



County of Wellington

Conversation Toolkit for HHP Update 2025-2035

Section 1 - About the County of Wellington's Housing and Homelessness Plan Update 2025-2035

The County of Wellington is updating its 10-Year Homelessness and Housing Plan.

The primary objective is to ensure that local Plans are developed in an integrated manner, with consideration given to the housing and homelessness system, resulting in locally appropriate allocation of the available resources.

Under the Housing Services Act, the County of Wellington is responsible for the service delivery and administration of social and affordable housing programmes, as well as initiatives to prevent and respond to homelessness in both the City of Guelph and the Wellington service area. The County of Wellington has a leadership role in developing a sustainable and integrated housing stability system, but it cannot do this work alone. Housing stability is a community issue that requires a collective, community-wide system response. The strategic plan needs to leverage partnerships in all services, sectors, governments and residents to address the rapidly changing and complex housing stability needs of individuals and families. The strategic plan is intended to guide the County of Wellington's work from 2025 to 2035, noting that a 5-year review will also need to be completed.

Why is the Plan being updated?

Ontario's Third Action Plan under the National Housing Strategy (2025-2028) identified the need to review these programmes in the face of Ontario's growing population, the need for the appropriate mix and supply of affordable housing, the increased complexity of at-risk households, and potential service and funding gaps.

To reflect the Service System Managers' role in addressing unique local circumstances, challenges and opportunities and help ensure that the solutions we implement respond to the highest priority need, the County will develop our Plan over the next several months.

The review will assess -

- Programmes and services that currently exist in Wellington County and the City of Guelph service area and identify gaps and challenges.

- Effective practices and approaches in other jurisdictions.
- General options for addressing gaps, aligning resources and collaborating with community partners.

Feedback received during community consultations from the community will inform and contribute to the final 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan roadmap.

Who is leading this in the County of Wellington?

- The County of Wellington’s Housing Services division will lead this work.

How will the Plan be prepared?

- 1. Consulting Community Service Providers, Partners and Members of the General Public** - The County identified agencies/organizations that provide homelessness, housing or related support services and participants with lived experience will be engaged through community engagement sessions. In addition, members of the general public are invited to participate in all community engagement sessions.
- 2. Testing the Plan** - Leaders in the housing and homelessness space will help with developing a preliminary strategy to be tested with the boarder community through a series of consultations. Out of these consultations, the County will develop a preliminary strategic plan to share with the consultant for further community consultation and strategic plan development.
- 3. Approving the Plan** - County Council will approve the Housing and Homelessness Plan Update 2025-2035 in May 2026.

Community Conversation Strategic Pillars (Draft)

1. Responding to the Homelessness Crisis
2. Increasing Affordable Housing Options
3. Maintain and Modernize the Existing Housing Portfolio
4. Housing Stability Supports
5. Improve the Service System

Thank you for participating in a community conversation. Should you have any questions about this Toolkit, or would like to send a completed document back to Wellington County, please email Viktorija Arsic, Housing Planning and Policy Analyst at viktorijaa@wellington.ca, or You can also drop off the workbook at -

Administration Centre

74 Woolwich Street
Guelph ON
N1H 3T9

Section 2 - Community Conversation Workbook

Strategic Pillar 1 - Responding To the Homelessness Crisis

The County of Wellington delivers programmes across the housing spectrum, from homelessness prevention initiatives to homeownership down payment grants.

Did you know?

- 48% of homeless individuals surveyed have completed high school education or above.
- Almost half of those experiencing homelessness have been living in the Wellington-Guelph area for 5+ years.
- Most individuals and families experiencing homelessness do not require the intensive in-home supports provided by Housing First programmes.
- Individuals and families on the County of Wellington's By-Name list have completed an assessment and have been prioritized to participate in a Housing First program.
- Rehousing is expected to occur as individuals transition from homelessness to housing stability.

