



The Corporation of the City of Stratford
Social Services Sub-committee
Open Session
AGENDA

Date: Tuesday, July 15, 2025
Time: 4:30 P.M.
Location: Council Chamber, City Hall
Sub-committee Present: Councillor Henderson - Chair Presiding, Councillor Briscoe - Vice Chair, Councillor Biehn, Councillor Nijjar, Councillor Wordofa
Staff Present: Kim McElroy - Director of Social Services and Interim Director of Human Resources, John Ritz - Supervisor Homelssness and Housing Stability, Audrey Pascual - Deputy Clerk, Victoria Trotter - Council Committee Coordinator

To watch the Sub-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. Delegations

None scheduled.

4. Report of the Director of Social Services

4.1 Annual Community Income Tax Clinic for Completion of 2024 Returns (SOC25-008)

4 - 6

Motion by

Staff Recommendation: THAT the City of Stratford issue a thank you to all businesses that provided their support and services during the Annual Community Income Tax Clinic.

5. Report of the Supervisor of Homelessness and Housing Stability

5.1 Homelessness Reduction Innovation Fund approval (SOC25-009)

7 - 8

Motion by

Staff Recommendation: THAT Council authorize the Mayor and Clerk on behalf of The Corporation for the City of Stratford to enter into an agreement with the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness for the Homelessness Reduction Innovation Fund and to sign any additional documentation required.

6. Department Update

9 - 13

The following Department Update Infographics of May, 2025 have been provided for the information of Sub-committee:

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

7. Next Sub-committee Meeting

The next Social Services Sub-committee meeting is September 9, 2025 at 4:30 p.m. in the Council Chamber, City Hall.

8. Adjournment

Meeting Start Time:

Meeting End Time:

Motion by

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



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: July 15, 2025
To: Social Services Sub-committee
From: Colleen Steckly, Administrative Assistant to the Director of Social Services
 Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
Report Number: SOC25-008
Attachments: None

Title: Annual Community Income Tax Clinic for Completion of 2024 Returns

Objective: To provide Council with an update on the annual community income tax clinic serving low-income residents of the City of Stratford, Town of St. Marys, and County of Perth.

Background: Since 1989, the City of Stratford has coordinated this clinic with the invaluable support of local accounting firms, specifically this year Famme & Co. Professional Corporation and McCutchen & Pearce Professional Corporation. These partners have consistently offered their services free of charge, this year enabling us to support the completion of 122 individual income tax returns.

Analysis: This year upheld the practice initiated during the pandemic, utilizing a successful drop-off and pick-up method, which extends our capacity to serve more residents and provides additional preparation time for our partners.

Enhanced communication strategies ensured broad awareness, involving partner agencies, multiple media platforms, city transit displays and direct notifications to Ontario Works clients.

There were 132 appointment slots generously made available by the participating firms, with a first-come, first-served approach.

Program Eligibility:

- Social Assistance recipients (Ontario Works, ODSP) with a Form T5007.
- Seniors 65+ with single incomes less than \$25,396 and couples with incomes less than \$34,346.

- Other individuals with single incomes less than \$16,000 and couple incomes less than \$32,000.

Alternatives were also made available to potential participants through partnerships with The Salvation Army in Stratford/St. Marys and North Perth and the Stratford Public Library. Additional tax assistance needs included multiple-year filings, estate returns, and convenience to office or readiness by the deadline were also factors.

The clinic ensures participants are equipped to maximize income through federal benefits, essential for accessing resources such as Rent-Geared-to-Income housing and the Canada Child Benefit. The effort reinforces financial stability by promoting access to benefits like the GST/HST credit.

Continued support of this vital community service aids in addressing financial disparities by providing necessary tax services free of charge, further cementing its positive impact on our residents' lives.

Financial Implications:

Financial impact to current year operating budget:

There is no cost to the Corporation other than some administrative staff time to coordinate with the accounting firms and schedule appointments, which did not have an impact on this year's budget or to service delivery.

Financial impact on future year operating budget:

There will be no future year impact relating to the clinic held in 2025.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Work Together For Greater Impact

This report aligns with this priority as it highlights the coordination of a program that supports residents accessing resources to receive all federal benefits available to them, maximizing incomes.

