



# Social Services Department

2024 Annual Report

Children's Early Years Division  
Housing Services Division  
Ontario Works Division

County of Wellington  
**Social Services Department**

September 2025

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# Social Services 2024 Annual Report

The County of Wellington is one of 47 designated Service System Managers for Social Services across Ontario that are responsible for the delivery of provincial services in the areas of child care and early years services, housing services, homelessness services and prevention, and income supports. Service System Managers oversee the systems planning and manage the delivery of these services in a way that is integrated, people-focused and outcomes-driven at the local level.

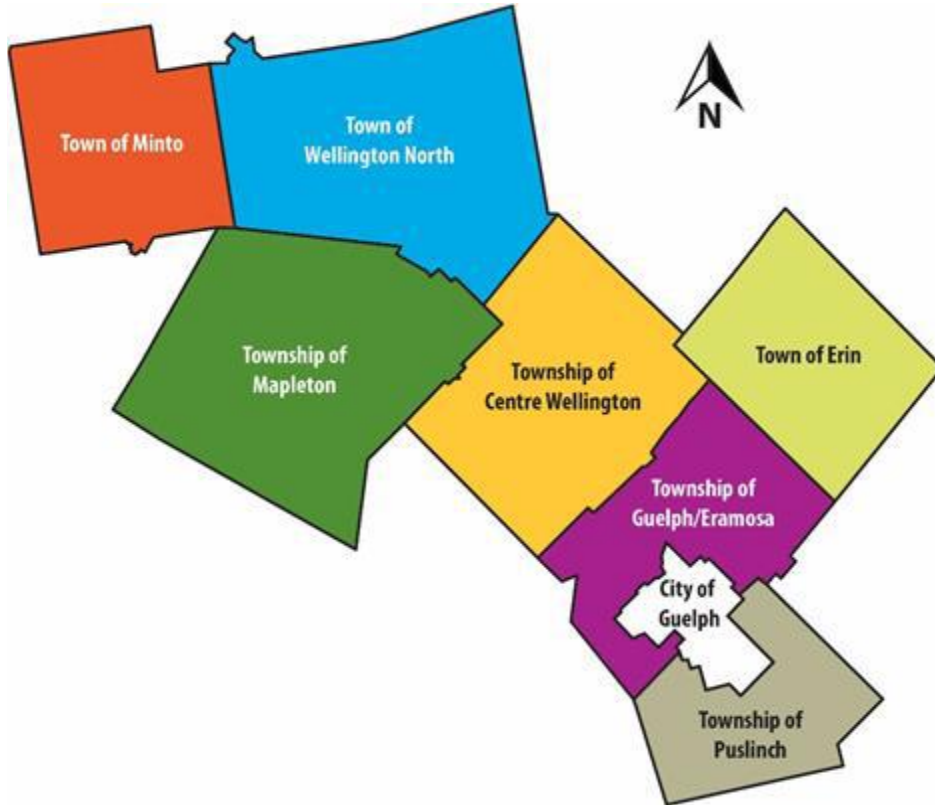
As the Service System Manager, the Social Services department oversees the planning, management, implementation, and co-funding of the following programmes and services on behalf of the Province of Ontario. Each division is legislatively required to report to their respective Ministries in accordance with the Ministry's programme mandates, funding allocations, directives, guidelines, and service targets.

| <b>Social Service</b>  | <b>Legislation</b>  | <b>Ministry</b>                                     |
|------------------------|---|---|
| Children's Early Years | Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014                          | Ministry of Education                               |
| Housing Services       | Housing Services Act, 2011<br>Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 | Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing           |
| Ontario Works          | Ontario Works Act, 1997                                       | Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services |

This report includes an overview of the Role and Responsibilities, Goals and Objectives, Provincial Performance Targets, and Service Delivery Activity for each Division of the Social Services Department within the approved 2024 Social Services budget allocation.

## Wellington Service Delivery Area

The Wellington service delivery area includes 8 municipalities that are a mix of urban and rural areas, covering 2,665 square kilometers.



According to the 2021 Census, Wellington service delivery area has a total population of 241,026, with approximately 60% residing in the City of Guelph and 40% residing in Wellington County. The population has grown by 9.1% since the 2016 census, well above Ontario's population increase of 5.8%. The City of Guelph population is distributed across just over 87 square kms, and the County of Wellington population is distributed across more than 2,500 square kms of land (nearly 97% of the total service delivery area).

## Children's Early Years

### Service System Manager Responsibilities

Service system managers play a central role in the planning, funding, administration and operation of licensed child care, authorized recreation programmes, and the early years system in Ontario.

A key responsibility of the Children's Early Years division is to perform service system planning for the child care and years system that addresses local priorities and matters of provincial interest, as outlined in the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*. The [Wellington-Guelph Child Care and Early Years Plan](#) is available on the County's website.

To advance Wellington's strategic priorities of a licensed child care and early years system that is of high quality, and is equitably available, equitably accessible, and affordable across the service delivery area of Wellington-Guelph, the Children's Early Years Division performs several key functions:

- **Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) System:** Implementation of 100% federal funding to reduce child care fees, increase licensed child care spaces, and support improved compensation for Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) who are low wage earners.
- **Child Care Fee Subsidy:** Administration of the child care fee subsidy programme, which subsidizes the costs of licensed child care for eligible families.
- **Special Needs Resourcing:** Improve access and optimal participation of children with special needs in licensed child care and early years programmes.
- **Capacity Building:** Build the capacity of the child care and early years programmes workforce through professional learning and development opportunities to support the provision of high-quality programmes.
- **EarlyON Child and Family Centres:** Plan for and oversee the system of high-quality child care and family programmes and services, for all families and caregivers with children from birth to 6 years old, at no cost to participants.
- **Directly Operated Child Care Programmes:** Operate four licensed child care centres and one licensed home child care agency.

## Programme Goals and Objectives

A collaborative approach to planning and implementation of programmes is supported through the Growing Great Generations Planning Table and the Birth to Six sub-working group, as well as local community planning tables involving health, community service agencies, child care and EarlyON operators, and organizations supporting children and youth and their families.

- To increase the capacity for regulated child care and EarlyON services, focusing on fair distribution.
- To develop and support implementation of a workforce strategy that improves recruitment and retention of qualified child care and early years professionals.
- To support the inclusion of children with special needs in the child care and early years programmes, including EarlyON Centres.
- To increase access to and participation in professional development and recruitment strategies that enhance the workforce's knowledge and competencies on topics of current focus, relevance and interest within the sector including diversity, inclusive practices, and cultural competence.
- To improve child care and early years service system information, awareness, communication, and service navigation resources to enable parents to make informed decisions and to learn about available services.
- To improve integration of the child care and early years service system, particularly EarlyON programmes, with other community services.

