

2014

United Counties of
Prescott and Russell



[HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS PLAN]

This document contains the 2014 report of the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan for the United Counties of Prescott and Russell.

The United Counties of Prescott and Russell introduced in 2014, a Housing and Homelessness plan, striving to improve the resident's housing condition.

Our plan is divided into 16 strategic initiatives in order to end homelessness in our County. This document provides to the reader a glimpse of the key projects and services that were introduced or facilitated in 2014.

A. Partnerships and Collaborations

- Meeting bi-annually with Non Profit providers to review policies, procedures, resolve issues and get feedback for a positive outcome.
- Creation of a networking breakfast with all agencies providing services to the community. This will be ongoing and also occurs bi-annually. The meeting has gathered approximately 40 agencies under the same roof.
- The agency meeting provided opportunities for our Community Relation Worker to know more about services offered and connect with individuals of the agencies that provide these services.

B. Access to CMSM Services and Programs

- We have applied for grants through a homelessness program hoping we could use the funding to hire an outreach worker
- We also asked for funding through that same program to try to have an emergency shelter in the west part of the Counties
- As an ongoing measure we provide IAH rent supplements as per a specific ratio to ensure a balance of housing services within the SM area
- Our Rent Calculation Clerks keeps a updated list of Landlords that wish to enter into agreements for the Rent Supplement programs of offer units to those in need
- We encourage Landlords to offer units in location where services are easily accessible (that don't require transportation)

Home Ownership Program

Buying a house can be one of the largest, single expenses someone can experience during their lifetime. It can also be a great investment. Nowadays, finding a house at an affordable price can be an overwhelming task.

The Homeownership Component under the IAH provides an opportunity for a forgivable loan to allow low-to-moderate-income renter households to purchase their first home. The amount of the loan for down payment assistance is equivalent to 10% of the purchase price. Through this program, the United Counties also have access to a revolving loan fund, whereby money is reinvested back into the fund when the houses are sold, for use by potential future buyers.

The program was available in October 2014; however, the funds were only spent in 2015.

Rent Supplement

The *Rent Supplement* Component has been designed to help address affordability issues of households in modest rental units across the province. The “rent supplement” is a subsidy (up to 230\$ per month) paid to the landlord on behalf of a household in need of rental assistance. It is meant to help bridge the gap between the rent that a household can afford to pay and the actual market rent of a modest unit.

*The United Counties of Prescott and Russell helped approximately
97 households with their monthly rent ;*

***186, 350\$** invested in 2014.*

Housing Allowances

The Housing Allowances program is also a program made to address affordability issues of households in modest rental units across the province. It differentiates itself from the Rent Supplement Program by the fact that the subsidy is paid to the tenant instead of being directly paid to the landlord.

*The United Counties of Prescott and Russell helped approximately
4 households with their monthly rent ;*

***7 762\$** invested in 2014.*

Ontario Renovates

As the years go by, houses are aging and are in need of renovations and repairs. Ontario Renovates is a 10 year forgivable loan that provides financial assistance to homeowners so they can conduct urgent home repairs that will allow for continued safe occupancy of their home. Through this program, the United Counties also have access to a revolving loan fund, whereby money is reinvested back into the fund when the houses are sold, for use by potential future buyers.

*The United Counties of Prescott and Russell helped approximately
12 households with their monthly rent ;*

***110, 227.87\$** invested in 2014.*

C. Prevention

- We use a large amount of IAH funding for rent supplement program as this provides more unit for our dollar. This also helps renters in locations where no other Social or Non Profit Housing exists
- We use our administration dollars towards human resources to ensure that we get the most out of the IAH funding (hired a project coordinator)

Domiciliary Hostel Program

This program provides residence and some support with activities of daily living for people with special needs. Residents are vulnerable with respect to securing and maintaining housing.

