



The Corporation of the City of Stratford
Social Services Committee
Open Session
AGENDA

Date: Monday, January 27, 2025

Time: 7:05 P.M.

Location: Council Chamber, City Hall

Committee Present: Councillor Henderson - Chair Presiding, Councillor Briscoe - Vice Chair, Mayor Ritsma, Councillor Beatty, Councillor Biehn, Councillor Burbach, Councillor Hunter, Councillor McCabe, Councillor Nijjar, Councillor Sebben, Councillor Wordofa

Staff Present: Joan Thomson - Chief Administrative Officer, Kim McElroy - Director of Social Services, Tatiana Dafoe - City Clerk, Karmen Krueger - Director of Corporate Services, Taylor Crinklaw - Director of Infrastructure Services, Tim Wolfe - Director of Community Services, Adam Betteridge - Director of Building and Planning Services, Dave Bush - Director of Human Resources, Chris Van Bargaen - Deputy Fire Chief, Audrey Pascual - Deputy Clerk

To watch the Committee meeting live, please click the following link:

<https://video.isilive.ca/stratford/live.html>

A video recording of the meeting will also be available through a link on the City's website

<https://calendar.stratford.ca/meetings> following the meeting.

Pages

1. Call to Order

The Chair to call the Meeting to Order.

Land Acknowledgment

Moment of Silent Reflection

Respectful Conduct Statement

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

The *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* requires any member of Council declaring a pecuniary interest and the general nature thereof, where the interest of a member of Council has not been disclosed by reason of the member's absence from the meeting, to disclose the interest at the first open meeting attended by the member of Council and otherwise comply with the *Act*.

Name, Item and General Nature of Pecuniary Interest

3. Sub-committee Minutes

5 - 11

Sub-committee minutes are attached for background regarding the discussion held at the January 14, 2025, Sub-committee meeting.

4. Delegations

None scheduled

5. Report of the Manager of Ontario Works

5.1 Ontario Works 2024 Business Plan (SOC25-001)

12 - 32

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "Ontario Works 2024 Business Plan" (SOC25-001), be received for information.

Motion by

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "Ontario Works 2024 Business Plan" (SOC25-001), be received for information.

5.2 CMHA Outreach Worker Service Agreement (SOC25-002)

33 - 36

Staff Recommendation: THAT the Corporation of the City of Stratford enter into a three-year agreement with the Canadian Mental Health Association Huron Perth Addictions and Mental Health Services for the provision of services defined in the Outreach Worker Service Agreement;

THAT the Mayor and Clerk, or their respective delegates, be authorized to sign the Outreach Worker Service Agreement with the Canadian Mental Health Association Huron Perth Addictions and Mental Health Services;

AND THAT the Director of Social Services be authorized to approve any contract amendments, subject to no changes to the financial considerations or identified performance concerns, for the duration of the contract and subject to providing the City Clerk with any approved contract amendments.

Motion by

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the Corporation of the City of Stratford enter into a three-year agreement with the Canadian Mental Health Association Huron Perth Addictions and Mental Health Services for the provision of services defined in the Outreach Worker Service Agreement;

THAT the Mayor and Clerk, or their respective delegates, be authorized to sign the Outreach Worker Service Agreement with the Canadian Mental Health Association Huron Perth Addictions and Mental Health Services;

AND THAT the Director of Social Services be authorized to approve any contract amendments, subject to no changes to the financial considerations or identified performance concerns, for the duration of the contract and subject to providing the City Clerk with any approved contract amendments.

5.3 Optimism Place Outreach Worker Service Agreement (SOC24-003)

37 - 40

Staff Recommendation: THAT Council authorize The Corporation of the City of Stratford to enter into an agreement with Optimism Place, Women's Shelter, and Support Services for the provision of services defined in the Outreach Worker Service Agreement;

THAT the Mayor and Clerk, or their respective delegates, be authorized to sign the Outreach Worker Service Agreement with Optimism Place, Women's Shelter, and Support Services;

AND THAT the Director of Social Services be authorized to approve any contract amendments, subject to no changes to the financial considerations or identified performance concerns, for the duration of the contract and subject to a copy of any approved amended contract being provided to the City Clerk.

Motion by

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT Council authorize The Corporation of the City of Stratford to enter into an agreement with Optimism Place, Women's Shelter, and Support Services for the provision of services defined in the Outreach Worker Service Agreement;

THAT the Mayor and Clerk, or their respective delegates, be authorized to sign the Outreach Worker Service Agreement with Optimism Place, Women's Shelter, and Support Services;

AND THAT the Director of Social Services be authorized to approve any

contract amendments, subject to no changes to the financial considerations or identified performance concerns, for the duration of the contract and subject to a copy of any approved amended contract being provided to the City Clerk.

6. For the Information of Committee

6.1 Department Update

41 - 44

The following Department Update Infographics of November 2024 have been provided for the information of Committee:

- Monthly Children's Services Report
- Monthly Homelessness Report
- Monthly Housing Report
- Monthly Ontario Works Report

7. Adjournment

Meeting Start Time:

Meeting End Time:

Motion by

Committee Decision: THAT the Social Services Committee meeting adjourn.



**The Corporation of the City of Stratford
Social Services Sub-committee
MINUTES**

Date: January 14, 2025
 Time: 4:30 P.M.
 Location: Council Chamber, City Hall

Sub-committee Present: Councillor Briscoe – Vice Chair Presiding, Councillor Biehn, Councillor Nijjar, Councillor Wordofa

Regrets: Councillor Henderson

Staff Present: Kim McElroy - Director of Social Services, Alex Burgess - Manager of Ontario Works, John Ritz – Homelessness and Housing Stability Supervisor, Tatiana Dafoe – Clerk, Miranda Franken - Council Clerk Secretary

1. Call to Order

The Vice-Chair called the Meeting to Order.

Chair Henderson provided regrets for this meeting.

Land Acknowledgment

Moment of Silent Reflection

Respectful Conduct Statement

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

The *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* requires any member of Council declaring a pecuniary interest and the general nature thereof, where the interest of a member of Council has not been disclosed by reason of the member's absence

from the meeting, to disclose the interest at the first open meeting attended by the member of Council and otherwise comply with the *Act*.

Name, Item and General Nature of Pecuniary Interest

No disclosures of pecuniary interest were made by a member at the January 14, 2025, Social Services Sub-committee meeting.

3. Delegations

None scheduled

4. Report of the Manager of Ontario Works

4.1 Ontario Works 2024 Business Plan (SOC25-001)

Sub-committee Discussion: The Manager of Ontario Works presented the report, highlighting the following:

- the 2024 Business Plan having been submitted and executed with the Ministry in March 2024 and the budget and Service Plan being approved at that time;
- previously being called the Service Plan and now being called the Business Plan with these terms being used interchangeably;
- the 2024 Business Plan covering a 4-year period and historically covering a 2 year period;
- the Ministry now providing a template, this being previously provided by the Service Manager;
- the Plan addressing the following four categories:
 - 'Conduct Community Analysis' being an overview of caseload demographics, community occurrences that would support or hinder;
 - 'Review Performance Outcome Targets' being as titled;
 - 'Develop Service Strategies' relating to outcome targets, plans to achieve targets, risk assessments to be completed related to how these will be achieved and related privacy elements;
 - the IT Division having assisted in the privacy strategy and the Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Strategy being completed with the DEI Manager;

- 'Manage Program Delivery' being a review of program delivery including fiscal accountability and Provincial framework relating to eligibility and ensuring people are eligible for received services;
- staff currently working on an addendum to the Plan, due in February; and
- the budget to be approved with the addendum approval and staff expecting to provide Council with an update in early April.

Motion by Councillor Nijjar

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "Ontario Works 2024 Business Plan" (SOC25-001), be received for information.

Carried

4.2 CMHA Outreach Worker Service Agreement (SOC25-002)

Sub-committee Discussion: The Manager of Ontario Works presented the report, highlighting the following:

- the update to the CMHA agreement being to the scatter site component of the Intensive Case Management Program (ICM);
- the funding to provide two full time equivalent case managers carrying caseloads between 12-15 participants and supporting with housing stability;
- a caseload to include individuals experiencing homelessness as well as housed individuals;
- new individuals to be added to caseloads are actively experiencing homelessness, and will be supported until housed;
- individuals to be discharged from the program once an appropriate level of stability has been reached;
- this being measured through various tools and evidence based information;
- the Supported Housing of Perth Program (SHOPP) having been in place since 2018 and replaced at its conclusion in 2023 with ICM and these positions having existed in several iterations since 2018;

- 2025 budget including additional funding for a Case Manager working out of the Stratford Connect Center with this portion being funded through the OW program;
- the CMHA Counselling Position no longer required as CMHA is meeting the needs of the caseload;
- funding being transitioned from the CMHA Counselling Position to the Case Manager at the Connection Center to better support individuals in the community with housing stability;
- the position providing support for attaining housing including contacting landlords, housing applications and housing searches, while also supporting housing stability for individuals who attend the Connection Centre and are living in Perth and Stratford Housing Corporation;
- the agreement update providing staff the opportunity to clearly define outcomes addressing needs of the program and ensuring an ability to performance manage the contract if needed;
- staff extending the agreement as there are no performance concerns;
- the agreement having a built in out clause should financial or performance related concerns be identified;
- the agreement being sustainable only with the continuation of the Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) and OW funding in the Provincial and Municipal budget; and
- this being fully funded through the 100% OW Employment Supports portfolio and the 100% Provincially Funded HPP from Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Motion by Councillor Biehn

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the Corporation of the City of Stratford enter into a three-year agreement with the Canadian Mental Health Association Huron Perth Addictions and Mental Health Services for the provision of services defined in the Outreach Worker Service Agreement;

THAT the Mayor and Clerk, or their respective delegates, be authorized to sign the Outreach Worker Service Agreement with

the Canadian Mental Health Association Huron Perth Addictions and Mental Health Services;

AND THAT the Director of Social Services be authorized to approve any contract amendments, subject to no changes to the financial considerations or identified performance concerns, for the duration of the contract and subject to providing the City Clerk with any approved contract amendments.

