

# Year 2017

United Counties of Prescott and Russell



## **[HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS PLAN]**

This document contains the 2017 report of the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan for the United Counties of Prescott and Russell.

The United Counties of Prescott and Russell (UCPR) introduced, in 2014, a Housing and Homelessness Plan, striving to improve the residents' housing conditions.

Our Plan is divided into **16** strategic initiatives in order to end homelessness in our County. This document provides to the reader a glimpse of the key projects and services that were introduced or facilitated in 2017.

## A. Partnerships and Collaborations

- Meeting biannually with Non-Profit Providers to review policies and procedures, resolve issues, and obtain feedback for a positive outcome. In 2017, we addressed End of Operating Agreements, the Portable Housing Benefit, programs offered through Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) funding, and marijuana.
- Meeting biannually with all agencies providing services to the community. The meeting gathers **28** agencies with the attendance of more than **120** participants under the same roof. In 2017, **8** agencies presented their services to the networking group.
- The agency meeting provided opportunities for our Community Relations Worker to learn more about services offered and connect with individuals from the agencies that provide these services as well as share our housing programs and services.

## B. Access to CMSM Services and Programs

- As an ongoing measure, we provide *Investment in Affordable Housing for Ontario* (IAH) rent supplements as per a specific ratio to ensure a balance of housing services within the Service Manager (SM) area.
- Our Rent Calculation Clerk keeps an updated list of Landlords who wish to enter into agreements for the *Rent Supplement* programs to offer units to those who are in need.
- We encourage Landlords to offer units in locations where services are easily accessible (that do not require transportation).
- The main reception of the UCPR is now served by employees from the three services of the Social Services Department with a service integration approach.
- The IAH program internal policies have been modified to allow greater access to the *Ontario Renovates* and *Homeownership* components. By increasing rates for the value of property and household income, the programs become more accessible to the population.
- The Housing Services sit on the Prescott-Russell Situational Table.

### Homeownership Program

Buying a house can be one of the largest, single expenses someone can experience during their lifetime. It can also be a great investment. Nowadays, finding a house at an affordable price can be an overwhelming task.

The *Homeownership* Component under the IAH provides an opportunity for a forgivable loan to allow low-to-moderate-income renter households to purchase their first home. The amount of the loan for down-payment assistance is equivalent to **10%** of the purchase price. Through this program, the UCPR also have access to a revolving loan fund, whereby money is reinvested back into the fund when the houses are sold, for use by potential future buyers.

The program was available throughout 2017, helping **4** households become first-time Home Buyers.

### Rent Supplement

The *Rent Supplement* Component has been designed to help address affordability issues of households in modest rental units across the province. The “rent supplement” is a subsidy (up to **\$230** per month) paid to the Landlord on behalf of a household in need of rental assistance. It is meant to help bridge the gap between the rent that a household can afford to pay and the actual market rent of a modest unit.

*The UCPR helped approximately **112 households** with their monthly rent; **\$293,507** invested in 2017.*

### Ontario Renovates

As the years go by, houses are aging and are in need of renovations and repairs. *Ontario Renovates* is a 10-year forgivable loan that provides financial assistance to homeowners so they can conduct urgent home repairs that will allow for continued safe occupancy of their home. Through this program, the UCPR also have access to a revolving loan fund, whereby money is reinvested back into the fund when the houses are sold, for use by potential future buyers.

*The UCPR helped approximately **11 households** with their home repair; **\$151,380** invested in 2017.*

## Rental Component

- The UCPR approved a project of **21** units, **11** of which are affordable, with the Township of Russell (Embrun) Non-Profit Housing Corporation, Centre J. Urgel Forget. The UCPR advanced approximately **\$500,000** to start up the project.

## C. Prevention

- We use a large amount of IAH funding for the *Rent Supplement* program, as this provides more units for our dollar. This also helps renters in locations where no other Social or Non-Profit Housing exists.
- We use our administration dollars towards human resources to ensure that we get the most out of the IAH funding (Project Coordinator was hired).

## Residential Services Homes Program

Residential Services Homes offer long-term accommodation and care to vulnerable adults that require help to perform their daily activities.

The UCPR subsidize the accommodation and food costs to **450** people throughout the **eight** municipalities across the UCPR. Agreements are in place between the UCPR and the **33** Residential Services Home owners offering a per diem (**\$55/day; \$1,672.92/month**) along with a monthly allowance for personal necessities (**\$146/month**) to every subsidized resident.

