

REPORT TO COUNTY COUNCIL

Homelessness Prevention Program Funding 2023-2024 Annual Report

To: Warden and Members of County Council

From: Director of Human Services

RECOMMENDATION

1. That County Council receive Report HS 2024-06, entitled “Homelessness Prevention Program Funding 2023-2024 Annual Report” as information.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Oxford County received an additional \$1,215,700 in funding under the Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) for 2023 – 2024 bringing the annual funding to \$2,992,000.
- Approximately 86% of the HPP funding was flowed out to external community partners who provide supports and services to people at risk of or experiencing homelessness.
- A number of new initiatives were implemented with the increased funding including an increase in the capacity of the emergency shelter services and outreach services to support people at risk of or experiencing homelessness in Oxford County.
- The revised HPP framework requires collection of data elements for reporting that will provide valuable information about people at risk of or experiencing homelessness in Oxford County and help track the impacts of programs and services.

IMPLEMENTATION POINTS

The reporting requirements under the HPP are still fairly new to the County and to our community partners in receipt of funding through the HPP. The County has created a simplified template to use for reporting purposes to reduce any administrative burden for community partners and to assist in the integrity of data collected.

Financial Impact

There was not any impact to the 2023 budget as HPP funding is 100% Provincial funding.

Communications

On March 24, 2023, Oxford County received their revised HPP allocation letter from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) confirming the 2023-2024 allocation of \$2,922,000 and planned commitments for the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 fiscal years.




On May 7, 2024, Oxford County received their HPP allocation letter confirming the funding for the 2024-2025 funding year, however, continue to be under an embargo until an announcement is made for our County by the Province.

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
<p>Goal 1.1 – 100% Housed</p> <p>Goal 1.3 – Community health, safety and well-being</p>		

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 is a result of the consolidation of funding from three programs delivered by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH). It combines the former Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI), Home for Good (HFG) and the 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 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 have the housing and support services that they need to retain and/or obtain stable housing and achieve better outcomes.

Table 1 outlines the HPP allocations for Oxford County as provided to the County in the allocation letter from March 2023. The 2022-2023 allocation for Oxford County is included as a baseline for funding. The allocations are based on a new funding allocation model that responds to the 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 annually.

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

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 condition.

Figure 1 depicts the HPP Logic Model and the vision of HPP which is to provide funding (*inputs*) to support Service Managers in implementing a variety of flexible, local approaches to the delivery of services and supports (*outputs*) aligned with three key goals (*outcomes*):

1. **Prevent homelessness:** People at risk of homelessness remain housed and have connections to support services.
2. **Address homelessness:** People who are homeless and chronically homeless obtain and retain housing and support services.
3. **Reduce chronic homelessness:** Reduction in chronic homelessness.

