

**2021 Housing and
Homelessness Annual Report
Continuing Forward**

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Message from the Warden



With the cost of housing on the rise throughout the province, increasing cost of living and lack of available rental stock, coordinated housing and homelessness response continues to be a critical priority for our community. Over the past year, Northumberland County worked closely with community partners to address gaps in our local housing system and to strengthen support for individuals experiencing homelessness. This report highlights the progress, trends and metrics related to these efforts in 2021, including updates on the implementation of action items identified in our Affordable Housing Strategy – a strategy focused on increasing the supply of housing throughout Northumberland at various levels of affordability.

Under this strategy, we launched an Affordable Housing Grant program in 2021 to incentivize the creation of new affordable rental units across Northumberland and progressed plans with the Northumberland County Housing Corporation (NCHC) for two housing developments in Cobourg that will help address identified gaps in this high-demand area. Last year, the County entered a Memorandum of Understanding with Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services, Habitat for Humanity Northumberland and the NCHC to jointly develop 62 new units of affordable and attainable rental housing on Ontario Street, and continued design work for the Elgin Park Redevelopment that will increase the number of subsidized and market rental housing units at this location from 18 to 40. With support from the provincial Social Services Relief Fund, the County also acquired an existing house in Campbellford, to be used for new supportive housing as early as 2023.

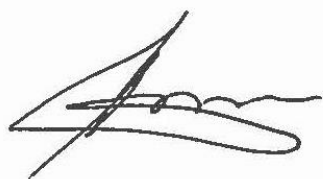
In addition to growing our local housing supply, the County also expanded our existing programming to support community members in need. We increased County-funded rent supplement agreements as part of our Made in Northumberland Rent Supplement Program developed to support households on the centralized waitlist for Rent-Geared-to-Income housing and we continued to support critical home renovations for low-income homeowners through a partnership with Habitat for Humanity on the Northumberland Renovates program.

To improve service delivery within the homelessness system, the County worked with our community partners to improve our approach to data management and to coordinate access to shared homelessness data through the Homeless Individuals and

Families Information System. This real-time data system, which is expected to launch in late 2022, will allow us to enhance coordinated access to the homelessness system across Northumberland. The County also achieved a 'Quality By Name List' status from Built For Zero in 2021, reflecting our commitment to providing robust monthly homelessness reports that include the identification of individuals experiencing homelessness in Northumberland and data that will help us better understand their needs and connect them to services, supports, and available housing.

While we worked on actioning items related to our strategic goals, our team also continued to respond to emerging community needs related to the COVID-19 pandemic, including providing strategic leadership support to our community partners, operating daytime and nighttime warming rooms for unsheltered residents throughout the winter, and expanding our transitional housing program to help more people experiencing homelessness bridge the gap from homelessness to permanent housing.

All of these efforts are great examples of the incredible work being done by staff and community partners to help provide Northumberland residents with access to safe, stable and affordable housing. As we enter 2022, we look forward to building on our current strategic goals as we develop and implement a new Community Housing Master Plan that will help guide future planning, programming and service delivery related to affordable housing in Northumberland. This strategic planning process and ongoing collaboration with community partners will be essential to ensuring the continued delivery of an effective, coordinated approach to housing and homelessness response that meets the evolving needs of our community.



Robert Crate
Warden, Northumberland County

Introduction: The Northumberland Context

About the 10-year plan

Northumberland County is entering year 4 of our 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan 2019-2029. The County's vision for Northumberland that "[b]y 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 forthcoming 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.

Yes in My Backyard...

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, Hastings County, the City of Kingston and the region of Durham.
- The year-to-date average house resale price as of December 2021 was over \$825,000 – a 30% increase over the same period the previous years, and as of March 2022 has increased to over \$1,000,000. This is unaffordable to all households in Northumberland except for the top decile of income earners.
- The waitlist for social housing continues to be 10 years in some communities and has grown more than 260% in the last 10 years, with over 1,000 households on the waitlist.

- The vacancy rate remains low and there have been limited new primary market rent units built since 2016.
- As of November 2021, the living wage for Northumberland County was \$18.80. 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. It is notable that all three municipalities where data is available for vacancy rates are lower than the 2021 provincial average (3.4%). Northumberland's vacancy rate is calculated using available data from CMHC, which is limited in its reliability and in 2021, the availability of data for Northumberland is also limited. Based on available data, the vacancy rate in 2021 was less than 1%.