## 2024 Provincial Performance Measures

| Green: Target met    Yellow: In progress    Red: Target not met   |   |                               |                          |             |                            |
|---|---|-------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|
| Performance Outcome   | Description   | Provincial Target (2024-2026) | Provincial Target (2024) | Actual 2024 | Progress on 3-year targets |
| # new school-based child care spaces, birth – 5 years, created under the CWELCC Agreement, 2024-2026    | Number of new child care spaces located in schools created with CWELCC funding.       | 128                           | 64                       | 64          | 50%                        |
| # new community-based child care spaces, birth – 5 years, created under the CWELCC Agreement, 2024-2026 | Number of new child care spaces located in the community created with CWELCC funding. | 1,081                         | 458                      | 273         | 25%                        |
| <b>Total # new child care spaces created under the CWELCC Agreement, 2024-2026</b>                      | <b>Total of new school- and community-based spaces created.</b>                       | <b>1,209</b>                  | <b>522</b>               | <b>337</b>  | <b>28%</b>                 |

Source: Wellington County Service Data – CWELCC Growth Data, as of December 31, 2024.

## 2024 Service Delivery

### Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Funding

The [Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care \(CWELCC\) System](#) for licensed child care spaces for children ages birth up to 5 years of age, includes the implementation of 100% Federal funding to reduce child care fees for families and supports improved compensation for Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) and other programme staff. Across Wellington-Guelph, there are 3,619 spaces being supported by CWELCC funding, which accounts for 90.4% of all spaces for children birth to age 5 (i.e., infant, toddler, kindergarten, and preschool spaces).

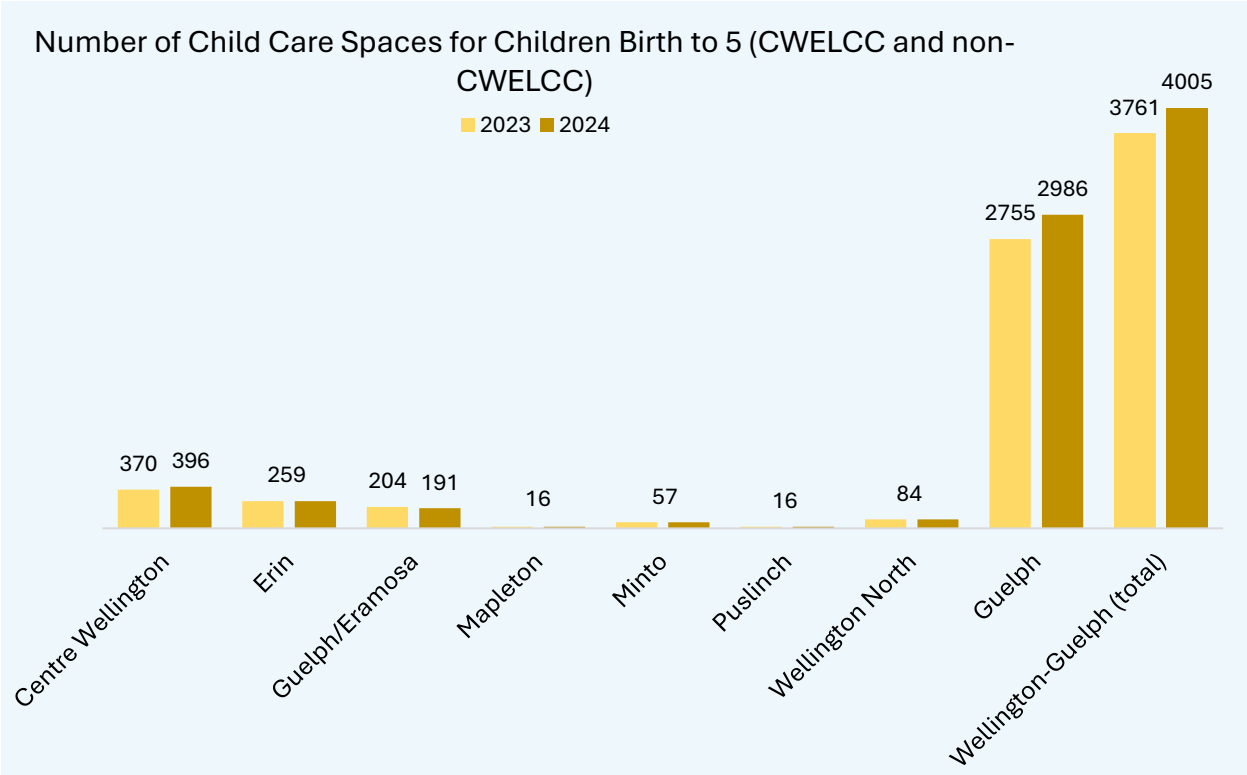
|                                      |                                  |              |                   |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| <b>83</b>                            | <b>3,619</b>                     | <b>2,682</b> | <b>937</b>        |
| Programmes with a CWELCC agreement   | Total spaces supported by CWELCC | Guelph       | Wellington County |
| Spaces, birth-5, supported by CWELCC |                                  |              |                   |

*CWELCC Children's Early Years*

Under the CWELCC System, the Province of Ontario has a goal to create 86,000 new affordable spaces by the end of 2026. Meeting this target will be contingent on the availability of capital funding and sufficient operational funding under CWELCC.

Provincial space creation targets for 2024-2026 were adjusted as of March 31, 2025. Wellington's 2024 space creation was planned under the original 2022-2026 targets and therefore did not meet the 2024 targets after the adjustments. The Ministry of Education indicated that Service System Managers would carry any gaps in space creation into 2025.

The figure below shows the total number of licensed child care spaces for children ages birth to 5 years in each of the eight municipalities in the service delivery area in 2023 and 2024. Appendix A provides access rate percentages in the City and County for child care spaces for children ages birth up to 12 years of age.



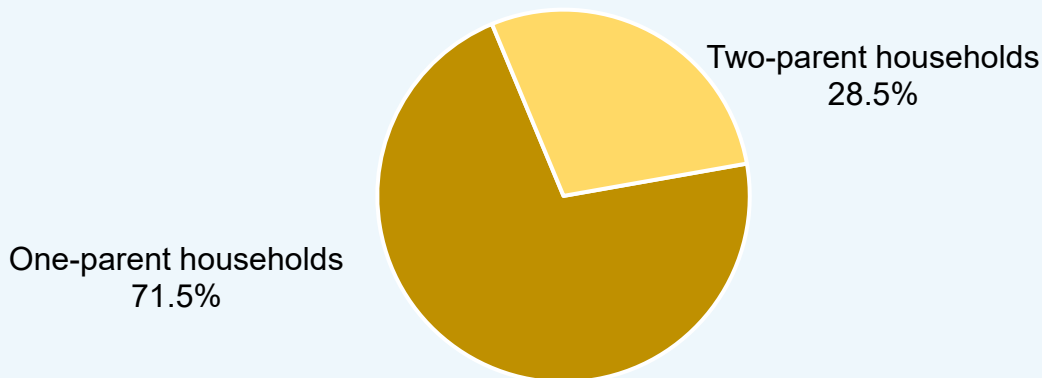
## Child Care Fee Subsidy

The Children's Early Years Division administers the [child care fee subsidy programme](#), which can help families pay for licensed child care, and approved camp and recreation programmes for children up to age 13 years. Families must have a need for child care and be eligible based on family income. Need for care includes working, attending school or a training programme, have a medical or family need that can be helped by the child attending child care, or if the child has a disability or special need and child care is recommended by agencies working with the child.

