



2019 and 2020 Housing and Homelessness Annual Report: What's Next?

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Message from the Warden



This year's Housing and Homelessness Annual Report highlights progress made by Northumberland County and community partners in 2019 and 2020 to address local housing gaps. The metrics shared in this report point to the positive outcomes of innovation, dedication and collaboration as we work together to meet the evolving needs of our community.

In 2020, we began the implementation of our Affordable Housing Strategy – a strategy outlining 44 action items focused on increasing the supply of housing throughout Northumberland at various levels of affordability. In alignment with this strategy, together with the Northumberland County Housing Corporation (NCHC), we advanced plans for construction of the Elgin Park affordable housing

project and started the design process with project partners for the Ontario Street affordable housing project – both in the Town of Cobourg, where we see the highest demand for Rent-Geared-to-Income housing. These projects will introduce approximately 60 additional affordable housing units to our community.

During this same time, County Council committed to the expansion of rent supplement programming, including a commitment to continue the Strong Community Rent Supplement Program when provincial funding ends in 2023, and the creation of the Made in Northumberland Rent Supplement Program to increase county-funded rent supplement agreements.

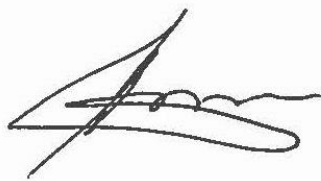
The County also oversaw local implementation of provincial and federal housing support programming in the 2019/2020 and the 2020/2021 fiscal years amounting to a nearly \$11,000,000 investment in our community, including the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit, Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative, Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative, Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Initiative and the Social Services Relief Fund.

This important progress was achieved even as our community was faced with the unprecedented challenge of the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Together with community partners, Northumberland County was able to react swiftly and put strategies in place to maintain service delivery and continue improvements during this time.

In the early days of the pandemic, within a 48-hour window, our Community & Social Services team collaborated with community partners to establish a temporary emergency shelter at Cobourg Collegiate Institute for individuals experiencing homelessness, which enabled ongoing shelter capacity during COVID-19 restrictions. Also during this period, we saw homelessness system partners coordinate daytime and overnight warming rooms as a winter relief measure for unsheltered residents, and establish a transitional housing program to support identified individuals to bridge the gap from homelessness to permanent housing.

As the County adjusted operations to ensure ongoing delivery of critical services while keeping community members and staff safe, another area of focus was to develop new approaches to providing housing supports to accommodate physical distancing and safety requirements in community housing units. Northumberland County led the COVID-19 response within the local community housing sector, supporting the NCHC, non-profits and co-operative housing providers to respond to the pandemic with a focus on tenant wellbeing and ensuring tenants remain safe during the pandemic.

County Council is incredibly proud of the innovative and collaborative efforts by staff and community partners over the past two years to achieve important advancements on the critical priority of addressing local housing and homelessness. We look forward to continued progress in 2021, including the completion of our third homelessness enumeration, which will give us updated data on the state of homelessness in our community to better inform our work. Local partnerships will remain essential to delivering meaningful and lasting impacts that will foster a strong and vibrant Northumberland for all.



Robert Crate
Warden, Northumberland County

Introduction: The Northumberland Context

A renewed ten-year plan

2019 marked the first year of the renewed Northumberland County Housing and Homelessness Plan 2019-2029. This plan establishes a 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 and the forthcoming Community Safety and Wellbeing 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.

Much of 2020 was focused on responding to the COVID-19 pandemic with this work carrying into 2021. As a result, a 2019 Annual Report was not able to be completed. This report attempts to provide a fulsome picture of the work completed over 2019 and 2020.

Yes in My Backyard...

Over 2019 and 2020, Northumberland County continued to raise aware of key housing realities facing our community. Despite the fact that many of these realities existed before the COVID-19 pandemic, COVID-19 has exacerbated many of these challenges.

Some key realities include:

- The average market rent in Northumberland 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 September 2020 was \$570,670, well above what the average household can afford.

- The waitlist for social housing is now approaching 10 years in some communities and has grown more than 260% in the last 10 years.
- The vacancy rate remains low and there have been virtually no new primary market rent units built since 2016.

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 2020 provincial average (3.2%). Northumberland's vacancy rate is calculated using available data from CMHC, which is limited in its reliability and in 2020, the availability of data for Northumberland is also limited. Based on available data, the vacancy rate over 2019 and 2020 in Northumberland was approximately 1.3%.

COVID-19 Impact and Response

2020 was predominately focused on responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic 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's COVID-19 response began early in the pandemic to support both individuals and local not-for-profit agencies in the housing and homelessness systems. Throughout the pandemic, the Community and Social Services office remained open, while reducing the necessity for in-person visits by members of the public. As a result of the pandemic, services were shifted and adapted to new technologies and processes to continue providing, urgent emergency and ongoing supports as required.

