



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

Date: Tuesday, April 15, 2025
Time: 4:30 P.M.
Location: Council Chamber, City Hall
Sub-committee Present: Councillor Henderson - Chair Presiding, Councillor Briscoe - Vice Chair, Councillor Nijjar, Councillor Wordofa
Staff Present: Kim McElroy - Director of Social Services, Alex Burgess - Manager of Ontario Works, Tatiana Dafoe - City Clerk, Miranda Franken - Council Clerk Secretary

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.

Councillor Biehn has 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

3. Delegations

None scheduled.

4. Report of the Manager of Ontario Works

4.1 Stratford-Bruce Peninsula Employment Service System Manager (SSM) Consortium Member Update (SOC25-004) 4 - 11

Aaron Stauch, Service System Manager Director, from Bruce County, will present the report.

Motion by

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "SSM Consortium Member Update" (SOC25-004), and dated April 15, 2025, be received for information.

4.2 Family Services Perth-Huron Counselling and Support Agreement Update (SOC25-005) 12 - 15

Motion by

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "Family Services Perth-Huron Annual Utilization Rate Summary Report" (SOC25-005), be received for information.

5. Department Update 16 - 20

The following Department Update Infographics of February, 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

6. Next Sub-committee Meeting

The next Social Services Sub-committee meeting is May 13, 2025 at 4:30 p.m. in the Council Chamber, City Hall.

7. Adjournment

Meeting Start Time:

Meeting End Time:

Motion by

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



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: April 15, 2025
To: Social Services Sub-committee
From: Alex Burgess, Manager of Ontario Works
Report Number: SOC25-004
Attachments: SSM Report to Council 2025-01.pdf

Title: Stratford-Bruce Peninsula Employment Service System Manager (SSM) Consortium Member Update

Objective: To provide Council with an update regarding the activities of the Stratford-Bruce Peninsula Employment Service System Manager (SSM).

Background: The Counties of Bruce (lead), Grey, Huron, and the City of Stratford are the Employment Service System Manager (SSM), funded entirely by the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD), for the Stratford – Bruce Peninsula Economic Region. The SSM is to build and implement a locally responsive employment services system that effectively meets the needs of a diverse range of job seekers and employers in the catchment area. Integrated Employment Services Delivery (IESD), the SSM newly designed system went live on April 1, 2023. This report provides a semi-annual update to Council on the performance of the SSM, and updates on future work to be completed.

Analysis: The attached document, “SSM Report to Council 2025-01” provides an update on the activities of the Employment Service System Manager and highlights the performance of the program over the last two quarters of 2024. Specifically, the update provides information and outcomes related to Client Intakes, Client Outcomes, Service to Priority Populations and Program Outcomes. Furthermore, the report highlights program successes alongside continuous improvement strategies that work to improve network capacity in an effort to produce high quality employment services.

Lastly, the report provides a 2025-27 funding update regarding core funding received from MLITSD.

The City of Stratford currently has representation on all committees identified in the governance structure and is an active participant in helping to reshape the employment services landscape as a member of the SSM.

Financial Implications:

Not applicable:

This report is for information only and provides an update regarding the activities of the Stratford-Bruce Peninsula Employment Service System Manager (SSM). There are no financial implications because of this report. The SSM is fully funded by MLITSD and is directly operated by Bruce County.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Work Together For Greater Impact

This report aligns with this priority as the focus of the SSM, the Employment Service Providers and the Ontario Works Division is to create meaningful partnerships that move our shared clients toward successful employment. Through these partnerships, we aim to improve the lives of the residents across Stratford, St Marys and Perth County.

Intentionally Change to Support the Future

This report aligns with this priority as the SSM is working with local Employment Ontario providers, employers and municipal partners to ensure the employment programs in the area meet the needs of the local community and continue to review the successes of the program with an aim to further enhance the services available.

Alignment with One Planet Principles:

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, "SSM Consortium Member Update" (SOC25-004), and dated April 15, 2025, 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

Background:

The Counties of Bruce (lead), Grey, Huron, and the City of Stratford are the Employment Service System Manager (SSM), funded entirely by the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD), for the Stratford – Bruce Peninsula Economic Region. The SSM is to build and implement a locally responsive employment services system that effectively meets the needs of a diverse range of job seekers and employers in the catchment area. Integrated Employment Services Delivery (IESD), the SSM newly designed system went live on April 1, 2023. This report provides a semi-annual update to council on the performance of the SSM, and updates on future work to be completed.

Information Update:

The SSM’s service delivery model provides services through eight Employment Service Providers (ESP). These are third party organizations that have service delivery agreements with the County for delivery of employment services for those eligible in the catchment area. The following outlines our performance in the past two quarters.