### ***Housing loss prevention***

*The UCPR stabilized approximately*

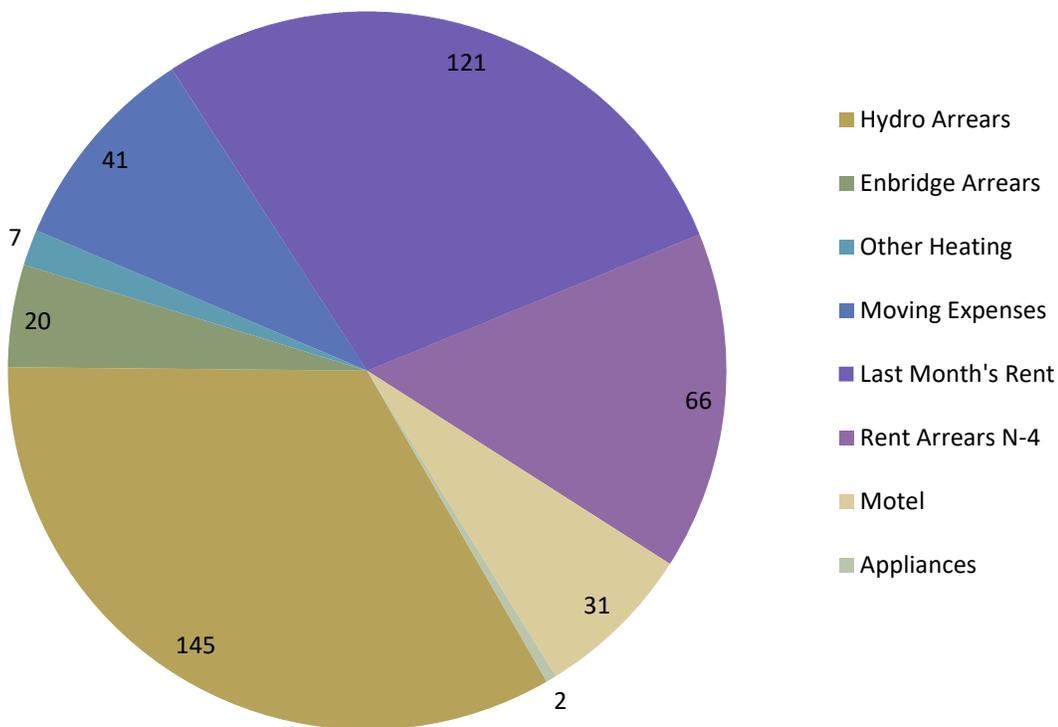
**359 households at risk of homelessness** (includes eviction prevention services, assistance with rental and energy arrears).

### ***Housing retention***

*The UCPR are helping approximately*

**460 households at risk of homelessness** by providing an ongoing subsidy/support to retain their housing (at **six** months).

### Housing Assistance Fund (CHPI)



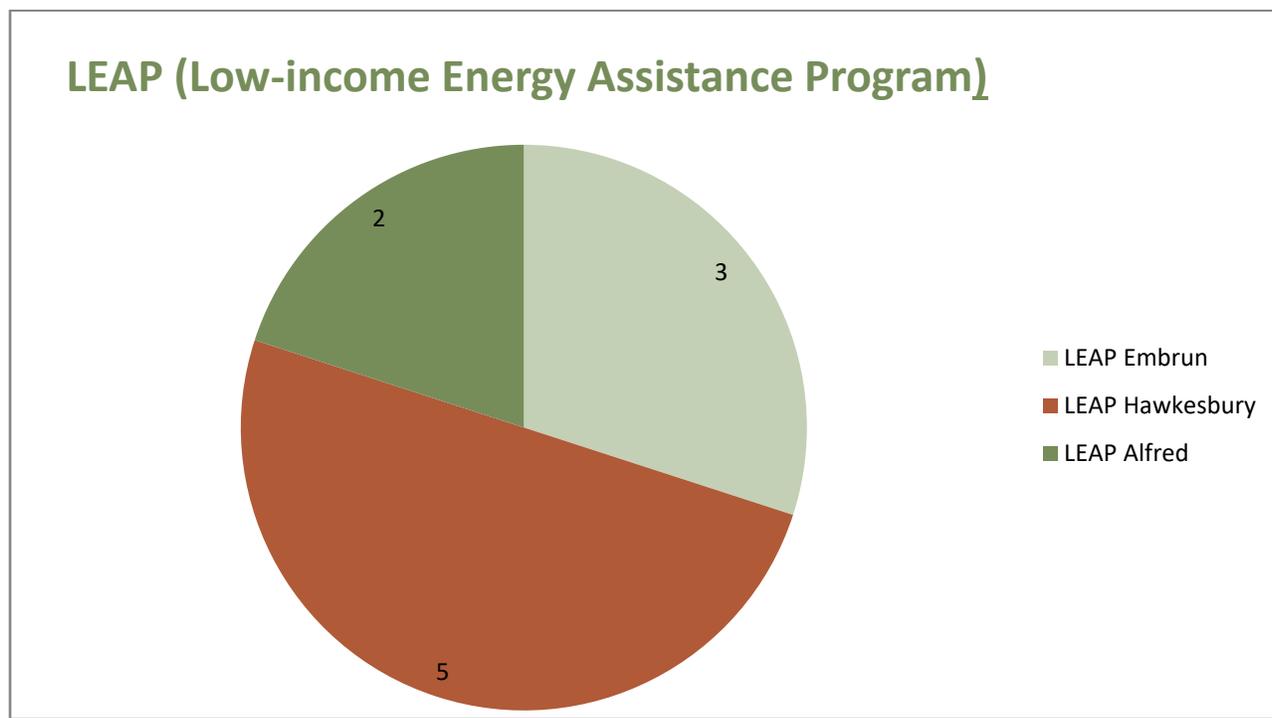
The *Housing Assistance Fund* assists low-income households within the UCPR to obtain and retain housing and also helps those at risk of homelessness to remain housed.

