



10-Year Housing & Homelessness Plan

2020 Update

A long-term plan to address Housing & Homelessness issues in the County of Dufferin

Executive Summary

Housing Services at the County of Dufferin provide a wide range of services, including:

- Administration of Dufferin County's Centralized Waitlist for community housing
- Delivery of various Rent Supplement Programs offered in Dufferin
- Management of the Homelessness Prevention Program
- Delivery of the Homeownership Program and the Ontario Renovates Programs
- Management and operation of the County owned community housing properties
- Working with Local Housing Providers (non-profit and co-operative housing programs)

In 2013, the County of Dufferin, in consultation with the community, created the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan to improve access to housing that is suitable and affordable for all residents in Dufferin. The 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan underwent a five-year review and the updated plan was adopted at County Council on November 14, 2019. Annual updates to the plan are posted on the County website.

In this 2020 update, the County has the opportunity to share a summary of progress made in 2020 despite the pandemic, and acknowledge the efforts of those contributing to our successes.

A Message from the Director

COVID-19 has presented a host of new challenges for everyone in 2020, yet it has also been a year of accomplishments. The pandemic created an opportunity to reflect and explore service delivery methods, supports and programming.

In 2020, Housing Services endured through the uncertainty and the many challenges but also created new opportunities to better serve clients, tenants, stakeholders and the community.

The impacts of COVID-19 are not felt equally among all those in Dufferin. We must seek to understand and mitigate the potential barriers to services and supports in this new landscape.

The County is fortunate to continue to work with local agencies and organizations in a myriad of ways to ensure every resident of Dufferin receives the supports that they need. Thank you for persevering with us through this challenging time, when we work together we achieve more.

Anna McGregor
Director of Community
Services, County of Dufferin

2020 HIGHLIGHTS

Various progress measures were established to ensure that the goals identified were addressed over the 10-year life of the plan. Specific measures include the County's efforts related to assisting low-income households, increasing the supply of affordable housing, maintaining operating agreements with housing providers, and expanding community collaboration.



41

Total housed waitlist applicants in 2020



272

Number of HPP cases in 2020



>50%

Reduction of chronic homelessness for at least three consecutive months

3 Households assisted through the 2020 Homeownership Program



\$86,063 Provided

"Are You Homeless in Dufferin" Contact Cards

The County of Dufferin launched the *Are You Homeless in Dufferin* contact cards in early December 2020 in collaboration with community partners such as Choices Youth Shelter, Family Transition Place, Salvation Army, Canadian Mental Health Association and the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP). Information sessions, contact cards and flyers are being provided to local service providers, businesses, churches and first responders to support those who are homeless in Dufferin County. So far, over 3,000 cards have been dispersed to OPP officers, paramedics, service providers, local businesses, churches, emergency responders, the hospital, and more.

- Youth (up to 24 yrs)**
519-940-5687
24/7 Choices Youth Shelter
- Women and Children**
519-941-HELP
24/7 Family Transition Place
- Families**
519-943-1203
(11:00-3:00, M-F) Salvation Army
- Men or Families**
519-941-6991 x2110
(8:30-4:30, M-F) County of Dufferin
- Men or Families**
1-888-811-2222 CMHA
(After Hours)
- Everyone**
211 or OPP 1-888-310-1122
24/7

If you know someone is homeless in Dufferin, please call.....

2020 RESULTS

2020 Progress Measures for the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan

GOAL 1 - Address Housing Affordability, Availability & Equity

Intended Outcomes	Short Term (1-2 years)	2020 Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better housing outcomes for low-to-moderate income households by helping to address affordability/income disparity House more people (i.e. goal of 40 additional units by 2024) Overall decline in seniors on the centralized waitlist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the creation of housing allowance programs to increase number of households who can receive financial assistance where they reside Continue to offer: Homeownership Program and Rent Supplement Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI) Housing Allowance provided housing allowances to 57 households Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) provided 17 households with a portable housing benefit that can be used throughout Ontario Chronic Homeless Housing Allowance Program (CHHAP) was implemented. CHHAP provides chronically homeless individuals a portable housing allowance of up to \$821 per month. As of 2020 year end, six chronically homeless individuals from the By-Name List (BNL) were receiving housing allowances Provided three households with loans through the Homeownership program Continued to offer the Rent Supplement Program

