



**THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA
PUBLIC HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
AGENDA**

PHSSC 6-2021

Tuesday, June 15, 2021

1:00 p.m.

Meeting will be held by electronic participation only

This electronic meeting can be viewed on Niagara Region's Website at:

<https://www.niagararegion.ca/government/council/>

Due to efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19 and to protect all individuals, the Council Chamber at Regional Headquarters will not be open to the public to attend Committee meetings until further notice. To view live stream meeting proceedings, visit:
[niagararegion.ca/government/council](https://www.niagararegion.ca/government/council)

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1. <u>CALL TO ORDER</u>	
2. <u>DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTEREST</u>	
3. <u>PRESENTATIONS</u>	
4. <u>DELEGATIONS</u>	
5. <u>ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION</u>	
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6. CONSENT ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

6.1.	<u>COM 17-2021</u> Homelessness Point-in-Time Count Report A presentation will precede the discussion of this item.	62 - 92
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7. OTHER BUSINESS

8. NEXT MEETING
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9. ADJOURNMENT

If you require any accommodations for a disability in order to attend or participate in meetings or events, please contact the Accessibility Advisor at 905-980-6000 ext. 3252 (office), 289-929-8376 (cellphone) or accessibility@niagararegion.ca (email).

Subject: Homelessness Services Contract Extensions

Report to: Public Health and Social Services Committee

Report date: Tuesday, June 15, 2021

Recommendations

1. That the existing homelessness system contracts **BE EXTENDED** as per Appendix 1 to Report COM 13-2021, with the value of \$8,293,109;
2. That an additional contingency of \$100,000 **BE APPROVED** should additional adjustments be necessary; and
3. That the Commissioner of Community Services **BE AUTHORIZED** to negotiate and execute the required amendments to implement contract extensions for service providers within Homelessness Services in a form approved by the Director of Legal Services.

Key Facts

- The purpose of the report is to seek approval to extend the current homelessness system contracts, originally set to expire March 31, 2023, for one additional year to March 31, 2024, in compliance with Section 19 (a) (vi) of the procurement by-law whereby negotiations may be used for purchases of goods and/or services when the extension of the existing contract would be more effective. Contract extensions greater than \$1M require Council approval as per schedule B of the procurement by-law.
- The competitively procured contracts were initially approved for a three-year period from April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2023.
- The Negotiated Request for Proposals for these homelessness contracts closed in November 2019 and contracts were approved/shared through the March and April 2020 Council meetings, coinciding with the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The extension is being requested as the pandemic has created significant pressures within the homeless system and as such has stretched the capacity of both agencies and Niagara Region. Key activities intended to fully support the system transition to further implementation of best practices, into the Homeless System 3.0, and prepare for the next round of Negotiated Requests for Proposals (NRFP's) is being delayed as the pandemic continues.
- Extending the contracts of the current service providers for an additional one year will allow agencies and Niagara Region the opportunity to continue the work on

system transformation. This will ensure that the system and scope of work for the next round of NRFP's is reflective of current best practices in homelessness and is informed by the data strategy currently being developed for homeless services.

Financial Considerations

The total cost to extend the homelessness services contracts for one additional year (April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024) is \$8,293,109. This amount is contingent upon receiving the same funding level until March 31, 2024. Homelessness Services has a total 2021 budget of \$13,281,941 (excluding costs specific to COVID). Homelessness Services is funded primarily by the province through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH). For the 2021 calendar year, the Homelessness division will receive \$9,528,300 in external funding (\$1,090,019 in federal funding, \$750,490 for the provincial Home for Good (HFG) program, \$7,687,791 from Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI)) and \$1,029,472 from a reserve transfer to cover the operating costs of the new supportive housing facility. The remaining \$2,724,169 comes from levy to support additional homelessness expenditures such as the Niagara Emergency Energy Fund, Housing Stability Fund, staffing costs and other homelessness contracts. CHPI and HFG funding is confirmed to March 31, 2022, and federal Reaching Home funding is confirmed to March 31, 2024. If the current funding levels are not maintained, the contracts would have to be reviewed to determine which ones would need to be cancelled due to lack of funding and/or additional levy would be required to cover the difference. The original three-year contracts commencing April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2023, contained no annual cost of living increases as this was taken into consideration in the initial awards. As there has been no year over year increase to the contracts, the proposed one-year contract extensions include a 2% cost of living adjustment.

Analysis

The Community Services department operationalizes the Region's responsibilities as the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) for the homelessness system in Niagara, through the Homelessness Services division. Its key responsibility is service system planning and administration for the homelessness system, and it operates under rules established by the MMAH.

The Homelessness Services division contracts with community agencies to provide prevention, outreach, emergency shelter, transitional housing, Niagara Emergency

Energy Fund, and Housing First (HF) and Home for Good (HFG) supportive housing programs.

A Negotiated Request for Proposal (NRFP) process was undertaken through the Region's Procurement division and a review process completed in accordance with the Council approved Evaluation Matrix from COM 29-2019. The NRFP's were issued in October 2019 and closed in November 2019. The evaluations were completed by panels of six (6) individuals, with representation from another municipal service system manager, and Niagara Region's Public Health, Finance and Community Services departments. The awards were approved by or provided for information (reflective of Regional procurement by-laws) to PHSSC and Council in March and April 2020.

Emergency shelters provide overnight accommodation, food and personal basic needs, along with services to find appropriate housing for the client. In addition, shelters provide connections and referrals to other services including mental health supports and treatment, addictions treatment and healthcare counseling as required.

Outreach services include outreach workers whom are focused on ending the experience of homelessness, particularly for those who would otherwise be underserved in traditional settings. Additionally, the selected agencies provide a centralized service for after-hours access to Niagara's homeless-servicing system. Street-based outreach ensures that trained workers respond directly and immediately to a person's needs by bringing coordinated services from across the homeless-serving system to the individual, rather than waiting for them to seek services on their own.

Supportive housing includes both Housing First and Home for Good programs, providing accommodation, case management and other support services. Housing First and Home for Good contracts support individuals experiencing chronic and/or episodic homelessness with mid to high acuity of need to obtain and retain stable housing. This program offers stable housing with supports thereby reducing pressure on Niagara's shelter system, and in other areas of Niagara's health and social service system (e.g. emergency room visits).

Transitional housing refers to a supportive, yet temporary type of accommodation that is meant to bridge the gap from homelessness to permanent housing. This housing option offers supervision, support (e.g. addictions and mental health), life skills and supports in moving forward with their housing goals.

Prevention services include shelter system diversion, youth programs, trusteeship, ID (identification) clinics, support to secure and retain housing and eviction prevention. Prevention programs will engage and collaborate with individuals and families in imminent risk of experiencing homelessness to maintain their housing or obtain new housing without becoming homeless. In addition, programs provide those who have been homeless with the necessary resources and supports to stabilize their housing, enhance integration and social inclusion, and ultimately reduce the risk of the recurrence of homelessness.

The Homelessness Services team is dedicated to ensuring that Niagara's homelessness system aligns with best practice and reflects local needs aligning it with provincial expectations i.e. to operate from a Housing First and people centered approach, which focuses on the shift from reliance on emergency shelter solutions to preventative and rapid rehousing services.

As the COVID pandemic occurred, the Homelessness division and agencies have moved forward with transformation efforts in a number of key areas within the system. This includes Housing First and Home for Good, Assertive Outreach and objectives in fulfilling the Region's Built for Zero goals including implementation of Coordinated Access. The next steps of system transformation will focus on housing focused shelter, prevention, transitional housing and developing a data strategy.

As a result of the significant work for agencies and staff to respond to the pandemic and ensure the safety of the clients and agency staff, the schedule to achieve the work associated with the next steps of transformation was adjusted and in some areas put on hold. Redirecting efforts to respond to the pandemic has pushed some transformation efforts over a year behind schedule. To ensure that the work can continue in a fulsome way, including opportunities for agency engagement, system learning and capacity building and best practice research, staff are requesting an additional year within the existing contract framework.

In addition, the experience of the pandemic, opportunities to pilot additional programming and acquire new supportive housing and bridge housing assets need to be reflected in the system 3.0 design moving forward. Should the homelessness system be required to respond to an NRFP based in the current timelines, the planned work of system transformation/improvement would need to be established by summer 2022, leaving only one year to complete all analysis of pandemic programs and pilots, complete research on best practices, undertake agency engagement, develop implementation plans and establish investment strategies.

While funding for the next immediate period of time is known (to March of 2023), funding going forward, from both upper tier levels of government, may be significantly impacted by the pandemic and budget constraints and system design would need to reflect and prioritize investments based on this knowledge, and again it may be up to a year before there is an understanding of what ongoing funding, and post pandemic will look like.

Alternatives Reviewed

Council could leave the current contracts as is, which are set to expire March 31, 2023 and request that the Homelessness division prepare a significant number of NRFP's as of April 1, 2023. However, it is staff's assessment that this does not allow for agencies to have an appropriate amount of time to be operating fully in the current contract and performance framework (without COVID-19) nor does it give the agencies enough time and capacity to respond effectively to a NRFP with new expectations. In addition, this would also not allow the Homelessness division enough time required to develop an overall further improved homelessness service plan. Furthermore, all CMSM's are anticipating significant impacts to the those living in deep poverty and homeless residents, post-pandemic and local planning will need time to analyse and plan for this post-pandemic impact. Moving too early on contract renewal could result in Niagara's homelessness populations not having the appropriate services and supports in place negatively impacting these vulnerable populations.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

Aligns with the goals in Niagara's 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan, including Goal 1: housing individuals who do not have a home and Goal 4: building capacity and improving the effectiveness of the housing system.