COVID-19 Impact and Response

Northumberland's COVID-19 response continued throughout 2021. The pandemic has greatly impacted both housing and homelessness systems, programs and services. The COVID-19 pandemic also highlighted the vulnerability of the individuals supported by the housing and homelessness sector in Northumberland, particularly for people experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity. Northumberland County has continued to respond to the pandemic and has seen success in adjusting services and programming to serve the changing needs and requirements throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Some key milestones in the COVID-19 response include:

Homelessness System

- Roll out of phase 3 and 4 of Social Service Relief funding to enhance services throughout pandemic including;
 - Set up of a warming room in a local school church as a measure to ensure access to a warm, safe space throughout the winter months while social distancing and other Covid safety requirements could be met.
 - Overflow and emergency accommodation provided at local motels
 - Eligibility determined through health screening and diversion conversations
 - Expansion of transitional housing program (Next Steps Program-NSP) providing 5 spaces for people experiencing homelessness - offering support, life skills and planning to move into permanent accommodation
 - Supply of PPE to organizations working with people experiencing homelessness
 - Development, implementation, and evaluation of a training development program to support recruitment and retention of newly hired emergency shelter staff
 - Development of Homelessness Leadership Table (HLT) to provide ongoing leadership support to HCRT and for ongoing monitoring of the homelessness system to identify and address gaps. This group consists of senior staff from local organizations providing direct support to people experiencing homelessness
 - Creation of a mental health worker position to conduct outreach with clients who are experiencing homelessness and who are identifying with mental health related concerns. There is an intensive case management component for those clients needing housing outcomes (e.g. to remain housed, obtain housing, in shelter, to a diversion option, etc.).

Housing System

The housing services team continued to provide high-quality services to clients in a remote and in-person environment over 2021. Many of the actions implemented earlier in the pandemic continued through 2021. These include:

- Regular correspondence with community housing providers, sharing directing and best practices to support a system-wide response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Rollout of SSRF to support community housing providers and tenants prepare for, and respond to, the pandemic.
- Supported the Northumberland County Housing Corporation (NCHC) in its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, implemented measures included:
 - Closure of common rooms and playgrounds (first wave)
 - Tenant Correspondence throughout the pandemic
 - Implementation of alternative methods of rent payments (including e-transfer)
 - Installation of electronic messaging boards to provide real time updates to tenants in NCHC properties.
 - Increased cleaning and disinfecting of common touch points
 - Enforcement of mandatory mask requirements
 - Installation of hand sanitizer stations throughout buildings

Measuring against our 10-year strategies (2021)

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 2021, progress has been made to support this strategy and the identified 13 action items.

Key progress made toward these action items include:

- Launched the Northumberland County Affordable Housing Grant Program to support the creation of additional affordable rental units across the County. (Action item 1.1)
- Worked with member municipalities to promote available incentives to developers for the creation of affordable rental housing options. (Action item 1.1)
- Worked with member municipalities with Affordable Housing Community Improvement Programs to support implementation. (Action item 1.1)
- Continued chairing the Affordable Housing Strategy Implementation Working Group with representatives from all member municipalities focusing on the Strategy's implementation from a municipal perspective. (Action item 1.1)
- 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)
- Initiated the procurement of construction services for the Elgin Park Redevelopment. (Action Item 1.6)
- Entered a Memorandum of Understanding with Ontario Aboriginal Housing services, Habitat for Humanity Northumberland and the NCHC to jointly develop 62 units of affordable and attainable rental housing at 473 Ontario Street. (Action Item 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)
- Initiated a discussion group with service managers across the province to share best practices and learn from others providing municipally funded affordable housing strategy programs. (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)

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-centred coordinated system supporting members of our community that are the most vulnerable.