Carried

4.3 Optimism Place Outreach Worker Service Agreement (SOC24-003)

Sub-committee Discussion: The Manager of Ontario Works presented the report, highlighting the following:

- the Optimism Place Outreach Worker Services Agreement being through the same program;
- the update being to the scatter site component of the Intensive Case Management Program (ICM);
- the agreement being to fund one Case Worker position;
- the updates being applied to an agreement currently in affect;
- the agreement having begun October 2023, and renewed in 2024 with payment for the Case Worker position made at that time;
- more clearly defined outcomes and expectations outlined, and, as with the CMHA agreement, aiming to attach individuals who align with the mandate of the organizations where possible;
- identifying individuals with mental health and addiction as barriers to housing and pairing support through CMHA;
- identifying individuals experiencing intimate partner violence as barriers to housing and pairing support through Optimism Place;
- the Case Worker to support a 12-15 participant caseload and provide support from homeless to housed and in achieving housing stability;
- a \$5,000 discretionary fund included to be tracked closely to inform staff of necessary updates to the Housing Stability Bank Program;

- the updated agreement taking effect January 1, 2025 with the term ending 2027; and
- this resulting in a lower payment amount for 2025 and increasing to \$80,000 in 2026 and 2027.

Discussion on this matter took place between Sub-committee and staff. Highlights of the discussion included the following:

- funding having been provided through the Provincial Homelessness Prevention core funding and OW; and
- staff to continue submissions to the province for core funding.

Motion by Councillor Wordofa

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT Council authorize The Corporation of the City of Stratford to enter into an agreement with Optimism Place, Women's Shelter, and Support Services for the provision of services defined in the Outreach Worker Service Agreement;

THAT the Mayor and Clerk, or their respective delegates, be authorized to sign the Outreach Worker Service Agreement with Optimism Place, Women's Shelter, and Support Services;

AND THAT the Director of Social Services be authorized to approve any contract amendments, subject to no changes to the financial considerations or identified performance concerns, for the duration of the contract and subject to a copy of any approved amended contract being provided to the City Clerk.

Carried

5. Department Update

The following Department Update Infographics of November 2024 were provided for the information of Sub-committee:

- Monthly Children's Services Report
- Monthly Homelessness Report
- Monthly Housing Report
- Monthly Ontario Works Report

Sub-committee Discussion: The Director of Social Services provided an overview of the department update, highlighting the following:

- the upcoming December update to be an analysis of variance observed in the final quarter of 2024;
- the November updates indicating numbers remaining consistent;
- a drop in homelessness numbers from 153 to 144;
- staff continuing to mitigate services and identify gaps to change service delivery where necessary;
- a recent report from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) on chronic homelessness identifying more than half of the homeless population having been homeless for over 6 months; and
- staff looking at strategies for rapid rehousing to help these individuals.

Discussion on this matter took place between Sub-committee and staff.

Highlights of the discussion included:

- 23 families experiencing homelessness; and
- A specialized OW Case Worker supporting newcomer case load and working closely with support agencies to help with appropriate services.

A member thanked staff and expressed gratitude for the crucial work being done for the City.

6. Next Sub-committee Meeting

The next Social Services Sub-committee meeting is February 11, 2025, at 4:30 p.m. in the Council Chamber, City Hall.

7. Adjournment

Motion by Councillor Nijjar

Sub-committee Decision: THAT the Social Services Sub-committee meeting adjourn.

Carried

Meeting Start Time: 4:30 P.M.

Meeting End Time: 4:46 P.M.



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: January 14, 2025
To: Social Services Sub-committee
From: Alex Burgess, Manager of Ontario Works
 Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
Report Number: SOC25-001
Attachments: 2024 Ontario Works Business Plan

Title: Ontario Works 2024 Business Plan

Objective: To provide Council with an update regarding the 2024 Ontario Works Business Plan that was submitted to and approved by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services.

Background: Each year, as a condition of receiving Ontario Works funding from the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, service managers are required to submit an Ontario Works business plan that adheres to the guidelines provided by the Province. In this plan, the local office is able to provide further details to the Ministry regarding local labour market information, service levels, caseload information and how the local office plans to meet the requirements and mandate set forth by the Ministry. Previously, business plans were required every two years with addendums or updates being provided in the second year. The current business plan, submitted and approved in 2024, is the first in a new model whereby plans will cover a 4-year period with an addendum due each year thereafter. This current business plan also marked the first year that the Ministry provided a comprehensive template which was to be used by all service managers, as opposed to previous years whereby each individual service manager could determine what to include, and what format to follow.

Analysis: The 2024 Business Plan was comprised of four primary sections:

- 1) Conduct Community Analysis – This section focused on two primary components as the third component was only required by Prototype sites, and the City of Stratford is considered an EST Phase 1 site. The two primary components were a review of key caseload demographics as well as a community needs assessment.
- 2) Review Performance Outcome Targets – This section does not require a written response but rather requires a review of the outcome targets set in the budget document.

- 3) Develop Service Strategies – This section included a risk assessment using a Ministry-provided template. The risk assessment focused on any potential risks or impacts that may hamper the ability of the municipality to achieve the performance outcome targets. The next part of this section was a focused Diversity, Equity and Inclusion strategy. The department worked closely with the DEI Manager to ensure the strategy reflected the corporate direction as well as the uniqueness of the Ontario Works division. The final portion of this section required logic models to be created for the four performance outcomes, focusing on how strategic activities of the team will help achieve the outcomes.
- 4) Manage Program Delivery – This section required a comprehensive review of local program management activities to ensure alignment with expectations and legislative requirements. The two primary written components required an explanation of how the division plans to meet service delivery expectations as well as monitoring activities that ensure legislative compliance with various requirements related to quality assurance and financial expenditures. There were two privacy and risk-related templates that had to be completed, and these were worked on in conjunction with the IT team. The final portion related to analysis of resources was completed as part of the budget submission package.

The business plan and corresponding budget were accepted and approved by the Ministry in March, 2024. The 2025 addendum is due in February and will be submitted with the corresponding 2025 budget. The Ministry anticipates that the contract for 2025 will be executed by early April.

Financial Implications:

Financial impact to current year operating budget:

The Business Plan and corresponding budget are required to be submitted to receive Provincial funding for the Ontario Works program. By receiving approval of the business plan and budget, the municipality received \$1,248,700 in 2024 and is expected to receive \$1,538,700 in 2025.

Financial impact on future year operating budget:

As mentioned in the report, the Business Plan submitted was a 4-year plan with addendums required each year. To continue receiving funding, the business plan was required to be completed and approved, which it was. Each year, the addendum and year-specific budget are required to be submitted and approved so that the municipality can continue to receive Provincial funding.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Build Housing Stability

This report aligns with this priority as funding provided through the Ontario Works program helps vulnerable community members receiving basic financial assistance and other forms of support to ensure they attain housing or remain housed when faced with financial difficulties. The Ontario Works team also operates the Housing Stability Bank

on behalf of the Social Services team, which helps to increase the ability for members of our community to find and retain housing through the provision of one-time financial assistance for items like last month's rent and the payment of rental arrears or utility arrears.

Work Together For Greater Impact

This report aligns with this priority as the Ontario Works program partners with and funds community partners who help to improve the lives of the residents of this community. The local Ontario Works office also utilizes funding received to implement local programs that meet the needs of the community while working to support our clients on their path to self-sufficiency.

Alignment with One Planet Principles:

Health and Happiness

Encouraging active, social, meaningful lives to promote good health and wellbeing.

Equity and Local Economy

Creating safe, equitable places to live and work which support local prosperity and international fair trade.

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "Ontario Works 2024 Business Plan" (SOC25-001), be received for information.