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 City of Stratford issue a thank you to all businesses that provided their support and services during the Annual Community Income Tax Clinic.

Prepared by: Colleen Steckly, Administrative Assistant to the Director of Social Services

Recommended by: Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
Adam Betteridge, Interim Chief Administrative Officer



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: July 15, 2025
To: Social Services Sub-committee
From: John Ritz, Supervisor of Homelessness and Housing Stability
Report Number: SOC25-009
Attachments: None

Title: Homelessness Reduction Innovation Fund approval

Objective: To update the Mayor and Council on the recently obtained funding from the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness as part of their Homelessness Reduction Innovation Fund.

Background: As part of Government of Canada's Budget 2024 commitment, \$45 million was approved for Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH) to implement the Homelessness Reduction Innovation Fund (HRIF), which provides communities with one-time funding grants to test, implement, document, and share innovative, system-level interventions that achieve measurable reductions in community-level homelessness.

In response to this announcement, the Social Services Department and their community advisor from Build for Zero, met to review the local data and begin determining what type of funding would best support our community in permanently housing individuals from our local By-Name List. It was determined that a proposal focused on the affordability challenges within our community would provide future insight and evidence to invest more money into permanent housing solutions and away from short-term emergency responses.

The City of Stratford was recently notified by our partners at the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness that we were successful with our HRIF application. The project will run over the course of the next 12 months and the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness will contribute up to \$120,000 for the City to design, implement, and evaluate the project. For this project, the target population is individuals experiencing homelessness who require a moderate or low level of support to achieve housing stability. Assistance with rent affordability will be provided through housing subsidies and moving individuals into permanent housing. Over the course of the next 12 months, this program will be thoroughly evaluated to ensure it is meeting targets, with a

management report to Council at the completion of the program highlighting the impact this funding opportunity will have had on the community.

Analysis: With this funding initiative, the aim is to reduce chronic homeless households by 18% off our local By-Name List. Through the tracking of local data, market trends, and housing retention efforts, this project will provide valuable information in directing future funding and how our homelessness response programs work in collaboration with new and bold initiatives to address an ongoing and complex issue.

Financial Implications:

Financial impact to current year operating budget:

This report should have no financial implications on the current year operational budget as additional funds have become available and will create an opportunity to expand service.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Build Housing Stability

This report aligns with this priority as it will build available housing options for individuals experiencing homelessness who may have otherwise been unable to afford a unit in a private market rental.

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 Council authorize the Mayor and Clerk on behalf of The Corporation for the City of Stratford to enter into an agreement with the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness for the Homelessness Reduction Innovation Fund and to sign any additional documentation required.

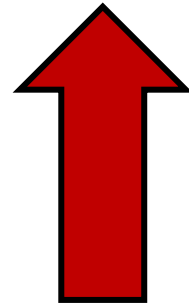
Prepared by:	John Ritz, Supervisor of Homelessness and Housing Stability
Recommended by:	Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
	Adam Betteridge, Interim Chief Administrative Officer