Healthy and Vibrant Community – Objective 2.3 – Addressing Affordable Housing Needs.

Other Pertinent Reports

- COM 4-2020 Emergency Shelter Negotiated Request for Proposal (NRFP) Award Results
- COM C 7-2020 – Assertive Street Outreach Request for Proposal Award Results
- COM C 13-2020 – Prevention Request for Proposal Award Results

- COM C 11-2020 - Housing with Supports - Supported Transitional Housing Request for Proposal Award Results
- COM C 8-2020 - Housing with Supports - Housing First Request for Proposal Award Results
- COM C 9-2020 - Housing with Supports - Home for Good Request for Proposal Award Results
- COM C 14-2020 - Niagara Emergency Energy Fund (NEEF) Request for Prequalification Award Results

Prepared by:

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Director
Community Services

Recommended by:

Adrienne Jugley, MSW, RSW, CHE
Commissioner
Community Services

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with Stephanie Muhic, Program Financial Specialist; Jeff Mulligan, Manager Purchasing Services and Sterling Wood, Legal Counsel.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Current homelessness contracts and costs relating to the one-year extension, including a 2% cost of living adjustment

Appendix 1:

The table below is a list of the current homelessness contracts and the costs relating to the one-year extension, which includes a 2% cost of living adjustment.

Contract Number	Priority	Supplier	Approved three-year Contract (dollars \$)	One-year extension (including 2% COLA) (dollars \$)	TOTAL Revised Contract (Dollars \$)
2019-RFP-310	Housing with Supports – Housing First	Gateway Residential & Community Support Services	3,510,000	1,193,400	4,703,400
2019-RFP-311	Housing with Supports - Home for Good	Gateway Residential & Community Support Services	915,000	311,100	1,226,100
2019-RFP-299	Shelter	Boys & Girls Club of Niagara	403,200	137,088	540,288
2019-RFP-299	Shelter	Casa El Norte Refugee Assistance Program	403,200	137,088	540,288
2019-RFP-299	Shelter	Matthew House Refugee Ministry of Fort Erie	403,200	137,088	540,288
2019-RFP-299	Shelter	Niagara Resource Service for Youth / RAFT	583,434	198,368	781,802
2019-RFP-299	Shelter	Southridge Community Church	2,577,000	876,180	3,453,180
2019-RFP-299	Shelter	Start Me Up Niagara	966,750	328,695	1,295,445

Contract Number	Priority	Supplier	Approved three-year Contract (dollars \$)	One-year extension (including 2% COLA) (dollars \$)	TOTAL Revised Contract (Dollars \$)
2019-RFP-299	Shelter	The Salvation Army Booth Canada	1,050,000	357,000	1,407,000
2019-RFP-299	Shelter	The Hope Centre	1,236,750	443,700	1,680,450
2019-RFP-299	Shelter	The Young Women's Christian Association of St. Catharines	4,323,150	1,493,076	5,816,226
2019-RFP-300	Outreach	Gateway Residential & Community Support Services	1,065,000	362,100	1,427,100
2019-RFP-300	Outreach	Port Cares	270,000	91,800	361,800
2019-RFP-300	Outreach	Niagara Resource for Youth / RAFT	225,000	76,500	301,500
2019-RFP-305	Prevention – Eternal Routes	Niagara Resource for Youth / RAFT	408,000	138,720	546,720
2019-RFP-305	Prevention – Youth Reconnect	Niagara Resource for Youth / RAFT	717,705	244,020	961,725
2019-RFP-305	Prevention – Youth Clinical Director	Youth Resources Niagara Inc	267,120	90,821	357,941
2019-RFP-305	Prevention	Start Me Up Niagara	675,000	229,500	904,500
2019-RFP-305	Prevention	Community Care St. Catharines	1,474,395	501,294	1,975,689
2019-RFP-305	Prevention	Port Cares	245,490	83,467	328,957

Contract Number	Priority	Supplier	Approved three-year Contract (dollars \$)	One-year extension (including 2% COLA) (dollars \$)	TOTAL Revised Contract (Dollars \$)
2019-RFP-308	Supportive Transitional Housing	Bethlehem Housing & Support Services	287,100	97,614	384,714
2019-RFP-308	Supportive Transitional Housing	Port Cares	413,400	140,556	553,956
2019-RFP-308	Supportive Transitional Housing	The Hope Centre	165,300	56,202	221,502
2019-RFP-308	Supportive Transitional Housing	Start Me Up Niagara	180,000	61,200	241,200
2019-RFP-308	Supportive Transitional Housing	Boy's & Girl's Club of Niagara	214,500	72,930	287,430
2019-RFP-308	Supportive Transitional Housing	Canadian Mental Health Association of Niagara	329,100	111,894	440,994
2019-RFP-308	Supportive Transitional Housing	The Young Women's Christian Association of St. Catharines	774,300	263,262	1,037,562
2019-RFP-308	Supportive Transitional Housing	Matthew House Refugee Ministry of Fort Erie	171,900	58,446	230,346
TOTAL			24,254,994	8,293,109	32,548,103

Subject: Approval of 2020/2021 Community Services Program Audits

Report to: Public Health and Social Services Committee

Report date: Tuesday, June 15, 2021

Recommendations

1. That the draft audited annual reconciliation return for the Community Support Services Program (Appendix 1 to Report COM 14-2021) for the year ended December 31, 2020, **BE APPROVED**;
2. That the draft audited schedule of Revenue and Expenses for the Reaching Home Program (Appendix 2 to Report COM 14-2021) for the year ended March 31, 2021, **BE APPROVED**;
3. That staff **BE DIRECTED** to coordinate with the auditor to finalize the statements as presented; and
4. That Report COM 14-2021 **BE FORWARDED** to the Region's Audit Committee for information.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to obtain approval for the audited annual reconciliation return ("ARR") and the schedule of revenue and expenses ("financial schedule") for the respective programs in accordance with the federal and provincial funding requirements.
- The Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant Local Health Integration Network (HNHB LHIN) submission deadline for the Community Support Service Program is June 30, 2021.
- The Ministry of Employment and Social Development Canada submission deadline for the Reaching Home Program is July 31, 2021.
- As per Financial Reporting and Forecasting Policy (C-F-020), other financial statements or schedules performed for Ministry funding purposes, will be recommended for approval to Council by the standing Committee with oversight of the program. Upon approval by Council, the department Commissioner, or delegated authority, and the Treasurer will be authorized to sign the auditor's representation letter to obtain the auditor's signed report. The approved statements will then be forwarded to Audit Committee for information.

Financial Considerations

The ARR of the Community Support Services Program has been prepared in compliance with the guidelines of the Ontario Health Reporting Standards and the Community Financial Policy issued by the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Long-Term Care. A draft copy of the ARR is attached as Appendix 1 to Report COM 14-2021.

The financial schedule for the Reaching Home Program has been prepared in compliance with legislation and in accordance with the financial reporting provisions of the agreement between the Ministry of Employment and Social Development Canada and the Regional Municipality of Niagara. A draft copy of the financial schedule is attached as Appendix 2 to Report COM 14-2021.

The ARR and the financial schedule are prepared specifically for the purposes of meeting the requirements outlined in the service agreements with the funding Ministries. These reports are a provincial/federal requirement as noted in the audit report for the programs as follows:

Community Support Services Program

“The schedules are prepared to assist the Program in complying with the financial reporting provisions in the guidelines in Chapters 3 and 4 of the Ontario Healthcare Reporting Standards and the Community Financial Policy (2016) issued by the Ontario Ministry of Health. As a result, the schedules may not be suitable for another purpose.”

Reaching Home Program

“The schedule is prepared to assist the Program in complying with the financial reporting provisions of the agreement between the Ministry of Employment and Social Development Canada and the Regional Municipality of Niagara. As a result, the schedule may not be suitable for another purpose.”

Analysis

The ARR and the financial schedule were audited by the Region’s external auditors, Deloitte. The auditors have indicated that, based on their review, nothing has come to their attention that causes them to believe that this information is not, in all material aspects, in accordance with the requirements identified.

Upon approval by Committee and Council, the ARR and financial schedule will be submitted to the respective Ministry in accordance with the funding agreement requirements and will also be referred to Audit Committee for information.

Below is a summary of the results of the audited schedules:

Community Support Service Program – this program has an overall surplus of \$433,378 as of December 31, 2020, which will be returned to the LHIN by way of a reduction in their future payments to the Region. The COVID-19 pandemic caused significant interruptions to service, which led to the year-end surplus. Seniors Community Programs provides a range of services to seniors who want to keep active and stay in their home as long as possible. Most of these services involve in-person group settings, which were not permitted for the majority of the year due to the pandemic. Most significantly, the Region's Respite Companion Services, a program aimed at providing meaningful activities tailored to client's needs in the client's home, was unable to operate for the majority of the year. Adult day programs, many of which are co-located within the Region's long-term care homes, and in-person health and wellness classes were unable to operate due to the requirement to socially distance. Many staff were redeployed to the long-term care homes for resident social support and many services did resume virtually, on a smaller scale, towards the end of the year; however, the interruption to service for the majority of the year resulted in the year-end surplus. 2020 annual funding for Seniors Community Programs is \$6.68 million and the amount returnable for 2020 is approximately 6.6% of that funding.