Prepared by: Alex Burgess, Manager of Ontario Works
Recommended by: Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
 Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer

Ontario Works Service Planning Template

2024

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Overview

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) and Social Assistance (SA) delivery sites share the common goal of improving employment results for people relying on social assistance. This service plan template is the tool used for SA delivery sites to document the service planning required activities, including the strategies to achieve performance outcomes.

How to use this template

This template is **used in conjunction with the Main Guidelines Document**, which outlines key information, including required and optional planning activities.

This template is mandatory and is to be completed using the allotted space and uploaded to TPON as part of the service agreement.

Corresponding Guides, Tools, and Templates

Please refer to the following guides/tool if you require assistance:

1. Main Guidelines Document
2. Supplementary Guidelines Document
3. Community Service Inventory Tool (optional)
4. Performance Outcomes Risk Assessment Template
5. Privacy Risk Assessment and Privacy Maturity Self-Reporting Tool

Section 1 – Conduct Community Analysis

In this section, SA delivery sites provide a summary of the community context in which Ontario Works person-centered supports and services and employment assistance is delivered over the four-year service planning period.

1.1 Key Caseload Demographics

Enter a **focused overview of the key findings** from the current demographic composition of the caseload and anticipated changes over the service plan cycle:

Enter a focused overview of key caseload findings (500 words max recommended)

The City of Stratford CMSM has seen a significant caseload increase heading into the 2024 calendar year. The average caseload per year has increased from a total of 652 in 2022 to 682 in 2023, which is a 5% increase in demand for service. If you include temporary care assistance, the total average caseload in 2023 was 737. This increase has brought us back to pre-pandemic caseload levels and based on caseload projections from the Ministry, economic circumstances in our province, and the high cost of living including housing, we anticipate this number to continue to increase over the course of this service plan cycle.

The caseload is mostly represented by single adults without children who, as of December 2023, represented 64% of the caseload. This is consistent with previous years data and shows consistency in the type of client accessing services through the local Ontario Works office. This also poses significant affordability challenges due to Ontario Works rates in correlation with the cost of housing in our community. The rest of the caseload composition remains consistent with 2022 numbers. Sole-support parents represent 32% of the caseload, couples without children represent 1% and couples with children representing the remaining 3%, a 1% decrease from 2022.

The average months on assistance increased from 30 months in 2022 to 31 months in 2023, though that does not reflect the complexity of the current caseload. There continues to be a trend toward women-led households accessing services with 60% of the caseload having a female-identifying gendered head of household. The predominant age range for the head of the family has remained consistent with previous years. 34% of the overall caseload falls in the age range of 25-34 years old, a 2% increase from 2022, and a further 27% of the caseload representing the 35-44 years old range. We anticipate this number to remain fairly consistent over the service plan cycle as historical data indicates this age range has predominantly been the most in-need.

Based on the Caseload at a Glance and observations by the caseworker team, we are experiencing an increase in the Newcomers to Canada demographic accessing services from the Ontario Works office. We have seen an increase of 10 families that have been in Canada less than

10 years over the 2022 numbers, with the majority of those families residing in Canada for less than 3 years. We have assigned a caseworker with expertise in the immigration sector to carry a newcomer caseload as we anticipate this number to continue increasing over the service plan cycle.

To highlight the complexity of the OW caseload locally, a detailed analysis was completed of the local homelessness By-Name list. While this is not a comprehensive review of all clients experiencing housing instability, it paints a clear picture of the depth of need for the local Ontario Works caseload. Of the 140 households on the By-Name list, 63 (45%) identified as being in receipt of Ontario Works. Of those households, 54% were identified as high acuity, 44.4% as mid-acuity and only 1.6% as low acuity. This demonstrates that almost 10% of the local OW caseload is on the local by-name list, and over half of those on the local BNL were identified as needing a high level of support which cannot be sustained with the current caseload levels. We expect this trend to continue throughout the service plan cycle as housing affordability and rising cost of living continues to be a pressing issue for residents of Ontario.

1.2 Service Needs (EST Prototype sites only for 2024)

A **focused assessment of key service needs** (in relation to your caseload) that have linkages to meeting the performance outcomes:

Enter focused assessment of service needs (500 words max recommended)

N/A

1.3 Community Needs Assessment

Use the information from your community needs assessment and parts 1-2 to identify the following as it relates to social assistance:

Strengths: Identify existing strengths and resources

- The local Ontario Works office and Employment Ontario providers have a functional and close working relationship, resulting in a high level of service provided to clients, a seamless transition between programs, and effective ongoing communication.
- The local OW office and the SSM have a strong working relationship.
- The OW office is physically present in our three largest communities on a weekly basis. These areas include the main office in Stratford, a caseworker located in North Perth 4 days per week, co-located with an Employment Ontario office, and a caseworker in St. Marys 1 afternoon per week, located in a service provider's office.
- The City of Stratford CMSM funds multiple programs which address systemic barriers and improve the lives of residents accessing services in this office. In North Perth and St Marys, there are full-time community developers who work closely with all residents of the region to access services, navigate systems, and provide support to those who require it. The City has partnered with Perth County EMS to have a full-time outreach worker working alongside a community paramedic. Furthermore, the City funds a full-time Nurse Practitioner who can support clients accessing Social Services to receive primary care and better address their health needs.
- The City of Stratford CMSM operates an integrated intake service whereby intake staff are trained and knowledgeable of all programs offered within the Department. This means that clients are not obligated to re-tell their story to each service provider and that silos are being removed, ensuring complete wrap-around supports are being provided to shared clients.

Gaps: Determine where there may be gaps in services or required resources

- There is a gap in pre-employment services available to Ontario Works clients who are not yet ready for Employment Ontario services but rather require pre-employment supports with things such as literacy, basic skills, and basic job requirements.
- There is a gap in services for full-time persons who are employed and exiting social assistance. Often, there are not enough programs to address their needs or support them past their time on assistance which can lead them to re-entering the program within one year.

Challenges: Common themes around concerns/challenges that impact SA

- Ontario Works rates continue to provide a significant challenge for the local area. Due to high rental costs, high grocery costs and other impediments to daily living, Ontario Works rates create significant challenges for those in receipt of assistance.
- The lack of housing availability in the Stratford CMSM region is significant. There is very little housing stock available and of the housing stock that is available, the cost often far exceeds what a single adult on Ontario Works can afford, which we know from the data comprises the majority of applicants. Safe and suitable housing continues to be a major challenge and is a crucial component for bridging the gap between Ontario Works and independent living.
- Transportation from rural areas continues to pose a major challenge. While Perth County has implemented the PC Connect program, there are still communities which it does not serve, or times of the day/shift start times that the PC Connect program simply cannot support. The ability to reliably travel to and from a place of employment is crucial for long-term success.
- Food security is an ongoing challenge for the clients in this region. The local office is exploring partnerships within the community to try and improve food security but in the end, the ongoing challenge of inadequate food security for large portion of OW clients continues to pose a significant challenge.

Opportunities: Current or upcoming opportunities that can be leveraged by SA

- The SSM is planning to roll out two initiatives which will help address the gaps and challenges identified. In April, 2024, the SSM is implementing a pre-employment workshop aimed at addressing initial barriers to employment and upskilling for those not yet ready for employment related activities, and they are utilizing more digital options for Stream A and Stream B job-seekers to allow for EO to spend more time supporting Stream C clients.

Section 2 – Review Performance Outcome Targets

Enter the ministry prescribed targets in the “Outcome” section in the budget submission in TPON.

Section 3 – Develop Service Strategies

This section establishes the contracted expectations of all SA delivery sites and connects the first two planning components (i.e., community analysis and performance outcome targets).

3.1 Risk Assessment

Complete the risk assessment using the **Performance Outcomes Risk Assessment template**. For more information refer to the Main Guidelines document

3.2 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

Part A: Articulate specific tactics that will consider the needs of equity seeking groups from the initial service planning stages through to delivery.

Enter the local equity, diversity, and inclusion strategy here (500 words max recommended)

- Making appropriate referrals based on identified needs.
- Removing internal barriers such as biases in policies, procedures, and practices.
- Implementing comprehensive training programs to raise awareness and address unconscious biases.
- Understanding diverse community needs and ensuring services are accessible and responsive to those needs.
- Tailoring services to address barriers faced by marginalized or underrepresented groups.
- Incorporating diversity considerations into service planning to ensure equitable outcomes.
- Engaging service providers from diverse backgrounds to gather input and perspectives may lead to the identification of specific service needs that address the unique challenges faced by different communities.