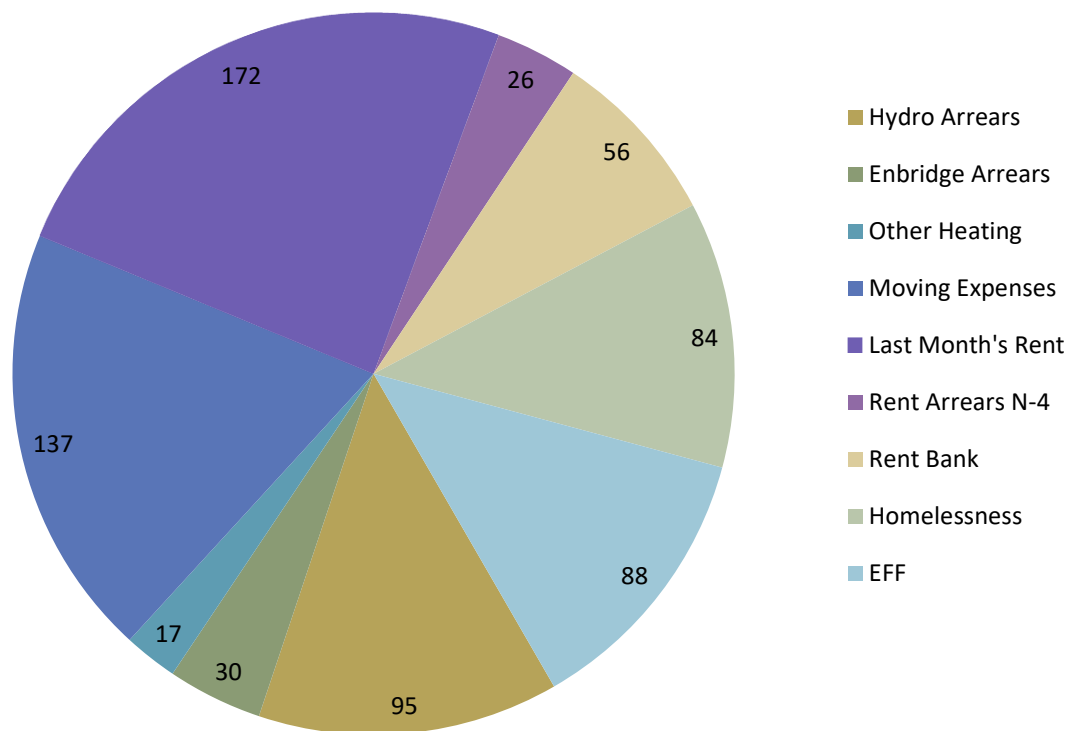
Housing lost prevention

*The United Counties of Prescott and Russell stabilized approximately
705 households at risk of homelessness (includes eviction prevention services, assistance with rental and energy arrears).*

Housing retention

*The United Counties of Prescott and Russell are helping approximately
479 households at risk of homelessness by providing an ongoing subsidy/support to retain their housing (at 6 months).*

Housing Assistance Found (CHPI)



The Housing Assistance Fund assists low-income households within the United Counties of Prescott-Russell to obtain and retain housing and to also support those at risk of homelessness to remain housed.

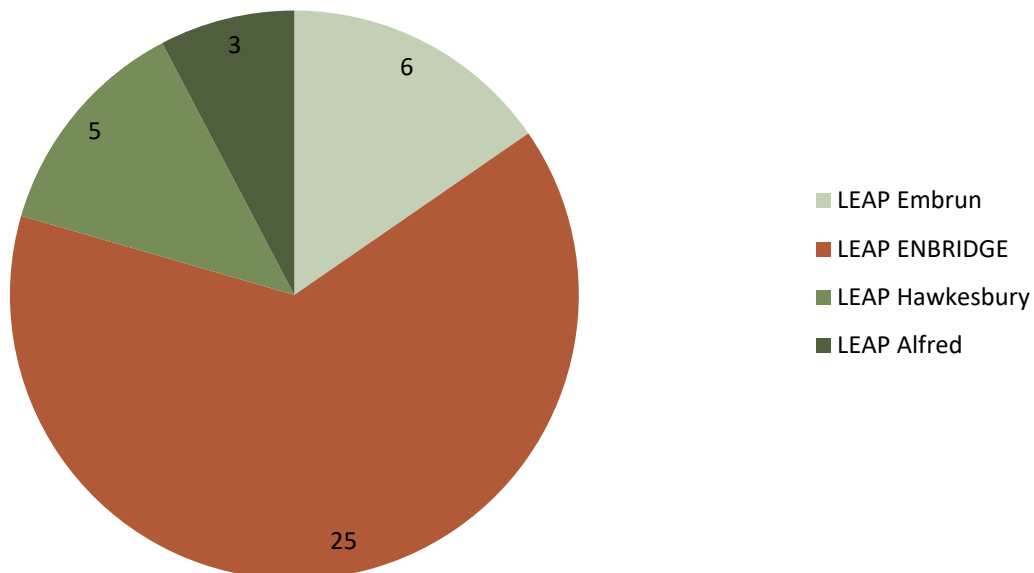
The Housing Assistance Fund can provide financial assistance up to a maximum of \$800 for singles and couples with no children, \$1,500 for families with children. (H.A.F., Rent Bank, LEAP, EFF, Homelessness)

The fund is paid every 2 years commencing January 2013.

