

Year 2018

United Counties of Prescott and Russell



[HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS PLAN]

This document contains the 2018 report of the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan for the United Counties of Prescott and Russell.

The United Counties of Prescott and Russell (UCPR) introduced, in 2014, a Housing and Homelessness Plan, striving to improve the residents' housing conditions.

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 2018.

A. Partnerships and Collaborations

- Meeting biannually with Non-Profit Providers to review policies and procedures, resolve issues, and obtain feedback for a positive outcome. In 2018, we addressed End of Operating Agreements, Community Paramedics, hydro credits, Social Welfare of tenants, annual reviews, cannabis, 5-year review of 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan, smoking in units and grandfathering existing smokers, subsidy reconciliation, National Housing Strategy, Wait list, and, electric stations for e-cars.
- Meeting biannually with all agencies providing services to the community. The meeting gathers **56** agencies with the attendance of more than **120** participants under the same roof. In 2018, the following agencies presented their services to the networking group:
 - Health link
 - Vision loss rehabilitation Ontario
 - Laurencrest Youth Services Inc.
 - Fem'aide
 - Interlude House (women's shelter)
 - ODSP
 - 211 Ontario
 - Employment Ontario
 - Situation Table
- 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

- We continue to provide subsidized housing in accordance to our ratio determined in our Regional Housing Needs Assessment Study.

- We maintain an updated list of potential private landlords who wish to participate in our Rent supplement programs.
- We continue to encourage housing in locations where there are more services available.
- We update our Ontario Renovates and Homeownership program components to align to community needs and responses.
- We participate in many committees across Prescott-Russell for greater visibility.
- We participate in the Portable Housing Benefit for Victims of Domestic Abuse.
- We created and use a consent form to allow for better communications and services between O.W., Housing and Child Care.

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 UCPR 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 2018, helping **7 households** 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 UCPR helped approximately 130 households with their monthly rent; \$291,906 invested in 2018.

The *Housing Allowance Component* has been designed to help address affordability issues of households in modest rental units across the province. A “Housing Allowance” is a subsidy paid to the tenant in need of financial 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 UCPR helped approximately **25 households** with their monthly rent; **\$7 657 invested in 2018.**

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 UCPR 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 UCPR helped approximately **22 households** with their home repair; **\$277,875 invested in 2018.**

Rental Component

- The UCPR approved a project of **21** units, **11** of which are affordable, with the Township of Russell (Embrun) Non-Profit Housing Corporation, Centre J. Urgel Forget. The UCPR advanced approximately **\$500,000** to start up the project.

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).

Residential Services Homes Program

Residential Services Homes offer long-term accommodation and care to vulnerable adults that require help to perform their daily activities.

The UCPR subsidize the accommodation and food costs to **450** people throughout the **eight** municipalities across the UCPR. Agreements are in place between the UCPR and the **29** Residential Services Home owners offering a per diem (**\$55/day; \$1,672.92/month**) along with a monthly allowance for personal necessities (**\$146/month**) to every subsidized resident.

Housing loss prevention

The UCPR stabilized approximately

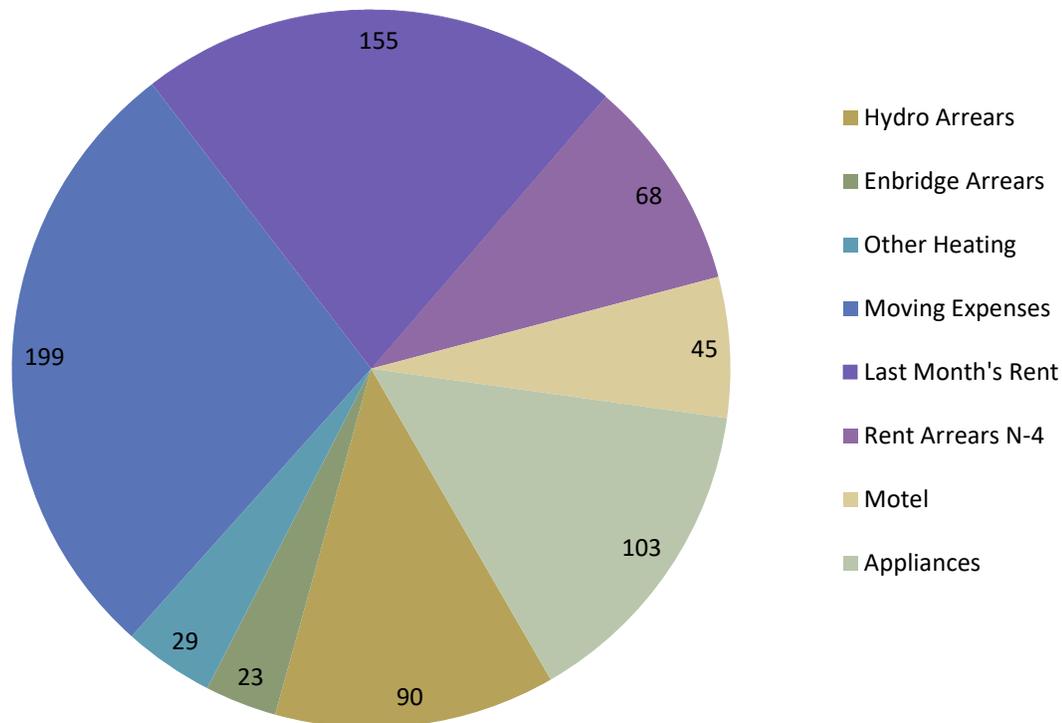
210 households at risk of homelessness (includes eviction prevention services, assistance with rental and energy arrears).