Approach to Developing the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy:

- **Leveraging Community Partnerships:** Collaborate with community partners and utilize community assets to co-create training programs and establish safer spaces where individuals feel comfortable.
- **Building Trust and Community:** Focus on building trust and fostering a sense of community among partners, key agencies, and leaders. This involves open communication, active listening, and creating inclusive environments where diverse voices are valued and heard.
- **Incorporating Training Initiatives:** Implement comprehensive training initiatives that address issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion. These initiatives should aim to raise awareness, challenge biases, and promote understanding of SA-related issues within the community.
- **Engaging partners from diverse backgrounds:** By involving individuals with various perspectives and experiences, we ensure that the services developed are inclusive and address the needs of all community members.
- **Collaborating with community organizations and advocacy groups:** Partnering with these entities allows us to tap into their expertise and insights, ensuring that the services are informed by the real-world experiences and challenges faced by the community.
- **Incorporating equity, diversity, and inclusion principles:** By embedding these principles into organizational policies and practices, we ensure that our services are designed and delivered in a manner that promotes fairness, inclusivity, and respect for all individuals, regardless of their background or identity.

Identifying barriers for specific groups, such as newcomers and Indigenous communities, is crucial for developing effective strategies to address them. Here are some common barriers identified for each group and potential approaches to address them:

1. Newcomers:

- Language and cultural barriers: Newcomers may face challenges due to language proficiency and cultural differences, which can hinder their integration into society and access to resources.
- Employment and economic barriers: Newcomers may struggle to find employment opportunities that match their skills and qualifications, leading to financial instability.
- Social isolation: Lack of social networks and support systems can contribute to feelings of isolation and disconnection from the community.
- *Approaches to address barriers for newcomers:*
 - a. Providing language and cultural orientation programs to facilitate integration.
 - b. Offering employment assistance and skills training programs tailored to the needs of newcomers.
 - c. Establishing community support networks and mentorship programs to foster social connections and provide guidance.

1. Indigenous Communities:

- Historical and systemic marginalization: Indigenous communities often face long-standing inequalities resulting from historical injustices and ongoing systemic discrimination.
- Socioeconomic disparities: Indigenous populations may experience higher rates of poverty, unemployment, and inadequate access to essential services such as healthcare and education.
- Cultural preservation and identity: Indigenous communities may struggle to maintain their cultural traditions and practices in the face of external pressures and assimilation efforts.
- *Approaches to address barriers for Indigenous communities:*
 - a. Engaging in meaningful consultation and collaboration with Indigenous leaders and communities to ensure their voices are heard and their needs are prioritized.
 - b. Implementing policies and programs aimed at addressing socioeconomic disparities and improving access to essential services in Indigenous communities.
 - c. Supporting initiatives that promote cultural revitalization and language preservation within Indigenous communities.

Building trust and relationships with community leaders is essential for effectively addressing these barriers. By establishing strong partnerships based on mutual respect and understanding, organizations can better identify needs, develop culturally appropriate solutions, and ensure that marginalized groups are actively involved in the decision-making process.

Part B: Complete the French Language Services strategy using the ministry provided templates. For more information refer to the Main Guidelines document.

3.3 Logic Model

A logic model maps the linkages between services delivered and performance outcomes. It is a tool to support how service strategies will help to achieve targets and is included as part of the Service Planning template.

Complete one logic model for each of the 4 performance outcomes. For 2024, only complete the “Highest Risk(s) Mitigation” section for only the two identified outcomes. Add or remove rows, as needed. Refer to Main Guidelines Document, Appendix # for completed example.

Definitions:

- a. **Inputs:** Describe the organizational, community and/or external inputs within your organization used to coordinate services to meet the stated performance outcome (e.g., staffing, internal processes, training, relationship with community organizations, gaps in services, etc.).
- b. **High Risk:** Identify the highest risks as indicated in the Performance Outcomes Risk Assessment Template. Note for 2024, this will only be applicable to 2 performance outcomes and will be indicated on the applicable logic model templates.
- c. **Activities:** Operational and strategic activities (e.g., processes, tools, events, actions, etc.) that will be carried out as part of the strategy (e.g., staff training, recruitment, staff supports, community relationships, retention strategies, workshops, etc.).
- d. **Expected outputs linked to outcome:** What are your expected results given the planned activities and what changes do you expect to realize?

Performance Outcome 1: Ontario Works adult and ODSP non-disabled adults with participation requirements have an Action Plan		
Inputs (e.g., organization, community, external)	Operational and Strategic Activities	Expected Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staffing and Staff Training 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Work to achieve staff stability and low turnover of Ontario Works caseworkers, creating consistency for clients in receipt of OW. Continue to engage staff in comprehensive training related to supporting participants in all aspects of life stability. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize resources such as OMSSA and Continuing Education initiatives through post-secondary institutions. Utilize monthly caseworker meetings to share knowledge, review best practices and create consistency in processes used across the office. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased number of action plans completed within 30 days. Increased number of referrals to EO. Increased number of referrals to community partners.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear processes for completion of Action Plan 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Clear, concise, written processes regarding what is to be captured within an action plan. Creation of an Action Plan guide to ensure consistency across the office. Regular file review of action plans to ensure deferrals are appropriate, referrals to EO are being made and referrals to community partners are being made. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community resources available to clients 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Regular staff training regarding resources available in the community to ensure they are able to better inform clients about what is available. Continue to have community partners attend the Stratford OW office to provide services and ensure continuity of care for OW clients. Advocate with community partners to ensure services are applicable to the caseload demographics and individuals requiring support in our community. 	
<p>Highest Risk(s) from Risk Assessment Template (applicable to the two in the risk assessment only): Two Risks were tied at 9 (Medium) as the highest risk:</p> <p>1.2 – SA staff and clients are not aligned with the goals/support services that will support the client towards employment readiness. 1.3 – Action plan discussion (i.e. goals/support services) is not easily understood by clients.</p>		

Performance Outcome 2: Ontario Works adult and ODSP non-disabled adults with participation requirements are referred to EO		
Inputs (e.g., organization, community, external)	Operational and Strategic Activities	Expected Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staffing and Staff training 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Staff are aware of EO partners, the programs they offer and the staff working in the EO locations. Staff are trained on when to refer to EO, when to defer from participation and when to refer to community partners. Employment readiness is clearly defined and explained to staff. Clear processes regarding appropriate deferrals and reasons to not refer to EO. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased number of referrals to EO. Low volume of returned referrals. Increased level of partnership between OW and EO.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear referral pathways 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Work with local SSM and EO partners to ensure strong referral pathways are present. Continue to have EO on site at the local Ontario Works office for seamless in-person referrals. Regular reporting and status updates between EO and OW for shared clients. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training for staff regarding the role of Employment Ontario 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Clear and consistent training from Employment Ontario and the Service System Manager on the role of EO in Integrated Employment Service Delivery. Consistent messaging from management to caseworkers regarding the role of EO and referral pathways. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong relationship with local SSM 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Regular participation in SSM meetings to ensure the objectives and needs of OW are identified and acted upon. Regular communication with the SSM regarding opportunities and challenges facing OW staff. 	
<p>Highest Risk(s) from Risk Assessment Template (applicable to the two in the risk assessment only): The highest risk was 16 (Medium-High) for: 2.3 - Client's barriers/needs have not been addressed prior to referral to Employment Ontario.</p>		

**Performance Outcome 3:
Ontario Works cases exit to employment**

Inputs (e.g., organization, community, external)	Operational and Strategic Activities	Expected Outputs
- Staff Training	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff are trained on how to capture accurate reason for exiting assistance. 2. Regular review of caseload exit reports to ensure accurate reporting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurate number of exits to employment are being captured. • Increased number of exits to employment.
- Resources available to clients who exit are clearly communicated	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff are knowledgeable of EHB, EEHB and other resources available through OW when exiting assistance. 2. Staff are aware of community resources that client may be able to access once no longer on assistance. 3. Resources are clearly articulated to clients when they are exiting assistance. 	
<p>Highest Risk(s) from Risk Assessment Template</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Do not complete for this performance outcome for 2024</u> 		

**Performance Outcome 4:
Ontario Works cases do not return to the program within one year**

Inputs (e.g., organization, community, external)	Operational and Strategic Activities	Expected Outputs
• Staff Training	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff are aware of resources available to clients who exit assistance, and these benefits are clearly communicated to ensure they are aware of extended health benefits and supports available within the community. 2. Staff are aware of the employment resources available in the community and how to match clients to the appropriate resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower percentage of OW cases who return within one year. • Increased awareness by clients of community resources.
• Action Plans promote client self-sufficiency	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff create action plans in conjunction with the client that reflect a path to self-sufficiency, not just the quickest path off of Ontario Works. 2. Sustainable employment is discussed from the moment someone applies for assistance. 	

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Referrals to EO are made promptly and OW staff ensure the action plan reflects the work being completed in the Employment Action Plan. 4. Financial benefits are provided in a timely manner to support clients who are transitioning into employment to ensure there are limited barriers to full-time, sustainable employment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased number of clients receiving EHB or EEHB.
<p>Highest Risk(s) from Risk Assessment Template</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Do not complete for this performance outcome for 2024</u> 		

Section 4 – Manage Program Delivery

In this section, SA delivery sites will identify key program management activities to ensure the program supports program integrity and is delivered in accordance with legislative and policy requirements.