Although CWELCC has reduced the cost of many child care spaces across Ontario for children up to age 5, many families cannot afford the cost of child care, whether it be for spaces not eligible for the CWELCC system or the reduced CWELCC rates. As such, child care fee subsidy remains an important support for families, and allows children to access high-quality licensed child care and enables low income families to participate in the workforce or attend education or training.

In 2024, child care spaces for 715 unique children across 554 families were supported by fee subsidies. The figure below shows the composition of families that accessed fee subsidies in 2024, with the majority being one-parent households.

Composition of Households Accessing Fee Subsidy

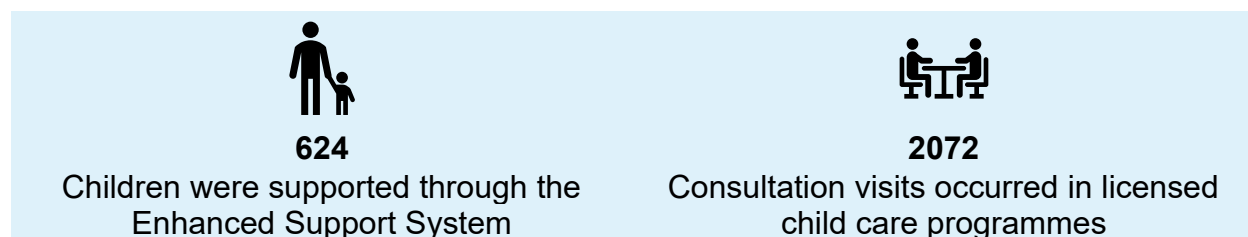


## Special Needs Resourcing

The Children's Early Years Division administers Special Needs Resourcing (SNR), a funding stream that supports the inclusion of children with special needs in licensed child care (centre-based and home-based), authorized recreation and camp programmes, and EarlyON Child and Family Centres.

Supports offered through SNR funding are provided at no additional cost to families. The [Enhanced Support System \(ESS\)](#) is Wellington's model of delivering SNR and includes general consultation (i.e., supports an entire programme or room), child-specific consultation (i.e., supports an individual child), and direct liaison therapy support, as well as funding for specialized equipment and devices and additional staffing. Two agencies are contracted and fully funded to deliver services through the Enhanced Support System: KidsAbility (Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Consultants), and the Canadian Mental Health Association Waterloo Wellington (Mental Health Consultants), with Resource Consultants being employed by the County.

In 2024, ESS supported developmental and inclusion supports for 624 children and provided 2072 consultations with staff at licensed child care programmes.



## Capacity Building

Capacity Building occurs through the Children's Early Years Division's [Early Years Professional Resource Centre \(EYPRC\)](#), which offers professional learning opportunities and resources to support the work of child care and early years educators throughout Wellington-Guelph.

The supports offered by the EYPRC include: in-person, virtual, and online training opportunities, side-by-side mentorship for child care and early years programmes, as well as access to the [ReachingIN...ReachingOUT \(RIRO\)](#) and [Bounce Back & Thrive! \(BBT\)](#) resiliency training programmes. Capacity Building Funding supports the work of the EYPRC whereas Workforce Funding is a specialized initiative from the Ministry of Education that aims to support and retain a qualified child care and early years workforce.

In 2024, there were 102 events supported through capacity building funding, and 2 events supported through Workforce Funding. Under the Workforce Funding, the EYPRC hosted the Early Years Professional Learning Day in November 2024, which brought together 703 educators, leaders, and support staff from across Wellington-Guelph for a full day of learning and reflection. The Workforce Funding also supported the Infant and Early Years Mental Health Day which supported 24 educators and leaders from EarlyON Child and Family Centres.

This is in addition to 104 professional learning activities that attracted the participation of 805 educators, with 93 child care and early years staff completing resiliency training.



## EarlyON Child and Family Centres

[EarlyON Child and Family Centres](#) are safe and welcoming environments for families and caregivers with young children (birth to 6 years) to access regardless of where they live in Ontario at no cost. Centres offer play and inquiry-based programmes led by a Registered Early Childhood Educator, who also provide support and advice about parenting and child development. The centres also provide access to resources and community supports as well as specialized services.

EarlyON Child and Family Centres are open weekdays, evenings, and weekends to fit the needs of families in their communities and offer both in person and virtual programmes.

As of December 2024, there were 7 EarlyON Centres and 14 EarlyON mobile sites across the Wellington service delivery area. Three agencies are contracted to operate EarlyON programmes: Community Resource Centre of North and Centre Wellington, Guelph Community Health Centre, and Shelldale Family Gateway. These programmes have offered warm and welcoming spaces to learn and grow for over 15,000 children and caregivers who combined made over 68,000 visits to an EarlyON Centre in 2024.



## Housing

### Service System Manager Responsibilities

Service System Managers play an important role in the delivery of housing and homelessness programmes and services in Ontario. The Housing Services division, as the Service System Manager for Wellington-Guelph, is responsible for the service delivery and administration of federally and provincially mandated community (formerly social) and government-funded affordable housing programmes under the *Housing Services Act, 2011*, as well as initiatives to prevent and respond to homelessness.

A key responsibility of the Housing Services division is delivering on the legislative requirements that include administration of the Centralized Waiting List for community housing, access to subsidized and government-funded affordable housing, administration of community housing subsidies, supplements and programme compliance.

*The Housing Services Act, 2011* requires Service System Managers to prepare local 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plans, in consultation with community and service providers, to address the current and future housing needs of individuals and families. Housing Services' Housing and Homelessness Plan "[A Place To Call Home](#)" sets out how our community plans to address housing and homelessness locally, including housing affordability, coordination of support services, the promotion of human-centred and culturally appropriate service delivery models, housing stock revitalization, and ending chronic homelessness.

Through the 10-year Housing and Homelessness Strategic Plan, Housing Services leads the service system planning through developing service system needs research and analysis, community engagement, and developing approaches to respond to diverse housing needs across the housing spectrum from homelessness, through emergency shelters, transitional and supportive housing systems, through community and affordable rental housing, to private market rental and ownership.

Housing Services manages a portfolio of community and government-funded affordable housing properties throughout the Wellington-Guelph service area and is responsible for financial support and legislative oversight of non-profit housing providers and housing co-operatives. In addition, Housing Services is also responsible for the administration of housing units under rent supplement agreements with private market landlords.

Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy provides federal funding to support individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness. As the designated Reaching Home Community Entity for the Wellington-Guelph service area, the Housing Services division implements the community plan and is responsible for the selection, approval, and management of projects in the local area. Community Entities are supported by a Community Advisory Board responsible for developing the community plan and recommending projects for funding at the community level.

Housing Services is the lead agency for the Guelph-Wellington Built for Zero-Canada Campaign, a national movement to end chronic homelessness. Built for Zero Canada provides a structured, supportive, and data-driven approach focused on optimizing local homeless systems, accelerating the adoption of proven practices, and driving continuous improvement.

In 2017, Stephen Gaetz and Erin Dej released the paper “[A New Direction: A Framework for Homelessness Prevention](#)” in collaboration with the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness which outlines three main tasks required to prevent and address homelessness:

- **Preventing Experiences of Homelessness** involves strategies to end or reduce as much as possible, the risk of people becoming homeless. Prevention support services include assistance with rental and/or utilities arrears as well as assistance with first and/or last month’s rent for eligible households.
- **Emergency Responses to Experiences of Homelessness** includes services that address the immediate needs of people experiencing homelessness. Emergency responses will always be a part of the solution because, despite best efforts, some people will continue to experience struggles and difficulties that will lead to their experiencing homelessness. In Wellington-Guelph, emergency responses include outreach and rapid re-housing services, emergency shelter, temporary accommodations, and transitional housing.
- **Housing Placements and Supports** involve strategies and resources to move people experiencing homelessness into permanent housing solutions and the provision of supports (health, developmental, mental health, addictions) that are needed to reduce the risk of housing instability and/or recurring experiences of homelessness. Depending on the needs of the individual or household, this can include solutions in market rental, social, government-funded affordable, or supportive housing solutions.

This prevention framework implies focusing resources on prevention and on housing placements and supports to achieve a reduction in the need and duration for emergency responses. This approach has also been adopted by Housing Services and community partners as a Built for Zero community.

## Programme Goals and Objectives

The work of Housing Services is undertaken collaboratively with a variety of local stakeholders including municipal partners; Indigenous organizations; health and human service organizations and operators in the homeless serving system. The current eight objectives of the Housing and Homelessness Plan, developed in consultation with community are:

- To help low-income households close the gap between their incomes and housing expenses.
- To provide a range of housing stability supports to assist with housing retention and homelessness prevention.
- To offer a comprehensive range of supportive housing options for residents with complex needs due to aging, disabilities, mental health issues and addictions.
- To increase the supply and mix of affordable housing options for low to moderate income households.
- To end chronic homelessness.
- To promote client-centred, coordinated access to the housing and homelessness system.
- To support the sustainability of the existing social and affordable housing stock.
- To foster access to culturally appropriate housing and homelessness services for Indigenous peoples.

The 2024 Annual Report on Objectives and Annual Progress/Achievement, as submitted to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing in June 2025 is attached as Appendix B.

## Provincial Performance Measures 2024

| Green: Target met    Yellow: In progress    Red: Target not met |  |                        |             |
|---|--|------------------------|-------------|
| Performance Outcome   | Description  | Provincial Target 2024 | Actual 2024 |
| # of subsidized housing units                                   | Number of units that are 100% municipally funded using rent calculation as per the <i>Housing Services Act</i> | 2,342                  | 2,495       |

## 2024 Service Delivery

**Preventing Experiences of Homelessness** involves strategies to end or reduce as much as possible, the risk of people becoming homeless. Prevention support services are provided by the Housing Services include one-time assistance with rental and/or utilities arrears as well as one-time assistance with first and/or last month's rent and other housing stability expenses for eligible households. In 2024, 441 household received one-time financial support to prevent losing their housing and 498 households received one-time financial support to secure permanent housing.

### Housing Loss Prevention | 441 households



**209** Households supported through utility arrears

**232** Households supported through rental arrears

### Programmes to Secure Permanent Housing | 498 households



**266** First or last months rent

**232** Other housing stability expenses (i.e. moving, appliances)

**Emergency Responses to Experiences of Homelessness** includes services that address the immediate needs of people experiencing homelessness, which include youth, families, singles, and seniors. Emergency responses will always be a part of the solution because, despite best efforts, some people will continue to experience struggles and difficulties that will lead to their experiencing homelessness. In Wellington-Guelph, emergency responses include outreach and rapid re-housing services, emergency shelter, temporary accommodations, and transitional housing.

#### Outreach and Rapid Housing

Through the *Reaching Home and Homelessness Prevention Program* funding streams, a number of local agencies are funded to support street outreach, diversion and rapid housing.

The Southwest Ontario Aboriginal Health Access Centre employs Indigenous Housing Focused Outreach Workers that use strengths-based and wholistic approach to provide culturally grounded support, including access to traditional medicines and healing, primary health care, and social services navigation. These workers conduct outreach to individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness in order to support permanent housing goals. Stepping Stone operates a team of Housing First workers, Housing

Outreach workers, and Diversion and Rapid Rehousing workers. Wyndham House provides housing support through Diversion and Rapid Rehousing staff under the same funding stream.

Diversion staff use several strategies like eviction prevention, system navigation for legal support, transportation services, and connecting people back to their home community as a focused effort to divert individuals from entering the emergency shelter system. Rapid Rehousing staff focus on quickly securing stable housing options for individuals at risk of homelessness. In addition, Rapid Rehousing and Diversion staff with Wyndham House provides urgent crisis response to youth at risk of or imminently experiencing a housing crisis. Wyndham House staff provide holistic support to youth transitioning out of the child welfare system by bridging health and housing. Staff administer assessments, provide resources, case management, crisis intervention and service navigation to divert individuals from entering shelter or rapidly Rehouse them. Outreach workers engage directly with people experiencing unsheltered homelessness, administer assessments, connect them to essential services like healthcare and emergency shelter, and help them navigate pathways to housing and stability.

Under the *Homelessness Prevention Programme*, East Wellington Community Services and the Community Resource Centre of North and Centre Wellington each employ Integrated Health and Housing Focused Outreach Workers. Staff support is intended to focus on self-identified goals including housing, education, employment, mental health, substance use, and cultural connections, and staff visit individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness where they're at.

Collectively, these roles are designed to prevent homelessness, support rapid transitions into permanent housing, and ensure long-term housing stability through individualized, culturally responsive, and health-integrated approaches. In 2024, Outreach Workers supported 156 individuals, and 320 individuals were diverted from emergency shelters.



| Street Outreach                            | Diversion and Rapid Rehousing    |                      |
|--|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>156</b><br>Unique individuals supported | <b>177</b><br>Youth              | <b>143</b><br>Adults |
|  | Diverted from emergency shelters |                      |

### Emergency Shelters and Temporary Accommodations

The total number of shelter and temporary accommodation beds available is 149, excluding cots and emergency overflow in motel spaces. These beds are distributed across several sites and are primarily operated by Stepping Stone and Wyndham House. Key locations included 23 Gordon Street (27 beds + 20 cots), Silvercreek (65 beds, closed in July 2024), and Norfolk Street (68 beds, opened in July 2024). Additional family emergency shelter was reopened in late November 2023 at 1 Waterloo (21 beds) and an adult substance-free emergency shelter was opened Highway 6 (19 beds). All emergency shelter services are provided through contracted services with Stepping Stone.

