

REPORT TO COUNTY COUNCIL

Homelessness Prevention Program 2024-2025 Investment Plan

To: Warden and Members of County Council

From: Director of Human Services

RECOMMENDATION

1. That County Council receive Report HS 2024-03, entitled “Homelessness Prevention Program 2024-2025 Investment Plan”, and approve the 2024-2025 Homelessness Prevention Plan funding allocations as set out herein.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Oxford County has a Provincial funding allocation of \$2,922,000 under the Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) for 2024 – 2025.
- The majority of the HPP funding is flowed out to external community partners who provide supports and services to people at risk of or experiencing homelessness.
- The HPP framework requires the collection of data elements for reporting that provides valuable information about people at risk of or experiencing homelessness in Oxford County. This data helps to track the impacts and outcomes of funding invested in local programs and services.
- The HPP Investment Plan is due to the province no later than April 15 of each year and must be approved by Council.

IMPLEMENTATION POINTS

Upon approval of the HPP Investment Plan by County Council, staff will submit the Plan to the Province. Staff will enter into new funding agreements with external partners to be able to support the continued delivery of programs and services for those at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

Financial Impact

There will not be any financial impact beyond what has been approved in the 2024 budget, subject to the Province’s commitment to their “planned” HPP funding allocation for 2024-2025.

Communications




County staff have informed community partners of the upcoming fiscal year’s HPP funding allocations to support seamless service delivery. Once the proposed 2024-2025 funding allocation plan is approved by County Council, staff will connect with community partners to finalize funding agreements.

2023-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

Oxford County Council approved the **2023-2026 Strategic Plan** on September 13, 2023. The Plan outlines 39 goals across three strategic pillars that advance Council’s vision of “Working together for a healthy, vibrant, and sustainable future.” These pillars are: (1) *Promoting community vitality*, (2) *Enhancing environmental sustainability*, and (3) *Fostering progressive government*.

The recommendation in this report supports the following strategic goals.

Strategic Plan Pillars and Goals

PILLAR 1	PILLAR 2	PILLAR 3
		
Promoting community vitality	Enhancing environmental sustainability	Fostering progressive government
Goal 1.3 – Community health, safety and well-being		

See: [Oxford County 2023-2026 Strategic Plan](#)

DISCUSSION

Background

The HPP is a provincially funded program that supports Ontario’s 47 Service Managers to provide affordable housing and support services for people at risk of or experiencing homelessness. The objective of the program is to support Service Managers in preventing, addressing and reducing homelessness including chronic homelessness.

The HPP was implemented in April 2022 and is a result of the consolidation of funding from three MMAH programs. It combines the former Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative; Home for Good Program; and Strong Communities Rent Supplement Program (SCRSP) into one program under a single policy and accountability framework.

The HPP is intended to be flexible and streamlined so that Service Managers can target funding where community need is greatest and can make the most impact on reducing and preventing homelessness. The overall vision of the HPP is to provide Service Managers with resources to establish a coordinated housing and homelessness system in order for people at risk of or experiencing homelessness to access housing and support services that they need to retain and/or obtain stable housing and achieve better outcomes.

On March 24, 2023, Oxford County received an HPP allocation letter (Attachment 1) from MMAH. The allocation amounts are summarized below in Table 1. The 2022-2023 allocation for Oxford County is included as a baseline for funding. The increased funding allocations are based on a new funding allocation model that responds to recommendations from the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario (OAGO) “Value For Money Audit of Homelessness (2021)” and feedback from consultations with Service Managers and sector partners. The new funding allocation model resulted in Oxford County receiving an additional \$1,215,700 starting in the 2023-2024 provincial fiscal year.

Table 1: HPP Allocations

Fiscal Year	HPP Allocation
2022 – 2023	\$1,706,300
2023 – 2024 (confirmed)	\$2,922,000
2024 – 2025 (planned)	\$2,922,000
2025 – 2026 (planned)	\$2,922,000

The 2024-2025 HPP Investment Plan is based on the “planned” allocations from the March 24, 2023 letter. MMAH has not released confirmation for HPP allocations to date and direction from MMAH is to use the planned allocations for Investment Plan purposes.

As a condition of receiving HPP funding, Service Managers must implement and maintain a By-Name List (BNL) in accordance with the approach outlined in the Ontario Services Manager By-Name List 2022 (BNL 2022) Guidelines by April 1, 2023. Oxford County is in compliance with this requirement.

The BNL 2022 Guidelines approach builds on previous BNL requirements and supports HPP outcomes of addressing and reducing homelessness, including chronic homelessness. The BNL 2022 Guidelines includes a more extensive list of data points for collection compared to previous BNL requirements. The expectation of BNL 2022 Guidelines implementation is to gain a better understanding of the needs of people experiencing homelessness in our communities to be better able to connect them to services and supports and achieve better outcomes.