4.1 Service Delivery Expectations

Develop an outline of how service delivery expectations will be managed to ensure the program is delivered in accordance with legislative and policy requirements and that financial assistance expenditures are accurate and meet ministry expectations (refer to Main Guidelines Document)

Enter outline for each area of focus below (suggest 250 words max recommended per area)

Essential information reviewed and verified by 3rd party checks prior to transferring to ODSP (within the last 12 months)

The local OW office has been working very closely with the Stratford ODSP office to refine the file transfer process and ensure all required steps are completed prior to the file being transferred. The ODSP office has reviewed the process, provided feedback, and worked alongside the OW team to ensure that all necessary information is captured within the transfer process, that the necessary third-party checks are documented, and that the files are ready for processing by the PSU. The local OW office continues to update and inform caseworkers on the process, utilizing the shared document to create local processes which ensure all required information is reviewed and third-party checks are completed prior to a file being transferred to ODSP.

24-month Reassessment (including Third Party Checks) on all OW cases

Ontario Works caseworkers utilize spreadsheets and tasks in SAMS to monitor when a 24-month reassessment is required on their files. Staff utilize these spreadsheets and tasks to determine when to schedule appointments with their clients who require 24-month reviews, and to monitor any files that may be out-of-date. The local OW team reviews the legislation regularly to ensure the local process matches what is required by legislation when completing a 24-month review. Furthermore, the OW management team completes monthly file reviews and regularly checks the status of 24-month reviews, utilizing a standardized template, during these monthly file reviews.

Timely follow up on deferrals from participation in employment related activities

The local office will focus on completing action plans within the allotted review period, ensuring all deferrals are up-to-date and are based on the most recent medical or circumstantial information that is provided by the client. Staff will utilize the common assessment tool (CAT) and the responses to the CAT to inform deferrals that may be in place, as well as to assess progress toward completion of goals related to mental health and wellness or overall job readiness through CAT checkpoints. All OW caseworkers utilize a spreadsheet outside of SAMS or tasks within SAMS to monitor when deferrals expire, ensuring there are timely follow-ups for all deferrals and that they are updated promptly before or after they end. The local office recently reviewed deferral reasons and the team works hard to ensure that deferrals are only input for appropriate reasons. Where possible, staff will make voluntary referrals for clients who are deferred to ensure they are able to participate in some form of employment activities, employment readiness activities or are supported with referrals to community agencies that better prepare them for employment once the deferral ends.

EVP is assigned and completed in established timeframes

The local office has a well thought out process in place and has dedicated 1.5 FTE to the EVP process. One staff member is a full-time EVP worker and the local ERO supports EVP activities each cycle. The management team regularly reviews the results of the EVP cycle to ensure timelines are being met and that comprehensive work is being completed during the EVP process. The local office utilizes communication from both the caseworker and the EVP worker to reinforce the importance of attending EVP appointments, submitting necessary information and responding to inquiries related to the EVP process. If clients fail to respond, the local office will suspend and/or terminate files, where applicable, for failing to respond to EVP inquiries. The local office has met all timelines related to file assignment and achieved a total of 91% of all files reviewed in 2023 within the allotted timeframe.

Application of up to 10% recovery rate for all overpayments

The Ontario Works team regularly monitors the OP Recovery Rate report to ensure that the office is meeting Provincial expectations. Currently, the Stratford office is above the Provincial average with respect to the number of files at a 10% recovery rate. Caseworkers and EVP staff have been trained and are aware of the reasons for setting a file to a 10% recovery rate and this will continue to be reiterated at team meetings. Furthermore, the OW management team completes monthly file reviews and regularly checks for overpayments, the reason for the overpayment and the recovery rate that has been determined to ensure it aligns with the Provincial direction.

Financial assistance expenditures (subsidy claims submissions) are accurate and meet ministry expectations (list all Ontario Works benefits managed outside of SAMS and identify supporting documentation that will be provided with adjustments to subsidy claims and describe business practices for Ontario Works benefits managed outside of SAMS)

The Stratford Ontario Works office has put a thorough review process in place to ensure the accuracy of subsidy claims that are submitted each month. The claim is first prepared by a member of the finance team, adhering to Ministry expectations. Once this is complete, the subsidy claim is then forwarded to the Business Integration Manager who conducts a thorough review of the work and ensures the accuracy of the report. Finally, the subsidy claim is forwarded to the OW Manager for review and submission. There is also ongoing reconciliation done throughout the year, utilizing actuals from Corporate Services and ensuring that these numbers balance with the subsidy claims that are submitted. If there is a variance discovered at any point which relates to a previous subsidy claim that was submitted, it is promptly reported to the Ministry, with applicable back-ups, and future subsidy claims are adjusted to reflect this change.

4.2 Analysis of Resources

Conduct an analysis of resources using the **Supplementary Reporting Tool**. For more information refer to the Main Guidelines document.

4.3 Monitoring Activities

Demonstrate how SA delivery sites will be prepared to support the monitoring activities by documenting its approach to readiness from combination of resource, awareness and understanding perspectives.

For example, the SA Delivery sites will be ready to support by reviewing and becoming familiar with all relevant materials provided by the ministry to understand the monitoring activities and OW's roles and responsibilities.

Enter the approach for monitoring here (suggested 250 words max recommended per area)
Overall Readiness (i.e., how your site will be ready to continuously support the monitoring activities)
The Stratford Ontario Works Division reviews all Ministry communications promptly after they are received, participates in all applicable training sessions and engages staff in training opportunities, when required, to support new initiatives. The local OW office will continue to utilize this approach and will stay in regular communication with the local office's Program Supervisor to ensure that the Division is meeting Ministry expectations and is prepared for any and all initiatives that are put forth.
Submission of actual expenditures (i.e., how to ensure your site will be able to submit the actual expenditures in a timely manner and engage in discussion when varied from budget)
The City of Stratford will continue to leverage the current staff complement to report actual expenditures when they are due, analyze variances in a timely manner and provide comprehensive responses to the Ministry when there are questions raised. Currently, the Social Services Department utilizes a Business Integration Manager to oversee financial reporting for the Department as a whole and to manage the submission of expenditures punctually. We will continue to utilize this approach while engaging Corporate Services as necessary to ensure deadlines are met and questions are answered in a timely manner.
Submission of outcomes achieved (i.e., how to ensure your site will be able to submit the actuals in a timely manner and engage in discussions on outcome performance)
The City of Stratford Ontario Works Division closely monitors performance metrics by utilizing the performance reports and PowerBI Dashboards that the Ministry makes available. Keeping a close eye on the progress that the Division is making toward those metrics, it will allow us to report on our performance outcomes. Similarly, by regularly reviewing the data, we are able to identify trends and issues that may arise that impact the targeted outcomes for each metric. Through this continuous monitoring, we will be able to quickly respond to questions related to our performance outcomes and engage in regular conversations related to the Ministry targets.
Performance reports (i.e., how to ensure your site will be ready to leverage ministry provided reports in monitoring outcomes and key program delivery expectations)
The Ontario Works staff utilize all reports available to inform and enhance program delivery. Staff and management access the COGNOS reports on a regular basis, review the applicable reports and make suggestions for program delivery based on the reports. Management regularly review the Social Assistance Operations Performance Reports to monitor the effectiveness of the Division and the ability of the Division to provide service to clients. The team also reviews information tracked via the Power BI dashboards on a regular basis to ensure the program is meeting the targets set forth

by the Ministry. We will continue to leverage the existing reporting mechanisms and continue to find ways to improve the use of this data in informing program delivery and effectiveness.

Quality Assurance (QA) reviews (i.e., how to ensure your site will be ready to leverage the results from the ministry performed QA reviews to determine possible course corrections, related monitoring and need for service plan amendments)

The local Ontario Works office will readily accept feedback on any course corrections that are required as a result of QA reviews. The office will maintain regular communication with the local Program Supervisor and will respond promptly to Ministry communications, ensuring they are thoroughly reviewed, understood, and implemented within the required timeframe. If there is monitoring required, the local management team will undertake thorough and comprehensive reviews of the monitoring initiative, assign appropriate staff (where applicable) in a timely manner and make necessary amendments to service delivery, as required, to meet the requirements set forth in the QA reviews.

Risk Mitigation Testing (i.e., how to ensure your site will be ready to use ministry provided testing scripts to carry out testing of mitigation for the highest risks impacting performance outcomes as well as how the results of the testing will be used by your site)

The Stratford Ontario Works office will implement risk mitigation strategies provided by the Ministry promptly and efficiently to ensure that the highest risks impacting performance are monitored effectively. Staff will be trained immediately after receiving testing scripts and the local office will involve all necessary parties promptly to ensure there is no lag between receipt of testing script and implementation. Results will be monitored closely and strategies will be developed by the team to address risks impacting performance outcomes. The team will utilize all the learnings and results from testing scripts to inform program design and service delivery, with an aim to mitigate risks impacting performance outcomes.