SOCIAL SERVICES MONTHLY CHILDREN'S SERVICES REPORT

Stratford, Perth County, & St. Marys

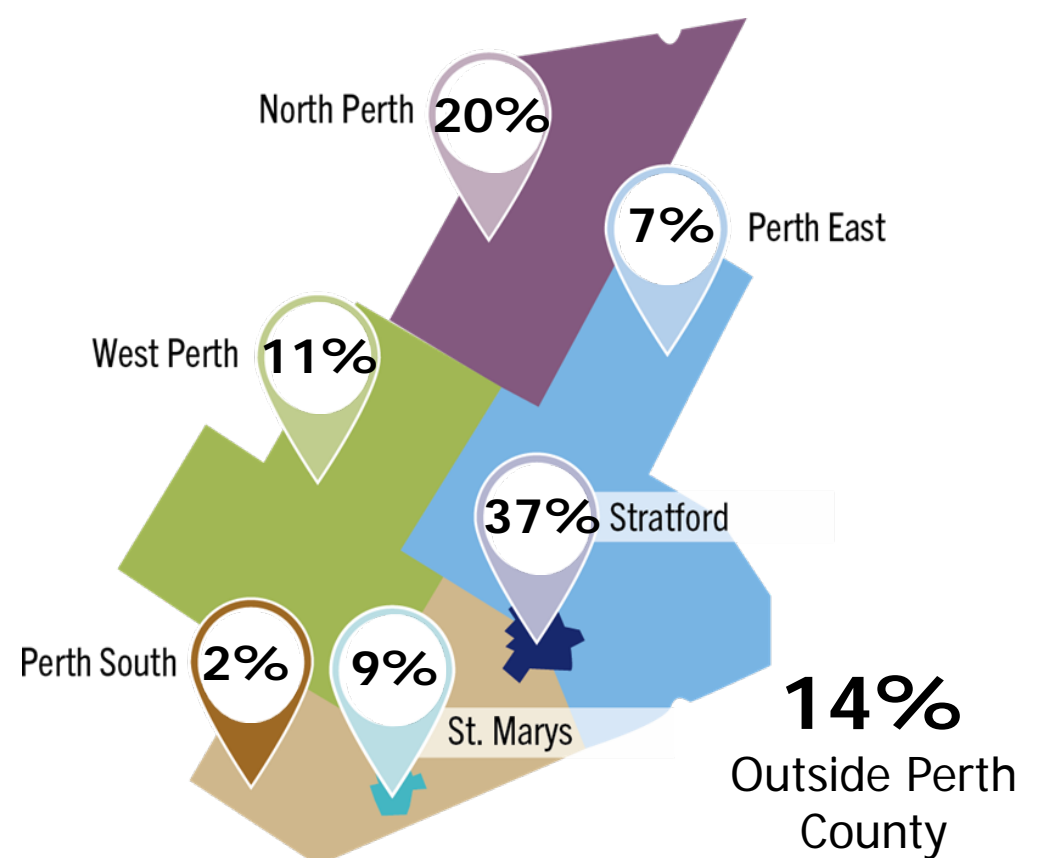
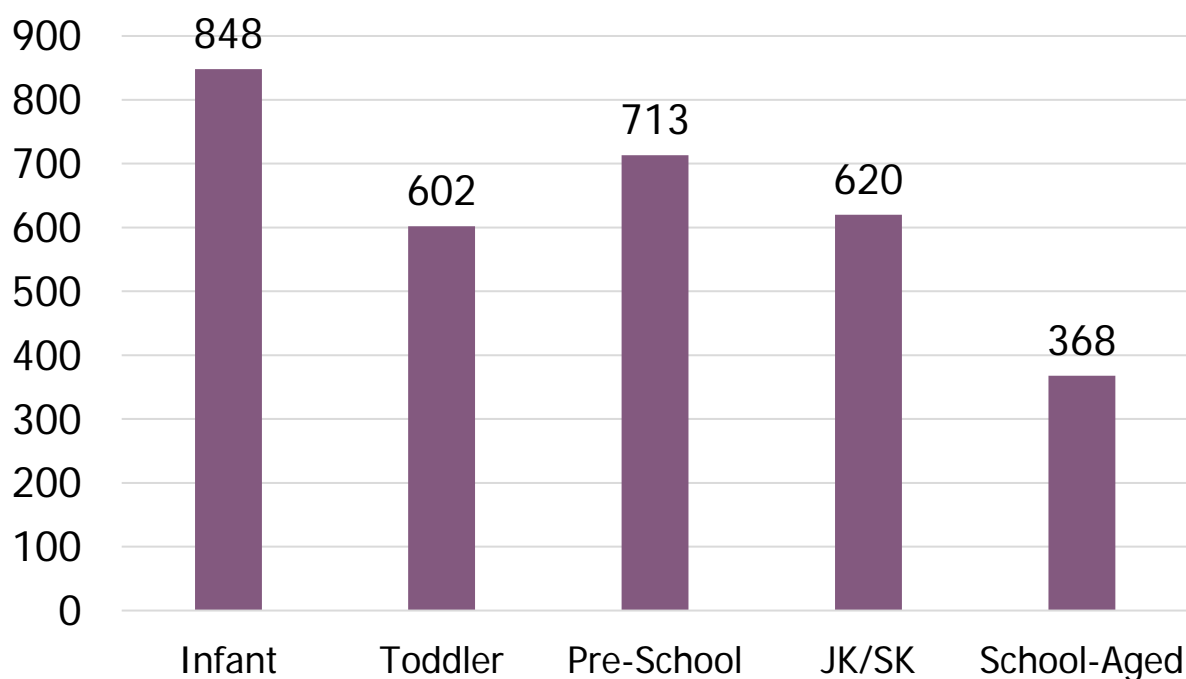
3,151