Reaching Home Program - commenced April 1, 2019, and ends March 31, 2024, and has no funds returnable for the current reporting period.

These schedules are subject to minor wording changes once they are finalized.

Alternatives Reviewed

The audited financial schedules are a Ministry requirement and therefore no alternatives are available.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

Providing formal financial reporting to Council and the public supports the Council Strategic Priority of Sustainable and Engaging Government.

Other Pertinent Reports

None.

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Corporate Services

Recommended by:

Adrienne Jugley, MSW, RSW, CHE
Commissioner
Community Services

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with Stephanie Muhic, CPA, CA, Program Financial Specialist and Jordan Gamble, CPA, CA, Program Financial Specialist.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Community Support Services Program – 2020 Annual Reconciliation
Return

Appendix 2 Reaching Home Program – 2021 Schedule of Revenue and Expenses

Annual Reconciliation Report
The Regional Municipality of Niagara
Community Services Department
Community Support Service Program

December 31, 2020

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Independent Auditor's Report

To the Members of Council of the Regional Municipality of Niagara, the Ontario Ministry of Health and the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant Local Health Integration Network

Opinion

We have audited the accompanying schedules (ARRFin1 and ARRFin2) of the Annual Reconciliation Report of the Regional Municipality of Niagara (the "Region") Community Services Department - Community Support Service Program (the "Program") for the year ended December 31, 2020 and notes to the schedules (collectively referred to as the "schedules").

In our opinion, the accompanying schedules of the Program for the year ended December 31, 2020 have been prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with the financial reporting provisions in the guidelines in Chapters 3 and 4 of the Ontario Healthcare Reporting Standards and the Community Financial Policy (2016) issued by the Ontario Ministry of Health (collectively referred to as the "guidelines").

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards ("Canadian GAAS"). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Schedules* section of our report. We are independent of the Region in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the schedule in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Emphasis of Matter - Basis of Accounting

We draw attention to Note 1 to the schedule, which describes the basis of accounting. The schedules are prepared to assist the Program in complying with the financial reporting provisions in the guidelines in Chapters 3 and 4 of the Ontario Healthcare Reporting Standards and the Community Financial Policy (2016) issued by the Ontario Ministry of Health. As a result, the schedule may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Schedules

Management is responsible for the preparation of the schedules in accordance with the guidelines, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the schedules that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Region's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Schedules

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the schedules are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian GAAS will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the schedules.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian GAAS, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the schedules, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Region's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates, if any, and related disclosures made by management.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Chartered Professional Accountants
Licensed Public Accountants
June 24, 2021

IFIS / Recipient #	13115
SRI Organization Code	4165
LHIN Name	Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant (Hnhb)
Service Provider Name	Regional Municipality of Niagara
Service Provider Legal Name	Regional Municipality of Niagara
Service Provider Address	
Address 1	1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way
Address 2	P.O. Box 1042
City	Thorold
Postal Code	L2V4T7
HSP Contact Name	Jordan Gamble
HSP Contact Position	Program Financial Specialist
HSP Contact Phone Number	905-685-4225, ext. 3815
HSP Contact E-mail Address	jordan.gamble@niagararegion.ca

TOTAL AGENCY

Form ARRfin 1- Total LHIN & Ministry Managed- Financial
Regional Municipality of Niagara

		TOTAL HSP
TABLE G: Total Agency Reporting		
Summary by Fund Type (Total Agency Financials)	Line #	
Total Revenue Fund Type 1	115	-
Total Expenses Fund Type 1	116	-
Net Surplus/Deficit Fund Type 1 (Hospital)	117	-
Total Revenue Fund Type 2 (Above)	118	6,377,378
Total Expenses Fund Type 2 (Above)	119	5,944,000
Net Surplus/Deficit Fund Type 2 (Community Programs)	120	433,378
Total Revenue Fund Type 3	121	-
Total Expenses Fund Type 3	122	-
Net Surplus/Deficit Fund Type 3 (Other)	123	-
Total Revenue for the Provider	124	6,377,378
Total Expenses for the Provider	125	5,944,000
Net Surplus/Deficit	126	433,378

FUNDING DATA INPUT TO BE DONE BY FUNDING RECIPIENTThis sheet spreads from Columns B to AG and ends at row 148.

Select TPBE (Transfer Payment Business Unit)		TOTAL	LHIN - CSS	LHIN - CSS Comments	LHIN - CSS				
Funding Initiative (Please select from drop down)			Select Funding Initiative (where applicable)		Pandemic Pay (Home & Community)		Select Funding Initiative (where applicable)		Pandemic Pay (Home & Community)
Table B	Line #								
LHIN Cash Flow:									
Funding - Local Health Integration Network (LHIN)	1	5,951,073	5,151,034	Base Funding		800,039	Base Funding		
Funding - Provincial MOHLTC	2	-							
Funding - LHIN One-Time	3	547,236	426,210	\$218,469 - High Intensity Community Paramedicine, \$201,021 COVID-19 Response Support, \$6,720 Patient Monitoring Technology	82,452	Pandemic Pay	12,474	PSW Wage Enhancement (earned in 2020, received in Jan/Mar 2021)	26,100
Funding - Provincial MOHLTC One-Time	4	-							
Sessional fee funding - LHIN	5	-							
Sessional fee funding - MOHLTC	6								
Total LHIN/MOHLTC funding as per cash flow	7	6,498,309	5,577,244		82,452		812,513		26,100
Service Recipient Revenue	8	141,797	141,797						
Recoveries from External/Internal Sources	9	-							
Donations	10	-							
Other Funding Sources and Other Revenue	11	23,585	23,000	United Way Emergency Community Support Fund			585		
Other revenue adjustments (detailed comments required)	12	-	28,120	One-time transfer of funds between TPBE's as requested to Ontario Health (West)			28,120	One-time transfer of funds between TPBE's as requested to Ontario Health (West)	
Total revenue adjustments	13	165,382	136,677		-		28,705		-
Total FUND TYPE 2 funding for settlement purposes	14	6,663,691	5,713,921		82,452		841,218		26,100
Deferred LHIN funding used to purchase capitalized items in the current year (Enter as Negative Amount)	15	-							
Amortization of donation revenue and LHIN funding in the current fiscal year	16	-							
Other Adjustments including LHIN/MOHLTC recovery (detailed comments required)	17	-	286,313	Deferral or surplus funding at December 31 for EMS Community Paramedicine Programs (reported fiscally) - \$216,351 High Intensity Community Paramedicine, \$56,325 COVID-19 Response Support, \$13,637 base funding					
Total Revenue FUND TYPE 2	18	6,377,378	5,427,608		82,452		841,218		26,100
EXPENSES- Fund Type 2									
Compensation									
Salaries and Wages (Worked + Benefit + Purchased)	19	4,178,121	3,424,950		75,996		653,133		24,042
Benefit Contributions	20	927,260	781,621		6,476		137,105		2,058
Employee Future Benefit Compensation	21	-							
Nurse Practitioner Remuneration	22	145,568	145,568						
Medical Staff Remuneration	23	-							
Sessional Fees	24	-							
Service Costs									
Med/Surgical Supplies and Drugs	25	47,320	13,116				34,204		
Supplies and Sundry Expenses (excl. Med/Surg Supplies & Drugs)	26	140,479	125,448				15,031		

Select TPBE (Transfer Payment Business Unit)		TOTAL	LHIN - CSS	LHIN - CSS Comments	LHIN - CSS	LHIN - CSS Comments	LHIN - SH	LHIN - SH Comments	LHIN - SH	LHIN - SH Comments
Community One Time Expense	27	-	-		-		-		-	
Equipment Expenses	28	29,993	28,682				1,311			
Amortization on Major Equip and Software License and Fees	29	-								
Contracted Out Expense	30	294,571	294,083				488			
Buildings and Grounds Expenses	31	180,688	180,562				126			
Building Amortization	32	-								
TOTAL EXPENSES Fund Type 2	33	5,944,000	4,994,030		82,472		841,398		26,100	
Depreciation/Amortization of Capital Assets for the Program and Admin & Support	34	-	-		-		-		-	
Total Capitalized Purchases and Services in current year	35	-	-		-		-		-	
(CHC & Home Care purposes only) Inadmissible salary expenses	36	-								
(CHC & Home Care purposes only) Less: Other adjustments	37	-								
Total Expenses for Settlement Purposes	38	5,944,000	4,994,030		82,472		841,398		26,100	
Less sessional fee expenses (Enter as Negative Amount)	39	-								
Less one time expenses as per listing below (Negative sum)	40	- 300,242	- 179,196		- 82,472		- 12,474		- 26,100	
Total operating expenses for settlement purposes	41	5,643,758	4,814,834		-		828,924		-	
Operating Recovery	42	472,877	472,877		-		-		-	
Sessional Fee Recovery	43	-	-		-		-		-	
One Time Recovery	44	247,014	247,014		-		-		-	
Total Settlement Recovery	45	719,891	719,891		-		-		-	