Housing retention

The UCPR helped approximately

447 households at risk of homelessness by providing an ongoing subsidy/support to retain their housing (at **six months**).

Housing Assistance Fund (CHPI)



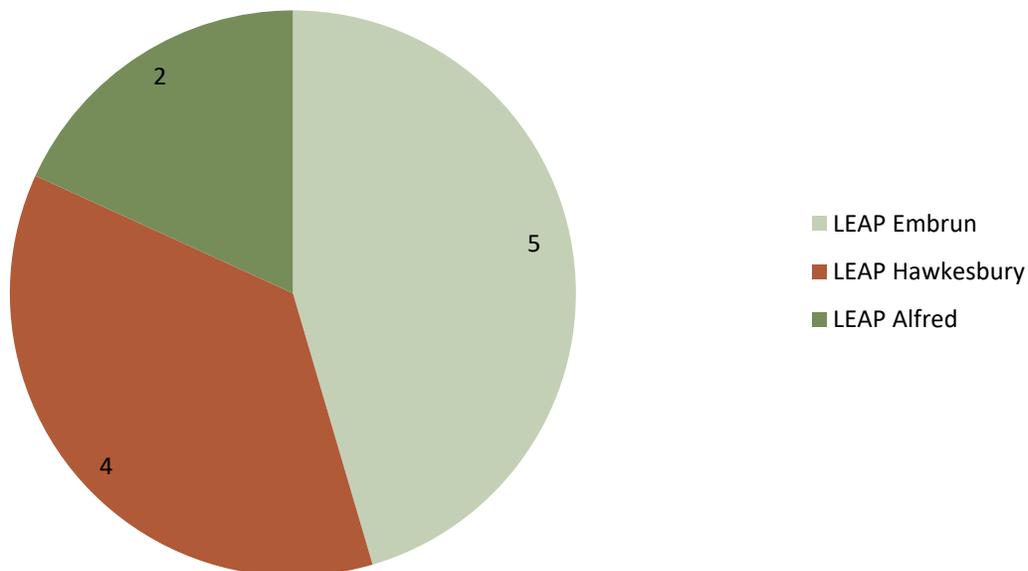
The *Housing Assistance Fund (HAF)* assists low-income households within the UCPR to obtain and retain housing and also helps those at risk of homelessness to remain housed.

The *Housing Assistance Fund* can provide annual financial assistance up to a maximum of **\$1,500** for singles and couples with no children, **\$3,000** for families with children.

In 2018, the UCPR provided financial assistance to **142** households with their **Energy Arrears (electricity, gas, propane and wood)**.

Also, we provided financial assistance to **199 households** for their **moving expenses**, **155** with their **Last Month Rent**, and **68** 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 UCPR 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 2018, **12 households** benefited from this program with **4** in **Hawkesbury**, **5** in **Embrun**, and **3** in **Alfred**.

In order to help end homelessness, the UCPR also provided a total of **693** gift cards of approximately \$25 each, from CHPI funds, to low-income individuals and families who were at imminent risk of homelessness.

Portable Housing Benefit – Victims of Family Violence

Between January 1st, and July 31, 2018, \$52,543 was allocated to 22 tenants in the Prescott and Russell area to make their home more affordable. During 2018, 17 eligible tenants were transferred from the Housing Services to the Ministry of Housing. The Housing Services received 7 new agreements between July 1st and December 2018, whereby 6 applicants received their 1st and last month's rent in the total amount of \$7,148. The purpose of the benefit is to provide survivors of family violence with financial assistance other than the traditional form of rent-geared-to-income (RGI) housing to provide safe and affordable housing.

