

Year
2016

United Counties of
Prescott and Russell



[HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS PLAN]

This document contains the 2016 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 2016.

A. Partnerships and Collaborations

- Meeting bi-annually with Non-Profit Providers to review policies, procedures, resolve issues, and obtain feedback for a positive outcome.
- Meeting bi-annually with all agencies providing services to the community. The meeting gathers **28** agencies with an attendance of more than **120** participants under the same roof. In 2016, **6** agencies presented their services to the networking group.
- The agency meeting provided opportunities for our Community Relations Worker to learn more about services offered and connect with individuals from the agencies that provide these services as well as share our housing programs and services.

B. Access to CMSM Services and Programs

- 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 Clerk keeps an updated list of Landlords who wish to enter into agreements for the Rent Supplement programs to offer units to those who are in need.
- We encourage Landlords to offer units in locations where services are easily accessible (that do not require transportation).
- A new strategic plan was initiated by Social Services management starting with Ontario Works but will eventually extend to Housing Services and Child Care Services.
- Our website has been revamped and provides more accessibility features than ever.

Homeownership 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 throughout 2016, helping **5** families become first-time Home Buyers.

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;*

\$232,214 invested in 2016.

Housing Allowance

The *Housing Allowance* 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
10 households with their monthly rent;*

\$22,977 invested in 2016.

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
15 households with their home repair;*

\$199,595 invested in 2016.

Rental Component

- The United Counties of Prescott and Russell approved a three-unit Affordable Housing rental project in Clarence-Rockland in 2016. The project will provide **3** two-bedroom units in a location that is much needed and aligns with our 10-year plan.
- The United Counties of Prescott and Russell approved a 14-unit Affordable Housing rental project in Embrun, also in an area where affordable housing is much needed.

C. Prevention

- We use a large amount of IAH funding for the *Rent Supplement* program as this provides more units 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 (Project Coordinator was hired).

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.

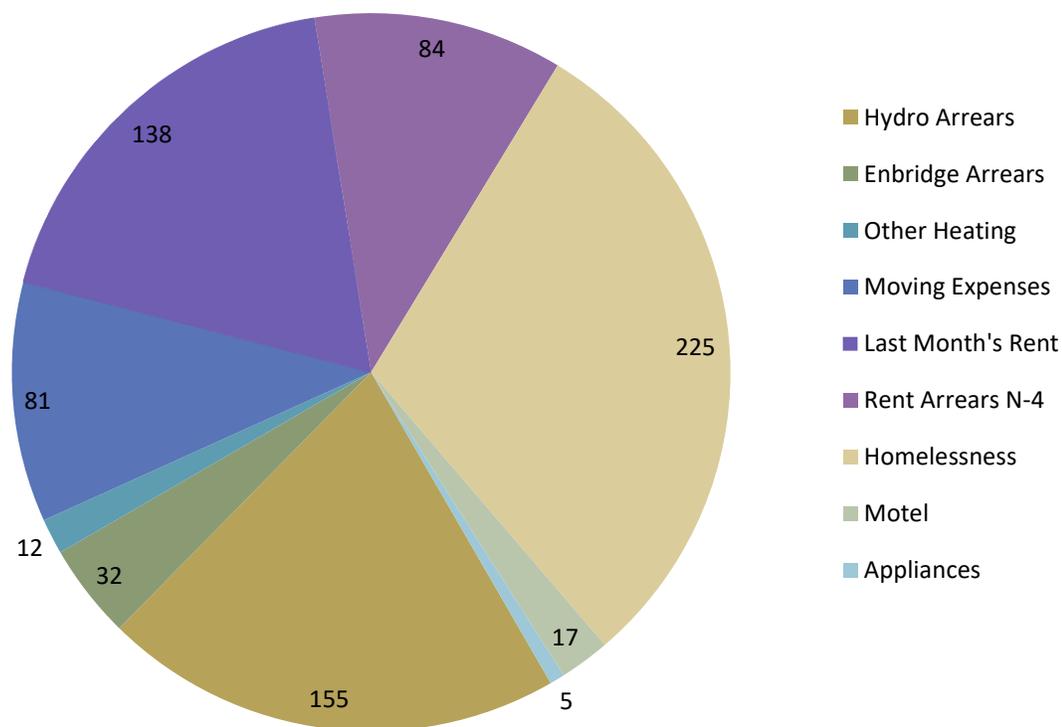
Housing loss prevention

*The United Counties of Prescott and Russell stabilized approximately **524 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 **460 households at risk of homelessness** by providing an ongoing subsidy/support to retain their housing (at six months).*

Housing Assistance Fund (CHPI)