Table 1 – Client Intakes

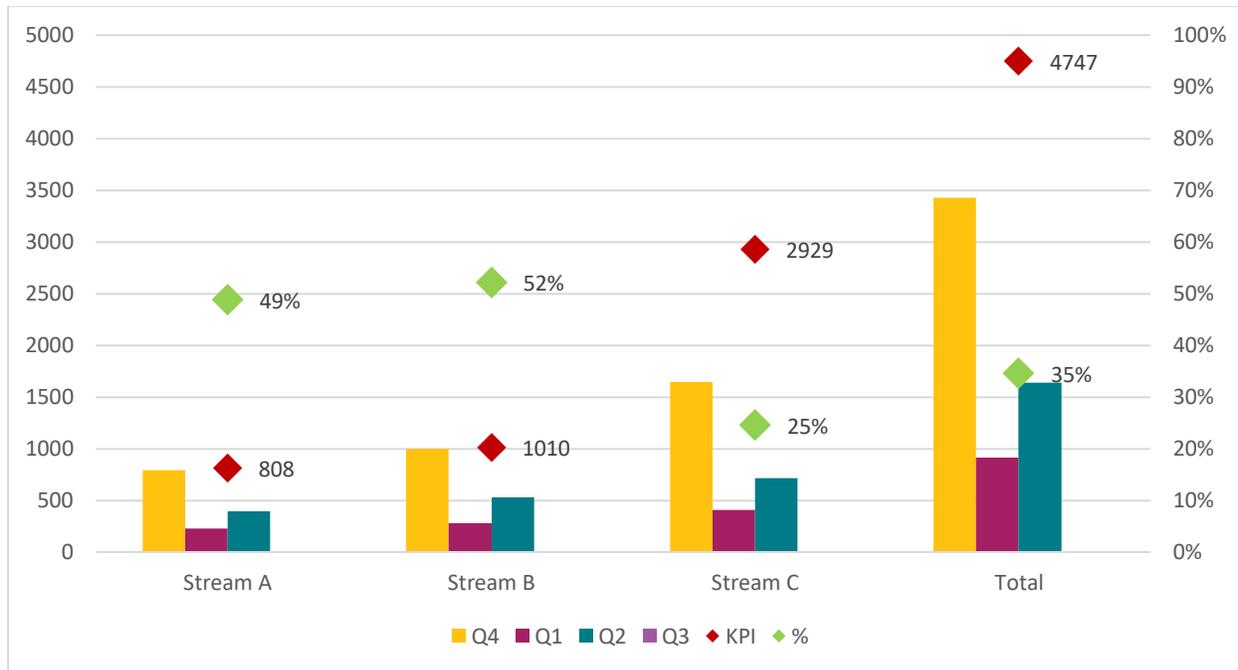


Table 1 outlines the SSM’s performance against client intake key performance indicators (KPIs) set by MLITSD. Stream A clients are those at low risk for long-term unemployment, Stream B clients are those at medium risk for long-term unemployment, and Stream C clients are those at high risk for long-term unemployment. Table 1 shows





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That Stream A clients are at 49% of target half-way through the year and Stream B clients are at 52% of target. Stream C clients are at 25% of target and total client intakes are at 35% of target. The SSM continues to work with Social Assistance and community organizations such as newcomer services and probation and parole offices, to establish effective referral pathways for clients most at risk of long-term unemployment.

Table 2 – Client Outcomes

Client’s outcomes represent clients who have completed their plan with Employment Ontario and have most often found employment or been referred to another program such as Better Jobs Ontario, Skills Development Funded Programs or formal education settings. Clients in outcomes are monitored for one year to assist in maintaining employment and to gather necessary documentation to meet the criteria for performance-based funding.