In 2014, the United Counties of Prescott and Russell provided financial assistance to **95** households with their **Hydro Arrears**, **30** with their **Enbridge Arrears**, and **17** with **Other Heating Expenses**.

Also, we provided financial assistance to **137 households** for their **moving expenses**, **172** with their **Last Month Rent** and **26** with their **Rent Arrears** following the reception of a Notice to End a Tenancy Early for Non-payment of Rent.

LEAP (Low-income Energy Assistance Program)

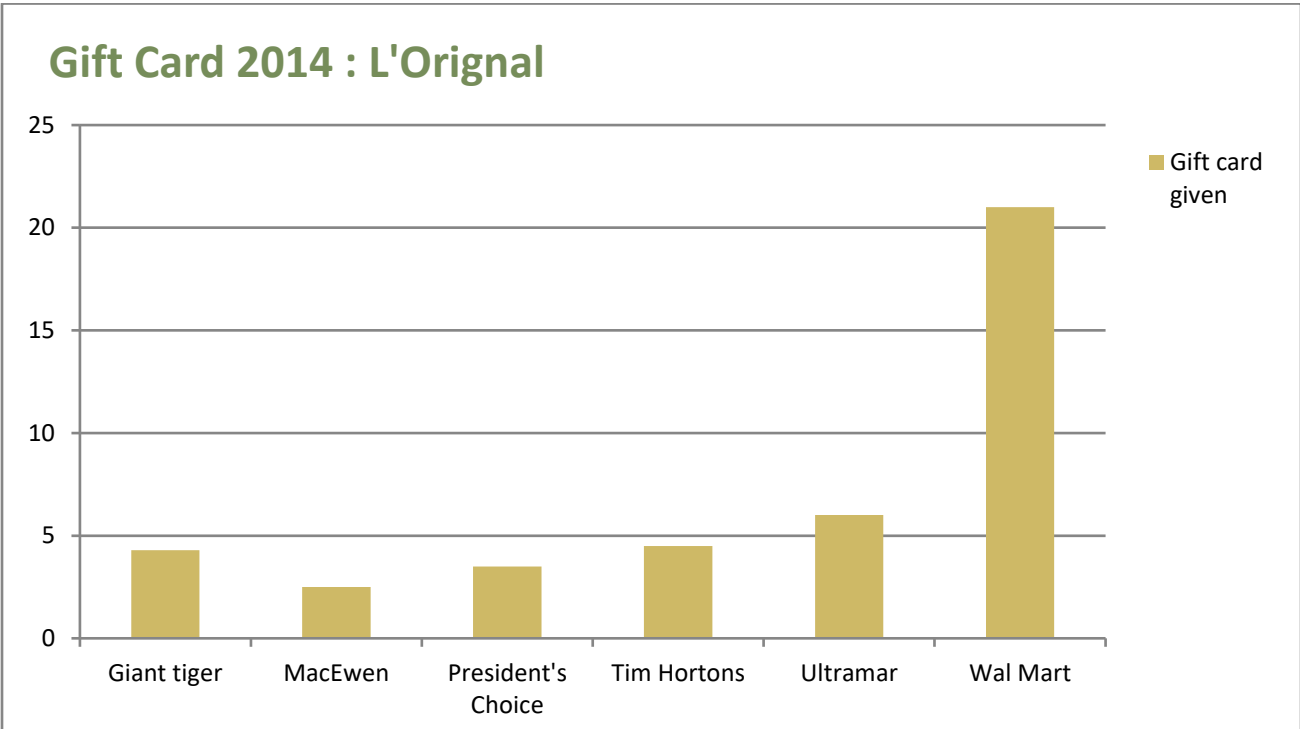


LEAP is a grant program intended to provide emergency relief to eligible low-income customers who may be experiencing difficulty paying current arrears. This program assists consumers with limited financial resources, through three unique programs:

- Emergency Financial assistance
- Special rules for qualified low-income customers
- Energy conservation (established by the utility company).