Total number of children on the child care waitlist



This is an increase from April 2025, when there were **3,124** children on the child care waitlist

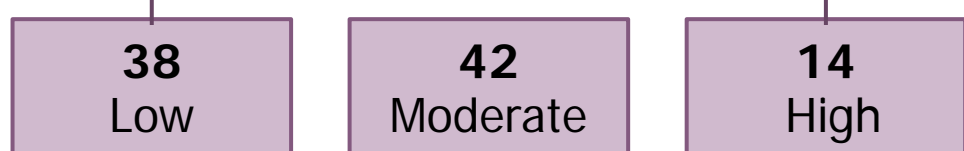
Age Category on the waitlist



Resource Consulting

94 Total children supported by the Program

Level of Support



EarlyON

589 Unique children (0-6 years) served

468 Unique parents/caregivers served

1,724 Visits by children (0-6 years)

1,617 Visits by parents/caregivers

i 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.

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



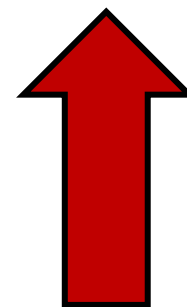
SOCIAL SERVICES MONTHLY HOMELESSNESS REPORT

Stratford, Perth County, & St. Marys



149

Total number of households experiencing homelessness



This is an increase from April 2025, when there were **148** households experiencing homelessness



10

New households entering into homelessness



9

Households returned to service area or reconnected with services



2

Households who lost their housing



12

Households who became housed



8

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

Population Specific Information

115 Single Adults

19 Youth (16-24)

15 Families

133 Chronic

31 Unsheltered

21 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 these 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 housing

Source: The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness - The Homelessness Hub

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

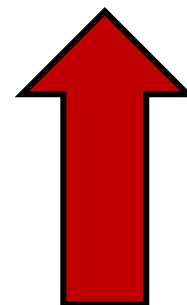


SOCIAL SERVICES MONTHLY SOCIAL HOUSING REPORT

Stratford, Perth County, & St. Marys

612

Total number of Households
on the centralized waitlist



This is an increase from April 2025, when there were **600** households on the centralized waitlist