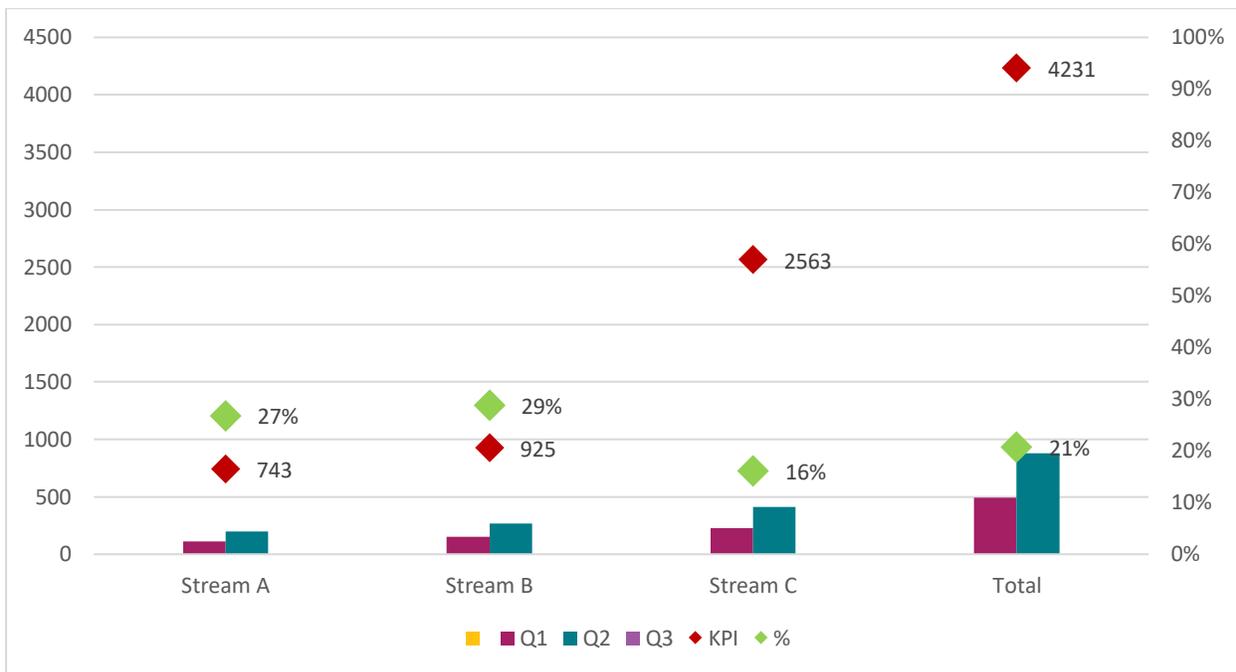


Table 2 shows that Stream A clients are at 27% of the target half-way through the year, Stream B clients are at 29% of the target and Stream C clients are at 16% of the target. Overall, the total meets 21% of the target for the year.

The SSM has implemented a Digital Service Delivery platform to match Stream A clients with available job openings.

Through an employer activation strategy we are focusing on developing relationships with employers to offer Stream C clients job placements and trials to get them into the

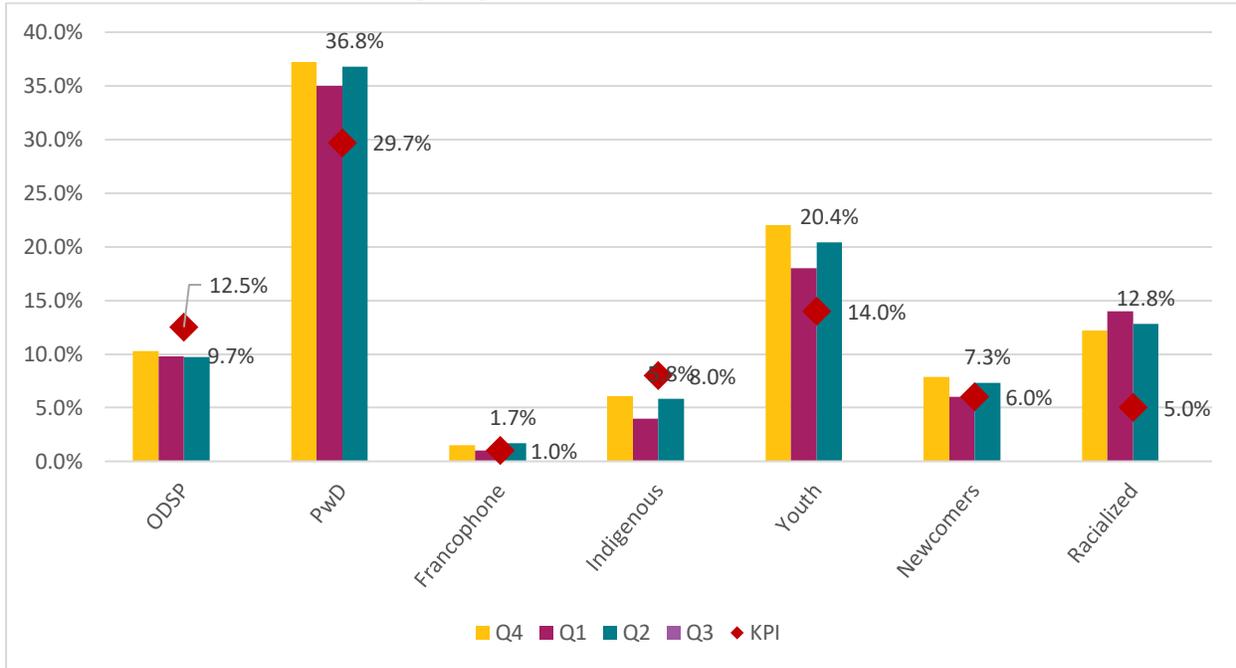




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workforce without participation in a traditional job competition, i.e., identifying employer needs and recommending clients that are a good fit for the role, or a paid placement to trial the role.

Table 3 – Service to Priority Populations



The Ministry outlines priority populations that the SSM and its network of ESPs are to provide service. Table 3 outlines the SSM’s results in these KPIs. As the table demonstrates, the SSM is meeting or exceeding targets in all areas aside from clients in receipt of ODSP and Indigenous individuals.

The SSM continues to support the Indigenous service provider to offer service. Overall, the SSM’s performance indicates those that need employment services the most are provided with access to needed support.