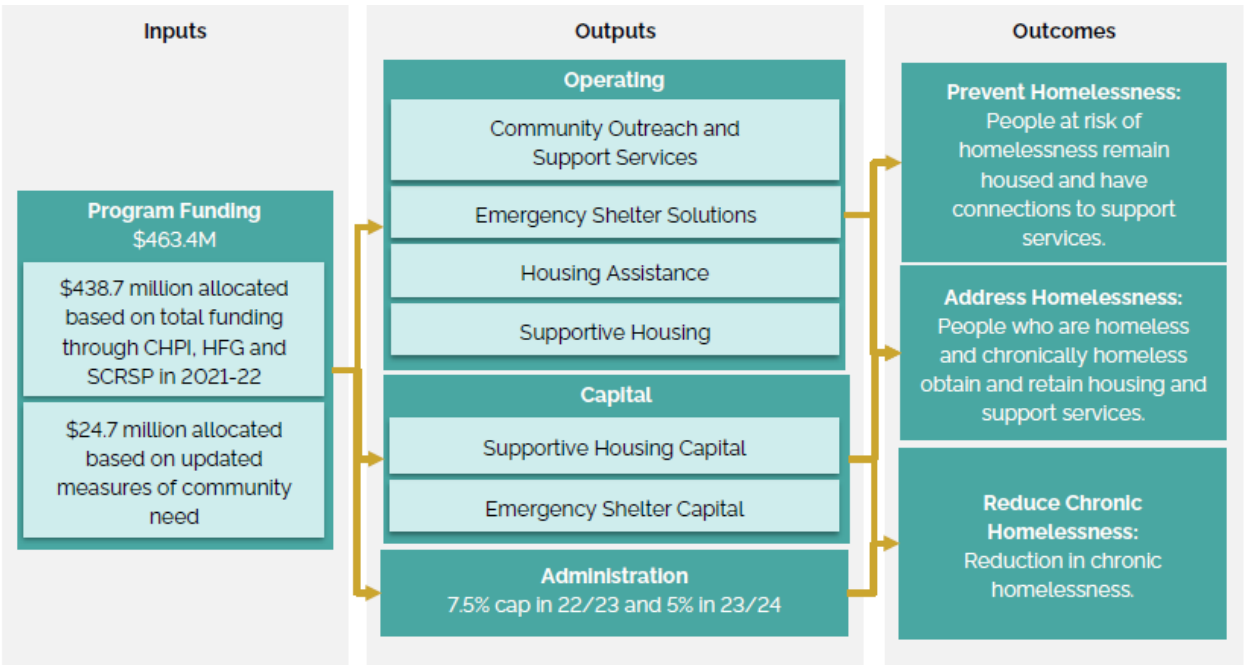


Figure 1: Homelessness Prevention Program Logic Model

Comments

2023 – 2024 HPP Investment Plan Overview

The HPP framework requires Service Managers to complete an Investment Plan and submit to the MMAH by April 15th each year. The Investment Plan outlines the planned commitments for the funding for the fiscal year by service category. Based on definitions provided by MMAH in the HPP Guidelines, adjustments to which category a community partner was receiving HPP funding under were made for reporting purposes starting in the 2023-2024 funding year.

Table 2 outlines the planned commitments for the 2023 – 2024 fiscal year for HPP that were approved by Council and submitted in the Investment Plan to the province.

Table 2: 2023 – 2024 HPP Planned Allocations by Category

HPP Service Categories	IP Planned Expenses
Supportive Housing	\$1,124,750
Community Outreach and Support Services	507,150
Housing Assistance	624,000
Emergency Shelter Solutions	520,000
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 supports 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.

The increased allocation of HPP allowed Oxford County to explore new initiatives with Community Partners to support those at risk of or experiencing homelessness. New initiatives explored in the 2023-2024 funding year are:

1. The creation of a new position within Human Services to provide community outreach and system navigation supports. The position works with those at risk of or experiencing homelessness, works closely with our community partners around housing stability, supports BNL initiatives and attends to encampments as required.
2. The Salvation Army Tillsonburg explored the creation of an Outreach position that would be focused on providing supports to those at risk of or experiencing homelessness in Tillsonburg. The position is to be funded for 12 months with the potential for extension.
3. In partnership with Salvation Army Tillsonburg the possibility of a daytime shelter space was explored to support those at who are experiencing homelessness or housing precarity.
4. Oxford County in partnership with CMHATV explored the possibility of building on existing partnerships to provide supportive housing within Oxford County housing.
5. Expansion of the INN Overnight Shelter including some minor renovations as well as purchase of supplies and equipment.

In addition to the new initiatives HPP funding was allocated to support rent and utility arrears for residents, food banks, rent supplement, supportive housing, outreach services and BNL activities. HPP Funding for 2023 – 2024 supported the activities of a number of our community partners who work to support people at risk of or experiencing homelessness including but not limited to CMHATV, Salvation Army all three locations, Operation Sharing, Indwell, United Way, Oxford County Community Health Centre and supportive housing providers.

