships with other sectors, such as hospitals, the LHIN, and the correctional system, to ensure people leaving institutions are connected to the appropriate housing and supports they need to live independently in the community.
- 3.8 **PRIORITY** Encourage community agencies to examine current practices in providing supports to ensure they are person-centered and flexible enough to meet each individual client's own goals rather than the goals of the support provider.
- 3.9 **PRIORITY** Building on the landlord engagement strategy identified in the Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy, work with community agencies to provide education on discrimination and the human rights code as it applies to tenants and vulnerable groups.
- 3.10 **PRIORITY** Building on the eviction prevention model implemented in 2018, ensure all community housing providers, including Northumberland County Housing Corporation, are using the tools and processes developed to guide tenant relations and support eviction prevention goals.
- 3.11 Building on current relationship-building initiatives, work with Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services and the Nogojiwanong Friendship Centre to develop culturally appropriate tools and processes to prevent evictions.
- 3.12 **PRIORITY** Identify opportunities to bring people with living or lived experience into the decision-making process regarding the support services they need.
- 3.13 Advocate to the federal and provincial governments to increase funding for the Canada Housing Benefit, or other similar future program.

Strategy 4: Increase Supportive Housing and Supports

- 4.1 Encourage and support community agencies to provide training to frontline staff to ensure supports provided are culturally appropriate and trauma informed. This may include facilitating peer mentorship opportunities among staff of different organizations.
- 4.2 Work with community agencies to explore opportunities to submit joint funding bids, pool funding among housing partners to build supportive housing, and combine resources to develop common tools.
- 4.3 Work with Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services to explore opportunities to develop culturally appropriate supportive housing options for Indigenous peoples in Northumberland County who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- 4.4 **PRIORITY** Encourage and support non-profit housing providers to explore options for a shared services model to build capacity in the sector.

Strategy 5: Build a Diverse Housing Supply

- 5.1 **PRIORITY** Building on the actions in the Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy, encourage member municipalities to revise zoning by-laws to ensure cohousing, co-living, and shared housing arrangements (with or without supports) are permitted in all communities throughout Northumberland.
- 5.2 Keep member municipalities accountable to ensure their Official Plans and zoning by-laws do not act as barriers to the development of a more diverse housing supply in all communities.
- 5.3 Work with member municipalities to explore options to make zoning by-laws and other local regulations more flexible to allow culturally appropriate housing.

Strategy 6: Optimize the Existing Housing Stock

- 6.1 Facilitate partnerships among community agencies, private developers, member municipalities, and property owners to identify opportunities to renovate vacant or underutilized properties into affordable and/or supportive housing.
- 6.2 Explore the feasibility of offering a property tax discount for property owners who donate or lease their property at below-market value to non-profit housing providers to increase the supply of affordable housing.
- 6.3 Explore the feasibility of supporting a pilot project which would renovate a vacant or underutilized property into cohousing/shared housing for people on the By-Name List with low acuity scores (i.e. those who only need affordable housing).
- 6.4 Facilitate partnerships with faith groups and non-profit and for-profit residential developers to redevelop vacant or underutilized church-owned property to increase the supply of affordable and supportive housing.
- 6.5 Encourage private and not-for-profit residential builders to meet Passive House, LEED (even if they do not obtain certification), or similar standards in renovations of existing dwellings as well as the development of new dwellings, particularly affordable housing projects.
- 6.6 Building on the actions in the Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy, work with municipal staff and other housing partners to develop fact sheets on considering climate change in the renovation of existing homes as well as the building of new dwellings by incorporating energy efficient and environmentally sustainable features.