In addition to the results outlined above, the network has seen a continued trend of clients in receipt of social assistance accessing employment services. One quarter of clients in service are from Ontario Works and 10.9% of clients are from the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). This demonstrates evidence of the effectiveness of the collaboration between our Ontario Works partners and the SSM.





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Table 4 – Program Outcomes

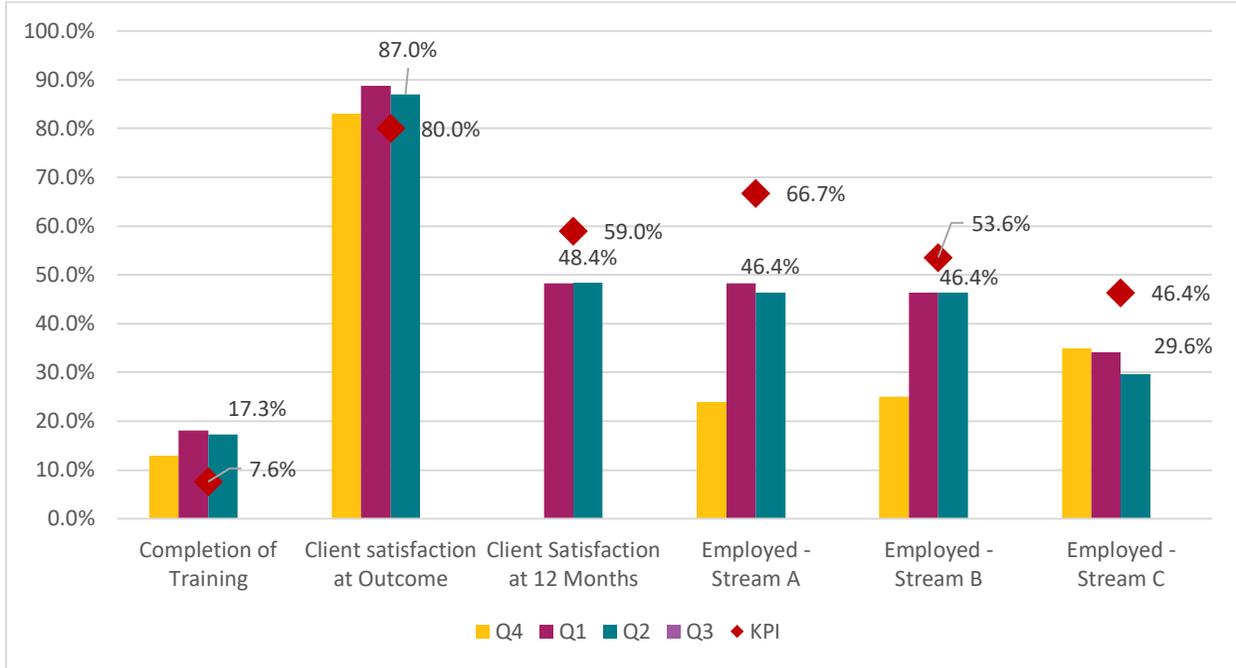


Table 4 outlines the SSM’s achievement of outcomes against MLITSD KPIs. As the table shows, the SSM is exceeding the targets for completion of training and client satisfaction with services at outcome. However, the SSM is slightly below the target for satisfaction at the 12-month point (12 months after the client has been moved to outcomes). The SSM is also under target for employment outcomes in all three streams. However, outcomes for Stream A and Stream B clients are significantly higher than the Q4 numbers from the previous year.

Program Successes:

1. The service providers in the Stratford-Bruce Peninsula SSM have assisted 2000 clients in finding employment with 1764 clients finding employment at 20 hours per week or more.
2. Clients who are referred from social assistance have a low returned referral rate of 13%. This demonstrates an effective partnership and referral practice for clients between social assistance and Employment Ontario providers in the Stratford-Bruce Peninsula area. In addition, 25% of clients who have been referred to Employment Ontario by social assistance have found employment, with 22% finding a job working 20+ hours per week.
3. Start-up of the Digital Service Delivery platform in partnership with FutureFit AI with close to 200 job ready clients registered on the platform. The program uses AI technology to match job seekers to job postings based on previous





Consortium Member Council Information Report

experience, education and transferable skills. The SSM is registering employers through presentations hosted by Huron, Bruce and Perth County Economic Development departments, referrals from service providers, and onboarding at job fairs, information events, and one on one meetings with local employers.

4. The Employer Activation strategy involves training service providers on how to establish effective relationships with employers for the purpose of understanding employer hiring needs and creating opportunities for clients to find work outside of the traditional application process. This includes providing placements for clients and matching clients to employer requests. To date, 50% of job placements have resulted in clients being hired and maintaining their employment.
5. The In Motion and Momentum Plus program is intended to meet the needs of clients most at risk of long-term unemployment. Clients are typically referred to the program by Social Assistance caseworkers or Employment Ontario caseworkers. Of the 47 clients enrolled in the program, 37 clients have enrolled in Employment Ontario services. Thirteen clients have completed their work with Employment Ontario and seven clients have employment with an average of 25 hours per week.