The Investment Plan includes a provision to allocate 5% towards administration costs. This can be changed over the course of the year and be allocated to program costs. However, in order to use any of our allocation for administration costs it needs to be declared in the Investment Plan.

2023 – 2024 HPP Outcomes

In 2023-2024 the HPP allocation was used to support a number of community partners who support people at risk of or experiencing homelessness in our communities. Table 3 provides an overview of how the annual funding allocation was spent throughout the County by service category.

Table 3: 2023 – 2024 HPP Expenditures by Category

HPP Service Categories	IP Planned Expenses	Actual Financial Expenditures
Supportive Housing	\$1,124,750	\$592,208
Community Outreach and Support Services	507,150	647,964
Housing Assistance	624,000	470,640
Emergency Shelter Solutions	520,000	1,133,963
Administration	146,100	77,225
Total	\$2,922,000	\$2,922,000

Throughout the year funding allocations are shifted based on local needs. In addition, some initiatives are not able to be implemented for a variety of reasons and those funds are reallocated to another project. In 2023-24 the variances can be attributed to:

- The allocation to supportive housing was redirected to support the expansion of the INN Woodstock as well as to fund the Out of the Cold Shelter in Tillsonburg. At the time of preparing the Investment Plan the extensive expansion of the INN and the request to fund the Out of the Cold Shelter in Tillsonburg were not known. In addition, there was an increase in motel rooms used for shelter during December 2023 through March 2024 which has stopped with the opening of the additional spaces at the INN. This meant the partnership with CMHATV for supportive housing was paused.
- The Housing Assistance category was lower than expected as the allocation of Canada Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) funding allowed the rent supplement funds to be diverted to Community Outreach and Support Services category to increase capacity for outreach services for our community partners.
- The planned implementation of a software system for homelessness data and reporting could not move forward in 2023-2024 with costs covered using administration funding. Funds were directed to support food security organizations throughout the County at the fiscal year end while still maintaining some funding to offset internal administration costs to deliver the HPP.

HPP breaks down the following Service categories into activities for reporting purposes.

Supportive Housing

The Supportive Housing component is broken down into eight activities for year end reporting to the province. In the 2023-2024 fiscal year Oxford County funded partners who provided services related to the following three activities:

- Life Skills Development / Daily Living Supports
- Other Supports not captured
- Residential Services Homes

In 2023-2024 185 unique individuals were supported across the three activities with the HPP funding.

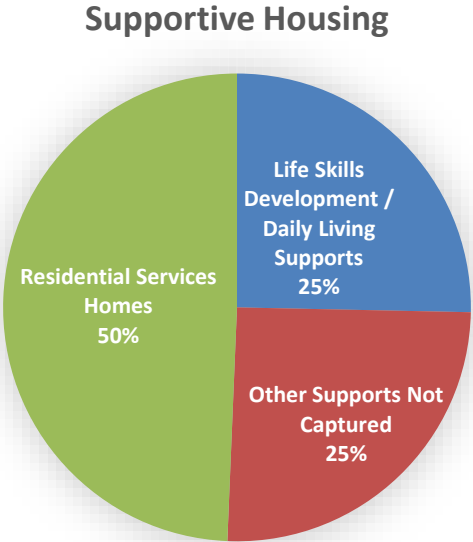


Figure 2: Supportive Housing Allocation Percentages

Community Outreach and Support Services

The Community Outreach and Support Services component is broken down into eight activities for year end reporting to the province. In the 2023-2024 fiscal year Oxford County funded partners who provided services related to the following activities:

- Mental Health and Addictions
- Life Skills Development / Daily Living Supports
- Food Security
- Case Management and Outreach

In 2023-2024 627 unique individuals were supported across the four activities with the HPP funding.