Some key milestones in the COVID-19 response include:

Homelessness System

- Roll out of phase 1 and 2 of Social Service Relief funding to enhance services throughout pandemic including;
 - Set up of an interim emergency shelter in a local school dining hall as a measure to ensure social distancing and other Covid safety requirements could be met. This increased bed space by 100%
 - All clients and staff screened each day
 - Enhanced cleaning and laundry at the facility
 - Public health guidance shared with all clients and visitors each day
 - Water bottles and flasks distributed to all clients to reduce sharing
 - Food and meals prepared for eating on site and to be distributed in the community
 - Overflow and emergency accommodation provided at local motels
 - Eligibility determined through health screening and diversion conversations
 - Pilot scheme developed and implemented to provide new transitional housing program providing 5 spaces for people experiencing homelessness - offering support, life skills and planning to move into permanent accommodation
 - Supply of PPE to organisations working with people experiencing homelessness
 - Development of Northumberland Advisory Group (NAG) to inform and monitor the distribution of the Social services Relief funds. This group consists of senior staff from local organisations providing direct support to people experiencing homelessness

Housing System

- 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.
- Provided direction on emergency income and its impact to rent-geared-to-income calculations.
- 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) *implemented in 2021
 - Installation of electronic messaging boards to provide real time updates to tenants in NCHC properties. *implemented in 2021
 - 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 (2019/2020)

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 2019 and 2020, progress has been made to support this strategy and the identified 13 action items.

Key progress made toward these action items include:

- Finalized and adopted the Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy. (Action item 1.1)
- Finalized and presented Affordable Housing Strategies for each member municipality. (Action item 1.1)
- Adopted an Affordable and Rental Housing Program Policy to support the development of affordable rental housing in Northumberland County through the provision of financial incentives. (Action item 1.1)
- Revised the Municipal Housing Facilities By-law to reflect findings in the Affordable Housing Strategy. (Action item 1.1)
- Created a 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)
- Formed 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)
- Completed planning and recommendations to County Council on developing a capital incentive program to support the Affordable Housing Strategy and complement the Affordable and Rental Housing Policy. (program to be launched in 2021) (Action item 1.1)
- Support private and non-profit developers applying for incentives through the Affordable and Rental Housing Policy 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)

- Continued discussions with member municipalities on land-banking opportunities to continue identifying shovel-ready and funding-ready projects. (Action item 1.2)
- As a part of the newly implemented Northumberland County Development Charges, provide considerations for waiver of Development Charges for affordable housing units. (Action item 1.1)
- Working with the NCHC to create additional RGI and market rent units (with the first project slated for construction in 2021). (Action item 1.6)

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 2019 and 2020, progress has been made to support this strategy and the identified 6 action items.

Key progress made toward these action items include:

- Updated consent and case presenting process at HCRT to ensure consistency and support onboarding of new members (Action item 2.10)
- Progressed development of By Name list achieving full membership of Built For Zero demonstrating movement toward ‘quality by-name list’ status, expected 2021 (Action item 2.3)
- Develop advisory group for the social services relief fund allocations as first step toward leadership table formation (Action item 2.4)
- Completed a revision of rent supplement agreements and internal processes, including a workload realignment to provide landlords and tenants with separate caseworkers to provide more targeted support. (Action Item 2.6)

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 2019 and 2020, progress has been made to support this strategy and the identified 13 action items.

Key progress made toward these action items include:

- Supported community housing providers and tenants through the COVID-19 pandemic, to provide supports to tenants to encourage housing stability, including support in adhering to public health guidelines and fluctuating incomes.
- Worked with the Legal Centre to provide training to community housing providers on tenant and landlord rights and responsibilities, including the Ontario Human Rights Code. (Action Item 3.9)
- Presented to HCRT on the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit and supporting households in our community achieving housing stability that were at risk of homelessness. (Action Item 3.6)
- County Council approved Housing Retention Framework for the ongoing management and administration of community housing in Northumberland and continued the implementation of the housing retention model of community housing, including developing tools, training, and policies for community housing providers, including the NCHC. (Action Item 3.10)

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 2019 and 2020, 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 in 2018 inclusive of all department staff and relevant to the client demographic. Topics covered in 2019 included trauma informed client service, Indigenous Cultural Competency, Emergency Social Services through Basic Emergency Management, and Resiliency training. In 2020, Community and Social Services staff continued participating in professional development training opportunities in a virtual environment, predominately through the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA) on a range of topics including Hoarding, Difficult Conversations, Time Management, Vicarious Trauma and Mental Health Awareness. (Action Item 4.1)

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 2019 and 2020, 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)
- Many of the action items and progress made in achieving Strategy 1, also support this strategy.

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 2019 and 2020, progress has been made to support this strategy and the identified 6 action items.