The *Housing Assistance Fund* can provide financial assistance up to a maximum of **\$1,500** for singles and couples with no children, **\$3,000** for families with children (H.A.F., Rent Bank, LEAP, EEF, Homelessness)

The fund is paid every two years commencing January 2013.

In 2017, the UCPR provided financial assistance to **145** households with their **Hydro Arrears**, **20** with their **Enbridge Arrears**, and **7** with **Other Heating Expenses**.

Also, we provided financial assistance to **41 households** for their **moving expenses**, **121** with their **Last Month Rent**, and **66** with their **Rent Arrears** following the reception of a Notice to End a Tenancy Early for Non-payment of Rent.



LEAP is a grant program intended to provide emergency relief to eligible low-income customers who may be experiencing difficulty paying current arrears.

This program assists consumers with limited financial resources, through **three** unique programs:

- Emergency Financial Assistance;
- Special rules for qualified low-income customers;
- Energy conservation (established by the utility company).

The UCPR assist applicants to fill out the application form and deem eligible customers as low-income with the utility company in order for the household to qualify.

In 2017, **17 households** benefited from this program with **5** in **Hawkesbury**, **3** in **Embrun**, and **2** in **Alfred**.

In order to help end homelessness, the UCPR also provided gift cards, from CHPI funds, to low-income individuals and families who were at imminent risk of homelessness. **L'Original's main office** gave **698** gift cards, while **Rockland's office** donated **802** gift cards, for a total number of **1,548** gift cards granted in 2017.

### Portable Housing Benefit – Victims of Family Violence

During 2017, we signed **27** new agreements. An amount of **\$96,025** was thus allocated to **35** tenants in the Prescott and Russell area to make their homes more affordable. The purpose of the Benefit is to provide survivors of family violence with financial assistance other than the traditional form of rent-geared-to-income (RGI) housing to provide safe and affordable housing.

## D. Transportation

- The Prescott and Russell Economic Development and Tourism Department has prepared a pilot project to offer community transportation that would link the various municipalities in the Prescott and Russell territory. This project is awaiting provincial funding.

## E. Education and Training

- We continuously encourage Tenants to seek advice from Legal Aid if they have issues with Non-Profit Landlords, Private-sector Landlords, or our own Housing Services Portfolio.
- We often meet with Legal Aid representatives and share our concerns with them.
- Each year within our senior's portfolio, we have a community lunch and take the opportunity to educate Tenants on their rights and obligations or educate them about bullying or fraud with the help of other agencies such as the OPP.
- When we meet with Providers on a biannual basis, we invite agencies such as the Canadian Mental Health Association, the Fire Department, or Maison Interlude House (victims of domestic violence) to educate Managers about various programs.
- On an annual basis, our Community Relations Worker visits Tenants of the Public Housing Portfolio and provides information on Tenants' rights and obligations as well as safety issues such as electrical or smoke alarms. She also provides available resources within the community.

- We send a bulletin each fall and spring on Tenants' rights and obligations as well as available resources.