Continuous Improvement:

The SSM continues to monitor performance and tailor conversations with each service provider. These conversations focus on key themes to support the success of the network.

The SSM has undertaken strategic initiatives to build network capacity to produce high quality employment services.

1. **Local Labour Market Information:** The SSM provides labour market statistics based on Connect2Jobs data. This data set can guide service providers to identify opportunities for employment or placements at a village or town level.
2. **Employer Activation:** All service providers have completed training on developing relationships with local employers. These relationships provide opportunities for identifying employer needs and providing clients with the necessary qualifications for placements or direct to hire. Clients who are typically locked out of the job market can become gainfully employed without participating in traditional job competitions.
3. **Digital Services Delivery:** The SSM is working in conjunction with FutureFit AI to create a digital platform where employers can identify clients with the desired skill set and reach out directly to discuss employment opportunities. The platform





Consortium Member Council Information Report

helps Stream A job seekers identify a desired career path as well as local opportunities to obtain skills that employers value. Future plans include rolling out the platform to local employers to streamline local hiring and improve employment opportunities for clients.

4. **Employment Preparation:** Several cohorts have completed the In Motion and Momentum Plus program, designed to help clients address intrinsic barriers such as motivation, reliability and dependability. To date a subset of clients that have completed the program have successfully found employment and client evaluations demonstrate client's personal growth and improvements in confidence. Managers from Social Assistance partners and Employment Service providers have been trained to utilize assessment tools to identify client readiness for change, motivation, reliability and dependability and develop an individualized service plan to consider each client's specialized needs. Future plans include providing staff level training.
5. **Evidence-Based Practice:** Clients continue to be served using evidence-based approaches to employment service including cognitive motivational models, and trauma informed approaches.
6. **Performance:** Data collection and reporting continue to frame discussions around results. Service provider objectives and targets continue to be modified based on performance outcomes.

2025-2027 Funding Update

On January 6, 2025, the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development provided an amending agreement which extends the existing contract with the Stratford-Bruce Peninsula SSM until March 31, 2027.





MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: April 15, 2025
To: Social Services Sub-committee
From: Alex Burgess, Manager of Ontario Works
 Robin Brown, Social Services Supervisor – Ontario Works
 Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
Report Number: SOC25-005
Attachments: None

Title: Family Services Perth-Huron Counselling and Support Agreement Update

Objective: To provide Council with information regarding services provided by Family Services Perth-Huron to referred Ontario Works clients as per the Counselling and Support Agreement between Ontario Works and Family Services Perth-Huron.

Background: Participants in social service programs may have emotional and other barriers that need to be addressed to promote participant self-reliance and life stabilization prior to achieving the goal of employment and other forms of community engagement.

In March of 2023, an agreement was signed between the City of Stratford Ontario Works program and Family Services Perth-Huron. The Social Services Department agrees to pay Family Services Perth-Huron a maximum of \$95,000 annually for their services, with an ability to provide an extra \$20,000 for programming considered to enhance services.

Through this agreement, Family Services Perth-Huron agrees to support Ontario Works participants to improve overall life stability in the community. They do this through personal and group interventions, groups/clinics, as well as counselling services. These services are aimed at reducing barriers to employment, increasing sustainable wellness and change, impacting housing and overall life stability. Counsellors provide compassionate trauma informed support for mental health concerns/crises and address self-esteem and goal-setting challenges.

Local in-person and virtual supports help some of our most vulnerable community members through evidence-based prevention and interventions supports to offer support, seek solutions and mitigate overall risk and stability. Family Services focuses on

barriers to employment, housing instability, risk of homelessness, complex familial needs, mental health concerns, addressing self-esteem, and goal setting challenges. Focusing on these areas and providing personal counselling services allows participants to progress towards their eventual goal of successful life stabilization.

Key Performance indicators are tracked by Family Services for clear accountability framework through the Family Services Perth-Huron internal tracking system.

Analysis: The Utilization Rate Summary report was submitted by Family Services Perth-Huron on February 28, 2025. Through the course of 2024, the Ontario Works office referred 168 participants to Family Services Perth-Huron. Of those 168 participants, 151 were served, far exceeding the target set at 100. Many of the participant referrals included children, partners, and/or caregivers. The 151 participants served included a total of 226 individuals.

Family Services Perth-Huron utilized a total of 921 hours working with Ontario Works participants through various sessions including Psychotherapy, Individual, Couple and Family Group sessions, and Drop-in Counselling. Again, this far exceeded the target of 800 hours.

They conducted 64 group sessions or drop-in clinics with various Ontario Works participants with 48 people attending these group sessions or receiving drop-in services.

Family Services Perth-Huron faced a number of issues and complexities when working with Ontario Works participants. These issues were most often related and intersectional. Homelessness was a common factor where participants were facing a risk of homelessness, often due to precarious relationships.

There was regularly a sense of stress, instability and emotional issues with the participants concerning their overall life situations. These issues often impeded job search and retention abilities. There was also an inability to secure primary care or psychiatric supports as needed.

