



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

**Date:** Monday, July 28, 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 Burbach, Councillor Hunter, Councillor McCabe, Councillor Nijjar, Councillor Sebben, Councillor Wordofa

**Staff Present:** Adam Betteridge - Interim Chief Administrative Officer, Kim McElroy - Director of Social Services and Interim Director of Human Resources, Audrey Pascual - Deputy Clerk, Karmen Krueger - Director of Corporate Services, Taylor Crinklaw - Director of Infrastructure Services, Tim Wolfe - Director of Community Services, Neil Anderson - Director of Emergency Services/Fire Chief, Victoria Trotter - Council Committee Coordinator

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.

Councillor Biehn provided regrets for this meeting.

**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**

4 - 7

Sub-committee minutes are attached for background regarding the discussion held at the July 15, 2025 Sub-committee meeting.

**4. Delegations**

None scheduled.

**5. Report of the Director of Social Services**

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

8 - 10

**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.

**Motion by**

**Sub-committee 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.

**6. Report of the Supervisor of Homelessness and Housing Stability**

**6.1 Homelessness Reduction Innovation Fund approval (SOC25-009)**

11 - 12

This item will also be considered at the July 28, 2025, Council reconvene meeting.

**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.

**Motion by**

**Sub-committee 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.

## **7. For the Information of Committee**

### **7.1 Department Update**

13 - 17

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

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

## **8. 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: 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 Homelessness and Housing Stability, Jeff Wilson – Manager of Housing, Audrey Pascual - Deputy Clerk, Victoria Trotter - Council Committee Coordinator

Also Present: Members of the public

#### 1. **Call to Order**

The Chair called 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

No disclosures of pecuniary interest were made by a member at the July 15, 2025, Social Services Sub-committee meeting.

**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)**

**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.

**Sub-committee Discussion:** The Director of Social Services noted 122 individuals having accessed the free income tax clinics and expressed gratitude to Famme & Co. Professional Corporation and McCutchen & Pearce Professional Corporation for their support.

Motion by Councillor Nijjar

**Sub-committee 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.**

**Carried**

**5. Report of the Supervisor of Homelessness and Housing Stability**

**5.1 Homelessness Reduction Innovation Fund approval (SOC25-009)**

**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.

**Sub-committee Discussion:** The Homelessness and Housing Stability Supervisor provided an overview of the report highlighting the following:

- Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness to contribute \$120,000 towards the design, implementation and evaluation of the project;
- the aim being to reduce chronic homeless households; and

- to assist with first and last months rent and short term subsidy.

Motion by Councillor Biehn

**Sub-committee 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.**

**Carried**

## **6. Department Update**

**Sub-committee Discussion:** The Director of Social Services noted the majority of numbers having increased and stated staff continue to chart and look for variances throughout the year.

A discussion took place between Sub-committee and the Director of Social Services. Highlights of the discussion included:

- the number of children on the childcare waitlist continuing to increase;
- there being a target for the number of new spaces to be available by the end of the 2025;
- there being a system in place for a heat advisory for three (3) consecutive days of temperatures above 36 degrees Celsius;
- sunscreen and water being provided to those living unsheltered during heat advisories;
- a presentation to the Province to be made by staff regarding the cooling systems approach being taken;
- there being a program for individuals on social assistance to apply for air conditioners; and
- there being air conditioning in many housing units and in common areas.

## **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**

Motion by Councillor Biehn

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

**Carried**

Meeting Start Time: 4:30 P.M.

Meeting End Time: 4:44 P.M.



## 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.**

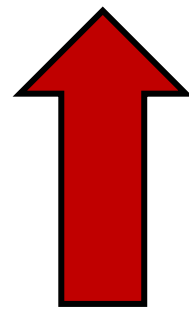
<b>Prepared by:</b>	John Ritz, Supervisor of Homelessness and Housing Stability
<b>Recommended by:</b>	Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
	Adam Betteridge, Interim Chief Administrative Officer