Youth-specific shelter services are provided through contracted services with Wyndham House, offering 14 beds and five cots at their Youth Emergency Shelter.

The figures below show the number of total beds/spaces available and the unique number of individuals that used emergency shelters in 2024.

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
|   | <b>81</b>  | <b>68</b>  |
|   | Emergency shelter beds (adults, families, youth) | Temporary accommodation spaces for adults                        |
|   | <b>764</b>                                       | <b>123</b>   |
|  | Unique individuals using emergency shelters      | Unique individuals using emergency shelters per night on average |

### Winter Response Plan October to December 2024

The *Winter Response Plan* is a coordinated initiative led by Wellington County's Housing Stability team to support people experiencing unsheltered homelessness during colder months. Through strategic planning and collaboration with service partners and the Lived Experience Advisory Group, the Winter Response plan prioritized access to temporary accommodation, tangibles and basic needs. Between October and December 2024, this plan offered accommodation to 105 unique individuals, as well as essential supplies, access to storage, and transportation to 33 unique individuals.

| Winter Response Plan   |  |
|------------------------|--|
| 105                    | 33   |
| Offered Accommodations | Tangibles, Access to Storage, and Transportation |

## Housing Placements and Supports

Housing Placements and supports involve strategies and resources to move people experiencing homelessness into permanent housing solutions and the provision of supports (health, mental health, addictions, housing) that are needed to reduce the risk of housing instability and/or recurring experiences of homelessness. Depending on the needs of the individual or household, this can include solutions in market rental, community, government-funded affordable, or supportive housing solutions.

### People Housed from the By-Name Data in 2024

The *Wellington-Guelph By-Name List* (BNL) is a real-time list of all people experiencing homelessness in Wellington-Guelph. Managed by the Housing Services division, this dynamic list helps in prioritizing needs and tracking changes in housing status as individuals and families move in and out of chronic homelessness. By highlighting inflow and outflow trends and fluctuations, the BNL helps inform outreach and diversion strategies to reduce inflow into homelessness and local resources and strategies to connect individuals with permanent housing solutions, which increases outflow. This targeted need-based approach plays a central role in supporting the community’s effort to end chronic homelessness in a coordinated and data-informed manner. In 2024, there have been a total number of 245 housing placements for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness on the BNL, including 138 adults, 24 youth, and 83 individuals in families.

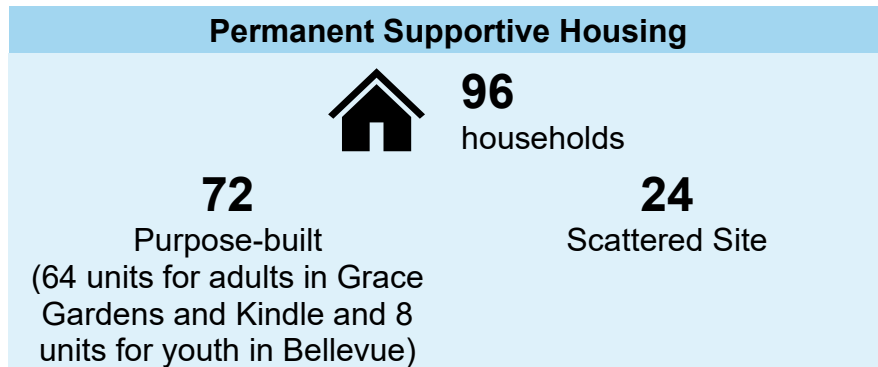
| Total Individuals in Housing Placements (Chronic*)<br>from the BNL in 2024 |
|--|
| <b>245**</b>   |
| **Includes 138 adults, 24 youth and 83 individuals in families             |

### Supportive Housing (Buildings and Scattered sites)

Supportive housing refers to housing that combines rental assistance with individualized health support services offered to people with critical physical and mental health needs, developmental disabilities, or substance use. This form of housing is offered in purpose-

built housing or in “scattered sites”, where support is integrated into units spread across different housing provider locations. As of summer 2024, there was a total of 96 supportive housing units. This represents an increase of 32 units compared to 2023, following the recent completion of the Kindle project at 10 Shelldale Crescent, which provides 24/7 on-site support for tenants.

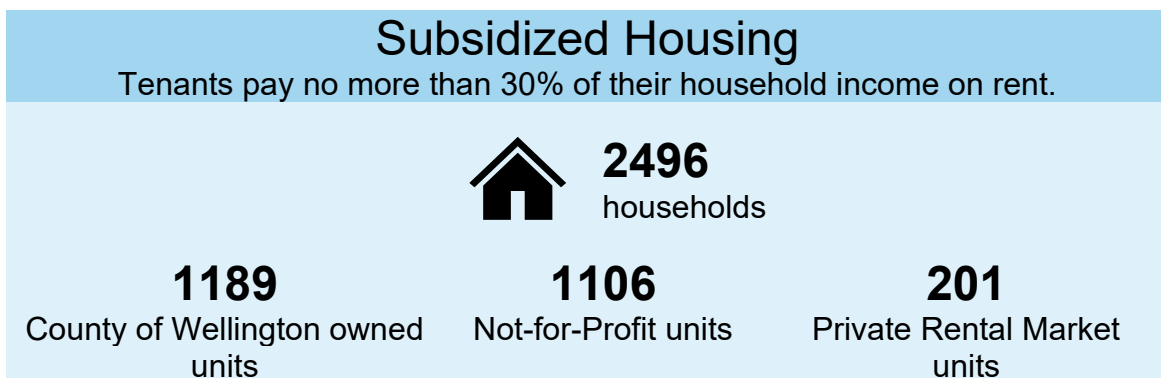
The figure below shows the total number of households supported through permanent supportive housing across 96 units in Wellington-Guelph.



### Subsidized Housing

Subsidized housing, also known as rent-geared-to-income (RGI) housing, ensures that tenants pay no more than 30% of their household income on rent. The County owns and operates 1189 RGI units across the Wellington-Guelph area. Community housing providers manage an additional 1106 RGI units, with another 201 units available through partnerships with private market landlords. These units represent vital community infrastructure and play a key role in providing safe and affordable housing options to low-income households.

The figure below shows the total number of households supported through subsidized housing across 2,496 units in Wellington-Guelph.