Comments

The HPP framework prescribes service categories under which Service Managers are required to allocate funding and report on outputs. The service categories are:

- Supportive Housing;
- Community and Outreach Support Services;
- Housing Assistance; and
- Emergency Shelter Solutions.

In addition, Service Managers are able to allocate a percentage of their annual allocation to administration costs. The percentage of allowable administration costs were reduced from 7.5% to 5% in the 2023-2024 fiscal year. Historically Oxford County has taken minimal administration funding and allocated the funding to program delivery. Table 2 outlines the planned expenditures for the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

Table 2: 2024-2025 HPP Planned Expenditures

HPP Service Categories	Planned Financial Expenditures
Supportive Housing	\$615,000
Community Outreach and Support Services	675,900
Housing Assistance	450,000
Emergency Shelter Solutions	1,035,000
Administration	146,100
Total	\$2,922,000

Service Categories:

Supportive Housing

- Refers to a combination of housing assistance with individualized, flexible, and ongoing support services (for example, mental health and addictions supports; assistance with daily living; and other services).
- For the purposes of HPP, this category includes transitional housing and residential services homes (i.e., former domiciliary hostels).

Community Outreach and Support Services

- Refers to services and supports, such as community outreach and food security programs, as well as case management and referrals for people on By-Name Lists.
- Also includes ongoing support and services such as counselling, medical care, or assistance with daily living for people not receiving long-term housing assistance, which would be considered supportive housing under HPP.

Housing Assistance

- Refers to short-term/emergency assistance, non-financial housing assistance, and long-term housing assistance such as rent supplements and housing allowances for people not receiving ongoing support services, which would be considered supportive housing for the purposes of the HPP.
- Includes rent supplements under the former SCRSP program.

Emergency Shelter Solutions

- Refers to expenses directly related to operating and staffing emergency shelters (including permanent, temporary and motel rooms).

Administration

- Refers to expenses not directly related to delivering services and supports such as back-office administration, professional services and office expenses.

Reporting Requirements

Service Managers are required to submit an HPP Investment Plan by April 15 each year outlining plans for how HPP funding will be allocated among the various service categories. In their planning Service Managers are encouraged to consider how investments of HPP will:

- Support a shift away from emergency responses towards prevention and permanent housing to contribute to a reduction in chronic homelessness.
- Support priority populations who may be at greater risk of homelessness (for example, youth, Indigenous Peoples, and people transitioning from provincial institutions)

Service Managers are required to report back on progress quarterly through the Government's Transfer Payment Ontario system (TPON) using templates provided by the Province. Quarterly reports must provide updated forecasts for funding expenditures and provide explanations for any variances in spending between service categories. A more detailed annual report is required to be submitted to the province by June of each year through TPON. Staff will bring a report to County Council annually that aligns with the annual report to the province on progress made towards the goals of reducing homelessness and supporting housing stability. The reporting requirements under the revised HPP add a significant administrative burden for Service Managers on reporting and data collection for the HPP despite the province's commitment to reduce administrative burden.

The Province released a performance indicator guide to Service Managers that outlines the performance indicators developed to monitor and track progress on achievements of HPP outcomes, including measuring a reduction in homelessness and chronic homelessness. For each performance indicator, data elements will be reported annually on unique households assisted, BNL data and breakdowns of provincial priority groups (Chronic Homelessness, Youth, Indigenous and Transitions from Provincial Institutions) as recommended by the Expert Advisory Panel on Homelessness (2015) and recommended by the Auditor General in December 2021. The data collected through the performance indicators will help inform gaps in services and supports in Oxford County for those at risk of or experiencing homelessness that can be used for advocacy efforts with the Province.

The Province is interested in Service Managers using the HPP to support cost avoidance initiatives in establishing a system approach to preventing, addressing and reducing homelessness. The reporting requirements under the new framework will allow for valuable information to be collected to inform and understand the needs of people at risk of or experiencing homelessness. In addition, having comprehensive and up to date information through our BNL activities will allow data collection over the long term to help track program impacts, influence policy development and inform advocacy efforts.

CONCLUSIONS

Access to support and affordable housing is critical in reducing chronic homelessness. While HPP funding alleviates some of the financial pressures of delivering programs and services in support of those at risk of or experiencing homelessness, it is not enough to meet current demands across the homelessness service system. In recognition of this gap, County Council invested \$2.8 million through the 2024 budget to support the creation of transitional supportive housing . Notwithstanding this local investment, financial assistance

is still required across all levels of government to support the creation of transitional supportive housing and achieve the Province's goal of reducing chronic homelessness.

SIGNATURES

Report author:

Original signed by

Kelly Black
Director of Human Services

Approved for submission:

Original signed by

Benjamin R. Addley
Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT

Attachment 1- Correspondence from the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, dated March 24, 2023, regarding Funding Allocation Updates for the Homelessness Prevention Program – 2023-24 to 2025-26