GOAL 2 - Prevent Housing Instability & Homelessness

Intended Outcomes	Short Term (1-2 years)	2020 Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help people obtain and/or maintain housing through Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) and similar programs Provide client-centered Homelessness Services through partnerships/collaboration with local agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue collaboration with agencies (i.e. LEAP) to deliver financial aid Continue delivery of "urHome" through HPP Implement HIFIS system Continue collaboration with community partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued to offer HPP. Administered LEAP for other utility providers and provided support for OESP Dufferin was recognized as having achieved an Advanced Quality By-Name List (BNL) Dufferin was recognized as having a Basic Quality Coordinated Access System. The Coordinated Access Table (CAT) continues to work towards an Advanced Quality Coordinated Access System In 2020, Dufferin reduced chronic homelessness by more than 50% and sustained it for at least three consecutive months Staff developed HIFIS training modules for in-house and external training. HIFIS training was completed with community partners. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, HIFIS has been used to complete all HPP applications including LEAP, OESP, urHome and motel vouchers Chronic Homeless Housing Allowance Program (CHHAP) was implemented (see above for more information)

2020 RESULTS (CONT.)

2020 Progress Measures for the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan (cont.)

GOAL 2 - Prevent Housing Instability & Homelessness (Cont.)

Intended Outcomes	Short Term (1-2 years)	2020 Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Help people obtain and/or maintain housing through HPP and similar programs• Provide client-centered Homelessness Services through partnerships/ collaboration with local agencies• Help individuals find & maintain housing with RentSmart training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue collaboration with agencies to deliver financial aid• Continue collaboration with community partners• Improve tenant outcomes with RentSmart	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dufferin has two subprojects under Reaching Home:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ The Dufferin Area Family Health Team (DAFHT) has hired two Housing Support Workers who work with clients on the BNL who are identified as chronic. Workers assist clients with searching for, and securing, housing and completing applications and referrals to mental health and/or medical resources. They also provide ongoing support and home visits◦ A Landlord Liaison was hired. The Landlord Liaison is responsible for the ongoing development and maintenance of relationships with landlords in Dufferin◦ The Landlord Liaison and Housing Support Workers work collaboratively• The Coordinated Access Transitional Housing (CATH) program provides those who are identified as chronic on the BNL with a transitional unit for up to three months. These units are located at various motels in the area. CATH is currently funded until the end of 2022. Supports for these clients and the landlords are being provided by the Housing Support Worker and the Landlord Liaison. This program began in December of 2020 with four units through the Lighthouse and ten units in local motels. Clients are provided with support to look for permanent housing while working on life stabilization• The County of Dufferin launched the <i>Are You Homeless in Dufferin</i> contact cards in December 2020 in collaboration with community partners. So far, over 3,000 cards have been dispersed to OPP officers, paramedics, service providers, local businesses, churches, emergency responders, the hospital, and more• Staff delivered the first RentSmart course in January 2020

2020 RESULTS (CONT.)

2020 Progress Measures for the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan (cont.)

GOAL 3 - Maintain, & Where Possible, Improve Housing

Intended Outcomes	Short Term (1-2 years)	2020 Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and, if possible, improve community housing • Maintain operating agreements with housing providers • Make housing more accessible and sustainable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with providers to discuss end of operating agreements and importance of partnership • Assess condition of current properties and make upgrades where possible • Continue tenant and housing provider surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual 2020 tenant survey completed • A total of \$336,409 of OPHI funding, under the Ontario Renovates component, was given to four housing Providers to be used for capital projects. This funding was largely utilized for roof replacements at three provider locations and the creation of a secondary suite • Staff reached out to all Providers to check in and see if there were additional supports that the County could provide. Providers were also given information on the bylaw changes regarding masks in multi-residential buildings • Major elevator modernization at one of the County housing buildings took place in the spring. Staff ensured that tenants were looked after regarding required additional supports for food and medication deliveries, calls from community partners, and wellness checks • During the pandemic, staff ensured tenants needs were met and that they were kept informed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Regular wellness check phone calls were made to all tenants including the Rent Supplement tenants ◦ Food Bank referrals were made by staff when needed ◦ Public Health and community resources were frequently delivered ◦ Hand sanitizer was provided to all units along with three-ply face masks ◦ Enhanced cleaning of frequently touched surfaces has been performed in common areas at all buildings daily • The social services relief funding (SSRF) Phase 1 and 2 was used to expand rent support programming, enhance cleaning, renovate and retrofit units, provide staff support, etc.