Unit Size

1 Bedroom	61%
2 Bedroom	15%
3 Bedroom	13%
4+ Bedroom	11%

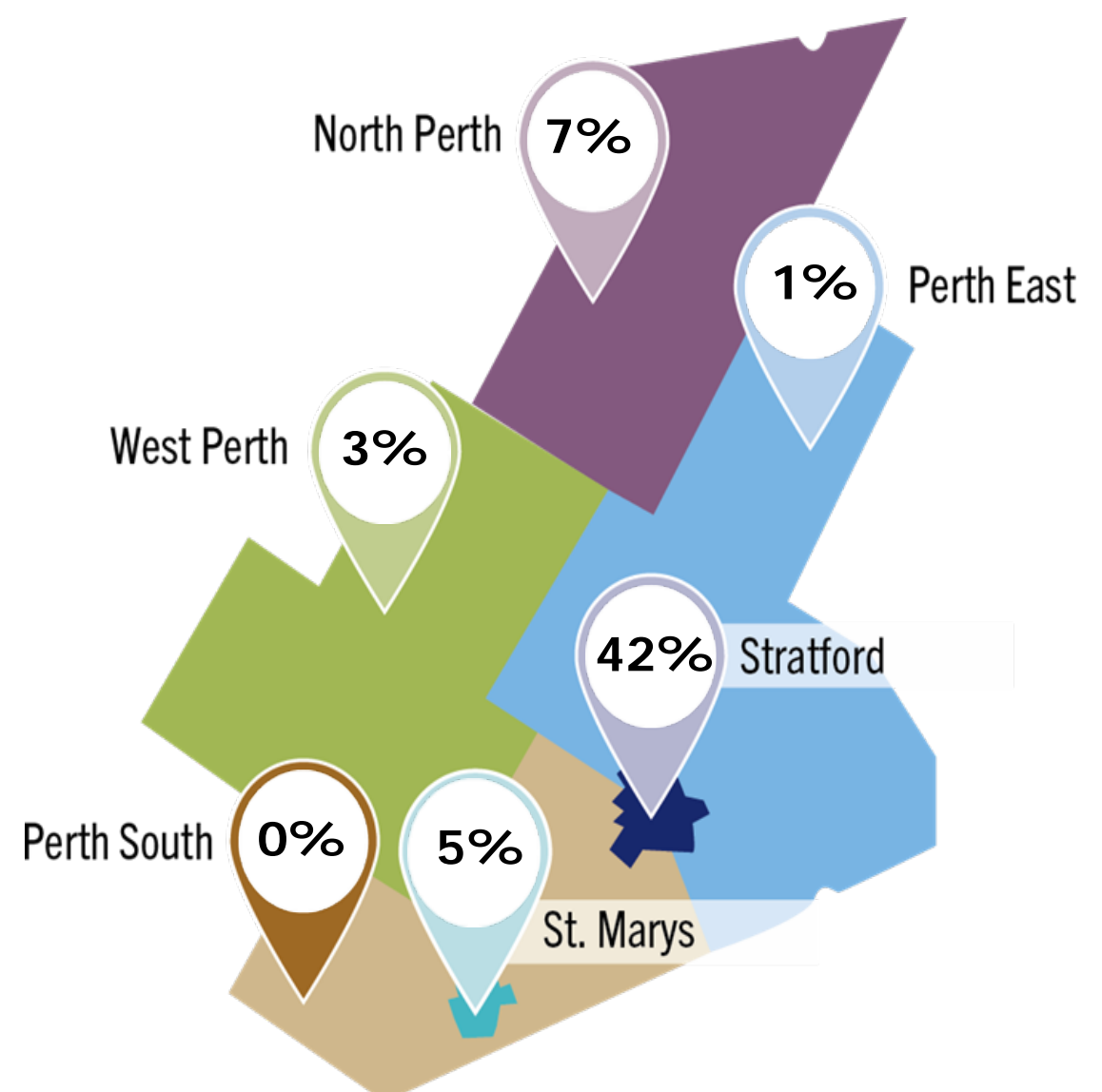
Applicant Type

Single/Couple	53%
Family	36%
Senior	11%

Priority Status

Chronological Order	87%
Homeless	8%
Special Provincial Priority (SPP)*	5%

*SPP: Survivor of domestic abuse or trafficking



Unknown: **6%**

Outside Perth County: **36%**

*Current applicant address

Move ins & Move outs

3 Total number of move outs

6 Total number of move ins

Maintenance



320

Number of
Work orders
requested

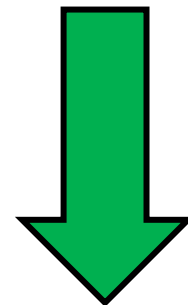
For more information about housing services and supports please
visit: <https://www.stratford.ca/en/inside-city-hall/housing.aspx>



SOCIAL SERVICES MONTHLY ONTARIO WORKS REPORT

Stratford, Perth County, & St. Marys

837 Total number of active caseloads



This is a decrease from April 2025, when there were **842** active cases

50 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.