# SOCIAL SERVICES MONTHLY CHILDREN'S SERVICES REPORT

## Stratford, Perth County, & St. Marys

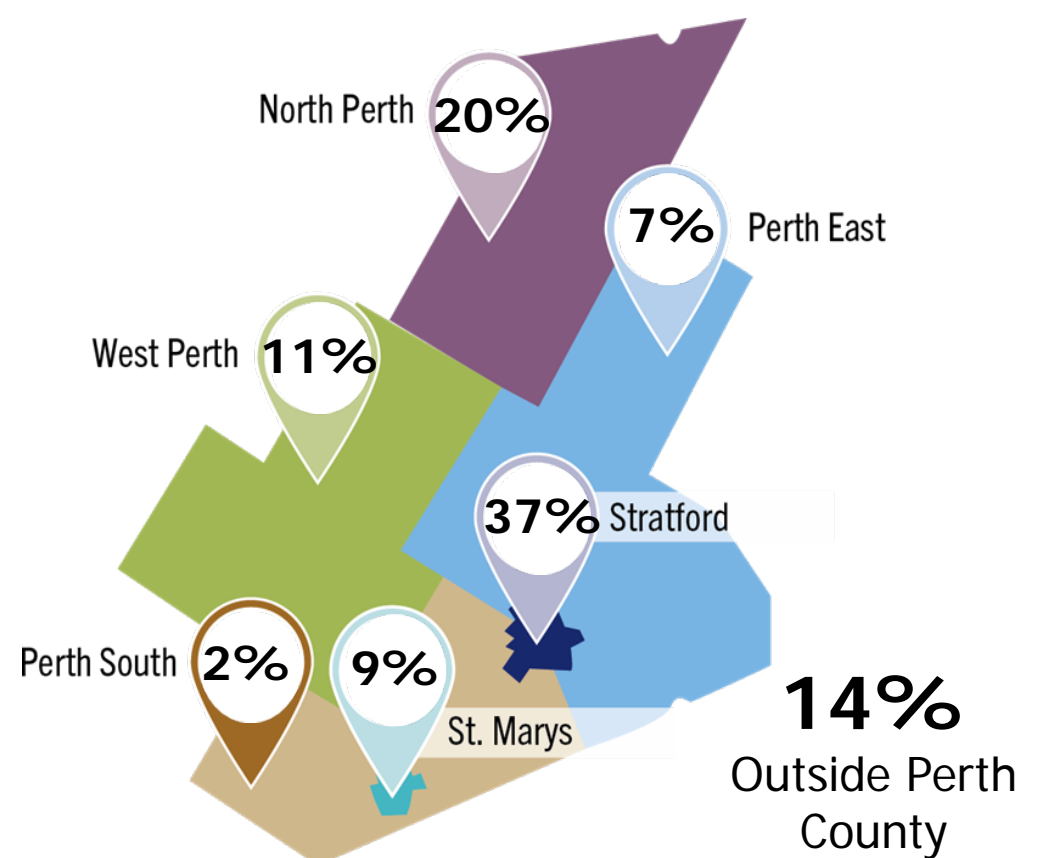
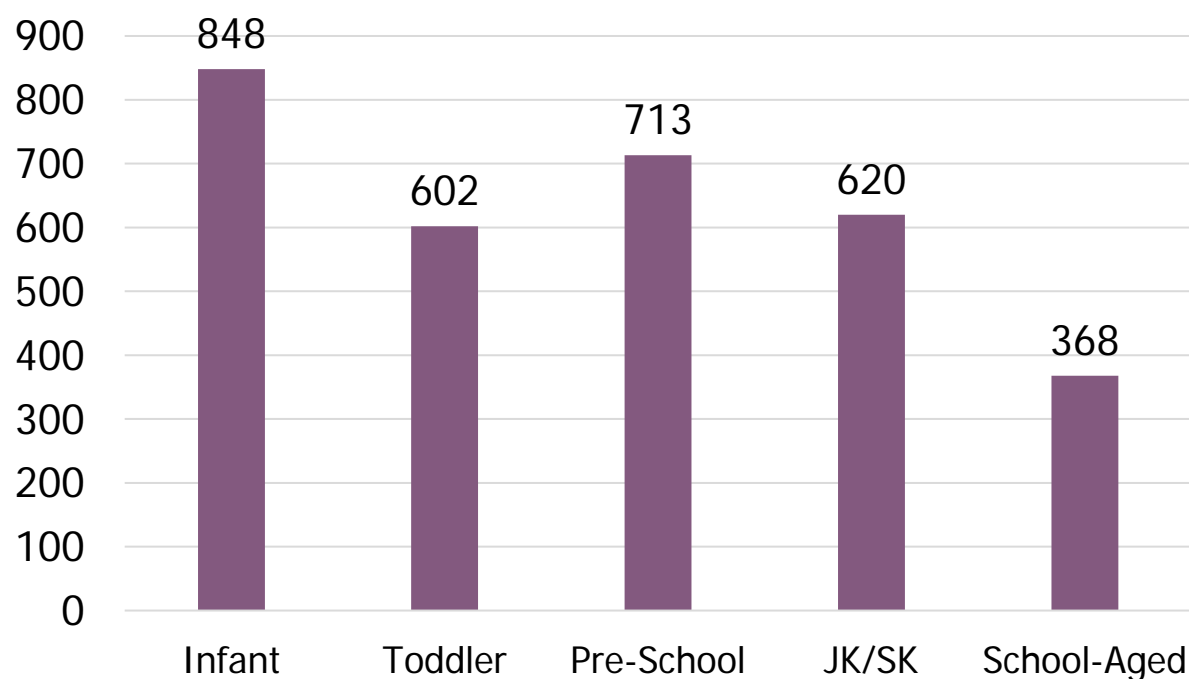
**3,151**