Select TPBE (Transfer Payment Business Unit)		TOTAL	LHIN - CSS	LHIN - CSS Comments	LHIN - CSS	LHIN - CSS Comments	LHIN - SH	LHIN - SH Comments	LHIN - SH	LHIN - SH Comments
TABLE C: One-Time Expenses	Line #									
Capitalized purchases from One Time funding Section C-1										
	46	-								
	47	-								
	48	-								
	49	-								
	50	-								
	51	-								
	52	-								
	53	-								
	54	-								
	55	-								
	56	-								
	57	-								
	58	-								
	59	-								
	60	-								
Total One-time capitalized purchases from One-time funding	61	-	-		-		-		-	
Operating expenses from One Time Funding Section C-2										
	62	259,819	148,291	Salaries	75,996	Salaries	11,490	Salaries	24,042	Salaries
	63	10,496	978	Benefits	6,476	Benefits	984	Benefits	2,058	Benefits
	64	8,423	8,423	Medical Supplies						
	65	6,720	6,720	Supplies & Sundry Expenses						
	66	14,784	14,784	Equipment Expenses						
	67	-								
	68	-								
	69	-								
	70	-								
	71	-								
	72	-								
	73	-								
	74	-								
	75	-								
	76	-								
Total One-time operating expenses from One-time funding	77	300,242	179,196		82,472		12,474		26,100	

Select TPBE (Transfer Payment Business Unit)		TOTAL	LHIN - CSS	LHIN - CSS Comments	LHIN - CSS	LHIN - CSS Comments	LHIN - SH	LHIN - SH Comments	LHIN - SH	LHIN - SH Comments
TABLE D: Operating Expenses										
Capitalized expenses Sourced from Operating Funding (Section D-1) (All capitalized items regardless of amount)										
	78	-								
	79	-								
	80	-								
	81	-								
	82	-								
	83	-								
	84	-								
	85	-								
	86	-								
	87	-								
	88	-								
	89	-								
	90	-								
	91	-								
	92	-								
Total Capitalized expenses from Operating Funding	93	-	-		-		-		-	
Non- capitalized one-time expenses > \$5,000 Sourced from Operating Funding (Section D-2)										
	94	-								
	95	-								
	96	-								
	97	-								
	98	-								
	99	-								
	100	-								
	101	-								
	102	-								
	103	-								
	104	-								
	105	-								
	106	-								
	107	-								
	108	-								
Total Non-Capitalized One-time expenses >\$5,000 from Operating Funding	109	-	-		-		-		-	
Total One Time Expenses	110	300,242	179,196		82,472		12,474		26,100	
TABLE F: Sessional Fees Summary (Enter the # of Sessions Delivered)										
# of Sessions Delivered (From Sessional Fees)	111	-								
Calculated Cost Per Session	112	0.00	0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00	
TABLE G: Total Agency Reporting Summary by Fund Type (Total Agency Financials)		Line #	TOTAL							
Total Revenue Fund Type 1	113	-								
Total Expenses Fund Type 1	114	-								
Net Surplus/Deficit Fund Type 1 (Hospital)	115	-								
Total Revenue Fund Type 2 (Above)	116	6,377,378	5,427,608		82,452		841,218		26,100	
Total Expenses Fund Type 2 (Above)	117	5,944,000	4,994,030		82,472		841,398		26,100	
Net Surplus/Deficit Fund Type 2 (Community Programs)	118	433,378	433,578		- 20		- 180		-	
Total Revenue Fund Type 3	119	-								
Total Expenses Fund Type 3	120	-								
Net Surplus/Deficit Fund Type 3 (Other)	121	-								

Select TPBE (Transfer Payment Business Unit)		TOTAL	LHIN - CSS	LHIN - CSS Comments	LHIN - CSS	LHIN - CSS Comments	LHIN - SH	LHIN - SH Comments	LHIN - SH	LHIN - SH Comments
Total Revenue for the Provider	122	6,377,378	5,427,608		82,452		841,218		26,100	
Total Expenses for the Provider	123	5,944,000	4,994,030		82,472		841,398		26,100	
Net Surplus/Deficit	124	433,378	433,578		- 20		- 180		-	

PROXY PAY EQUITY ANNUAL REPORT

This form is to be completed by transfer payment organizations who receive proxy pay equity funding from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, pursuant to the April 23, 2003 Memorandum of Settlement. It must be completed on an annual basis until an organization no longer has a pay equity obligation.

SECTION 1: BASIC PROGRAM INFORMATION

Name of Agency: **Regional Municipality of Niagara**

Vendor #:		Reporting Period: from		to	
-----------	--	------------------------	--	----	--

Contact Person:		Phone:	
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SECTION 2: EXPENDITURE REPORT

Sources of Proxy Pay Equity Funds

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care	\$	A
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Other (Specify)

TOTAL	0.00
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Expenditures

Actual Proxy Pay Equity Expenses		B
----------------------------------	--	----------

Surplus(Deficit)	0.00	A-B
------------------	------	-----

Current Outstanding Liabilities

Total Number of Individuals Receiving Proxy Pay Equity

SECTION 3: CERTIFICATION

I, _____ hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge the financial data is correct and it is reflected in the year-end settlement.

(Signature of Health Service Provider Authority)

Title:

Certification by Provider Fiscal 2020-21

Having the authority to bind the Health Service Provider, we certify that the information provided in ARRFIn1, ARRFIn2 and ARRFIn3 are complete and accurate

Regional Municipality of Niagara	
N/A	
Name of Signing Officer	Date
Signing Officer***	
N/A	
Title	
N/A	
Name of Signing Officer	Date
Signing Officer***	
N/A	
Title	

***I have the authority to bind the Health Service Provider

1. Significant accounting policies

Basis of accounting

These schedules have been prepared for the Ontario Ministry of Health and the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant Local Health Integration Network. They are prepared in accordance with the financial reporting provisions in the guidelines in Chapters 3 and 4 of the Ontario Healthcare Reporting Standards and the Community Financial Policy (2016) issued by the Ontario Ministry of Health, which approximates Canadian public sector accounting standards, except that they do not provide for employee future benefits and tangible capital assets are expensed as incurred. Since precise determination of many assets and liabilities is dependent upon future events, the preparation of periodic financial information necessarily involves the use of estimates and approximations. These have been made using careful judgments.

Revenue and expenses

Revenue is recognized as amounts become available and are measurable.

Expenses are recognized as they are incurred and measurable.

Capital assets

The historical cost and accumulated depreciation of capital assets are not recorded. Capital assets acquired are reported as expenditures and amortization is not reported on ARRFIn1 and ARRFIn2.

Employee future benefits

Employee future benefits are provided which will require funding in future periods. These benefits include sick leave, benefits under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board ("WSIB") Act, and life insurance, extended health and dental benefits for early retirees. These benefits are recorded on a cash basis.

Schedule of revenue and expenses
The Regional Municipality of Niagara
Reaching Home – Canada's
Homelessness Strategy Program

March 31, 2021

Independent Auditor's Report	1-2
Schedule of revenue and expenses	3
Notes to the schedule of revenue and expenses	4

Independent Auditor's Report

To the Members of Council of the Regional Municipality of Niagara and the Ministry of Employment and Social Development Canada

Opinion

We have audited the accompanying schedule of revenue and expenses of the Regional Municipality of Niagara (the "Region") Reaching Home – Canada's Homelessness Strategy Program (the "Program") for the year ended March 31, 2021 and notes to the schedule (collectively referred to as the "schedule").

In our opinion, the accompanying schedule of the Program for the year ended March 31, 2021 have been prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with the financial reporting provisions of the agreement between the Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, as represented by the Minister of Employment and Social Development Canada and the Regional Municipality of Niagara signed June 12, 2019 (the "guidelines").

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards ("Canadian GAAS"). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Schedule* section of our report. We are independent of the Region in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the schedule in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Emphasis of Matter - Basis of Accounting

We draw attention to Note 1 to the schedule, which describes the basis of accounting. The schedule is prepared to assist the Program in complying with the financial reporting provisions of the agreement between the Ministry of Employment and Social Development Canada and the Regional Municipality of Niagara. As a result, the schedule may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Schedule

Management is responsible for the preparation of the schedule in accordance with the guidelines, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the schedule that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Region's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Schedule

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the schedule is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian GAAS will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in

the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this schedule.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian GAAS, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the schedule, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Region's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates, if any, and related disclosures made by management.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Chartered Professional Accountants
Licensed Public Accountants
June 24, 2021

The Regional Municipality of Niagara
Reaching Home - Canada's Homelessness Strategy
Schedule of revenue and expenses
Year ended March 31, 2021

	Note	\$
Revenue		
Ministry funding	2	941,096
Expenses		
Sub-project costs		842,012
Program management & administrative		99,084
Total expenses		941,096
Excess of eligible expenses over revenue		—

The accompanying note is an integral part of the Schedule.

DRAFT

1. Significant accounting policies

Basis of accounting

The Schedule has been prepared for the Ministry of Employment and Social Development Canada. The agreement between the Ministry of Employment and Social Development Canada and the Regional Municipality of Niagara requires the Schedule to be prepared in a manner consistent with generally accepted accounting principles ("GAAP"). Management of the Regional Municipality of Niagara has interpreted GAAP to be recognition and measurement principles in accordance with Canadian Public Sector Accounting Standards, except that it does not provide for employee future benefits and does not capitalize and amortize tangible capital assets. Management has further interpreted that GAAP does not include the presentation principles or the presentation of all financial statements and note disclosures required by GAAP for a complete set of financial statements.