Community Outreach and Support Services

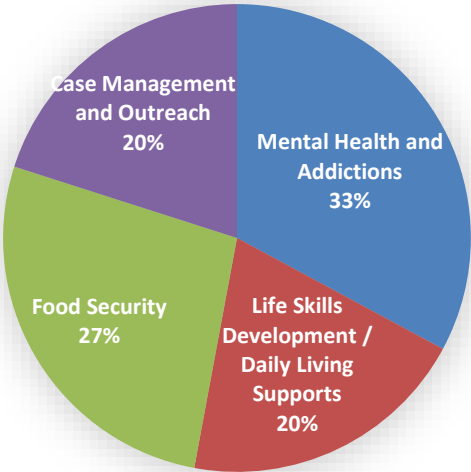


Figure 3: Community Outreach and Support Services Allocation Percentages

Housing Assistance

The Housing Assistance component is broken down into three activities for year end reporting to the province. In the 2023-2024 fiscal year Oxford County funded partners who provided services related to the following activities:

- Short-Term / Emergency Assistance

In 2023-2024 436 unique individuals were supported across the one activity with the HPP funding.

Housing Assistance



Figure 4: Housing Assistance Allocation Percentages

By Name List

The BNL is a real-time list of people experiencing homelessness in Oxford County that can connect people to services and supports they need and can create a foundation for better service coordination. The BNL provides a more standardized approach for assessment and referral protocols to support people experiencing homelessness by matching them to the services and supports they need. The BNL and Coordinated Access System is a requirement of the HPP in order to receive the funding. Oxford County implemented their BNL in early 2022.

As of March 31, 2024, 10 community partner agencies and 21 staff are participating in the Coordinated Access System connecting people experiencing homelessness to services and supports. Several agencies throughout the County support the work of the BNL and Coordinated Access System outside of entering into a formal agreement including growing supportive/collaborative relationships with local hospitals, correctional facilities, and youth serving agencies.

67 people have been housed since the BNL was implemented in early 2022 with 259 unique individuals being added to the list. An infographic of the BNL as of March 31, 2024 is provided as Attachment 1 for your review.

2023 – 2024 Reporting Requirements

In addition to Service Managers submission of an Investment Plan by April 15th each year, quarterly reports and an annual report are also required that must be done through the Government's Transfer Payment Ontario (TPON) system using templates provided by the province.

The Province released a Performance Indicator Guide to Service Managers in April 2022 that outlines the performance indicators developed to monitor and track progress on the achievement of HPP outcomes including measuring a reduction in homelessness and chronic homelessness. For each performance indicator, data elements are reported annually on unique households assisted, BNL data and a breakdown 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 Province is interested in Service Managers using HPP to support cost avoidance initiatives in establishing a system approach for preventing, addressing and reducing homelessness. The reporting requirements under the new framework will allow for valuable information to be collected to understand the needs of people at risk of or experiencing homelessness and inform response. 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

The additional \$1,215,700 in HPP funding for Oxford County was welcomed however, the annual allocation for Oxford County is not sufficient to meet all of the needs for our communities. The pandemic highlighted the number of individuals at risk of or experiencing homelessness in Oxford County and the number of individuals requiring supports and services continues to exceed the capacity for community partners to be able serve.

Most of the HPP allocation is provided externally to community partners to increase their capacity to provide services either through staffing or programs. Lack of financial and human resources continue to limit the capacity of community partners and should HPP funding not be provided to community partners their capacity to support individuals at risk of or experiencing homelessness would be reduced or non-existent.

HPP is not sufficient to be able to allocate towards a large capital project to address those experiencing homelessness or precariously housed. Our community partners and individuals at risk of or experiencing homelessness rely on the supports and services funded under HPP and delivered by our external partners. This leaves zero HPP funding to be allocated towards any capital initiatives.

The reporting requirements under the new framework while allowing for valuable information to be collected to inform and understand the needs of people at risk of or experiencing homelessness adds a significant administrative burden for Service Managers. This does not align with the province's commitment to reduce administrative burden.

SIGNATURES

Departmental approval:

Original signed by

Kelly Black
Director of Human Services

Approved for submission:

Original signed by

Benjamin R. Addley
Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT

Attachment 1: By-Name List as of March 31, 2024