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

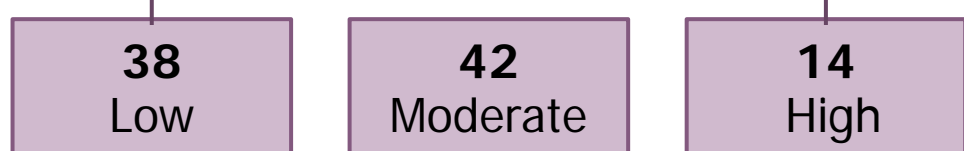
### Age Category on the waitlist



### 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>



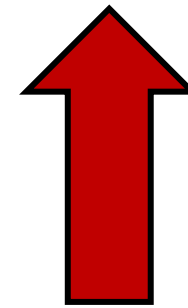
# SOCIAL SERVICES MONTHLY HOMELESSNESS REPORT

## 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>

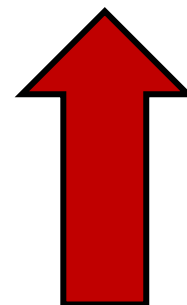


# SOCIAL SERVICES MONTHLY SOCIAL HOUSING REPORT

## 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%

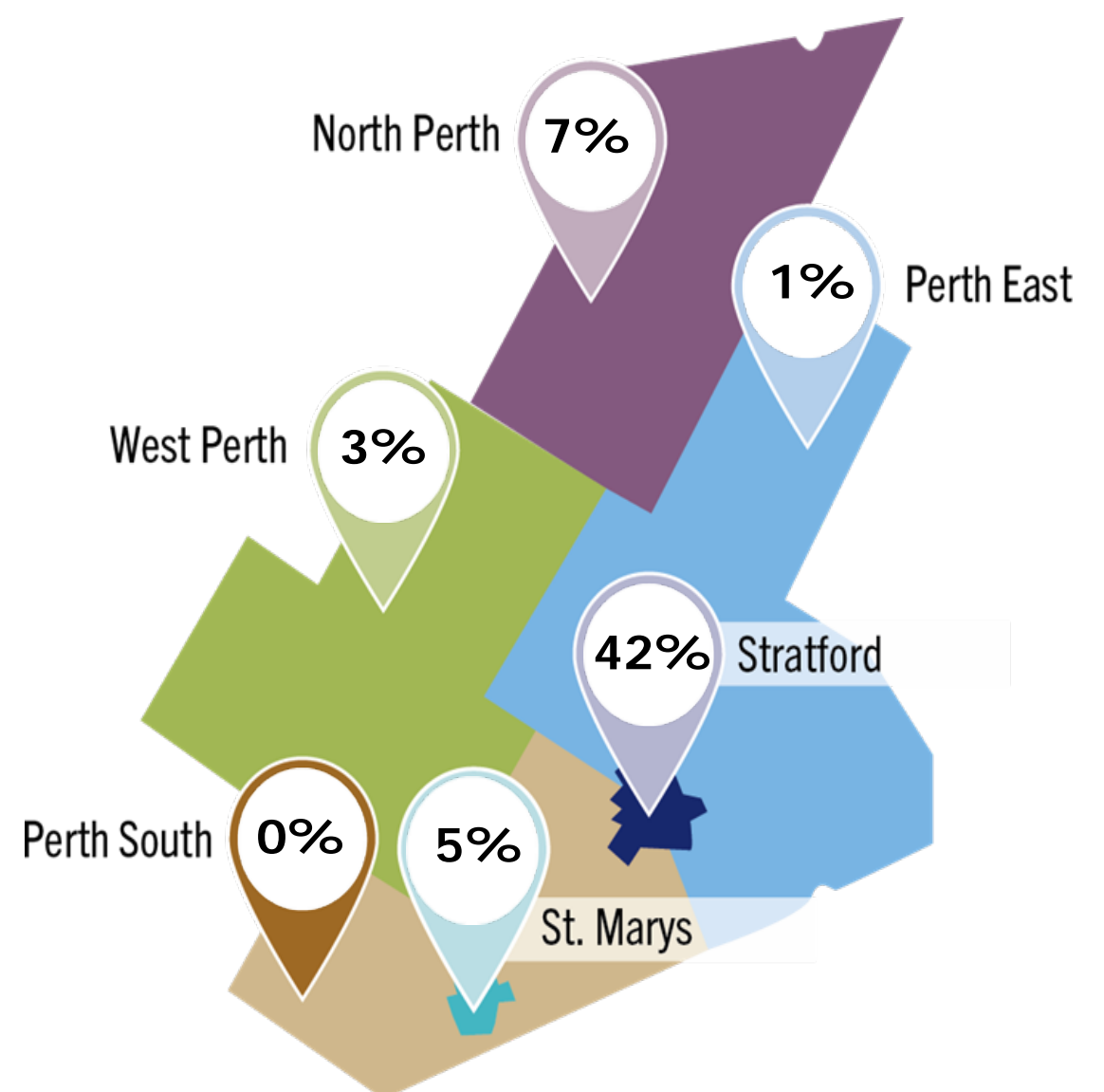
### Applicant Type

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>

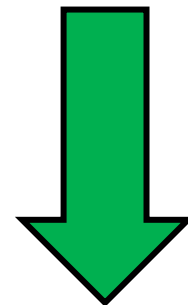




# SOCIAL SERVICES MONTHLY ONTARIO WORKS REPORT

## 