4.4 Privacy

Conduct a Privacy Risk Assessment using the **Privacy Risk Assessment Template and Privacy Maturity Self-Reporting Tool**. Instructions are included within the document, but for more information refer to the Supplementary Guidelines.



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: January 14, 2025
To: Social Services Sub-committee
From: Alex Burgess, Manager of Ontario Works
 John Ritz, Homelessness and Housing Stability Supervisor
 Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
Report Number: SOC25-002
Attachments: None

Title: CMHA Outreach Worker Service Agreement

Objective: To consider approval to enter into an updated three-year agreement with the Canadian Mental Health Association Huron Perth Addictions and Mental Health Services to provide housing-based case management services across Stratford, St Marys, and Perth County.

Background: The City of Stratford has partnered for several years with the Canadian Mental Health Association Huron-Perth Addictions and Mental Health Services (herein referred to as CMHA HP), formerly known as Choices for Change, for the delivery of housing-based case management services. CMHA HP was a founding partner of the Home For Good funded Supported Housing of Perth Program (SHOPP), now known as the Intensive Case Management program (ICM), and currently operate the North Perth Fixed Site portion of the program. CMHA HP has also worked with the City of Stratford on other contracts, including the street-focused outreach program which ended on September 30, 2024, and the currently operating Ontario Works Service Agreement which provides support and case management specific to OW clients.

The new agreement combines elements of three agreements mentioned above, focussing on the services delivered through the scattered site case management portion of the ICM program and case management services at the Connections Centre.

Analysis: The updated agreement focuses on services that improve housing stability for our most vulnerable community members as well as services for those actively experiencing homelessness who attend the Connection Centre in Stratford.

The initial component of the agreement is related to the scattered site component of the Intensive Case Management program. The agreement provides \$150,000 for two

FTE case managers who will carry caseloads comprised of the individuals facing the most complex barriers in our community, with the caseload ranging between 12 and 15 participants. The services offered begin when the individual is experiencing homelessness and continue after they are housed, ensuring an appropriate level of housing stability is achieved before the individual is discharged from the program. The caseloads at CMHA will, where possible, be targeted to individuals who identify mental health or addictions challenges to acquiring or maintaining their housing. Intake for the program will be provided by the City of Stratford Social Services Department, utilizing the local by-name list as well as other factors such as interactions with emergency services and interactions with local service providers. The City of Stratford will maintain oversight over the program by completing regular file reviews and data will be submitted to the Social Services Department on a yearly basis, allowing for evaluation and review of the services being provided. This portion of the agreement will be funded through the Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) funding received from the Government of Ontario.

The secondary component of the agreement focuses on case management services being provided through the Connections Centre as well as housing stability services at the Perth and Stratford Housing Corporation. A further \$60,940.50 will be provided for another FTE case manager to not only support community members who engage with services at the Stratford Connections Centre but also for residents of the PSHC where housing stability concerns have been identified. The services provided through this agreement will be housing-focused in nature, with expectations that document readiness, housing applications, housing searches and community-based referrals are completed alongside the provision of basic needs at the Connections Centre. Due to a high prevalence of social assistance clients on the by-name list, and accessing services defined in this agreement, the Ontario Works program will be funding this portion of the agreement. The funding will be provided through the 100% Provincial Funding component of the OW budget. This agreement will replace the current Ontario Works Service Agreement and any impact to clients will be monitored closely, with the ability to modify the agreement in the future, if required.

Due to their unique and exclusive capabilities, CMHA HP has been sole sourced for this agreement in accordance with the requirements set forth in Section 37 of Policy P.5.1 "Purchasing and Materials Management" and approved by the Manager of Financial Services as well as the Director of Social Services.

The program outcomes have been more clearly defined, as have expectations and activities that should be completed during the term of this agreement. The program is fully funded through Government of Ontario funding, so there is no anticipated impact on the tax levy currently.

The agreement is funded by the Government of Ontario through two separate funding envelopes, one from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) and the other from the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS).

The total cost of this agreement for 2025 is expected to be \$210,940.50 for three FTE caseworkers, funded as follows:

- \$150,000 from the Homelessness Prevention Program (MMAH)
- \$60,940.50 from the Ontario Works 100% Provincial funding (MCCSS)

In relation to Ontario Works, this is a \$20,940.50 increase over the current agreement as the current Ontario Works Service Agreement pays CMHA \$40,000 per year, which will be cancelled because of the updates to the program.

Financial Implications:

Financial impact to current year operating budget:

There is no anticipated impact on the municipal tax levy currently.

Financial impact on future year operating budget:

The Outreach Worker Service Agreement will be in place for three years, subject to no concerns related to finances or performance. The anticipated cost for 2026 and 2027 is \$210,940.50 per year. The total cost of the three-year agreement is \$632,821.50.

The program will be funded through the Homelessness Prevention Program and the Ontario Works program. There is a 90-day exit clause built into the agreement, in case of any financial or performance-related concerns, and the agreement can only continue if the funding from HPP and OW continues to be provided and is included in the municipal budget.

There is no anticipated impact on the municipal tax levy in future years because of this program.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Build Housing Stability

This report aligns with this priority as the sole focus of the program is providing support with the attainment and maintenance of housing. The program focuses not only on housing stability but also on the supporting clients with accessing safe, affordable, and permanent housing in the community.

Work Together For Greater Impact

This report aligns with this priority as the program continues to enhance partnerships within the community and build upon long-standing relationships that provide support and benefit to clients within the service manager area.

Alignment with One Planet Principles:

Health and Happiness

Encouraging active, social, meaningful lives to promote good health and wellbeing.

Equity and Local Economy

Creating safe, equitable places to live and work which support local prosperity and international fair trade.

Culture and Community

Nurturing local identity and heritage, empowering communities, and promoting a culture of sustainable living.

Staff Recommendation: THAT the Corporation of the City of Stratford enter into a three-year agreement with the Canadian Mental Health Association Huron Perth Addictions and Mental Health Services for the provision of services defined in the Outreach Worker Service Agreement;

THAT the Mayor and Clerk, or their respective delegates, be authorized to sign the Outreach Worker Service Agreement with the Canadian Mental Health Association Huron Perth Addictions and Mental Health Services;

AND THAT the Director of Social Services be authorized to approve any contract amendments, subject to no changes to the financial considerations or identified performance concerns, for the duration of the contract and subject to providing the City Clerk with any approved contract amendments.

Prepared by:

Alex Burgess, Manager of Ontario Works
John Ritz, Homelessness and Housing Stability Supervisor

Recommended by:

Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: January 14, 2025
To: Social Services Sub-committee
From: Alex Burgess, Manager of Ontario Works
 John Ritz, Homelessness and Housing Stability Supervisor
 Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
Report Number: SOC25-003
Attachments: None

Title: Optimism Place Outreach Worker Service Agreement

Objective: To consider approval to enter into an updated 3-year agreement with Optimism Place, Women's Shelter, and Support Services to provide housing-based case management services across Stratford, St Marys, and Perth County.

Background: The City of Stratford has partnered with the Optimism Place, Women's Shelter, and Support Services (herein referred to as Optimism place) for the delivery of housing-based case management services since 2018. Optimism Place was a founding partner of the Home For Good funded Supported Housing of Perth Program (SHOPP), now known as the Intensive Case Management program (ICM), and has been an active partner during this time. Optimism Place provides essential services to members of the community, including both on-site services for women accessing shelter as well as outreach services for women living in community. They are a leading expert in the community on intimate partner violence and continue to support agencies and clients alike with education, support, and services that better the lives of women living in Perth County.

Analysis: The updated agreement replaces an agreement of the same name, signed in 2023 after the SHOPP program concluded and was replaced with the ICM program. The agreement is updated with more measurable outcomes, clearer program delivery expectations, updated program activities and the addition of discretionary program funding. The updated agreement will take effect January 1, 2025, and run until December 31, 2027. There are termination clauses built into the agreement and the agreement will be subject to regular review to ensure financial responsibility and program delivery expectations are being met.

The agreement is related to the scattered site component of the Intensive Case Management program. The agreement provides \$75,000 for one FTE case manager who will carry a caseload comprised of the individuals facing the most complex barriers in our community, with the caseload ranging between 12 and 15 participants. The services offered begin when the individual is experiencing homelessness and continue after they are housed, ensuring an appropriate level of housing stability is achieved before the individual is discharged from the program. The caseloads at Optimism Place will be targeted to individuals who identify an experience of intimate partner violence as a challenge to acquiring or maintaining their housing where possible.

Intake for the program will be provided by the City of Stratford Social Services Department, utilizing the local by-name list as well as other factors such as interactions with emergency services and interactions with local service providers. The City of Stratford will maintain oversight over the program by completing regular file reviews and data will be submitted to the Social Services Department on a yearly basis, allowing for evaluation and review of the services being provided.

Within this updated agreement, a further \$5000 is being provided that was not part of the initial agreement. These funds are detailed as discretionary program funding and will be utilized to support housing stability and housing attainment challenges that cannot be addressed through the existing programs in the community. The funds will be tracked on a case-by-case basis with details being provided around what was obtained using these funds, helping to better inform program development and changes that may need to be made to the Housing Stability Bank program operated by Social Services.