Other complexities often demonstrated by participants were traumatic brain injuries, developmental disabilities, addictions and other medical concerns.

As can be expected, many participants struggled with both current and past trauma, violence and/or abuse, affecting familial, and personal relationships.

Family Services Perth-Huron conducted surveys with the Ontario Works clients who accessed their services. Of those that completed the survey, 85% found their social and community connections improved while 63% of that number felt they had improved employability and a capacity for employment and/or volunteering. This number remains steady when compared to that in 2023.

An impressive 85% of those participants who completed the survey found their overall mental health and wellness had improved. In the survey, participants were quoted to have 'felt safe and understood' and 'glad it was there for me.'

Financial Implications:

Financial impact to current year operating budget:

This program was previously approved by Council in 2023 (SOC23-011). The cost of the agreement in the current year is \$95,000, with an additional \$20,000 available for emergency and enhanced services requiring clinical intervention, if approved by the Director of Social Services. The program is fully funded through the 100% Provincial Program Delivery Funding provided to the Ontario Works Division so there is no net financial impact to the tax levy for the City or the shared services partners.

Financial impact on future year operating budget:

The program, as currently approved by Council, runs until December 31, 2027, and is renewed on a yearly basis, if agreed upon by both parties. The contract is subject to the City's budget approval and Provincial funding, on an annual basis.

As this program is 100% Provincially funded through the Ontario Works division, there is no anticipated impact on future year net tax levy budgets for the City or the shared services partners.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Build Housing Stability

This report aligns with this priority as this partnership provides gateways to housing stability to some of the most vulnerable members of the community.

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 report titled, "Family Services Perth-Huron Annual Utilization Rate Summary Report" (SOC25-005), be received for information.

Prepared by: Alex Burgess, Manager of Ontario Works
Robin Brown, Social Services Supervisor – Ontario Works

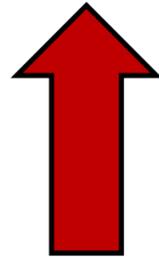
Recommended by: Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer

SOCIAL SERVICES MONTHLY CHILDREN'S SERVICES REPORT

Stratford, Perth County, & St. Marys

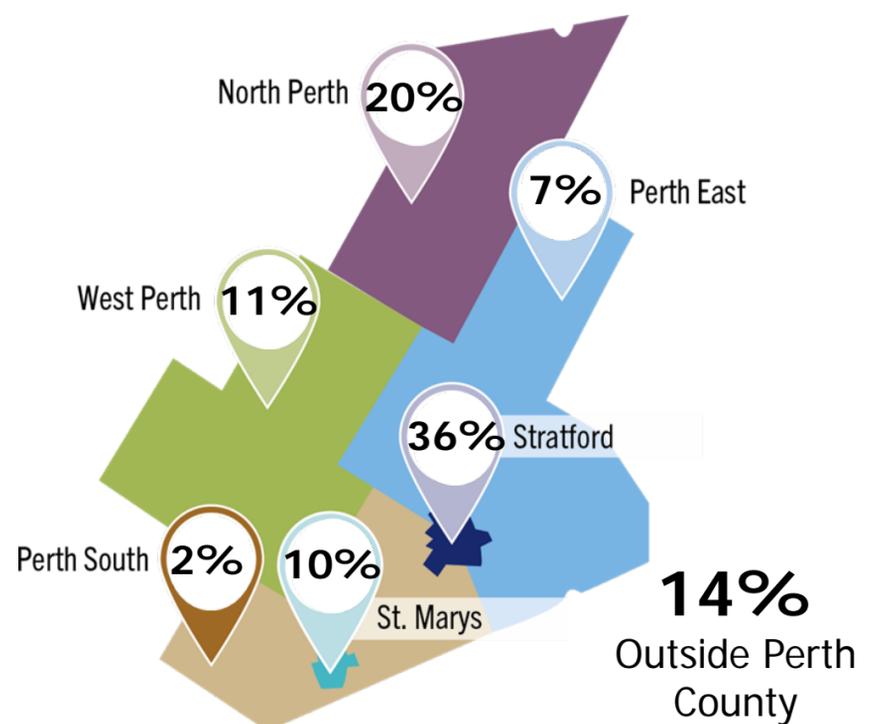
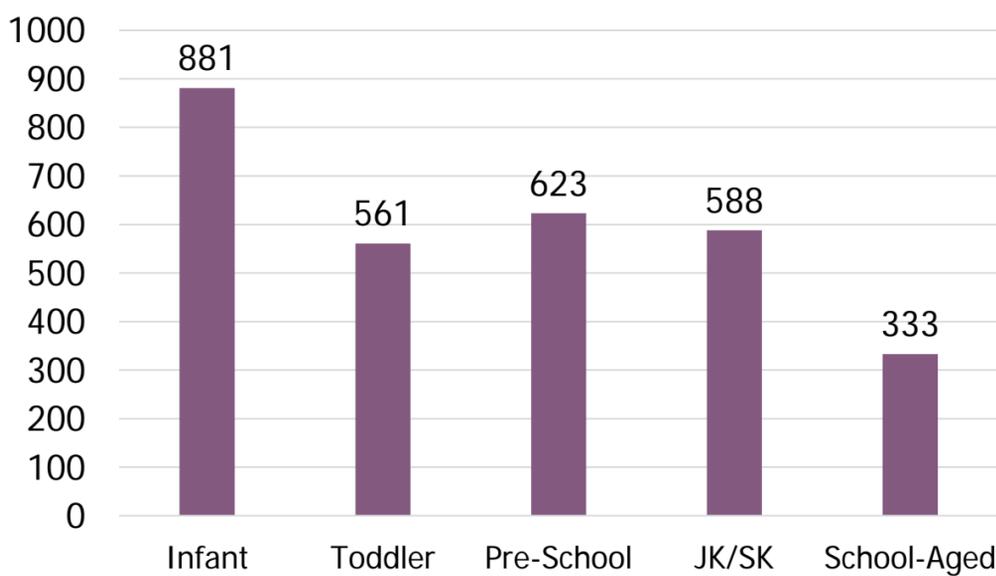
2,986