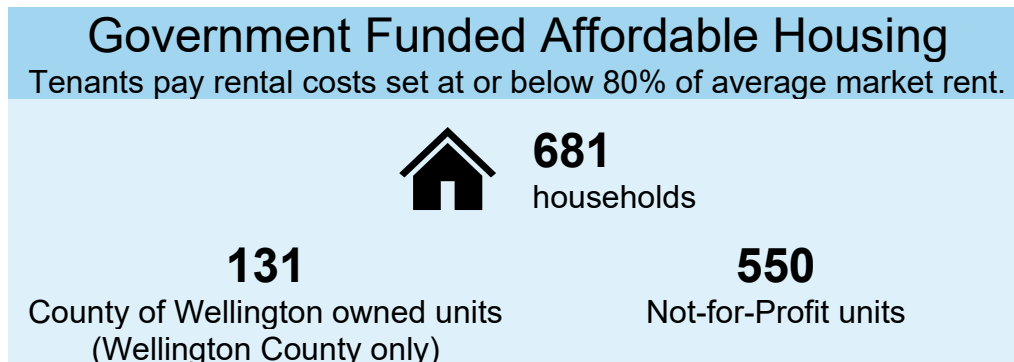


### Government-Funded Affordable Housing

Government-funded affordable housing ensures that tenants pay rental costs set at or below 80% of average market rent. The County plays a crucial role in expanding the availability of government-funded affordable housing in Wellington-Guelph. Through municipal, provincial and federal programmes, as well as collaborative work with community partners, the Housing Services division seeks to make meaningful increases in the complement of affordable housing options available in our community.

Since 2005, the Housing Services division, as Service System Manager, has supported the development of 681 units of government-funded affordable housing. In 2024, a total of 32 new affordable housing units were completed, including 32 supportive housing units for adults. An additional 40 transitional housing units remained in the development phase in 2024, with expected completion in 2025.

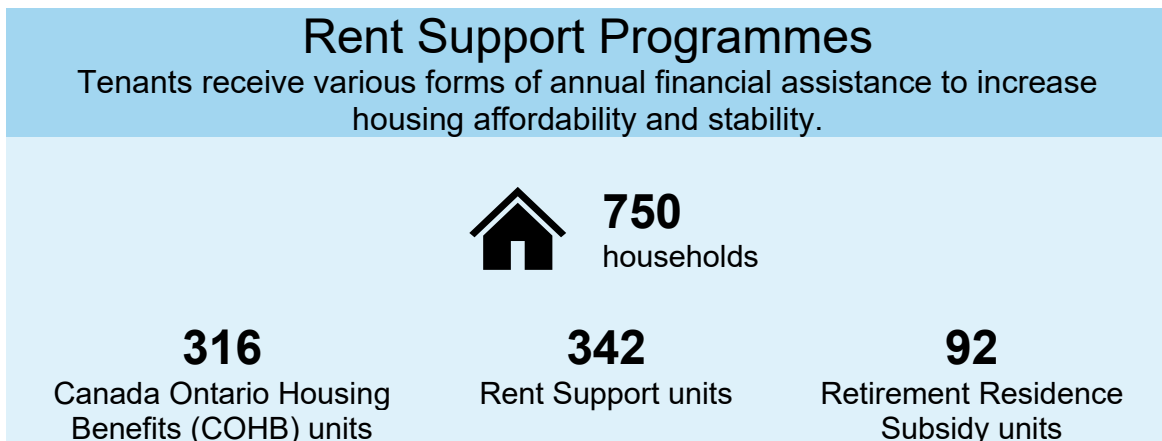
The figure below shows the total number of households supported through affordable housing across 681 units in Wellington-Guelph.



### Rent Support Programmes

The Housing Services division offers several rent support programmes that aim to improve housing affordability and stability for low-income individuals and families. These programmes provide either direct financial assistance to help cover the gap between what households can afford and market rent, or short-term support combined with services delivered through community agencies. Some programmes offer monthly subsidies paid directly to landlords or tenants, while others link rent assistance with wraparound supports for people facing challenges such as mental health or addiction issues. Together, these initiatives help prevent homelessness and promote housing stability in the Wellington-Guelph service delivery area.

The figure below shows the total number of households supported through rent support programmes across 750 units in Wellington-Guelph.



### Tenant Support Programmes

The Housing Services division and community service providers deliver a variety of case management support and counseling to tenant households in the Wellington-Guelph area. The goal of these initiatives is to assist tenants who require more intensive services to enhance their quality of life and maintain stable housing.

The figure below shows the total number of households receiving tenant supports across 262 units in Wellington-Guelph.



## Ontario Works

### Service System Manager Responsibilities

Ontario Works provides temporary financial assistance to residents in need while they are actively assisted in becoming employed and achieving financial self-reliance. Social assistance benefit rates, eligibility requirements, and programme delivery are regulated by the Province.

Benefits are provided monthly and consist of a basic need and a shelter portion, as well as other benefits prescribed in provincial regulations that consider family size and individual circumstances.

Ontario Works offers employment and life stability supports which include the development of participation plans, life skills programmes, referrals to community supports.

Ontario Works also administers provincially and municipally funded discretionary benefit programmes to eligible low-income households, with urgent needs, who are not otherwise in receipt of Ontario Works assistance.

To ensure accountability, the division's Cost Recovery team is primarily responsible for eligibility verification and review, overpayment recovery and client appeal processes.

### Ontario Works: Programme Goals and Objectives

The Ontario Works Division strives to effectively serve people needing assistance by delivering high quality programmes and services in collaboration with our community partners and in accordance with provincial legislation and directives governing the Ontario Works programme.

The Ontario Works Annual Service Plan outlines how the following goals and objectives of the Ontario Works programme are to be achieved:

- To recognize individual client responsibility and promote self-reliance through participation in life stabilization and employment activities.
- To provide financial assistance to those most in need while they meet obligations to prepare for, obtain and maintain employment.
- To ensure accountability in service delivery to provincial and local taxpayers.