Revenue and expenses

Revenues are reported on the accrual basis of accounting.

Expenses are recorded if they are eligible for the program and incurred in the period, except for employee future benefits.

Employee future benefits

Employee future benefits are provided which will require funding in future periods. These benefits include sick leave, benefits under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board ("WSIB") Act, and life insurance, extended health and dental benefits for early retirees. These benefits are recorded on a cash basis.

2. Ministry funding

This project commenced April 1, 2019 and will end March 31, 2024. Total maximum amount of Canada's contribution is \$5,225,896.

The funding allocation under Reaching Home will be used to support priorities and recommendations of the Community Advisory Board (\$4,703,056). There is incremental funding to support initial investments towards the design and implementation of Coordinated Access (\$522,840).

The maximum amount payable by the Ministry in each fiscal year of the project is:

	Designated Community \$	Coordinated Access \$	Total Funding \$
2020	837,176	121,420	958,596
2021	837,176	103,920	941,096
2022	1,009,568	103,920	1,113,488
2023	1,009,568	96,790	1,106,358
2024	1,009,568	96,790	1,106,358
	<u>4,703,056</u>	<u>522,840</u>	<u>5,225,896</u>

Subject: National Child Care Plan: Local Impacts and Recommendations

Report to: Public Health and Social Services Committee

Report date: Tuesday, June 15, 2021

Recommendations

1. That this report **BE RECEIVED** for information;
2. That Regional Council **ENDORSE** the recommendations (Appendix 1 to Report COM 15-2021) to be sent to the Ministry of Education, drafted in a response to the national child care plan by Niagara Region Children's Services, as a member of the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA) Children's Services Network (CSN);
3. That the Regional Chair **BE DIRECTED** to provide a copy of this report and its recommendations to the Minister of Education and to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO); and
4. That Regional Council **COMMUNICATE** the three recommendations specifically prioritized for Niagara, developed in consultation with local stakeholders and licensed child care service providers, in a delegation to the Minister of Education through a delegation at the annual Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) conference.

Key Facts

- On April 20, 2021, the federal government announced an investment of up to \$30 billion over five years for a national child care plan, in part modelled after the Quebec \$10 per day program.
- The next step to advance this plan, will be negotiations between the federal and provincial governments, to establish a funding agreement with set service targets.
- As a member of the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA) Children's Services Network (CSN), Niagara Region Children's Services was involved in drafting recommendations to be presented to the Ministry of Education (MEDU) in response to the federal national child care plan.
- These same recommendations were reviewed, in consultation with members of local stakeholder groups and licensed child care service providers, and the following three recommendations were specifically prioritized for Niagara:
 - The provincial government should develop a recruitment and retention strategy for Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs),

- Provincial allocations and capital expansion funds, at a minimum, should be maintained, and more capital and operating funds are needed to expand licensed child care, including both centre-based and licensed home child care and
 - Maintaining and enhancing child care fee subsidies is crucial to addressing affordability in child care.
- Through the CSN, Children's Services is advocating that municipal service system managers be involved in the development of a provincial response to the national child care plan, due to their critical knowledge of local community needs and relationships with community partners.

Financial Considerations

On April 20, 2021, the federal government announced an investment of up to \$30 billion over five years, to build a high-quality, affordable and accessible early learning and child care system across Canada, modelled in part after the Quebec \$10 per day program. The next step will involve negotiations between the federal and provincial governments, leading to a funding agreement with service targets to demonstrate the investment dollars have produced the intended results. This could signal a significant change in approach, and investment in licensed child care in Ontario.

Previously, in August 2019, the provincial government announced child care funding changes, which came into effect as of January 1, 2020. Among the funding changes, municipal service managers were asked to cost-share Expansion Plan operating funding at a rate of 80/20 provincial/municipal (previously this was funded 100% by the province). This meant that Niagara Region Children's Services would be expected to plan to support all existing and any new spaces within its existing funding allocation (resulting ultimately in less funding per operating space as the system grows). This planned funding change was paused due to the pandemic but there is no indication from the province, at this time, that the original plan will not move ahead for 2022.

At this time it is unknown if any of the provincial funding changes will be reversed due to the potential influx of federal dollars. As well, it is unknown how long it will take for both levels of government to reach a funding agreement. Therefore, Children's Services continues to work to mitigate the anticipated budgetary impacts and maintain the current capacity of the licensed child care system to ensure access to affordable care for families when parents are able to return to work or school.

Analysis

The provision of quality licensed child care services supports early childhood learning which is vital to a child's development and offers an opportunity for the best start in life for very young children and the future workforce. As well, licensed child care services are recognized as essential to the economic wellbeing of a community by enabling parents to work or attend school. The global pandemic has demonstrated how crucial access to affordable licensed child care is to the economic recovery in Canada, in part leading to the federal government moving forward with a national child care plan.

On April 20, 2021, the federal government announced an investment of up to \$30 billion over five years, intended to build a high-quality, affordable and accessible early learning and child care system across Canada. Of the \$30 billion investment, the federal government has committed up to \$27.2 billion over five years, starting in 2021-2022, to be used to bring the federal government to a 50/50 share of child care costs with provincial and territorial governments. The budget earmarks another \$2.5 billion for the Indigenous early learning and child care system to create new spaces, to build or renovate existing centres and to support after-school care programs on-reserve. The budget also sets aside money to renovate child care centres with the goal to make them more accessible for children with disabilities. Legislation is expected later this year to provide further details on the proposed national child care program. The next step will be negotiations between the federal government and the Ontario government, leading to a funding agreement with service targets to demonstrate the investment dollars have produced the intended results.

In Ontario, the provincial government has funding agreements with local municipal governments, as designated Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs), with responsibility for the local planning and managing of child care and early years services. Niagara Region, through Children's Services, is the CMSM for Niagara. In this role, Children's Services has service agreements with 61 service providers operating 175 licensed child care centres. Children's Services also administers child care fee subsidies for low income families and allocates additional resources to families and centres providing care to children with special needs. In addition, Children's Services directly operates five licensed child care centres and a licensed home child care agency.

Through its membership with the OMSSA Children's Services Network, Children's Services was involved in discussions with counterparts from across Ontario, and drafted a number of recommendations to be presented to the MEDU in response to the federal

national child care plan. These same recommendations were reviewed, in consultation with members of local advocacy groups and licensed child care service providers. The full list of recommendations are included in Appendix 1 to Report COM 15-2021. The following three recommendations were specifically prioritized for Niagara based on local input and observations of local need:

That the provincial government develop a strategy for the recruitment and retention of RECEs, and ensure they are compensated adequately in recognition of their years of education and critical role in licensed child care

For a number of years, as is the case across the province, Niagara has faced a critical shortage of qualified RECEs (requiring completion of a 2 year college program and registration in good standing with the College of Early Childhood Educators) to educate and care for children attending a licensed child care centre. The situation is even more pronounced for French language and Indigenous licensed child care centres, due to the need for qualified staff who also possess language and culture knowledge.

It is well recognized that the challenges with recruitment and retention stem largely from inadequate compensation. For many RECEs the base pay is minimum wage, far less than a living wage, and many are not entitled to benefits. The base pay in Ontario is currently enhanced through the provincial Wage Enhancement Grant (WEG), created by the previous provincial government to incrementally increase salaries to the same level as early childhood educators working in the school system. As well, licensed child care service providers may use their allocation from the provincial General Operating Grant (GOG), to increase RECE wages. The provincial government has continue to increase WEG funding in order to match the school board wage increases for RECEs working in a school setting. The average wage for a RECE working in a licensed child care centre in Niagara was \$20.70/hour in 2020 (It is important to note that these hourly rates include GOG and WEG), compared to \$27.75/hour paid to RECEs employed with local school boards.

An effective, multi-pronged recruitment and retention strategy is critically necessary not only to maintain the spaces currently licensed in Niagara but also to support any planned expansion that may come from additional federal funding. Feedback from local stakeholders and municipal service managers across the province states unequivocally that recognition of the profession, supported by appropriate and adequate compensation, is central to any effective recruitment and retention strategy. Furthermore, expansion of the existing licensed child care system is not possible until the critical shortage of qualified RECEs is addressed. In Niagara, most licensed child

care programs are not operating at their licensed capacity (i.e. the number of spaces permitted to operate by their provincially approved license), due to the shortage of qualified RECEs, and the system (based on pre-pandemic operations) would require approximately 25% (approximately 300) more RECEs to do so.

To date, the province does not have a province-wide strategy. At this time, its current effort is focused on promoting the Early Childhood Educators Qualifications Upgrade Program. This program provides financial support to individuals studying in the field, who work in early years settings, to obtain an ECE diploma and become eligible to apply for membership with the College of Early Childhood Educators. (However, many see this as of limited value, as the underlying issue of poor compensation remains unaddressed.) At this time, the province left it to CMSMs and colleges to develop and implement local recruitment and retention strategies. That said, Niagara Region Children's Services is working on a local strategy with Niagara College, and the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development.