Total number of children on the child care waitlist



This is an increase from January 2025, when there were **2,867** children on the child care waitlist

Age Category on the waitlist



Resource Consulting

88 Total children supported by the Program

Level of Support



EarlyON

587 Unique children (0-6 years) served

486 Unique parents/caregivers served

1,541 Visits by children (0-6 years)

1,235 Visits by parents/caregivers

i Information Bulletin

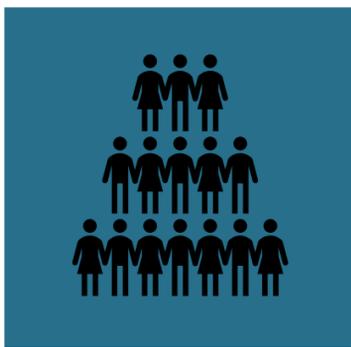
The Children's Services Division is the manager for child care in Stratford, St. Marys and Perth County. In partnership with the community, the Children's Services Division promotes fair and equal access to high quality care for children, and support to their families and caregivers.

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



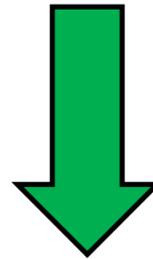
SOCIAL SERVICES MONTHLY HOMELESSNESS REPORT

Stratford, Perth County, & St. Marys



142

Total number of households experiencing homelessness



This is a decrease from January 2025, when there were **144** households experiencing homelessness



4

New households entering into homelessness



6

Households returned to service area or reconnected with services



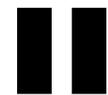
3

Households who lost their housing



5

Households who became housed



10

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

Population Specific Information

109 Single Adults

11 Youth (16-24)

22 Families

120 Chronic

32 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 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>

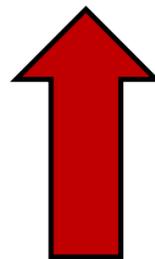


SOCIAL SERVICES MONTHLY SOCIAL HOUSING REPORT

Stratford, Perth County, & St. Marys

604

Total number of Households on the centralized waitlist



This is an increase from January 2025, when there were **594** households on the centralized waitlist