## 2024 Provincial Performance Measures

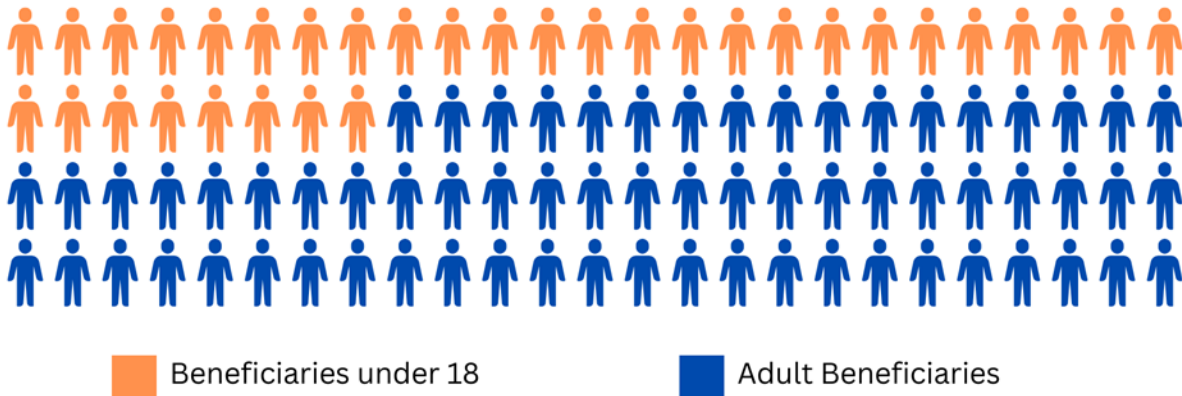
| Performance Outcome  | Description   | Provincial Target 2024 | Actual 2024 |
|--|---|------------------------|-------------|
| Ontario Works adults with participation requirements that have an Action Plan                | Percentage of adults that have an Action Plan outlining their participation activities to support moving forward. | 100%                   | 77%         |
| Ontario Works adults with participation requirements that are referred to Employment Ontario | Percentage of adults referred to Employment Ontario to receive employment supports.                               | 30%                    | 32%         |
| Ontario Works cases that exit to employment  | Percentage of the total Ontario Works caseload exited due to securing paid employment.                            | 14%                    | 8.7%        |
| Cases that exit Ontario Works do not return to the programme within one year                 | Percentage of the total Ontario Works caseload that return to the programme within one year.                      | 35%                    | 37%         |

## Service Delivery

### Ontario Works Caseload

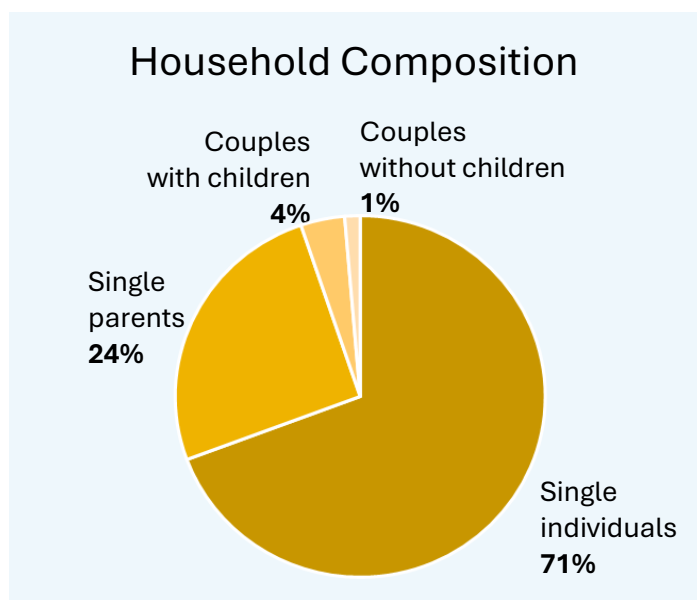
As of December 31, 2024, 3,720 people (2,258 cases) were reliant on Ontario Works financial assistance to meet their basic needs in Guelph and Wellington County. 80% of Ontario Works recipients in 2024 were residents of Guelph and 20% were residents of Wellington County.

33% of all people reliant on Ontario Works in 2024 were children under the age of 18 years.

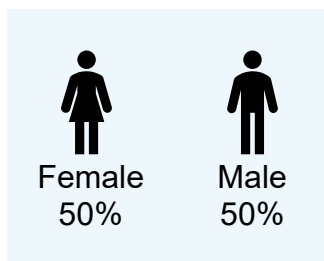


### Caseload Demographics

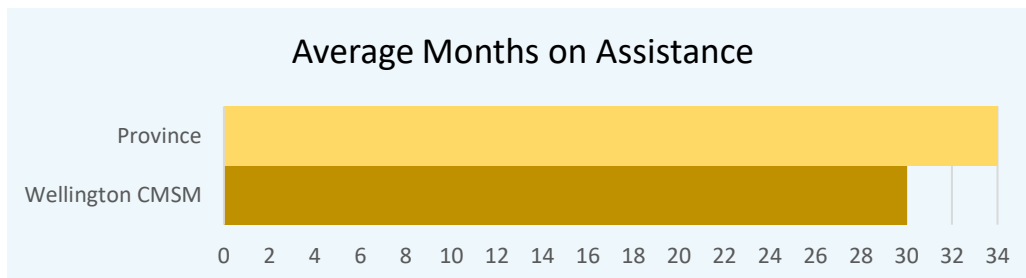
The majority of households on the Ontario Works caseload are single individuals at 71%, followed by single-parent households at 24%. Unlike families with children who can access targeted supports and child benefits, single individuals have limited access to other income supports and are over-represented on the Ontario Works caseload.



The gender distribution on the Ontario Works caseload is split evenly between male and female overall. The majority of single parent households however are female-led at 89%, while the majority of single individual households on the caseload are male at 64%.



The average time spent on assistance was 30 months, lower than the provincial average of 34 months. On average, single parent households remain on assistance for the longest period of time, while couples without dependent children tend to exit assistance faster than other household types.



### Areas of Highest Need

The top life stabilization needs identified by Ontario Works recipients were mental health, financial need, food security, transportation and housing. Monthly benefit rates for Ontario Works leave recipients in deep poverty, far below the official poverty line. Individuals in receipt of Ontario Works are not able to afford adequate and suitable housing or nutritious food, leaving them vulnerable to poor health outcomes and unable to move beyond survival.

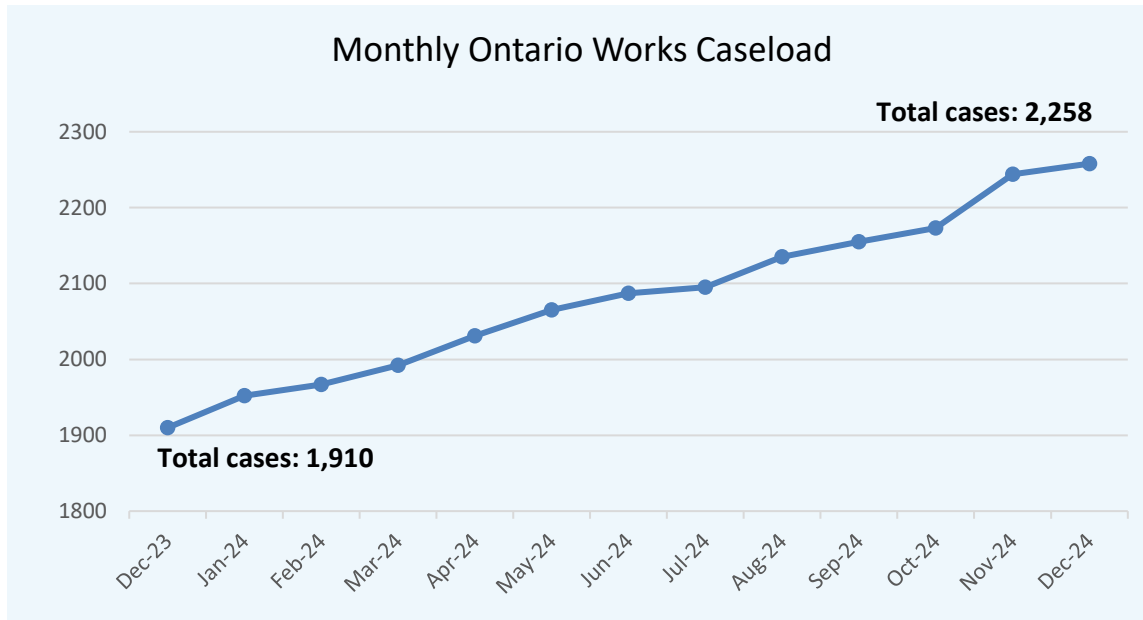
The areas of highest need identified by Ontario Works recipients are:

- Mental Health
- Financial Need
- Food Security

- Transportation
- Housing

### Increased Caseloads

The Ontario Works caseload has experienced rapid growth post-pandemic and continues to increase. The caseload in December 2024 was 18.2% higher than the previous year, increasing by 348 cases between December 2023 and December 2024.