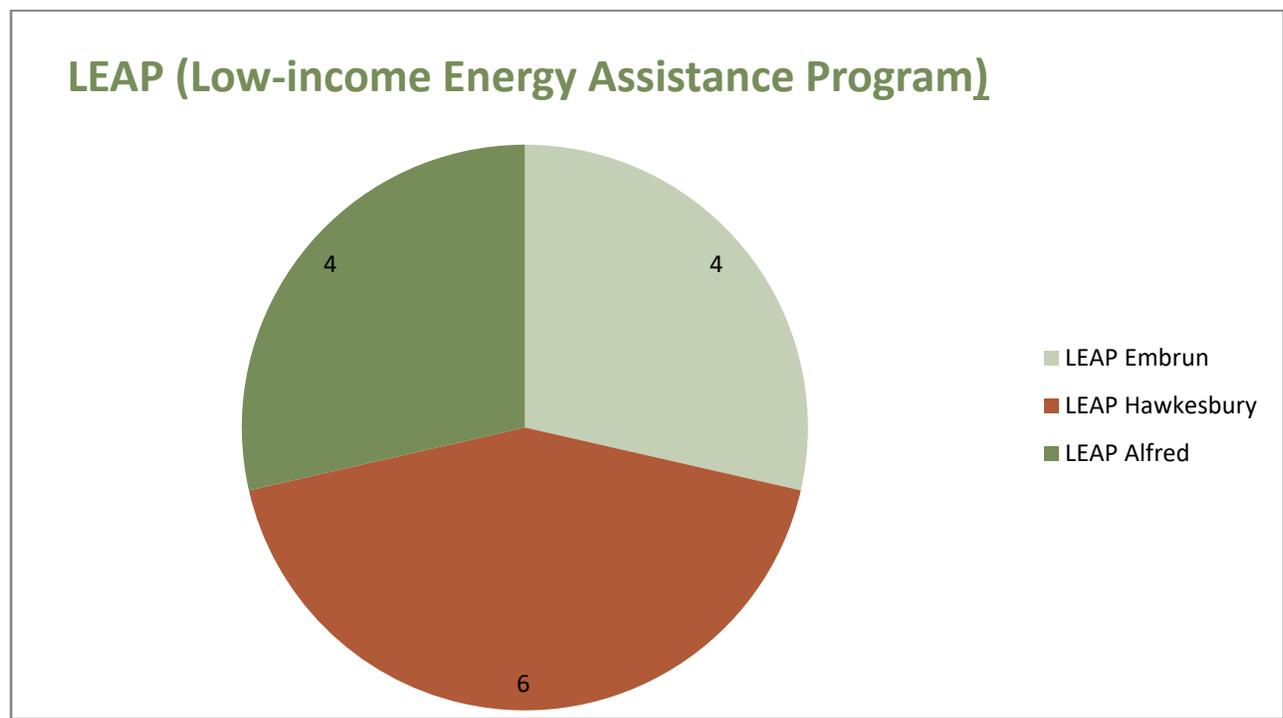
The Housing Assistance Fund assists low-income households within the United Counties of Prescott and Russell to obtain and retain housing and to also support those at risk of homelessness to remain housed.

The Housing Assistance Fund can provide financial assistance up to a maximum of **\$1,500** for singles and couples with no children, **\$3,000** for families with children. (H.A.F., Rent Bank, LEAP, EEF, Homelessness)

The fund is paid every two years commencing January 2013.

In 2016, the United Counties of Prescott and Russell provided financial assistance to **155** households with their **Hydro Arrears**, **32** with their **Enbridge Arrears**, and **12** with **Other Heating Expenses**.

Also, we provided financial assistance to **81 households** for their **moving expenses**, **138** with their **Last Month Rent**, and **84** with their **Rent Arrears** following the reception of a Notice to End a Tenancy Early for Non-payment of Rent.



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 assist applicants to fill out the application form and deem eligible customers as low-income with the utility company in order for the household to qualify.

In 2016, **14 households** benefited from this program with **6** in **Hawkesbury**, **4** in **Embrun**, and **4** in **Alfred**.

In order to help end homelessness, the United Counties of Prescott and Russell also provided gift-cards, from CHPI funds, to low-income individuals and families who were at imminent risk of homelessness. **L'Orignal's main office** gave **105** gift-cards, while **Rockland's office** donated **32** gift-cards, for a total number of **137** gift-cards granted in 2016.

Portable Housing Benefit – Victims of Family Violence

In 2016, the United Counties of Prescott and Russell introduced the Portable Housing Benefit program for victims of family violence. This new form of rent supplement is more flexible than other rent supplement programs and provides quick solutions to victims of violence. In 2016, we were able to provide such help to **8** households using a total funding of **\$6,665.00**.