Progress toward action items

Over 2021, 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. Implementation planning process currently underway. Full implementation expected late fall 2022. (Action item 2.2)
- Achieved ‘Quality By Name list’ status based on the Built For Zero scorecard. List to be updated at least monthly. (Action item 2.3)
- Developed homelessness leadership table as a next step towards examining homelessness services to in turn, identify opportunities to coordinate service delivery. (Action item 2.4)
- Created a new standalone homelessness information website for Northumberland. Worked with community partners and people with lived and living experience to test the content and the functionality. Included regular updates for both agencies and people interested in homelessness information. (Action 2.5)
- Developed and implemented plan to undertake enumeration as required by Provincial Government. (Action 2.2)

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 2021, 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 the expansion and implementation the Made in Northumberland Rent Supplement Program, to support households on the centralized waitlist obtain rent-geared-to-income (RGI) housing. (Action item 3.1.)
- Continued the implementation of eviction prevention policies and processes for the NCHC. (Action item 3.3.)
- Provided direction to all community housing providers on the treatment of undeclared COVID-19 emergency benefits, including consideration of pursuit of arrears generated as a result. (Action item 3.3.)
- Continued the delivery of tenant programming during COVID-19 at NCHC buildings, including ongoing partnerships with the Northumberland Community Health Centres, and a partnership with Food4All for fresh produce delivery and PPE/disinfecting kits to all NCHC tenants. (Action item 3.3.)
- Ongoing work with the Nogojiwanong Friendship Centre to begin implementation of an MOU to bring urban Indigenous services to Northumberland County, developing referral processes and procedures between the County and the Friendship Centre. Support delivery of Indigenous Cultural Competency Training to external community agencies in support of the MOU and program referral process. (Action item 3.4.)
- 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. (Action item 3.4.)

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 2021, progress has been made to support this strategy and the identified 4 action items.

Key progress made toward these action items include:

- Continued building on the department's professional development training series. During COVID-19 training opportunities were predominately virtual. Topics in 2021 included: Suicide Awareness Training, internal training on Health and Safety Incident Reporting, and division specific training related to areas of expertise including RGI simplification and housing legislation awareness training with Facilities staff. (Action Item 4.1.)
- Partnered with Nogojiwanong Friendship Centre to host a virtual cultural competency training for community agencies to support the forthcoming implementation of the Service Agreement between the County and Friendship Centre. (Action item 4.1.)
- Using SSRF 4 funding acquired an existing house for the creation of supportive housing in Campbellford. (Action item 4.2.)
- With COCHI/OPHI Year 3 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.)

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 2021, progress has been made to support this strategy and the identified 3 action items.

Key progress made toward these action items include:

- Coordinating with member municipalities through the Affordable Housing Strategy Implementation Working Group to review recommended action items and report on progress made. (Action Items 5.1 and 5.2)
- Working with the Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy Implementation Working Group share best practices in policy development and implementation to support the creation of affordable housing. (Action items 5.1. – 5 .2.)

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 2021, progress has been made to support this strategy and the identified 6 action items.

Key progress made toward these action items include:

- Launched 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)
- Final design of Elgin Park Redevelopment is anticipated to receive a LEED Silver designation with incorporation of energy efficient design principles and elements. (Action item 6.6.)
- 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.

Reporting on Progress

Strategy 1: Increase Affordable Housing Options

- At the time of this report, 5 affordable rental housing units have been built and occupied (i.e., have an occupancy permit as per the Ontario Building Code). Member municipalities also reported a total of 16 additional dwelling units (any legal secondary dwelling, such as a secondary suite) that were built and occupied.
- As of 2021, there are 61 permanent rent supplement units, and this has remained relatively consistent since 2018.
- The number of housing allowance recipients in 2021 was reported to be 41, which is a decrease from the previous two years (76 and 84 recipients, respectively), although comparable to rates from 2018.
- In 2020, 888 households were reported to be on the waitlist with 55 of these households housed. In 2021, the waitlist consisted of 1006 households, with 50 housed off the list. Of these, 9 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 Homeless Coordinated Response Team is a case conferencing group that work to share their knowledge and resources to support individuals experiencing homelessness. This group have continued to meet every two weeks.
- The HCRT group use the By Name List (BNL) which is updated at every meeting. In 2020 the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness determined that our membership of the Built For Zero campaign had moved to full member status based on the work and improvements achieved developing coordinated access for Northumberland.
- 13 member organizations attend the meetings.
- System partners have determined that coordinated entry for access to emergency accommodation operates through Transition House – where eligibility and availability is determined.
- In 2021, 11 agencies continued to use common intake processes, as well as sharing tools and data. This has remained stable since the previous year.
- 10 member agencies scored 12/12 on the BNL Scorecard, which is updated monthly.