Unit Size

1 Bedroom	61%
2 Bedroom	15%
3 Bedroom	12%
4+ Bedroom	12%

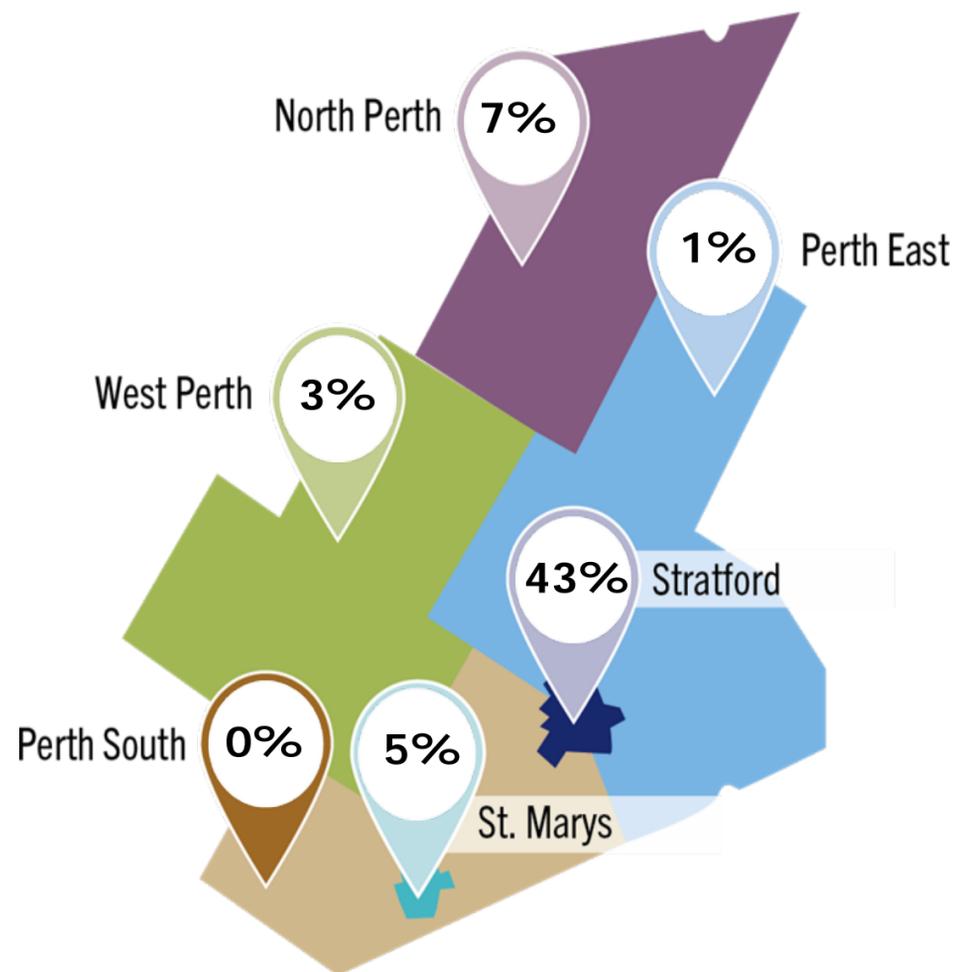
Applicant Type

Single/Couple	53%
Family	36%
Senior	11%

Priority Status

Chronological Order	87%
Homeless	8%
Special Provincial Priority (SPP)*	6%

*SPP: Survivor of domestic abuse or trafficking



Unknown: **6%**

Outside Perth County: **35%**

*Current applicant address

Move ins & Move outs

9 Total number of move outs

2 Total number of move ins

Maintenance



332

Number of Work orders requested

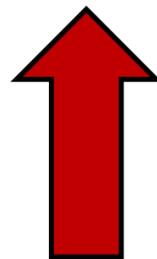
For more information about housing services and supports please visit: <https://www.stratford.ca/en/inside-city-hall/housing.aspx>



SOCIAL SERVICES MONTHLY ONTARIO WORKS REPORT

Stratford, Perth County, & St. Marys

856 Total number of active caseloads



This is an increase from January 2025, when there were **852** active cases

53 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.



23%

Percentage of caseload terminations exiting to employment



7%

Percentage of Caseload terminated



64

New applications received



11%

Percentage of caseloads with employment earnings



\$882

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

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)
- 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>



SOCIAL SERVICES MONTHLY CITY OF STRATFORD REPORT

Children's Services

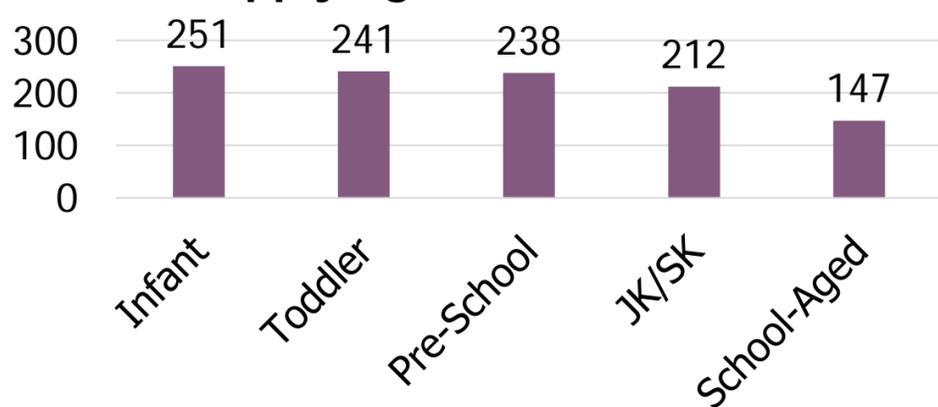
1,089

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

36%

Percentage of the total child care waitlist applying from Stratford

Age Category on the waitlist –
Applying from Stratford



EarlyON - Stratford

206

Unique children (0-6 years) served

162

Unique parents/caregivers served

439

Visits by children (0-6 years)

328

Visits by parents/caregivers

Social Housing

261

Total Households on the centralized waitlist applying from Stratford

Unit Size

1 Bedroom	68%
2 Bedroom	13%
3 Bedroom	10%
4+ Bedroom	9%

Applicant Type

Single/Couple	60%
Family	29%
Senior	11%

43%

Percentage of the total centralized waitlist applying from Stratford

Priority Status

Chronological Order	84%
Homeless	10%
Special Provincial Priority (SPP)*	8%

*SPP: Survivor of domestic abuse or trafficking

Ontario Works

522

Total number of active cases in Stratford

61%

Percentage of the total Ontario Works caseload that are in Stratford