Due to their unique and exclusive capabilities, Optimism Place has been sole sourced for this agreement in accordance with the requirements set forth in Section 37 of Policy P.5.1 "Purchasing and Materials Management" and approved by the Manager of Financial Services as well as the Director of Social Services.

This agreement will be funded through the Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) funding received from the Government of Ontario.

Financial Implications:

Financial impact to current year operating budget:

This program is funded through the Government of Ontario Homelessness Prevention Program with an impact of \$23,750 in 2025, included in the 2025 Draft budget. Payment was made to Optimism Place through the existing agreement on October 1, 2024, and covered the period of October 1, 2024, until September 30, 2025. The remaining \$23,750 represents payment for the final quarter of the year, October 1, 2025, until December 31, 2025, and the \$5,000 discretionary program funding.

Financial impact on future year operating budget:

The Outreach Worker Service Agreement is for three years, subject to no concerns related to finances or performance. The anticipated cost for 2026 and 2027 is \$80,000 per year. The total cost of the agreement, from 2025 until 2027, is \$183,750.

The program is funded through the Homelessness Prevention Program. There is a 90-day exit clause built into the agreement, in case of any financial or performance-related concerns, and the agreement can only continue if the funding from HPP continues and is included in the municipal budget.

There is no anticipated impact on the municipal tax levy in future years because of this program.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Build Housing Stability

This report aligns with this priority as the sole focus of the program is providing support with the attainment and maintenance of housing. The program focuses not only on housing stability but also on the supporting clients with accessing safe, affordable, and permanent housing in the community.

Work Together For Greater Impact

This report aligns with this priority as the program continues to enhance partnerships within the community and build upon long-standing relationships that provide support and benefit to clients within the service manager area.

Alignment with One Planet Principles:

Health and Happiness

Encouraging active, social, meaningful lives to promote good health and wellbeing.

Equity and Local Economy

Creating safe, equitable places to live and work which support local prosperity and international fair trade.

Culture and Community

Nurturing local identity and heritage, empowering communities, and promoting a culture of sustainable living.

Staff Recommendation: THAT Council authorize The Corporation of the City of Stratford to enter into an agreement with Optimism Place, Women’s Shelter, and Support Services for the provision of services defined in the Outreach Worker Service Agreement;

THAT the Mayor and Clerk, or their respective delegates, be authorized to sign the Outreach Worker Service Agreement with Optimism Place, Women’s Shelter, and Support Services;

AND THAT the Director of Social Services be authorized to approve any contract amendments, subject to no changes to the financial considerations or identified performance concerns, for the duration of the contract and subject to a copy of any approved amended contract being provided to the City Clerk.

Prepared by: Alex Burgess, Manager of Ontario Works
John Ritz, Homelessness and Housing Stability Supervisor

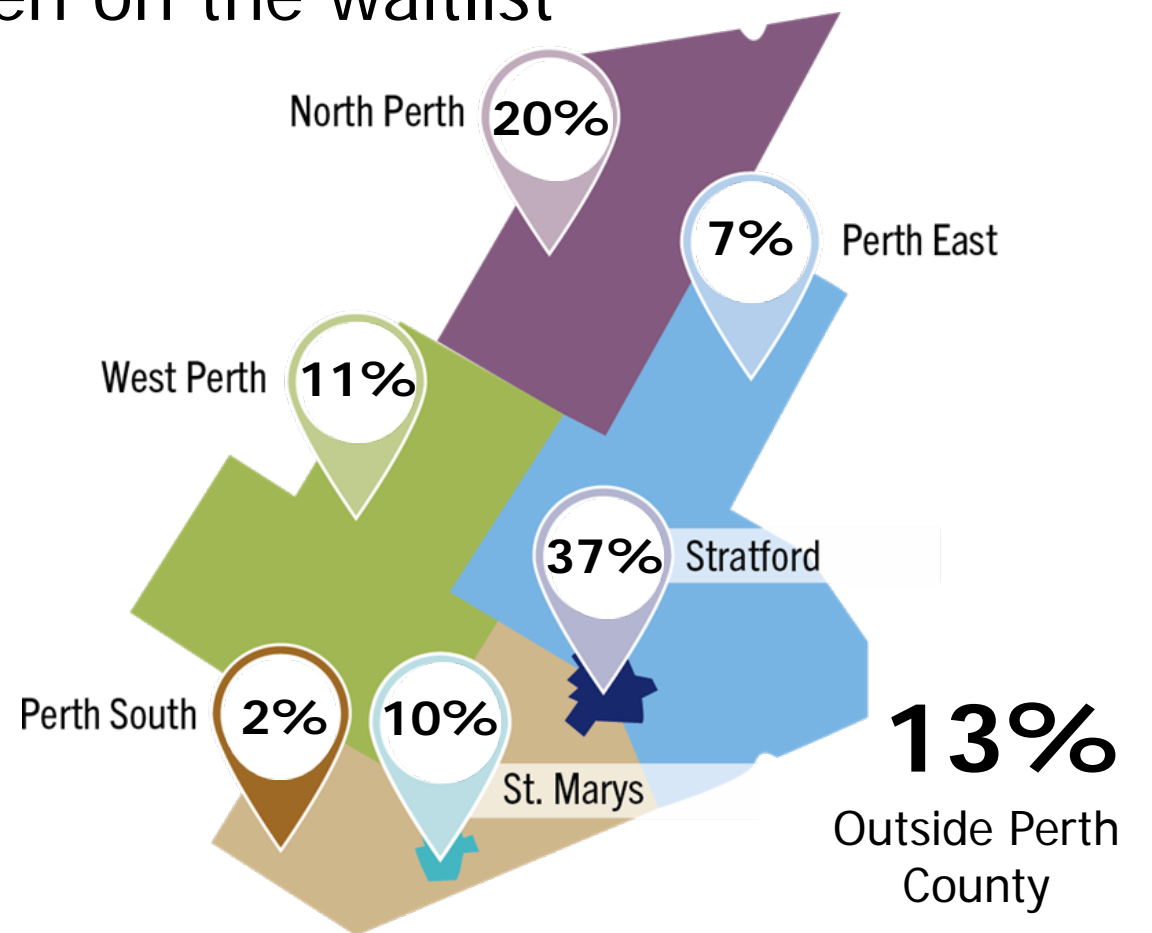
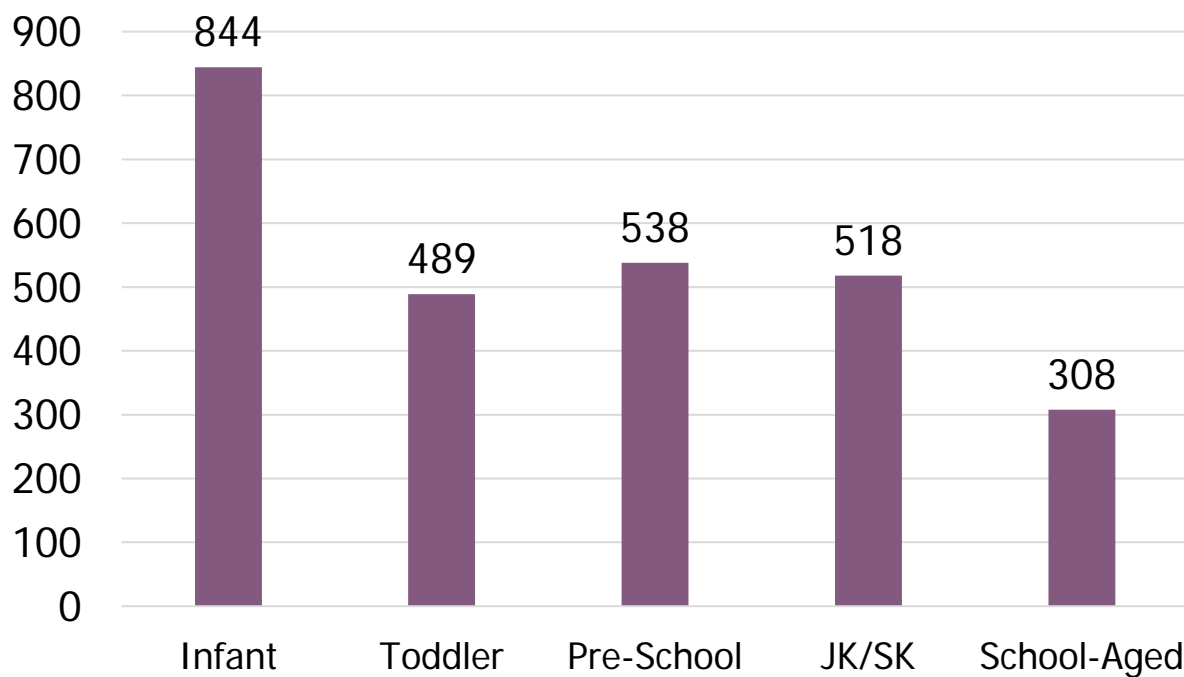
Recommended by: Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer

SOCIAL SERVICES MONTHLY CHILDREN'S SERVICES REPORT

Stratford, Perth County, & St. Marys

2697 Total number of Children on the waitlist

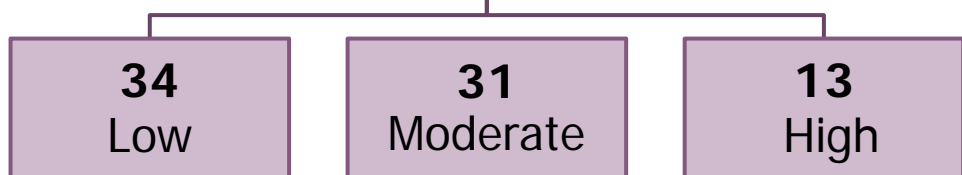
Age Category on the waitlist



Resource Consulting

78 Total Children supported by the Program

Level of Support



EarlyON

614 Unique children (0-6 years) served

467 Unique Parents/Caregivers served

1703 Visits by children (0-6 years)

1318 Visits by Parents/Caregivers



Information Bulletin

The Children's Services Division is the manager for child care in Stratford, St. Marys and Perth County. In partnership with the community, the Children's Services Division promotes fair and equal access to high quality care for children, and support to their families and caregivers.

Children's services are planned, managed, and provided in ways that promote early learning and development, and that respond to family needs and choices. We believe that integrated child care planning ensures public value and benefit to all.

For more information about Children's Services and supports please visit: <https://www.stratford.ca/en/inside-city-hall/childcare.aspx>



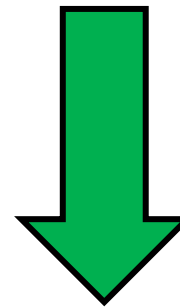
SOCIAL SERVICES MONTHLY HOMELESSNESS REPORT

Stratford, Perth County, & St. Marys



144

Total number of households experiencing homelessness



This is a decrease from October 2024, when there were **153** households experiencing homelessness



7

New households entering into homelessness



1

Households returned to service area or reconnected with services



1

Households who lost their housing



7

Households who became housed



11

Households who left the service area or had no contact with service provider

Population Specific Information

106 Single Adults

15 Youth (16-24)

23 Families

129 Chronic

30 Unsheltered

20 Identify as Indigenous

Information Bulletin

A variety of different factors can contribute to an individual's experience of homelessness. Often, people experience homelessness when all other options have been exhausted, and/or they are dealing with circumstances that make it difficult to maintain housing. Some of the obstacles that may lead people to their experiences of homelessness include:

- Eviction
- The affordable housing crisis
- Coping with mental illnesses or addictions, which makes it difficult to maintain independent housing

For more information about housing and homelessness services and supports please visit: <https://www.stratford.ca/en/inside-city-hall/Homelessness.aspx>



SOCIAL SERVICES MONTHLY SOCIAL HOUSING REPORT

Stratford, Perth County, & St. Marys

598 Total number of Households on the waitlist

Unit Size

1 Bedroom	62%
2 Bedroom	14%
3 Bedroom	12%
4+ Bedroom	12%

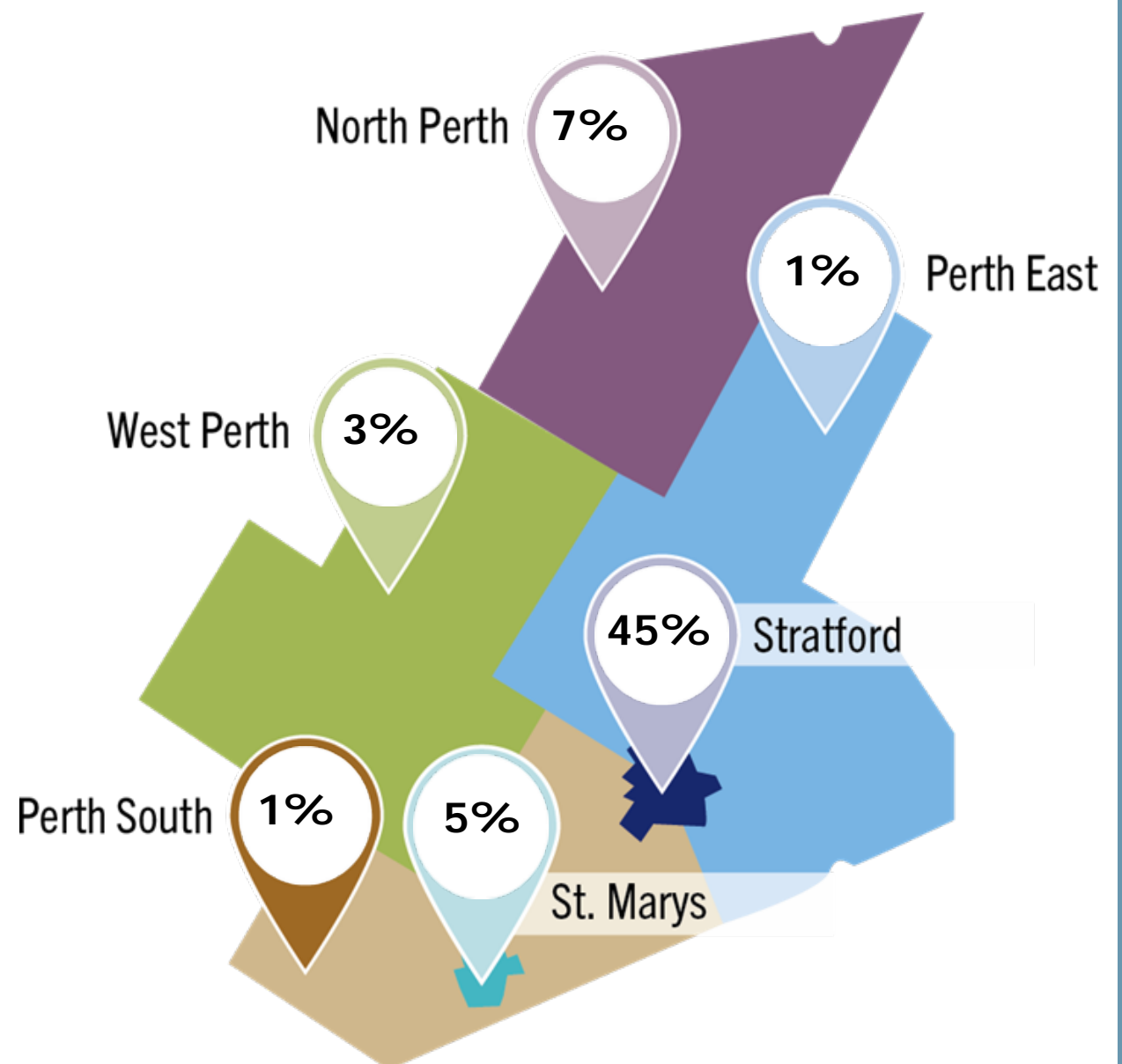
Applicant Type

Single/Couple	54%
Family	36%
Senior	10%

Priority Status

Chronological Order	85%
Homeless	9%
Special Provincial Priority (SPP)*	6%

*SPP: Survivor of domestic abuse or trafficking



Unknown: **6%**

Outside Perth County: **33%**

*Current applicant address

Move ins & Move outs

3 Total number of move outs

4 Total number of move ins

Maintenance



307

Number of
Work orders
requested

For more information about housing services and supports please visit: <https://www.stratford.ca/en/inside-city-hall/housing.aspx>



SOCIAL SERVICES MONTHLY ONTARIO WORKS REPORT

Stratford, Perth County, & St. Marys



816 Total number of active caseloads

54 Total number of active temporary care cases

*If you are an adult and you are temporarily responsible for the care of a child who is in financial need, you may be eligible for temporary care assistance on their behalf.



32%

Percentage of caseload terminations exiting to employment



5%

Percentage of Caseload terminated



81

New applications received



14%

Percentage of caseloads with employment earnings



\$893

Average monthly employment earnings

Population Specific Information



60%

Singles without dependents



30%

Lone parent families



5%

Couples with or without dependents

2.4

Years

Average time on Assistance

\$733

The maximum amount a Single on Ontario works receives per month



Information Bulletin

Ontario Works provides income and employment supports to people in temporary financial need. If you qualify, Ontario Works can provide you with:

- Financial assistance to help you cover the costs of your basic needs (example: food and housing costs), and
- Employment assistance to help you prepare for and find a job.

You may also be eligible for health benefits for yourself and your family, including drug and dental coverage.

For more information about Ontario Works and Social Assistance please visit: <https://www.stratford.ca/en/inside-city-hall/ontarioworks.aspx#How-to-Apply-for-Financial-Assistance>