D. Transportation

- No development in 2016.

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 Services Portfolio.

- We often meet with Legal Aid representatives and share our concerns with them.
- Each year within our senior's portfolio, we have a community lunch and take that opportunity to educate Tenants on their rights and 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 the Canadian Mental Health Association, the Fire Department, or Maison Interlude House (victims of domestic violence) to educate Managers about various programs.
- On an annual basis, our Community Relations Worker visits Tenants of the Public Housing Portfolio and provides information on Tenants' rights and obligations, as well as 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 obligations as well as available resources.

F. Delivery of Programs and Services

- Our Community Relations Worker maintains good working relations with Health Services Providers.
- Through 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 the Ontario Works program. We refer people in need of funding to this individual.
- We have a full-time IAH Coordinator to administer all programs mentioned above.

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 municipalities) on the proposed IAH funding and how to make the best use of the funding in keeping with our 10-year housing and homelessness plan.
- With the upcoming first Municipal Non-Profit Housing Corporation End of Operating Agreement in 2017, local municipalities are becoming more involved and interested in the future of housing projects in their municipality.

I. Needs assessment

- We continue to offer and provide rent supplement units in accordance with our Housing Need Assessment Study.
- We had BDO Canada produce a study on the impact of EOA to the Service Manager.

J. Performance measurements

- No development in 2016; however, we are changing our housing management software to YARDI Voyageur 7s. This may be an opportunity to provide more statistical information and reporting.

K. Housing Stock

- Two new Rental projects under the IAH-E and SIF projects for a total of **17** Affordable units located in Embrun and Clarence-Rockland.

L. Public Awareness

- Through bi-annual agency networking meetings, we promote programs and raise public awareness.
- We maintain updated information of our programs on our revamped website.

M. Awareness Among Government Authorities

- No new development in 2016.

N. Complementary between Programs and Services

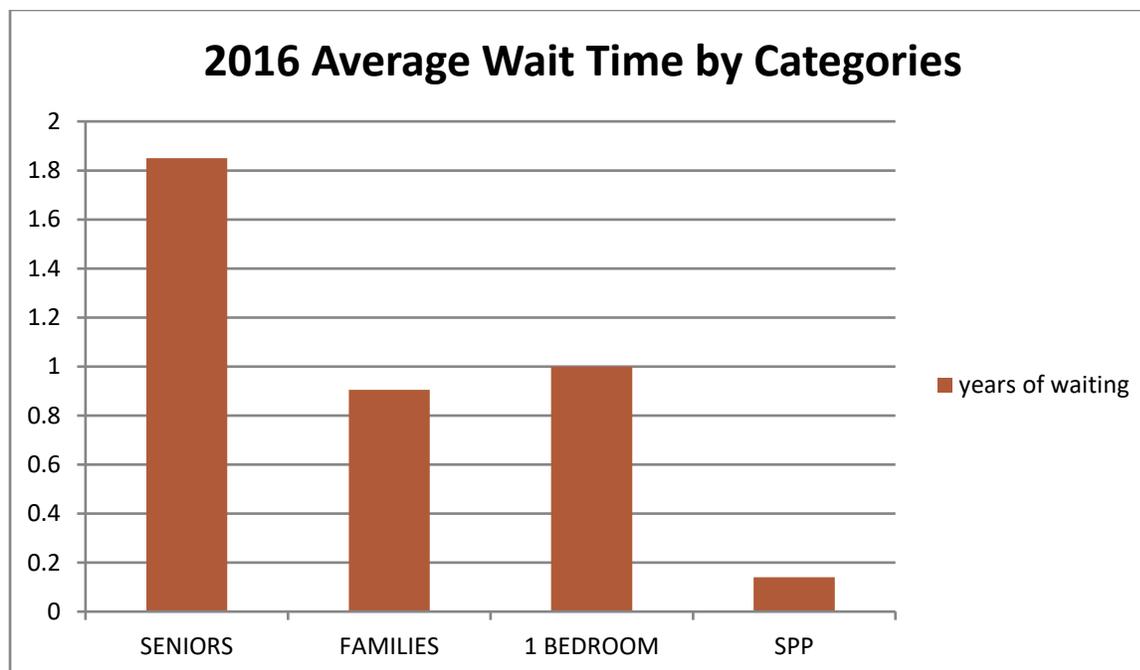
- No specific measures were taken in 2016.

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.

P. Waiting Lists

- We strongly recommend that MNP join the centralized waitlist system to ensure we have a better understanding of needs across the SM area.



The average wait time in 2016 for the Housing Services in the United Counties of Prescott and Russell is approximately 1 year. Since the implementation of the Portable Housing Benefit program for victims of family violence, the wait time for SPP has decreased.