

# Social Services Advocacy Priorities



## Take Action for Wellington-Guelph

Your voice matters  
in shaping a more  
resilient community.



For more information, visit:  
[www.wellington.ca/SSAdvocacy](http://www.wellington.ca/SSAdvocacy)

**Source:**  
County of Wellington. (2025). Social  
Services Advocacy (Report No. AD-25-02).

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## Addressing Critical Gaps in:

Ontario  
Works

Children's  
Early Years

Housing  
Services



## Children's Early Years Advocacy

- 1** Sustain and increase Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) funding to ensure affordable child care and increase access to child care spaces.
- 2** Allow fee subsidy use in any licensed child care programme, not just CWELCC- enrolled programmes.
- 3** Implement a Provincial wage grid for Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) starting at \$35/hour.

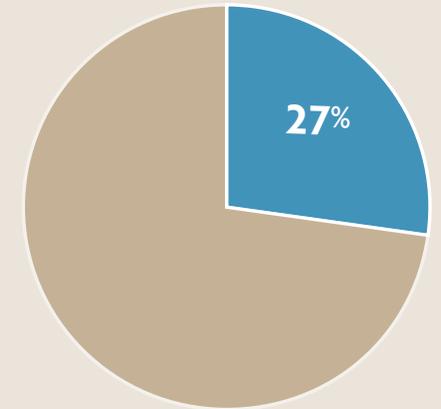
**Subsidy Access:** Due to CWELCC, 19% of Wellington-Guelph's licensed spaces are inaccessible to families who need fee subsidy for child care.

**Workforce Stability:** RECE wages (\$24.86/hour) barely meet the local living wage. Insufficient compensation leaves programmes struggling to recruit and retain staff or expand child care spaces, severely impacting the quality of child care.

### Why This Matters Locally

**Cost to Parents:** Without CWELCC, local infant care costs could jump from \$484 to over \$1,300 per month, preventing parents from participating in the labour force.

**Access Rates:** Wellington's child care access rate is only 23%. We need 615 more spaces to reach the provincial target of 37%.



● Only 27% of RECEs plan on staying in the sector over the next five years.

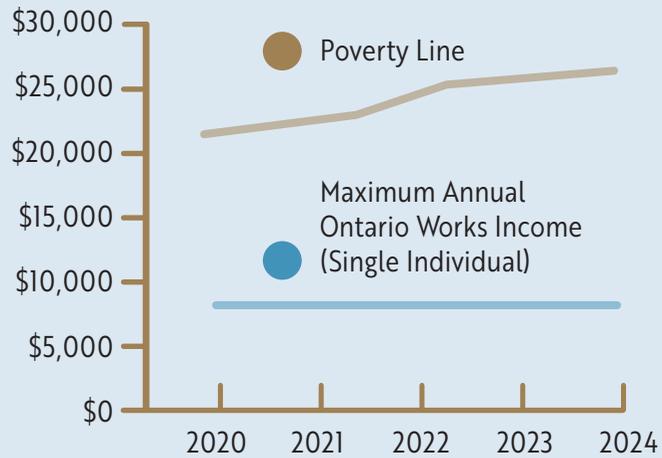
**Source:**  
Akbari et al. (2024). Knowing our Numbers - The Counties of Wellington and Dufferin.

# Ontario Works Advocacy

- 1 Raise Ontario Works rates to meet basic needs.
- 2 Mandate annual indexing to inflation.
- 3 Increase the monthly earnings exemption to \$1,000, matching the Ontario Disability Support Program.

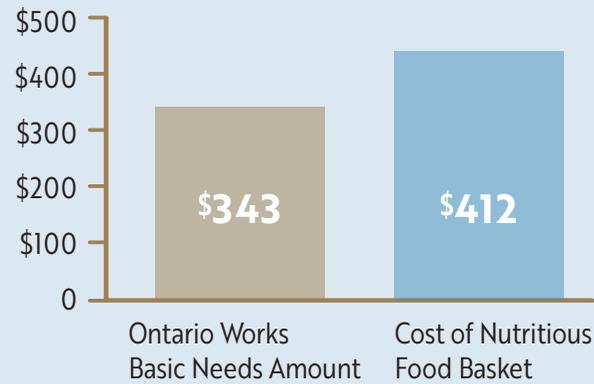
## Why This Matters Locally

**Frozen Rates:** Frozen since 2018, Ontario's social assistance rates are among the lowest in Canada, despite soaring living costs. In Wellington-Guelph, 4,215 recipients live in deep poverty, far below the poverty line.



**Note:** Poverty line is based on the Market Basket Measure

**The Cost of Inaction:** Health outcomes worsen and healthcare costs increase when individuals lack access to nutritious food and suitable housing.



**Source:** Wellington Dufferin Guelph Public Health, December 2025.

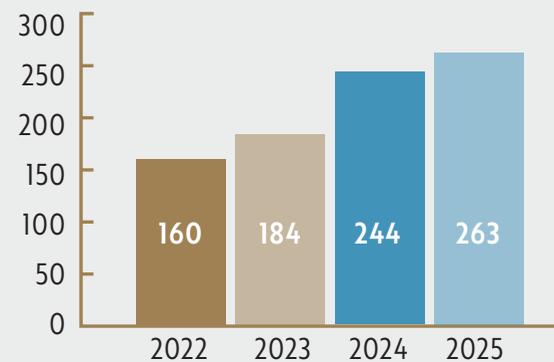
**Poverty Trap:** Current rules reduce benefits after \$200/month in earnings, creating a poverty trap that discourages work. As a result, only 8% of local Ontario Works recipients report employment income.

# Housing Services Advocacy

- 1 Provide sufficient and sustained multi-year, flexible operating funding.
- 2 Increase provincial funding to meet local priorities and increase housing solutions.
- 3 Pass legislation that protects renters from increased rental costs.

## Why This Matters Locally

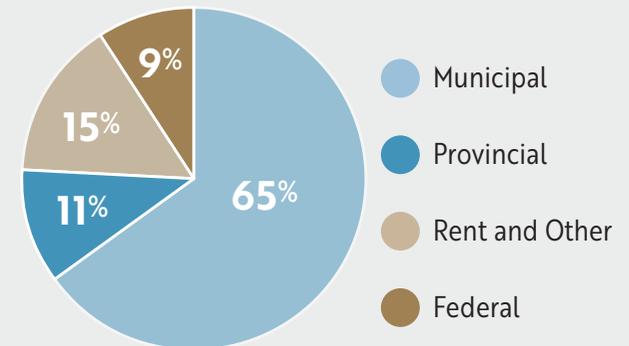
**Homelessness Crisis:** An average of 263 households a month in Wellington-Guelph experience homelessness. Nearly half are first-time cases.



**Source:** Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, Community Dashboard for Wellington-Guelph.

**Alternative Housing Solutions:** Over 70% of unhoused individuals in Wellington-Guelph face mental health or substance use challenges, highlighting the need for supportive and transitional housing.

**Funding Imbalance:** Across the province, municipalities are covering more than their fair share of funding. In Wellington-Guelph, municipal contributions covered 65% of housing services costs in 2025, while provincial and federal contributions accounted for just 11% and 9%, respectively.



**Source:** Social Services Budget Presentation, 2025

**Rising Rental Costs:** Since rent control was removed for new units, average three-bedroom rents have increased 23% in Wellington-Guelph, reaching \$2,091/month.