Strategy 3: Support Housing Stability

- In 2020, benefits were issued to 186 unique at-risk households to support them in remaining housed. An additional 172 households were supported by these benefits in 2021.
- Via the NCHC, there were 27 households at risk of experiencing homelessness that were stabilized in 2021. Community housing partners reported an additional 31 households for which eviction was prevented. These are households with current arrears but active payment plans.
- In 2021, 71 households were reported to move from homelessness or temporary housing into permanent or long-term housing. 159 individuals/families provided consent to be added to the BNL and were active on the list at any given time in 2021.
- RentSmart Training was offered to tenants and landlords. This training provides information on tenant rights and responsibilities, in addition to building capacity in financial management and communication skills. In 2021, 25 tenants and 5 landlords participated in this training.

Strategy 4: Increase Supportive Housing and Supports

- In 2021, 5 transitional housing beds were made available through the Next Step Program.
- 37 emergency spaces, including overnight, overflow, and warming room beds, were made available in 2021.
- Training was offered to community agencies to support them in facilitating client involvement (i.e., encouraging clients to have a say in how they receive services). In 2021, Bridges Out of Poverty was offered, with 72 participants completing the training. In addition, all staff received online training in Suicide Awareness and Health and Safety Incident Reporting.
- Partnered with Nogojiwanong Friendship Centre to host cultural competency training for community agencies. A total of 9 agencies were represented by 22 participants.

Strategy 5: Build a Diverse Housing Supply

- In 2021, a total of 717 residential building permits were issued across Northumberland County, which represents an increase of 34% over the previous year. Most permits were issued for detached structures, although there was a 242% increase in the number of permits issued for townhouse structures.
- At the time of this report, 5 new affordable housing units were built and occupied.
- In 2021, 5 purpose built rental housing units were added to the supply, all of which were two-bedroom units, and a total of 16 secondary suites were completed and occupied (at the time of this report).

- 111 units were in receipt of development incentives committed by Northumberland County and member municipalities, including development charge deferrals and rent supplements. These incentives were valued at approximately \$755,638.00
- A total of 336 residential units received subdivision draft approval, and 58 residential units received consent for severance. 90 site plan approvals were issued in 2021 for residential rental units.
- All member municipalities have indicated they are actively working towards implementing the Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy, including updating zoning bylaws to allow for a more diverse housing supply.

Strategy 6: Optimize the Existing Housing Stock

- The Renovate Northumberland program supported 12 households in 2021. An additional 2 households received support from ReNew It in 2021.

COVID-19 Pandemic Response

- 6 quarantine spaces for homeless individuals were created and supported.
- Provincial funding supports (Social Services Relief Funding, SSRF) were used to provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and transportation and meals, with a total of \$317,908 and \$209,604 allocated, respectively.
- SSRF was used to issue benefits to at-risk households to remain housed. A total of 98 households were supported by this initiative.

Looking Forward

Looking forward to 2022, Northumberland County will seek to stabilize the housing and homelessness system into a post COVID-19 society in in the wrap-up of intensive funding supports.

In 2022, 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 2022 include:

- Continue working with member municipalities and other sources to develop a land bank of shovel-ready and funding-ready projects.
- Complete the Social Housing Master Plan/NCHC Strategic Asset Management Plan (dependent upon COVID-19 restrictions).

- Begin construction on Elgin Park Redevelopment, a mixed development, RGI redevelopment project with the NCHC.
- Continue pre-construction work, including net zero feasibility studies for the construction at 473 Ontario Street with project partners.
- Continue to support community housing providers in meeting goals and priorities of the Service Manager, including the response to COVID-19 and housing retention practices.
- Develop and launch a referral program with the Nogojiwanong Friendship Centre to support the introduction of culturally competent urban Indigenous programming in Northumberland.
- Continue to expand the Made in Northumberland Rent Supplement Program.
- Launch supportive housing in Trent Hills as funded through SSRF 4.
- Continue opportunities for shelter benefit programs to be operated through community partners.
- Develop a workplan for the homelessness leadership table for opportunities to work collaboratively to further develop and enhance homelessness system planning.
- Work with consulting firm through the RFP process to complete a review of the emergency shelter system with recommendations towards establishing a modernized shelter system with equitable funding models and core service levels that fit well with other community services to address homelessness.
- 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:

<https://www.northumberland.ca/en/living-here/housing-and-shelter.aspx>

Information is also available on the Housing Help website at:

<https://housinghelp.northumberland.ca/>

Alternative Forms 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** Work on developing 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 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-centred 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 model¹⁴ 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.