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

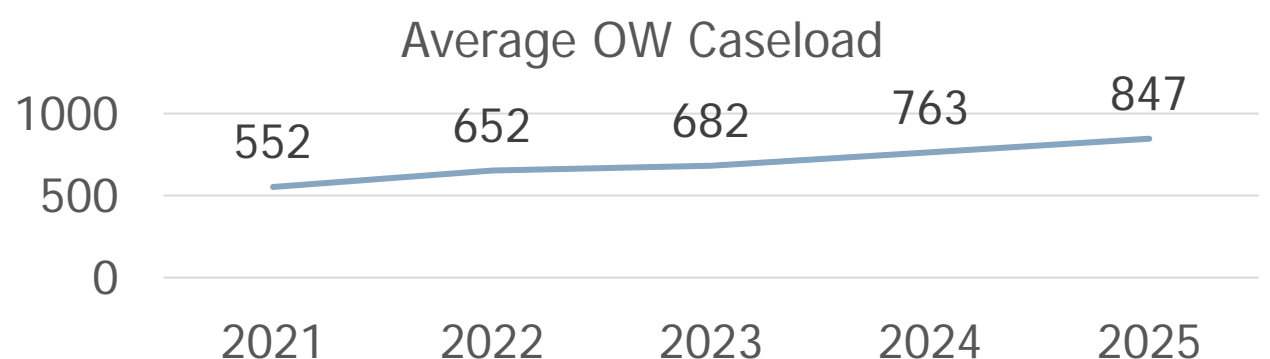
**\$733**

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

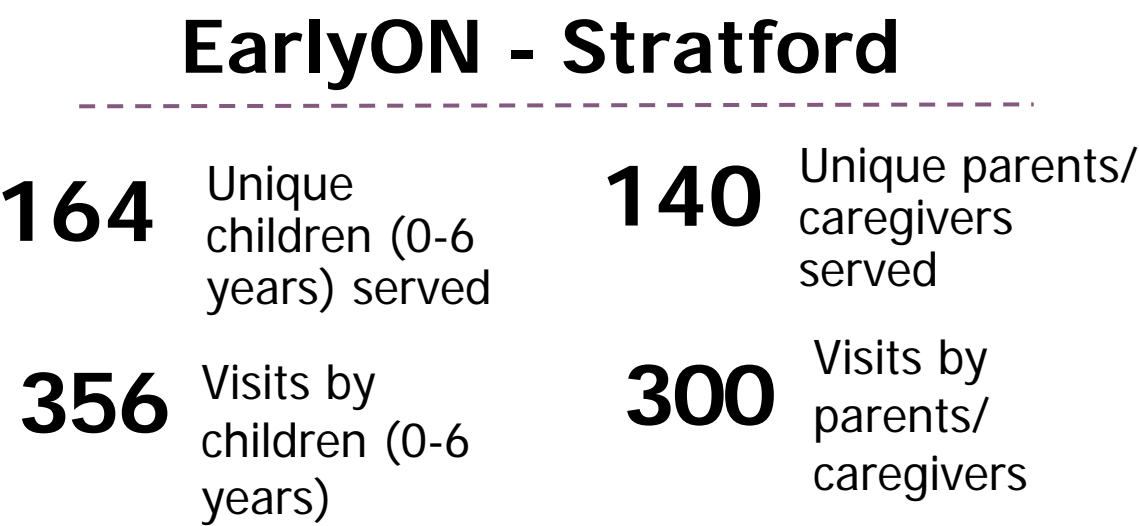
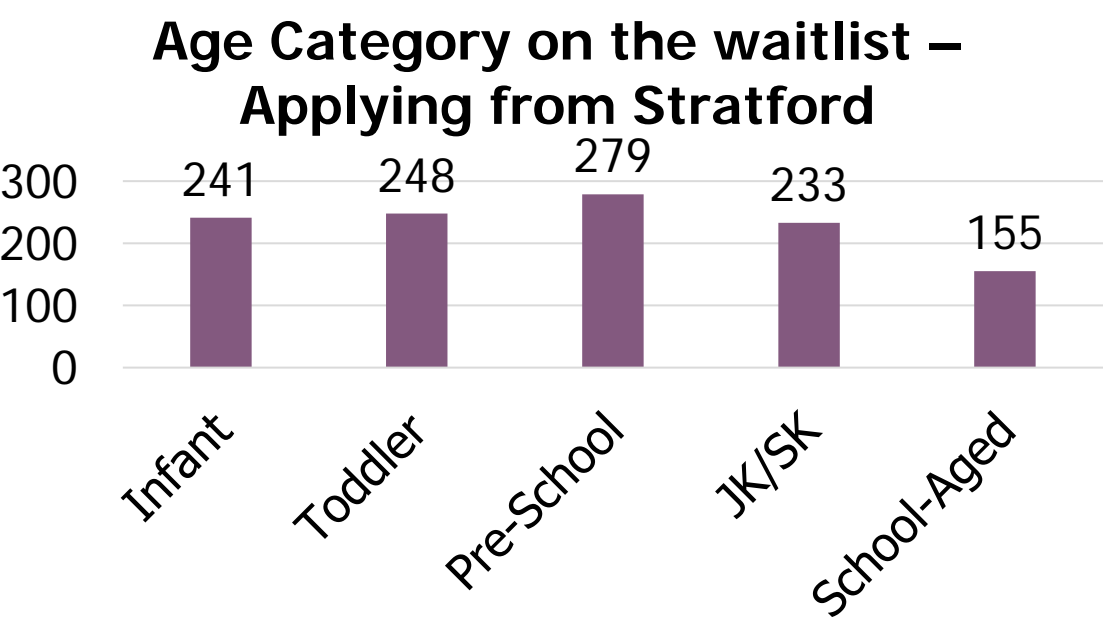
## Children's Services

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



## 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