Key progress made toward these action items include:

- Completed planning and recommendations to County Council on developing a capital incentive program to support the Affordable Housing Strategy and complement the Affordable and Rental Housing Policy. (program to be launched in 2021) (Action item 6.1)
- 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

- From 2018 to 2019, 7 new affordable housing units were built, with an additional 4 units added to the supply in 2020.
- As of 2019, there are 63 permanent rent supplement units, and this has remained consistent in 2020.
- The number of housing allowance recipients has increased from 2018 (38 recipients), with 84 in 2019 and 76 in 2020.
- In 2019, there were 814 households on the centralized waitlist, with 62 housed. In 2020, 888 households were reported to be on the waitlist with 55 of these households housed. Of these, 24 households were in receipt of the new 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 2019, 10 agencies were reported to be using common intake processes, as well as sharing tools and data. 11 agencies were reported to be participating in 2020.
- 8 member agencies scored 12/12 on the BNL Scorecard, which is updated monthly. This increased to 10 agencies in 2020.

Strategy 3: Support Housing Stability

- In 2019, benefits were issued to 270 unique at-risk households to support them in remaining housed. 186 households were supported by these benefits in 2020.
- Via the NCHC, there were 24 and 28 households at risk of experiencing homelessness that were stabilized in 2019 and 2020, respectively. Community housing partners reported an additional 19 households for which eviction was prevented. These are households with current arrears but active payment plans.

- In 2019, 52 households were reported to move from homelessness or temporary housing into permanent or long-term housing, with 43 reported in 2020. 25 and 27 chronically homeless individuals moved into permanent or long-term housing in 2019 and 2020, respectively. In 2019, 2 households that experienced homelessness returned to homelessness. 5 households returned in 2020.
- RentSmart Training was offered to tenants and landlords in 2019 and 2020. This training provides information on tenant rights and responsibilities, in addition to building capacity in financial management and communication skills. In 2019, 24 tenants and 7 landlords participated, with an additional 22 tenants and 5 landlords receiving training in 2020.

Strategy 4: Increase Supportive Housing and Supports

- In 2020, 5 transitional housing beds were made available through the Next Step Program.
- 15 emergency spaces, including overnight, overflow, and warming room beds, were made available in 2019, with an additional 24 beds and 16 warming spaces added in 2020.
- 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 2019, Consent Training and Bridges Out of Poverty were offered, with 14 and 64 participants, respectively. In addition, 2 staff received training in culturally appropriate and trauma informed supports, with 51 participating in 2020.

Strategy 5: Build a Diverse Housing Supply

- In 2020, a total of 482 residential building permits were issued across Northumberland County, with the majority being detached structures
- In 2019 31 new affordable housing units were built and occupied. A total of 4 affordable housing units were constructed and occupied in 2020 (1 one-bedroom and 3 two-bedroom units).
- In 2020, 10 purpose built rental housing units were added to the supply, and a total of 8 secondary suites were completed.
- In 2020, 39 development incentives were committed by Northumberland County and member municipalities, including development charge deferrals and rent supplements. These incentives were valued at approximately \$490 230.
- In 2020, a total of 72 residential units received subdivision draft approval, and 47 residential units received consent for severance. An additional 4 units received provisional consent. Of these, 13 are considered affordable units. 89 site plan approvals were issued in 2020 for residential units. Of these, 5 are 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 11 and 12 households in 2019 and 2020, respectively. An additional 3 households received support from ReNew It in 2019, with one household receiving support in 2020.

COVID-19 Pandemic Response

- 4 quarantine spaces for homeless individuals were created and supported.
- Provincial funding supports (Social Services Relief Funding) were used to provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and transportation and meals, with a total of \$24 900 and \$56 076 allocated, respectively.

Looking Forward

Looking forward to 2021, Northumberland County will seek to stabilize the housing and homelessness system throughout the COVID-19 pandemic in both our response and in the wrap-up of intensive funding supports.

In 2021, 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 2021 include:

- Implement a Capital Incentive Program to support the creation of additional affordable housing units.
- 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.
- Initiate 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.
- Pilot opportunities for shelter benefit programs to be operated through community partners
- Develop a homeless leadership table for opportunities to work collaboratively to further develop and enhance homelessness system planning
- Identify opportunities for work to align with principles of life stabilization and the Community Safety and Well-being plan
- Increase opportunities for the inclusion of people with lived and living experience into planning and evaluation
- Develop certificated training and learning opportunities to enhance employment opportunities for jobs supporting vulnerable adults
- Consider collaboration opportunities for housing supports at the front-end of the housing continuum, including supportive housing, transitional housing, and other supports for people experiencing homelessness, or at risk of homelessness.

For a list of housing and homelessness resources available, visit our website:

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

Alternative forms of this report are available upon request.

<https://HousingHelp.Northumberland.ca>

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 scorecard⁹ 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.