27%

Percentage of caseload terminations exiting to employment



6%

Percentage of Caseload terminated



77

New applications received



13%

Percentage of caseloads with employment earnings



\$884

Average monthly employment earnings

Population Specific Information



69%

Singles without dependents



26%

Lone parent families



5%

Couples with or without dependents

**2.3
Years**

Average time on Assistance

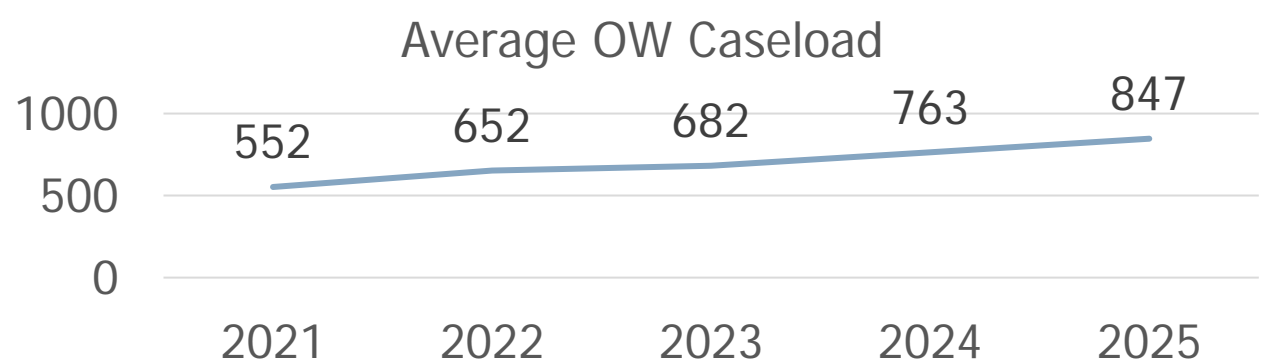
\$733

The maximum amount a Single on Ontario works receives per month



Information Bulletin

The average Ontario Works caseload is increasing over time. The following graph shows the average caseload by year since 2021. As shown, the average caseload has increased by approximately 300 clients from 2021 to 2025.



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>



SOCIAL SERVICES MONTHLY CITY OF STRATFORD REPORT

Children's Services

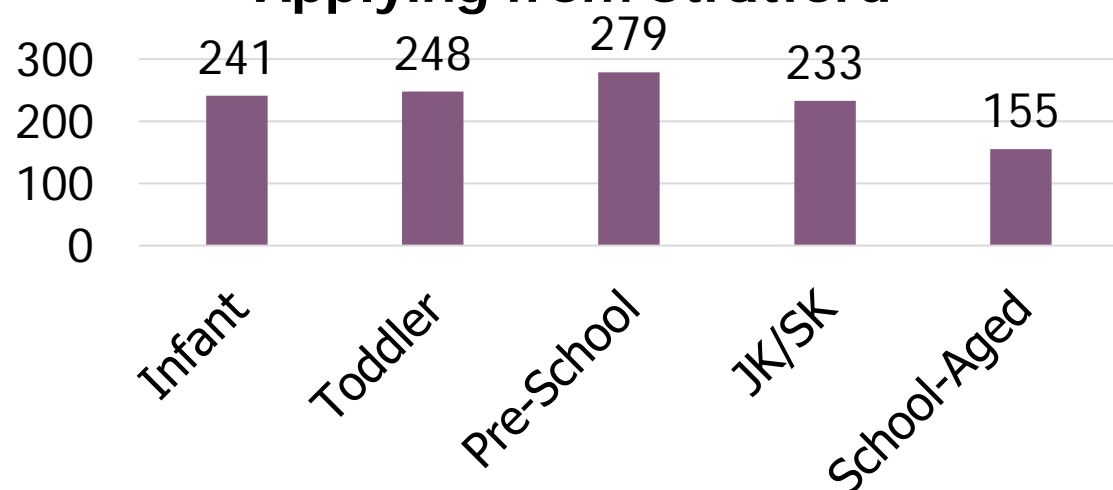
1,156

Total number of children on the child care waitlist applying from Stratford

37%

Percentage of the total child care waitlist applying from Stratford

Age Category on the waitlist –
Applying from Stratford



EarlyON - Stratford

164

Unique children (0-6 years) served

140

Unique parents/caregivers served

356

Visits by children (0-6 years)

300

Visits by parents/caregivers

Social Housing

258

Total Households on the centralized waitlist applying from Stratford

Unit Size

1 Bedroom	69%
2 Bedroom	12%
3 Bedroom	10%
4+ Bedroom	9%

Applicant Type

Single/Couple	61%
Family	29%
Senior	11%

42%

Percentage of the total centralized waitlist applying from Stratford

Priority Status

Chronological Order	83%
Homeless	11%
Special Provincial Priority (SPP)*	7%

*SPP: Survivor of domestic abuse or trafficking

Ontario Works

497

Total number of active cases in Stratford

59%

Percentage of the total Ontario Works caseload that are in Stratford