2020 RESULTS (CONT.)

2020 Progress Measures for the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan (cont.)

GOAL 4 - Meet a Range of Complex Community Needs

Intended Outcomes	Short Term (1-2 years)	2020 Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer safe and secure housing for victims of abuse in a timely manner • Work to become an Indigenous ally • Collaborate on services to help those most at risk before they are in full crisis • More seniors able to age in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue compliance with HSA legislation • Continued dialogue between County and supporting agencies • Continue involvement in the Domestic Assault Review Team (DART) • Explore alternative solutions for seniors housing (i.e. homesharing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Portable Housing Benefit-Special Priority Policy was replaced by the Canadian Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) in 2020. COHB provided 17 households with a portable housing benefit that can be used throughout Ontario • Provided Housing Allowance that subsidizes community partners who assist at-risk women • Continued involvement in DART • The process for Dufferin County's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan was started • Monthly transportation for Shelburne tenants from each building to the local grocery store was expanded to include Grand Valley tenants. These tenants are mostly seniors. In addition, for 2020, monthly transportation for Shelburne and Grand Valley tenants to Walmart in Orangeville had been arranged. Transportation had also been organized for locations that do not have public transportation. This program has been on hold since March 2020 due to the pandemic.

2020 RESULTS (CONT.)

2020 Progress Measures for the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan (cont.)

GOAL 5 - Cultivate Local Partnerships, Collaborate with Lower-Tiers of Government & Engage the Community

Intended Outcomes	Short Term (1-2 years)	2020 Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase awareness and buy-in of housing challenges• Collaborate on housing and support services• Consult community• Work more closely with lower-tier municipalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase awareness of challenges, poverty, inequity and homelessness• Continue involvement in committees (i.e. DCEC)• Engage tenants and the community using modern and interactive methods• Work with Planning and Consultants during Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR)• Dialogue with local government reps on direction and goals of plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continued work with DC MOVES & DCEC• Annual Housing Forum was held on November 23, 2020• Dufferin County collaborated with community partners on the Are You Homeless in Dufferin contact card project• Dufferin County Housing Services have entered into a contract with DAFHT to provide two Housing Support Workers who provide direct support to those who are chronically homeless• The process for Dufferin County's Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Plan was started. The municipalities in Dufferin are working collaboratively to develop a shared CSWB Plan for all of Dufferin County. An Advisory Committee was established to guide the development of the plan. This committee was comprised of a broad cross-section of organizations, with representatives from 16 different groups. In July and August of 2020, the Advisory Committee began the asset mapping process by conducting 20 interviews with community organizations. In November 2020 a general public survey was shared with residents. A total of 471 responses were received from residents across Dufferin's geographic areas. One of the key priority areas from the organizational consultation and community engagement was housing and homelessness• The social services relief funding (SSRF) Phase 1 and 2 was provided. Municipal service managers determined local needs and distributed the funding. The County of Dufferin invited community partners, organizations, non-profit agencies and those who support the most vulnerable in the community to provide feedback and submit business cases as to how the County could use the funding to financially assist them in order to continue to offer the best support to the community during the COVID-19 transition to recovery

2020 Housing Forum

The theme of the Housing Forum held on November 23, 2020 set to coincide with National Housing Day, was “Collaborative Leadership in the Pursuit of Reducing Homelessness”. This was held virtually due to COVID-19 restrictions. The session was led by world renowned author, researcher and professor Iain De Jong. The topic was certainly timely given the global circumstances.

Iain De Jong



Leader. Edutainer. Coach. Consultant. Professor. Researcher. Blogger. Do-gooder. Potty mouth. Positive disruptor. Relentless advocate for social justice. Comedian. Dad. Minimalist. Recovering musician. Canadian citizen. International jetsetter. Living life in jeans and a t-shirt. Trying really hard to end homelessness in developed countries around the world, expand harm reduction practices, make housing happen and reform the justice system....