Provincial allocations and capital expansion funds should be, at a minimum maintained, and community-based operating and capital funds are also needed to expand licensed centre-based and home child care, as further capacity is urgently required to address growing demands for licensed child care

Since the Canada-Ontario Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) initiative was announced in June 2017, Children's Services received an annual amount of \$7.8 million in expansion funding, and has subsequently increased the local licensed child care system by over 500 spaces for infants, toddlers and preschoolers aged 0-4 years. However, additional investments are needed to increase access and address the growing demand for licensed child care, particularly for infants, toddlers and preschool aged children. The table below shows the number of infants, toddlers and preschool aged children on a waitlist for a licensed child care space across Niagara as of May 2021. (Note: these numbers are likely an underrepresentation of local need, as many families, believing that licensed care is inaccessible, do not put their names on the central waitlist.)

Age grouping	Number of children on waitlist
Infants (0-18 months)	265
Toddlers (19-30 months)	400
Preschoolers (31 months-4 years)	388

In addition to the need for additional child care centre spaces, licensed home child care is recognized as an invaluable part of Niagara's child care system. Local stakeholders recently spoke to the value of this in Niagara both as an opportunity to increase local capacity and to provide the expanded hours (evenings and weekends) so critical for those who work in the manufacturing and hospitality industries. Some proposed that the provision of incentives would be helpful to encourage unlicensed home child care providers to enter into the licensed system. Furthermore, reducing provincially directed administrative barriers to home child care licensing requirements would create new capacity, support quality, and enhance oversight and accountability for services rendered to families. As licensed child care centre hours of operation do not meet the needs of families who require alternate hours of care (evenings, weekends, and overnight) it is imperative to expand local licensed home child care as part of the larger licensed child care system.

Maintaining and enhancing funding for operating costs and fee subsidies is crucial to addressing affordability in child care

In addition to capital dollars to expand the existing licensed child care system, additional funding is needed for ongoing operations. In August 2020, the provincial government announced funding allocation changes. Beginning on January 1, 2021, Municipalities would be expected to financially support the operation of any additional spaces within the existing child care budget allocation from the province. With the provincial government signaling a plan to hold to existing funding levels (and instead focus new investments into its Ontario Child Care Tax Credit initiative), as the system grows, the annual child care funding allocated to licensed child care service providers per licensed space would be anticipated to be reduced.

While Children's Services is working to mitigate the anticipated budgetary impacts, the lack of increased funding will likely cause some licensed child care service providers to increase parent fees for child care to make up for the reduction in annual funding and to address increasing costs associated with operating a licensed child care centre. Many families already struggle with the cost of licensed child care, therefore, along with investments to expand high-quality licensed child care spaces, funding is needed to ensure fees are affordable to parents so that they are able to access licensed child care and return to work or school.

The following table provides the lowest, highest and average daily per diems for each age group care category (as of January 1, 2020).

Per diems	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	School Age*	Before School	After School
Minimum	\$43.00	\$30.50	\$29.50	\$28.50	\$6.25	\$8.50
Maximum	\$70.99	\$60.96	\$56.39	\$52.93	\$18.00	\$18.00
Average	\$53.91	\$45.38	\$41.67	\$39.26	\$10.38	\$13.32

*Full day rate for school age children (e.g. PD day)

The table does not include co-ops or nurseries unless they provide full day

As part of the national child care plan, the federal investment seeks to reduce fees for licensed child care to \$10 per day, on average, within the next five years. While this plan unfolds, it is imperative that financial assistance with child care fees is not eliminated, because for many families, particularly those with multiple children, a daily child care fee of even \$10 per child would still be too costly. Although the provincial government introduced the Ontario Child Care Tax Credit, many families are not able to pay child care costs up front and wait to receive the provincial tax credit when they file their taxes.

In addition to keeping the child care fee subsidy program, the regulatory framework guiding child care fee subsidies under Ontario's Child Care Funding Formula should be reviewed as it has not been updated since 2005, and based on the low-income cut-off (LICO) measure. Currently, a family income must be under the threshold of \$20,000 to qualify to receive the full fee subsidy. An annual family income of \$20,001 and above requires a parental contribution. According to Statistics Canada, the low-income measure (the LIM is an internationally used measure of poverty, widely used by OECD countries, and is considered a more accurate measure) after tax thresholds for a family of four in 2018 was \$48,366. The table below shows the number and percentage of one parent and two parent families in Niagara (January 1 to December 31, 2020), by annual family income, in receipt of child care fee subsidy. To note, 459 one parent families (51%) are required to make a parental contribution for their child care fees.

Annual Family Income	Number of One Parent Families	Percentage of One Parent Families	Number of Two Parent Families	Percentage of Two Parent Families
\$0 - \$10,000	237	27.8	142	39.7
\$10,001 - \$20,000	156	18.3	19	5.3
\$20,001 - \$30,000	210	24.7	36	10.1
\$30,001 - \$40,000	169	19.9	51	14.2
\$40,001 - \$50,000	65	7.6	40	11.2
\$50,001 - \$60,000	11	1.3	34	9.5
\$60,001 - \$70,000	4	0.4	24	6.7

Annual Family Income	Number of One Parent Families	Percentage of One Parent Families	Number of Two Parent Families	Percentage of Two Parent Families
\$70,001 - \$80,000	0	0.0	7	2
\$80,001 - \$90,000	0	0.0	4	1.1
\$90,001 - \$100,000	0	0.0	0	0

It is important to note that prior to the global pandemic, on average there were 2500 children in receipt of a child care fee subsidy each month, with slightly more than 4000 children supported each year. In comparison, in 2020, just over 1200 children received a child care fee subsidy, 30 percent of the pre pandemic number of children supported.

It is well recognized that there is a connection between access to affordable and quality child care and labour force participation by women¹. Child care challenges have become a barrier to work for mothers who disproportionately take on unpaid child care responsibilities when their family cannot find or afford child care. From 2016 to 2020, there were 6,200 (6.2%) fewer people participating in Niagara's labour force. Initially it was thought the decline was a result of the aging demographic in Niagara, however, the year over year change from 2019 to 2020 was unique. A closer look at the data shows that the biggest loss from the workforce was from the 15 to 25 years demographic (-15.6%), and females were affected disproportionately at -31.3% compared to males at -3.2%. Additionally, women dominate the labour force in the sectors which have been hardest hit by the global pandemic, e.g. accommodation and food services, retail etc. When the pandemic comes to a close and these sectors reopen, to enable a full economic recovery, women must be able to re-enter the labour force. As women begin to return to work they will once more be seeking affordable childcare.

While these recommendations have been prioritized locally, additional recommendations identified through discussions with counterparts across Ontario will be submitted to the provincial government through the Children's Services Network of OMSSA. Through this network, Niagara Region Children's Services is advocating that municipal service system managers, who possess critical knowledge about community needs and have relationships with community partners, be involved in the development of a provincial response to the proposed national child care plan.

¹ Niagara Community Observatory. (2020). The economic impact of COVID-19 on Niagara women in the workforce. Link to [The economic impact of COVID-19 on Niagara women in the workforce.](#)

Consultation with Local Advocacy Groups and Child Care Service Providers

Children's Services consulted with members of local stakeholder groups (Niagara Region Women's Advisory Committee, Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce - Women in Niagara, and the Gender Equity Task Force), and licensed child care services providers to inform the aforementioned recommendations outlined in this report. These groups were consulted to gain feedback, discuss local priorities as it relates to child care, and to ensure that the recommendations in this report were representative of their concerns.

The local stakeholder groups emphasized the importance of expanding access to high-quality licensed child care spaces, recognizing that there should also be greater flexibility in the hours of child care available to families in Niagara. These groups noted that fee subsidies should be maintained and enhanced to ensure that families are able to continue to access child care, even with federal commitments to reduce child care fees, ultimately to an average of \$10 day.

The development of a recruitment and retention strategy for RECEs was also expressed as critical to not only ensure that Niagara is able to increase its child care operating capacity to match its licensed capacity, but also to enable the expansion of available child care spaces in general. The quality of care within licensed child care spaces can be positively impacted when qualified staff are compensated fairly and adequately for their work. Studies have indicated that the ability of staff to support the needs of children in early learning and child care environments is influenced not only by their level of education and training but also by external factors, such as their work environment, salary and work benefits². Improving RECE wages can support the overall stability of the child care system, be effective in the retention and recruitment of qualified staff, while also positively affecting the quality of care.

The licensed child care service providers outlined that their primary recommendation again focused on the recruitment and retention of RECEs. These professionals are the cornerstone of the child care system, and without having access to a well-compensated, and qualified workforce, licensed child care spaces would not be able to operate or expand. Child care service providers also identified the continued need for operating dollars to go in tandem with increased capital investments for expansion of licensed

² Employment and Social Development Canada. (2019). Defining and Measuring the quality of Early Learning and Child Care: A literature review. Link to [Defining and Measuring the quality of Early Learning and Child Care: A literature review](#).

child care spaces. The service providers recognized the need to address the affordability of child care, by ensuring that fee subsidies remain available for families, and are enhanced to be more responsive to the changing financial needs of families in Niagara.

During both consultation sessions, the involvement of service system managers in the development of a provincial response to the national child care plan, was highlighted as a key element. In preparing this report, recently received written submissions from these same stakeholders were reviewed and considered (appendices 2 to 5 to Report COM 15-2021).

Alternatives Reviewed

This report is initiated by staff to provide Council with local considerations and recommendations as a result of the federal announcement of a national child care plan.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

The provision of accessible and quality early learning programs and services supports Council's focus on Supporting Businesses and Economic Growth.