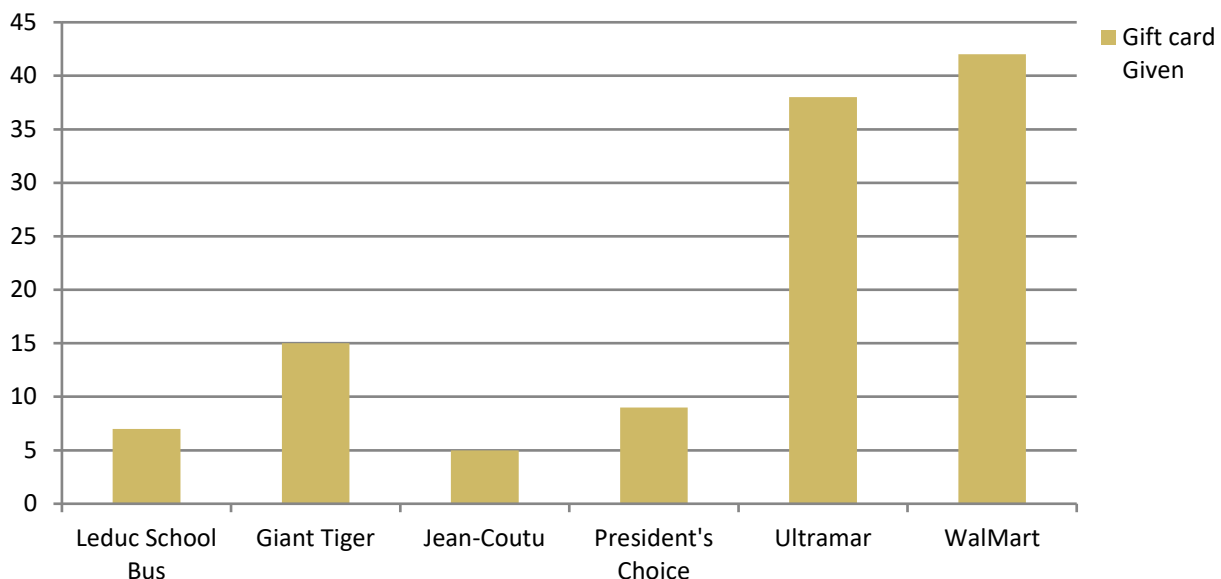
The United Counties of Prescott and Russell assists applicants to complete the application form and deems eligible customers as low income with the utility company in order for the household to qualify.

In 2014, **25 households** benefited of this program with **Enbridge**, **5 in Hawkesbury**, **6 in Embrun** and **3 in Alfred**.



In order to help ending homelessness, the United Counties of Prescott and Russell also provided gift cards to low income individuals and families whom were at imminent risk of homelessness. L'Original's main office gave 83 gift-cards, while Rockland's office donated 116 gift-cards, for a total amount of 199 gift-cards granted in 2014.

Gift Card 2014 : Rockland



D. Transportation

- There was no development in this area in 2014.

E. Education and Training

- We continuously encourage tenants to seek advice with legal aid whether they have issues with Non-Profit Landlords, Private sector Landlords or our own housing Portfolio
- We often meet with Legal Aid representative and share our concerns with them
- Each year we have within our senior's portfolio a lunch and take that opportunity to educate tenant's on their rights, obligations, or educate them on bullying or fraud with the help of other agencies such as the OPP
- When we meet with providers on a bi-annual basis we invite agencies such as Canadian Mental Health Association, Fire Department or Interlude House (victims of domestic violence) to educate managers on various programs
- On an annual basis our Community Relation Worker visits tenants of the Public Housing Portfolio and provides information on tenants' rights and

obligation, safety issues such as electrical or smoke alarms. She also provides available resources within the community

- We send a bulletin each fall and spring on tenants' rights and obligation and available resources

F. Delivery of Programs and Services

- Our Community Relation Worker maintains good working relations with health services provider
- Through a homelessness program funding we asked for funding to provide an emergency shelter in the west part of the SM area

G. Resources (Financial, Human, Material)

- The Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative funding is managed by a full time employee of Ontario Works program. We refer people in need of funding to this individual
- We applied for funding to pay for an outreach worker