2020 Community Engagement

2020 Community Consultation Through the Community Safety and Well-being Plan Survey

The Provincial Government enacted legislation through the *Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act, 2019*, requiring municipal governments to adopt Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) plans. The legislation stated that every municipal council was required to develop and adopt these plans by working in partnership with a multisectoral advisory committee. The County of Dufferin was recognised as the lead for the coordination and development of the Dufferin CSWB Plan. Despite the unforeseen challenges the pandemic created, Dufferin continued to move forward with work on the plan.

Community consultation for the CSWB Plan was partly achieved through a general public survey. As there was a housing and homelessness component to this survey and the survey was being distributed around the same time of year that the Housing and Homelessness Community Engagement Survey typically gets distributed, the CSWB general public survey was used to fulfill the community engagement piece for the housing and homelessness annual review so as to avoid survey fatigue.

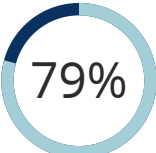
A total of 471 responses were received from residents across Dufferin’s geographic areas. The survey focused on perceptions of community safety and well-being and priorities to include in the Dufferin plan, and the housing and homelessness section included many of the same questions that had been used in Dufferin County’s housing and homelessness community engagement survey in previous years. High level results are presented on the following pages.

In general, it was found through the survey that housing and homelessness is a top CSWB factor that should be a priority in Dufferin, overall it was selected as the second highest priority, with mental health and well-being coming in at number one.

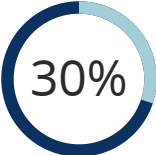
ENGAGEMENT (CONT.)

2020 Community Consultation (cont.)

AWARENESS



79% of respondents believe that everyone in Dufferin County has housing that is appropriate to their needs



30% were aware that Dufferin County has a 10-Year Housing & Homelessness Plan

MEETING GOALS

When asked to rate how well the County of Dufferin is doing on addressing each of the housing and homelessness goals, the between 20-30% of the participants responded with "don't know". Out of those that responded using the scale (one star (low) to five stars (high)), the percentages for the bottom two boxes (one and two stars) and top two boxes (four and five stars) are presented below:

	One & Two ★	Four & Five ★
Partnering and collaborating with local agencies on housing & homelessness	24%	22%
Maintaining and where possible improving community housing	29%	16%
Preventing homelessness and housing instability	35%	14%
Ending chronic homelessness	38%	14%
Meeting a range of complex community needs in regards to housing	36%	12%
Engaging the community about housing and homelessness	43%	12%
Increasing the supply of affordable housing in Dufferin County	43%	11%

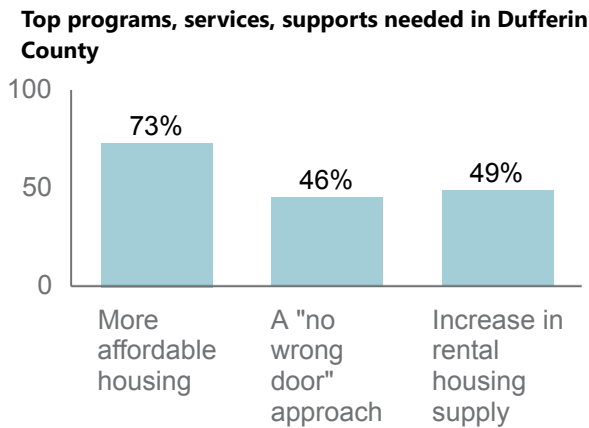
According to the survey respondents, Dufferin County is doing the best at partnering and collaborating with local agencies on housing & homelessness and needs the most improvement on increasing the supply of affordable housing in Dufferin County.