Definitions -

- **Chronic Homelessness** - Individuals who are experiencing chronic homelessness have been experiencing homelessness for over 6 months.
- **Housing First** - A recovery-oriented approach to ending homelessness that centers on quickly moving people experiencing homelessness into independent and permanent housing and then providing additional supports and services as needed.
- **Point in Time Count** - is community-level measure of the sheltered and unsheltered on one particular day.

Questions -

What is going well with Responding to the Homelessness Crisis in Wellington-Guelph?

What are your ideas for Responding to the Homelessness Crisis within the strategic plan?

What solutions or suggestions are needed to have your ideas in place?

Additional Notes Page -

Theme -

Notes -

Strategic Pillar 2 - Increasing Affordable Housing Options

The County of Wellington provides funding and resources to support the development of affordable housing, operated by external housing partners in Wellington-Guelph.

Did you know?

- In Canada, affordability is defined as having shelter costs less than 30% of a household's income before tax.
- Many people think affordable housing is subsidized rental housing, when it is a broad term that includes rental, homeownership, private and public housing.
- The County supported the creation of 82 affordable rental units from 2020-2025; despite significant reductions in Federal/Provincial funding.
- The vacancy rate in the City of Guelph is 1.9% which is below the healthy threshold of 3% vacancy rate.

Definitions -

- **Subsidized Housing** - A housing subsidy is a payment to help you with your rent, paid to your landlord or to you directly. It's based on your income and is typically 30% of your gross income. This approach is called Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) or Social Housing.
- **Affordable Housing** - Affordable Housing is a unit where rent is at or below the most recently released Average Market Rent levels published by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.
- **Transitional Housing with Supports** - Transitional Housing with Supports provides an intermediate step between emergency crisis shelter and permanent housing. Transitional Housing with Supports provides individuals with a safe place to stay temporarily, along with a programme of individualized support services such as counselling, job training and placement, community activities, and help with life skills. Facilities are created for individuals who need structure, support and/or skill building, to move from homelessness to housing stability and ultimately prevent a return to homelessness.
- **Core Housing** - A household is in core housing need if it meets 2 criteria.
 - A household is below one or more of the adequacy, suitability and affordability standards.
 - The household would have to spend 30% or more of its before-tax household income to access local housing that meets all three standards.

Questions -

What is going well with Increasing Affordable Housing Options in Wellington-Guelph?

What are your ideas for Increasing Affordable Housing Options within the strategic plan?

What solutions or suggestions are needed to have your ideas in place?

Additional Notes Page -

Theme -

Notes -

Strategic Pillar 3 - Maintain and Modernize the Existing Housing Portfolio

As the Service Manager for Wellington-Guelph, the County of Wellington is responsible for the delivery and administration of provincially mandated social and affordable housing programmes, as well as initiatives to prevent and address homelessness.

The County of Wellington provides financial support and legislative oversight to 20 non-profit housing providers and housing co-operatives located in Wellington County and the City of Guelph. The County supports over 1,000 rent-geared-to-income units and nearly 500 affordable market rental units.

The County of Wellington's Maintenance Services department ensures that County owned stock is in good repair. They also prepare units for move in, assisting with move outs, performing annual inspections, and tracking Capital Works.

Did you know?

- Community housing refers to a range of housing options: non-profit, co-operative, public and affordable housing.
- In addition to the housing owned and operated by the County, there are 20 non-profit and co-operative housing providers across the City of Guelph and County of Wellington.
- There are thousands of subsidized, affordable and market rental housing units in the County and Guelph but wait times to access can be long.

Definitions -

- **Centralized Waitlist** - All applications for Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) assistance for subsidized housing located in Guelph-Wellington are managed by the County of Wellington through the Centralized Waiting List. This "one-stop" centralized approach means applicants only need to complete one application form to apply to multiple housing providers for RGI assistance.

Questions -

What is going well with Maintain and Modernize the Existing Housing Portfolio in Wellington-Guelph?