## F. Delivery of Programs and Services

- Our Community Relations Worker maintains good working relations with community agencies. She also sits on the LGBTQ2 committee.
- The integration of the three services at the main reception is one more step towards the complete integration of the **three** services of the Social Services Department.

## G. Resources (Financial, Human, Material)

- The Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) funding is managed by a full-time employee of the Ontario Works program. We refer people in need of funding to this individual.
- We have a full-time IAH Coordinator to administer all programs mentioned above.

## H. Input of Municipalities

- Our Official Plan has been revised and includes provision to encourage developers to provide affordable housing in all municipalities.
- The Official Plan also encourages local municipalities to adopt the same provisions within their zoning by-laws.
- We provided a report to Council (Mayors of local municipalities) on the proposed IAH funding and how to make the best use of the funding in keeping with our 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan.
- Since the first Municipal Non-Profit Housing Corporation End of Operating Agreement was entered into at the end of 2017, early 2018, local municipalities are becoming more involved and interested in the future of housing projects in their municipality.

## I. Needs assessment

- We continue to offer and provide rent supplement units in accordance with our Housing Need Assessment Study.

- We have started work to assess the number of homeless people. The Evaluation will take place in the spring of 2018.

## **J. Performance measurements**

- No development in 2017.

## **K. Housing Stock**

- **Two** new Rental projects under the IAH-E and SIF projects for a total of **17** Affordable units located in Embrun and Clarence-Rockland.

## **L. Public Awareness**

- Through biannual agency networking meetings, we promote programs and raise public awareness.
- We maintain updated information about our programs on our website.

## **M. Awareness Among Government Authorities**

- No new development in 2017.

## **N. Complementary between Programs and Services**

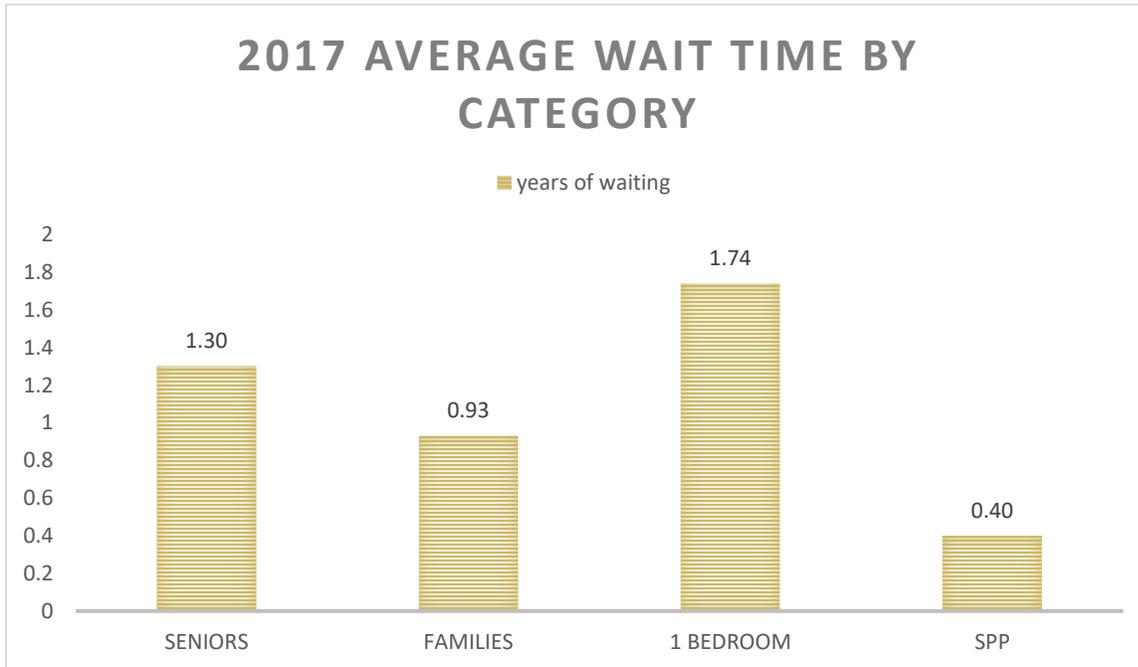
- No specific measures were taken in 2017.

## **O. Policies, Standards, and Guidelines**

- We make sure that CHPI funding can be used before we go to Tribunal for arrears or damages to the units.
- On an ongoing basis, we try to make repayment agreements. .

## P. Waiting Lists

- We strongly recommend that MNP join the centralized waitlist system to ensure we have a better understanding of needs across the SM area.



The average wait time in 2017 for the Housing Services in the UCPR is approximately **1 year and a half**.