H. Input of Municipalities

- Our Official Plan has been revised and includes provision to encourage developers to provide affordable housing in all municipalities
- The Official Plan also encourages local municipalities to adopt the same provisions within their zoning by-laws
- We provided a report to Council (mayors of local municipality) on the proposed IAH funding and how to make the best use of the funding and in keeping in line with our 10 year housing and homelessness plan

I. Needs assessment

- We continue to offer and provide rent supplement units in accordance with our Housing Need Assessment Study

J. Performance measurements

- We have completed in 2014 a new Building Condition Assessment for our entire Public Housing Portfolio
- We will use IAH Rent Supplement Funding to coincide with the first Non Profit Housing Corporation to see their End of Operating agreement for year 2017-18

K. Housing Stock

- With the 2014 Building Condition Assessment for the Public Housing portfolio, the engineering services are in a better position to evaluate budget needs in the next five years

L. Public Awareness

- Through bi-annual agency networking meetings we promote programs and raise public awareness

M. Awareness Among Government Authorities

- We've just recently had the opportunity to provide comments on the 10 year Housing Strategy

N. Complementary between Programs and Services

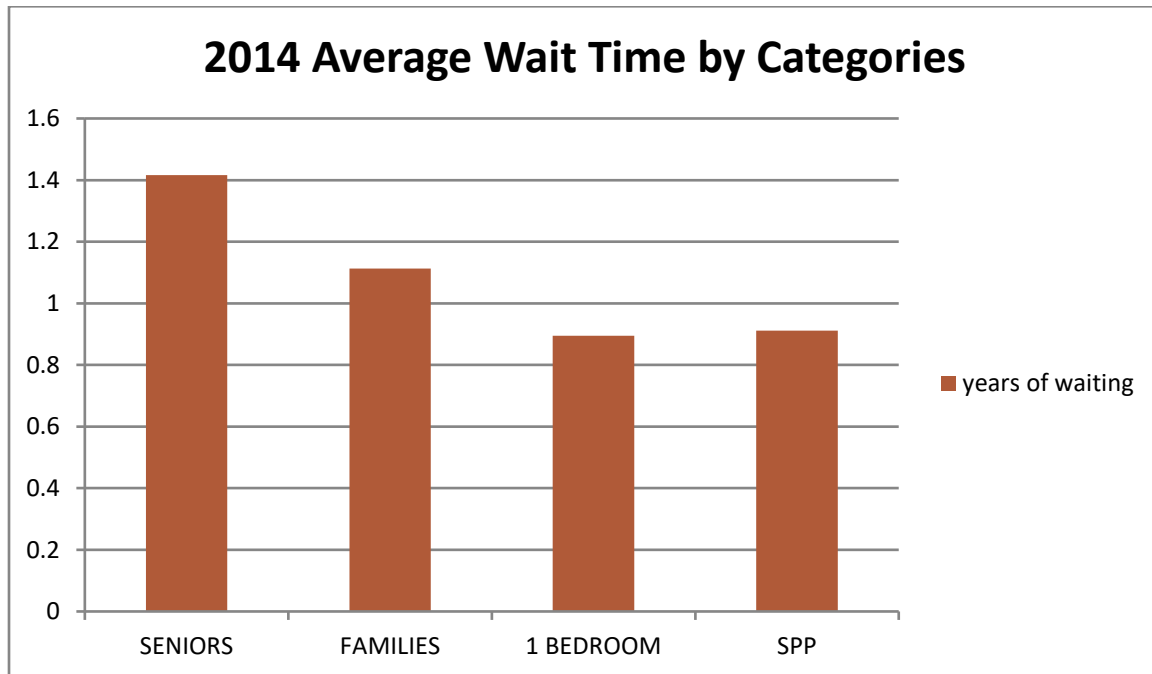
- No specific measures were taken in 2014

O. Policies, Standards and Guidelines

- We make sure that CHPI funding can be used before we go to Tribunal for arrears or damages to the units
- On an ongoing basis we try to have repayment agreements
- If we end up at Tribunal we always go for mediation first and use Tribunal Orders as a last resort to resolve tenant/landlord issues

P. Waiting Lists

- We strongly recommend MNP to join the centralized waitlist system to ensure we have a better understanding of needs across the SM area
- We had 1 MNP join the centralized waitlist in 2015



The average waiting time in 2014 for the Housing Services in the United Counties of Prescott-Russell is approximately 1.2 years.