Other Pertinent Reports

- COM 19-2020 Update on Community Based Capital Program and Early Years Capital Program Projects
- COM 30-2019 School Based Child Care Capital Projects
- COM 01-2018 Community-Based Early Years and Child Care Capital Funding Application
- COM 15-2018 Update on Niagara's Licensed Child Care Expansion Plan
- COM 24-2017 Licensed Child Care Expansion Plan

Prepared by:
Sandra Noel
Manager
Community Services

Recommended by:
Adrienne Jugley, MSW, RSW, CHE
Commissioner
Community Services

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.

Acting Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with Pam Abeysekara, Integrated Planning & Policy Advisor and reviewed by Darlene Edgar, Director, Children's Services and Lori Bell, Manager, Children's Services.

Appendices

Appendix 1 National Child Care Plan Local Impacts and Recommendations to be presented to the Ministry of Education

Appendix 2 YWCA child care letter to Council

Appendix 3 Gender Equity Task Force child care letter to Council

Appendix 4 West Lincoln child care letter to Council

Appendix 5 Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce child care letter to Council

Appendix 1

Recommendations to be presented to the Ministry of Education

Through its membership with the OMSSA Children's Services Network, Niagara Region Children's Services was involved in discussions with counterparts from across Ontario, and drafted the following recommendations to be presented to the MEDU in response to the federal national child care plan:

- The Ministry of Education should reconsider previously announced changes to administrative funding and cost-sharing post COVID-19, and look to sustain, reopen and expand the child care system in Ontario
- Provincial allocations and capital expansion funds should be, at a minimum maintained, and community-based operating and capital funds are also needed to expand licensed centre-based and home child care, as further capacity is urgently required to address growing demands for licensed child care
- Request Service System Manager involvement in the development of a provincial response to the proposed national child care plan
- Incentives should be provided to encourage unlicensed providers to enter into the licensed system, to ensure oversight that currently does not exist
- Along with investments to expand high-quality licensed child care spaces, fees must be affordable to parents so that they are able to access child care
- Provincial government develop a strategy for the recruitment and retention of Registered Early Childhood Educators, and ensure they are compensated adequately in recognition of their years of education and critical role in licensed child care
- Maintaining and enhancing funding for operating costs and fee subsidies is crucial to addressing affordability in child care
- Province consider an increase of the fee subsidy threshold to match the Low-Income Measure After-Tax (LIM-AT), adjusted for family size and indexed to inflation
- Ministry of Education to take action to improve collaboration between Service System Managers and local school boards across Ontario

April 13, 2021

Re. Report COM 6-2021- Managing the licensed child care system during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dear Councillors,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to this report on child care, which is critical to the social and economic recovery from the pandemic and to the future development of our communities. The YWCA Niagara Region appreciates our working relationship with Regional staff and many community partners who we work with to provide essential services across Niagara.

As part of a network of YWCA's across Canada and around the world, our organization serves women and children and families by providing emergency shelter, supported housing, life skills and support for families. Access to safe, affordable, quality child care is critical to our work and our vision of an equitable future where women and families thrive.

This report highlights how the pandemic has exacerbated decades of pressures and challenges in the child care system: a shortage of qualified staff, fewer child care spaces available, expensive health and safety requirements, and not enough subsidies to support the financial needs of local families. Of course these are not new challenges; the child care system has been under strain for decades. The pandemic has exacerbated the systemic issues but it has also highlighted how critical child care is to the social and economic health of all communities and for women to participate in the economy.

In Niagara the child care needs and pressures are well-known. For years we have read reports about waitlists, increasing costs, shortages of staff, and poor wages for workers. And as the report shows, the pandemic has created an even bigger problem with the loss of more than 6,660 licensed child care spaces - a massive loss which is likely only the tip of the iceberg, with many unlicensed, unregulated child care spaces not officially counted.

Now what are we going to do about it?

Over the last year, we have read research articles, op eds, policy discussions, politicians at all levels of government, from all political parties talk about child care policy. We have heard from [Dr. Kate Bezanson](#) a national expert on social policy speaking across the country about how child care is the critical social infrastructure that is necessary for social and economic recovery.

Locally, the [Niagara Workforce Planning Board and Niagara Community Observatory](#) have also analyzed the data to confirm that “women have overwhelmingly borne the brunt of employment losses in Niagara since the pandemic shutdown in March and continue to do so” and that child care will be critical to getting women back to work, contributing to the economy.

The [Ontario Chamber of Commerce](#) has reported on this in the She-covey report, as well as the [Canadian Chamber of Commerce](#), YWCA Canada, industry associations, banks and economic organizations across the country. Everyone is paying attention to the child care crisis and what further challenges are coming.

We have even heard this Regional Council pass a motion in Aug. 2020 affirming that “the economic recovery of the Niagara Region and Ontario is dependent on families having access to safe, reliable and affordable child care” and directing Niagara Region to advocate for child care as part of the pandemic recovery plan to the province and to work with the federal government to develop a national child care strategy.

Regardless of what the upper levels of government are willing to do, we need to find solutions for the economic and social recovery of our communities. As Dr. Robin Williams, Niagara’s former Medical Officer of Health said on International Women’s Day, “Everything is broken - what a time to fix it.”

In light of this report being presented for information, we are suggesting the following next steps for Council’s consideration:

- That the report be referred to the Planning and Economic Development committee for consideration. Child care is not just a social issue - it is an economic imperative.
- That the Region’s Economic Development department get involved and work collaboratively with local area municipalities and economic development experts to get involved in the child care recovery plan.
- That the Region works together with the Women’s Advisory Committee, business groups and chambers of commerce to develop a plan to advocate for Niagara’s needs, further affirming Council’s motion in Aug. 2020.
- Develop a child care plan for Niagara. While the Region’s Children’s Services department is responsible for the legislative responsibilities to license, monitor, enforce

and ensure compliance, it can also play a role in planning for the future that includes the three pillars of accessible, affordable and quality child care.

- Address the wage equity issue. In the development of a child care plan there must also be a focus on filling positions with qualified staff that are paid a fair living wage that reflects the value of their work as an essential pillar of our community. Wage inequity in the care sector has been a long-standing issue. For any child care plan to be stable and sustainable it must address this issue.
- Child care is the foundation of recovery planning and the future prosperity and equity of the entire region of Niagara. This is not only an issue for Public Health and Social Services Committee to receive information - it must be a full team Niagara effort to develop a targeted plan, actions and investment of time, focus and creativity.

Child care is a critical ingredient in all of the Region's economic objectives and strategic plans. It is an economic issue, a social issue, an equity issue, a business issue, and a future building opportunity. Child care is critical to Niagara's economic recovery, to get women back to work, to re-open businesses, to increase our output and opportunity and to achieve the bold future visions this council has set for itself: to achieve a prosperous, safe and inclusive community.

As always, the YWCA is here to work with you, as are many service providers, women's groups, business organizations and policy experts to address this pressing issue. As a YWCA and part of a national network that is actively advocating to address the issues of child care, we can help amplify the messages at a provincial and national level as well as support the development of local strategies.

If we want the community to recover from the devastating impacts the pandemic has had and for women to thrive, as has been stated, this is an essential component for success.

Thank you,

Elisabeth Zimmermann
Executive Director

And

Julie Rorison
Board President



April 20, 2021

Submitted via email

Niagara Regional Council
Office of the Regional Clerk
Niagara Region
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, P.O. Box 1042
Thorold, Ontario L2V 4T7

Dear Chair Bradley,

On behalf of the members of the Gender Equity Task Force please accept this letter in relation to the important issue of childcare in Niagara.

As stewards of our community we would like to invite you to ask the question "who benefits?" from the decisions you make. Social policy and corresponding public investments enshrine priorities and privileges the needs of some citizens over others.

Many studies highlight the social and developmental importance of childcare services for children directly. We would like instead to highlight the link between childcare and labour force participation.

While some may argue that direct payments to families for childcare is a preferred option, we ask you to examine who benefits from this approach? Direct cash payments for parents to find and pay for their own childcare may benefit families with the ability to discern for themselves high quality providers where children are safe from harm. However a system of subsidized childcare provides many more benefits to many more of Niagara's citizens by not only meeting the standard of no harm but also setting the conditions for children to thrive, establishing reliable childcare for parents who are working and contributing to the local economy through employment for childcare providers, opportunities for childcare operators and resources for labour market participation. A subsidized system of childcare levels the playing field for all families by ensuring equal access to high quality childcare.

We see a system of childcare as the better investment and the best way to ensure that the benefits of taxpayer funds are evident for children, families, job seekers and businesses.

Respectfully,

Gender Equity Task Force – Founding Members
Mishka Balsom
Rashmi Biswas
Elisabeth Zimmerman
Sarah Pennisi

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

April 27, 2021

Ann-Marie Norio
Office of the Regional Clerk, Niagara Region
1815 Sir Issac Brock Way
Thorold, ON
L2V 4T7

Sent via email: Ann-Marie.Norio@niagararegion.ca

Dear Committee Chair Greenwood, Public Health and Social Services Committee

Re: Request to Increase Licensed Child Care in the Township of West Lincoln

With full support of the Council of West Lincoln, I am writing to this committee to engage in conversation about the need for an increase in licensed child care in the Township of West Lincoln.