2020 Community Consultation (cont.)

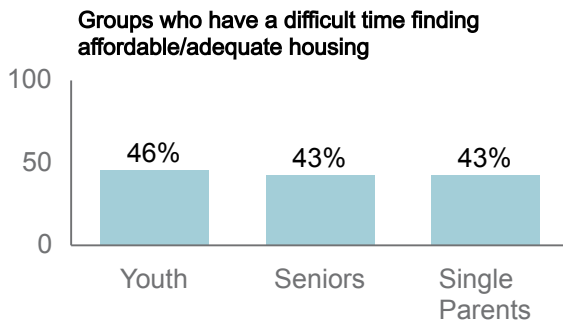
The survey contained several questions on local housing issues and challenges. Affordable housing came up as an issue several times in the survey:

According to 67% of respondents, lack of affordable housing is the #1 most pressing housing issue currently facing Dufferin County

The top three respondent selected (able to select all that apply) programs, services, supports needed to help people find and maintain housing in Dufferin County are:

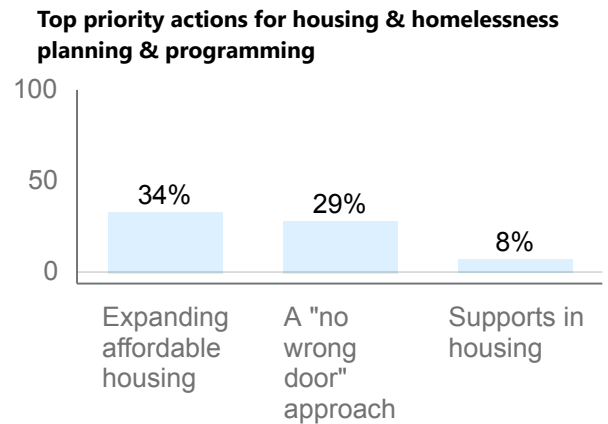


Respondents felt that certain groups of residents have a particularly difficult time finding affordable/adequate housing. The top three groups that were most selected (able to select all that apply) included:



Less than half of survey respondents (48%) agreed or strongly agreed that they have access to affordable housing options

The top three respondent selected (only able to select one) priority actions for housing and homelessness planning and programming in Dufferin County moving forward are:



A small sample of some of the open ended responses that were made regarding concrete actions that respondents felt would have the most positive impact on the quality of life, safety and well-being in Dufferin County included:

"more affordable housing"
"affordable rent (businesses and housing)"
"more housing options"
"more rental housing stock"
"affordable, accessible seniors housing"
"more infill development to increase housing options"

NEXT STEPS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

MOVING FORWARD & 2021 OPPORTUNITIES

Reaching Functional Zero for Chronic Homelessness in Dufferin County & the PiT Count

Dufferin aims to reach Functional Zero for chronic homelessness by the end of 2021. Functional Zero is three or less chronic homeless households on the BNL for three consecutive months. In order to reach Functional Zero, the County will continue to provide the CHHAP. The Point-in-Time (PiT) Count that was to be completed in 2020, has been re-scheduled to be completed in April 2021.

Implementation of Local Eligibility Rules and Asset Limits

The province will work with the County as a Service Manager, as well as housing providers and sector partners, to determine local eligibility rules on income and asset limits in regulation for RGI assistance. This is in order to provide greater consistency across the province in how housing need is identified and prioritized.

Promotion of RentSmart

Collaboration with other organizations in the community will be explored to further promote RentSmart. Organizations including youth groups, shelters, high schools, and colleges have expressed interest. The County will be exploring virtual RentSmart options.

Continue and Expand Housing Services

Expansion of Housing Services to tenants will take place to ensure housing retention, greater self-reliance, and social inclusion. COVID-19 Wellness Checks will continue in 2021 to support County tenants.

Re-vamp of the Homeownership Program

A re-vamp of the program will begin April 1, 2021. The maximum house purchase price will be \$609,118.00 and applicants must have a gross family income of \$114,500.00 or less. The re-vamp will also include a more streamlined process.

Thank you for your dedication and support!

The County of Dufferin Housing Services is pleased to have partnerships with the local human services agencies. Together we are making progress toward our goals to address housing and homelessness in Dufferin. The County gratefully acknowledges the efforts of all involved in helping us take steps forward. In particular, we would like to thank:

- Community partner agencies, for ongoing collaboration, and solutions-focused efforts in addressing affordable housing and homelessness in this community
- County of Dufferin Council, for continued leadership in making a difference in the lives of people in this community