D. Transportation

- In 2018, the United Counties received 5M\$ in funding to move forward with a community transportation services. The study is underway, a consultation has been done across Prescott-Russell and a pilot project will start in 2019.

E. Education and Training

- We completed a Homelessness Count in 2018 and posted our results on our web site. The study was shared with members of council.
- The economic and development department has a 2014-2019 plan that addresses employment trends.
- We continue to encourage tenants to seek legal advice as needed with Legal Aid.
- Our CRW continues to organize each year a lunch and presentations from agencies such as Services Canada to our seniors tenant portfolio.
- We invite partner agencies to educate our Non-Profit providers at the biannual meetings.
- Inspections and education is ongoing with our Community Relation Worker.
- 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 community agencies.

- The integration of the three services at the main reception is one more step towards the complete integration of the **three** services of the Social Services Department.

G. Resources (Financial, Human, Material)

- The Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) funding is managed by two (2) full-time employees of the Ontario Works program. We refer people in need of funding to these individuals.
- We have a full-time IAH Coordinator to administer all programs mentioned above.
- We continue to use all funding allocation for Ontario Renovates, homeownership and rent supplements.

H. Input of Municipalities

- We provided a report to the 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.
- Since the first Municipal Non-Profit Housing Corporation End of Operating Agreement was entered into at the end of 2017, early 2018, 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.
- Our homelessness count will guide us to meet needs and locations where housing is most needed.

J. Performance measurements

- No development in 2018.

K. Housing Stock

- No development in 2018.

L. Public Awareness

- Through biannual agency networking meetings, we promote programs and raise public awareness.
- We maintain updated information about our programs on our website.

M. Awareness Among Government Authorities

- No new development in 2018.

N. Complementary between Programs and Services

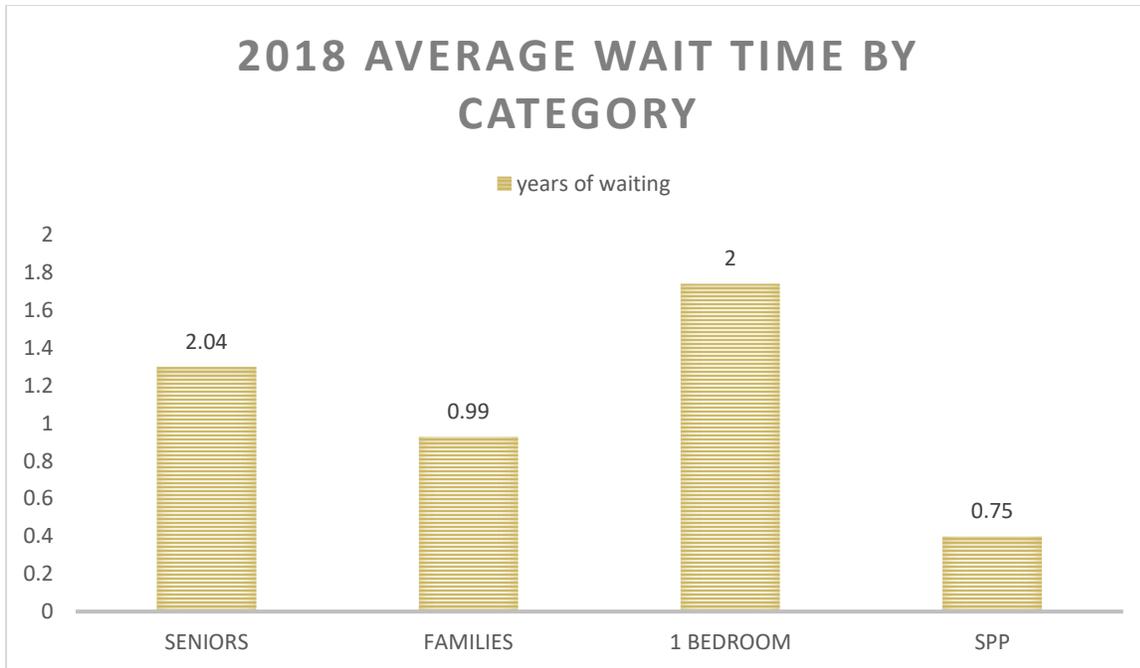
- No specific measures were taken in 2018.

O. Policies, Standards, and Guidelines

- We make sure that CHPI funding can be used before we go to a tribunal for arrears or damages to the units.
- On an ongoing basis, we try to make repayment agreements.
- Tenants can now make e-transfer rent payments.
- Consent forms were designed and used for all three (3) services (OW, Child Care and Housing).

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 2018 for the Housing Services in the UCPR is approximately **1 year and a half**.