What are your ideas to Maintain and Modernize the Existing Housing Portfolio within the strategic plan?

What solutions or suggestions are needed to have your ideas in place?

Additional Notes Page -

Theme -

Notes -

Strategic Pillar 4 - Housing Stability Supports

The County of Wellington administers funding for housing stability programmes across the Service Manager Area and funds emergency shelters in Guelph. Housing Services offers varied levels of support to individuals and families who need help finding and keeping a home.

Did you know?

- A Housing Stability Rent Support for households experiencing and/or at risk of homelessness.
- A rent subsidy or support Programme allowing individuals and families to receive a geared-to-income rent for a unit in the private market.
- The County offers other programmes including:
 - Housing Allowance Programme,
 - Community Agency Delivery Programme,
 - Community Agency Supported Unit Programme, and
 - Supportive Addiction and Mental Health Housing Programme.

Definitions -

- **VI-SPDAT** - The Vulnerability Index-Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT) is a pre-screening, or triage tool that is designed to be used by all providers within a community to quickly assess the health and social needs of homeless individuals and families.
- **By-Name Data** - A real-time list of all people experiencing homelessness. The BND helps service providers prioritize need, track the status change as individuals and families move in and out of homelessness and inform action as we move towards ending chronic homelessness in our community.
- **Point-in-Time (PiT) Count** - A PiT Count is one of several tools communities can use to understand the scope and extent of experiences of homelessness locally. The Point-in-Time (PiT) Counts are a community-level measure of sheltered and unsheltered homelessness on one day. The results provide an estimate of the number of people experiencing homelessness on the day of the count. In addition, the results also tell us about certain demographic and health characteristics of people experiencing homelessness as well as some of the challenges to find housing. Point-in-Time count results are used to monitor changes in time and help inform service planning and programme development.
- **Coordinated Intake** - **Coordinated** Intake is a single point of entry for services and supports.
- **Housing First** - **Housing** First means access to permanent housing with supports.

Questions -

What is going well with Housing Stability Supports in Wellington-Guelph?

What are your ideas for Housing Stability Supports within the strategic plan?

What solutions or suggestions are needed to have your ideas in place?

Additional Notes Page -

Theme -

Notes -

Strategic Pillar 5 - Improve The Service System

The Wellington-Guelph Coordinated Access System (CAS) is guided by the belief of Housing First, which means focusing on ending homelessness by putting recovery first and quickly moving people experiencing homelessness to permanent housing in the community.

Did you know?

- In 2024, 17.1% of tenants and 2.4% of homeowners in the County of Wellington and 21% of tenants and 5.2% of homeowners in the City of Guelph were identified to be in core housing need.
- The Coordinated Entry System was implemented in 2017 to improve coordination and service delivery for individual and families experiencing, or at risk of homelessness.
- Many partners support the Housing Stability System, including: Community Resource Centre of North and Centre Wellington, County of Wellington Social Services, East Wellington Community Services, Family & Children's Services of Guelph and Wellington County, Rural Wellington Community Team, Specialized Outreach Services (SOS), Women in Crisis, Stepping Stones, Stonehenge and Wyndham House.

Definitions -

- **Coordinated Access System** - Coordinated Access is a fair way of determining a homeless individual's or family's needs and the services they may require to achieve housing stability, no matter their circumstances or location. Service Providers that make up the Housing Stability System work together to look at individuals' and families' housing-related needs, prioritize them for resources, and link them to housing and a range of supports.
- **Core Housing** - A household is in core housing need if it meets 2 criteria.
 - A household is below one or more of the adequacy, suitability and affordability standards.
 - The household would have to spend 30% or more of its before-tax household income to access local housing that meets all three standards.

Questions -

What is going well with Wellington's Coordinated Access System?

What are your ideas to Improve the Service System within the strategic plan?

What solutions or suggestions are needed to have your ideas in place?

Additional Notes Page -

Theme -

Notes -