### 100% Municipal Discretionary Benefits

The Ontario Works division also delivers the Wellington-Guelph 100% Municipal Discretionary Benefits Programme to provide low-income residents of Wellington County and Guelph with one-time financial support to cover basic medical expenses when there is no other social assistance programme or other community support that meets their need. The programme has a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of those in our community who would otherwise have no ability to pay for critical medical necessities. This programme supported 320 unique individuals in 2024 with a total of 1,082 requests for assistance.

**320 individuals**  
assisted through  
the municipal  
discretionary  
benefits  
programme



## Appendix A: Supplementary Data for Children’s Early Years

Access rates are the key consideration when planning for licensed child care expansion in Wellington-Guelph. Access rates refer to the number of licensed child care spaces available in proportion to the number of children who live in each area and fall within the age category. For the purposes of this report, all centre-based spaces including part time (e.g., nursery programmes) and part year (e.g., before and after school programmes), are considered.

| Indicator  | City  | County | Total | Access Rate |
|--|-------|--------|-------|-------------|
| # of spaces, birth – 4 (i.e., infant, toddler, preschool)  | 2,143 | 658    | 2,801 | 27.5%       |
| # of spaces, 4 – 5 (i.e., kindergarten)  | 843   | 361    | 1,204 | 22%         |
| # of spaces, 6 – 12 (i.e., school-age)   | 1,249 | 465    | 1,714 | 8.7%        |
| Source: Wellington County Service Data – <i>Child Care Licensing System</i> , as of December 31, 2024; Statistics Canada. 2023. Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue number 98-316-X2021001. |       |        |       |             |

## Appendix B: Housing Services 2024 Annual Report on Objectives and Annual Progress/Achievement

| Outcomes  | Measures  | Targets   | Annual Progress/Achievement   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Objective 1:</b> To help low-income households close the gap between their incomes and housing expenses  |   |   |   |
| Improved access to rent supports that help improve housing affordability for low-income households.   | Number of households that receive rent supports per year.   | By 2024, 400 households receive rent supports per year.   | In 2024, 750 households received rent supports. We have met the target.   |
| <b>Objective 2:</b> To provide a range of housing stability supports to assist with housing retention and homelessness prevention   |   |   |   |
| Improved access to supports and resources for tenants and landlords to stabilize housing and reduce evictions.  | Number of households at risk of homelessness that are stabilized (includes eviction prevention services, and assistance with rental and energy arrears) per year. | By 2024, 75% of households who received a subsidy and/or supports have retained their housing at 6 months follow up.  | In 2024, 92% of households who received a subsidy and/or supports had retained their housing at six months follow up. We have met the target.           |
| <b>Objective 3:</b> To offer a comprehensive range of supportive housing options for residents with complex needs due to aging, disabilities, mental health issues and addictions |   |   |   |
| Increased access to supportive housing options that help people to successfully live independently.   | Number of households that receive housing support services through the Service Manager per year.  | By 2024, there has been a 5% increase in the number of households that receive support services through the Service Manager.  | In 2024, 530 households received support services and 40 units of transitional housing were in development. We have met the target.                     |
| <b>Objective 4:</b> To increase the supply and mix of affordable housing options for low to moderate income households  |   |   |   |
| Increased number of households who are living in affordable housing options.  | Number of households in affordable housing per year.  | By 2024, there has been a 5% increase in the number of affordable housing units.<br><br>Increasing number of first time homeownership grants and Ontario Renovates programme participation. | In 2024, two new homeownership down payment loans were issued and two households supported by Ontario Renovates in 2024.<br><br>We have met the target. |

| Outcomes   | Measures   | Targets   | Annual Progress/<br>Achievement  |
|--|--|---|--|
| <b>Objective 5:</b> To end chronic homelessness  |  |   |  |
| People experiencing chronic homelessness find and maintain housing   | Reductions in the number of people actively experiencing chronic homelessness  | By 2024, Guelph Wellington will reach the third key reduction indicator in the 20KHomes<br><br>Campaign: Getting Close to Functional Zero Chronic Homelessness  | In 2024, Wellington-Guelph By-Name List (BNL) has not remained below baseline for chronic homelessness. Youth chronic homelessness has been reduced by 76%. We met the target for youth.   |
| <b>Objective 6:</b> To promote client-centred, coordinated access to the housing and homelessness system                   |  |   |  |
| People are able to access the housing and homelessness support services they need in a timely and efficient manner         | Number of activities undertaken to improve coordinated access and customer service (i.e., training, policies, phones, positions, etc.)                 | By 2024, Social Services reception and intake is fully integrated   | In 2024, Housing Services was developing plans for a phased implementation of integrated social services reception and intake. We continue working to meet the target.   |
| <b>Objective 7:</b> To support the sustainability of the existing social and affordable housing stock                      |  |   |  |
| Improved viability of existing RGI units and social housing assets beyond their original operating and mortgage agreements | Number of households in RGI and affordable housing units   | By 2024, the Housing Services Division and local housing providers are collectively continuing to maintain service level standards  | In 2024, the County continued to maintain service level standards.<br><br>We met the target.   |
| <b>Objective 8:</b> To foster access to culturally appropriate housing and homelessness services for Indigenous peoples    |  |   |  |
| Improved access to culturally appropriate housing and homelessness services for Indigenous peoples                         | Number of engagement activities and resources initiated to deepen understanding of Indigenous housing and homelessness experience in Wellington Guelph | By 2024, the Housing Services Division and community housing partners are engaged in the development of a meaningful process that supports Indigenous participation in the housing and homelessness initiatives in our community. | In 2024, Housing Services continued to build partnerships with local Indigenous organizations. Crow Shield Lodge will deliver Indigenous cultural services and supports at the Transitional Housing Project set to open in 2025. We remain committed to this ongoing work. |



<sup>SM</sup> Official Mark of The Corporation of the County of Wellington  
Alternate Formats Available Upon Request.