As highlighted in a recent report entitled the Early Learning and Childcare as Key Economic Infrastructure by Deloitte Canada dated March 26, 2021, child care is described as education that is provided using a curriculum-based program delivered by trained educators can provide several benefits including but not limited to:

- **Benefits to Children:** Investments can have positive impacts on the outcomes for children, including better behavioural/social skills, better mental and physical health, and better long-term labour market outcomes.
- **Increase in the Labourforce Participation for Women:** Expanding early childhood education can have a positive economic impact through a resulting boost in the labour participation of women.
- **Benefits to Parents:** Beyond increasing workforce participation for women, ELCC can help reduce parental stress, which benefits their mental health and in turn benefits their children, work performance, and standard of living.
- **Promotion of Equality:** There is also evidence that investments in ELCC disproportionately benefit lower income Canadians and this can help address socioeconomic challenges, such as income inequality.
- **Decreased Reliance of Special Needs Education:** There is evidence of the sustained impact of ELCC on reducing the need for special education in the US, the UK, Canada, and other advanced economies.

After a recent review of the available child care in West Lincoln, we as a Council see a need to increase the amount of licensed child care especially for the youngest of children. It is our hope that this letter will highlight the need for our community and will promote further consideration of planning for our community.

Children begin life ready for relationships that assist in early brain development. Relationships continue to be an intricate part of human existence. Not only will a successful quality child care program promote relationship building amongst its youngest clientele, it is imperative that a growing community such as West Lincoln can provide such opportunities to our residents.

Respectfully,



Mayor Dave Bylsma

Fully Supported by All Council Members as listed below:

Mayor Dave Bylsma
Councillor Shelley Bradaric
Councillor Cheryl Ganann
Councillor Harold Jonker
Councillor Mike Rehner
Councillor William Reilly
Councillor Jason Trombetta

cc. Regional Councillor Albert Witteveen

From: Niagara Region Website
Sent: Wednesday, 21 April 2021 14:30:40 (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)
To: Clerks
Cc: webincoming
Subject: Online Form - Enquiry from Region website

Enquiry from Region website

To reply, copy the email address from below and put into 'To'. (if resident entered their email address)

name

Mishka Balsom

phone

[REDACTED]

email

mishka@gncc.ca

municipality

St. Catharines

other mun

subject

Affordable Daycare

comments

To Chair Bradley and Members of Council: On behalf of the Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce and its membership, I would like to express the sense of urgency we feel on the question of affordable and accessible childcare. While this issue is long-standing, the pandemic has thrown it into sharp relief. In 89% of all Canadian households with a stay-at-home parent, that parent is the mother. A report from the Niagara Community Observatory and Niagara Workforce Planning Board indicated that between February and April of 2020, working mothers with young children had reduced their working hours at a rate four to five times that of men. The Ontario Chamber of Commerce's annual

Enquiry from Region website

Ontario Economic Report consistently finds, year after year, that the greatest single concern for Ontario's businesses is access to talent. A business community already starved of skilled and qualified workers cannot withstand such a massive departure of skilled and qualified workers from the labour force without economic loss. The lack of affordable and accessible childcare is an economic issue that holds Niagara's business growth and prosperity back. Parents represent a significant pool of talent which is strangled by their inability to find someone to care for their children at a price that makes employment economically viable for them. We urge you to grant this issue the priority it deserves and to work immediately with your provincial and federal counterparts to ensure that affordable childcare becomes a reality.

reply
yes

Page Referrer

<https://www.niagararegion.ca/government/council/writtenletter.aspx>

Subject: Document Execution Authority for Housing Programs

Report to: Public Health and Social Services Committee

Report date: Tuesday, June 15, 2021

Recommendations

1. That Council **AUTHORIZE** either one of the Manager of Housing Programs or the Director of Housing Services/Chief Executive Officer Niagara Regional Housing to execute all documentation related to the Niagara Renovates Program and the Welcome Home Niagara Program including but not restricted to loan agreements, related security documentation inclusive of charges on real property, postponements and discharge of charges;
2. That Council **AUTHORIZE** either one of the Manager of Housing Programs or the Director of Housing Services/Chief Executive Officer Niagara Regional Housing to execute all documentation related to the Rent Supplement suite of programs including Housing Allowance, all Rent Supplement Programs, and landlord agreements;
3. That Council **AUTHORIZE** either one of the Commissioner of Community Services or the Director of Housing Services/Chief Executive Officer Niagara Regional Housing to execute all documentation related to the Canada Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI) funding stream, specifically charges and agreements for Housing Provider Capital Repair;
4. That Council **AUTHORIZE** either one of the Commissioner of Community Services or the Director of Housing Services/Chief Executive Officer Niagara Regional Housing to execute all documentation related to the New Development Housing Allowance Program; and
5. That Council **DIRECTS** staff to consider incorporation of the authority granted herein within the Schedule "A" (delegated authorities) of the next revision of the By-law 09-2016 being a By-law to Govern Execution of Documents and Delegate Certain Administrative Powers and Duties to Staff.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to identify and authorize appropriate level signing authorities for the Welcome Home Niagara and Niagara Renovates Programs which effective May 30, 2021 have transitioned from programs managed by Niagara Regional Housing (“NRH”) to programs managed by Niagara Region.
- Niagara Renovates is a loan program designed to assist low and modest income households in Niagara to fund repairs needed to bring their existing houses up to a minimum level of health and safety and/or to create permanent modifications to increase accessibility for occupants with a disability.
- Welcome Home Niagara is a loan program supported by federal and provincial funding with an objective of encouraging home ownership by offering down payment assistance to qualified applicants.
- The Rent Supplement suite of programs includes a variety of programs funded federally, provincially and municipally. Each of these funding streams is dedicated to providing subsidies that lower the overall rental payment made by the tenant in order to make market rental rates affordable to those living with low income. These subsidies are offered for various programs to applicants on the NRH waitlist.
- The Canada Ontario Housing Initiative (COCHI) Housing Provider Capital Repair funding is a funding stream that is a blend of Provincial and Federal dollars and supports housing provider capital repairs.
- The New Development Housing Allowance Program was developed to support non-profit and co-op housing providers to offer housing units at a reduced rate to applicants on the Housing Services Centralized waitlist who accept a new development unit. As new units are being developed, housing providers are seeking subsidies to offer tenants. In order to fund these units, long term levy commitment is required. These subsidies are essential to supporting the growth of local housing providers and ultimately expanding the core number of affordable units in Niagara.
- These programs are both high volume in terms of number of files, and time sensitive and when operated by NRH were managed by the Manager Housing Programs. Related loan documents were executed by either the Manager Housing Programs or the Chief Executive Officer of NRH.
- Niagara Region’s existing By-law 09-2016 being a By-law to Govern Execution of Documents and Delegate Certain Administrative Powers and Duties to Staff (“Execution By-law”) does not yet have an equivalent delegated authority to allow the operation of the programs in a similar manner under the auspices of Niagara Region.

Financial Considerations

The programs affected by the delegation of authority proposed by this report are fully funded and previously formed part of the annual budget presented by NRH to Council as part of the budget process. Funding for future years will form part of the budget presentation for Community Services and continued support from upper level governments is anticipated. As such the recommendations within this report should have a neutral effect on the financial position of Niagara Region.

Analysis

Niagara Region and NRH have entered into agreements authorized respectively by Council for Niagara Region and the Board of Directors of NRH to move employees of NRH to Niagara Region and shift management of various programs previously undertaken by NRH as administrator on behalf of Niagara Region as the designated service manager under the *Housing Services Act* to Niagara Region. Effective May 30, 2021 the transition will be complete and these programs, formerly managed by NRH will be managed by the same staff persons but under the auspices and direction of the Commissioner of Community Services.

The Niagara Renovates Program provides loans to fund repairs needed to bring their existing houses up to a minimum level of health and safety and/or to create permanent modifications to increase accessibility for occupants with a disability. As of the transition date NRH records indicate a total of five hundred and twenty six (526) such loans issued and outstanding with a range of values from \$714.00 to \$191,935. All but seven of the loans were equal to or less than \$25,000.00 in value. The program primarily funds renovations to single family homes but there is a multi-unit element to the program that in different years has resulted in a few larger loans. The loan agreements for this program contemplate advancing funds as receipts for the completion of the approved work is completed and that the loan will be fully forgiven in increments over a ten year period. The loans are typically secured by a mortgage/charge on the property. Periodically the homeowners sell the properties prior to full forgiveness and repayment of the outstanding amount is required. In addition, when a home owner moves to a new first mortgage lender and a new mortgage is required postponements are requested.

The Welcome Home Niagara provides a down-payment loan on the purchase of a home to qualified applicants and with limited exceptions all borrowers must reside in the premises as their principal residence. The loans are secured by a mortgage/charge on the land. As of the transition date NRH records indicate a total of four hundred and

eighty-five (485) such loans outstanding with values ranging from \$1345.00 to \$50,000.00 with all but eight such loans having values equal to or less than \$25,000.00. The loans are forgivable if there is no event of default prior to the twentieth anniversary of the loan advance. Events of default include selling the home and/or ceasing to use it as the borrower's principal residence prior to the twentieth anniversary and as a result frequently the borrower is obligated to repay the loan prior to the forgiveness date. The loan agreements contemplate the lender sharing in the capital appreciation of the property in the event of a default. Recognizing the increasing value of homes generally, requests for payout are a regular occurrence, which requires execution of various documents.

Security documentation and registrations on title to the subject properties for both the Welcome Home Niagara and Niagara Renovates Program have and will continue to be created with the assistance and advice of Legal and Court Services staff.

Collectively, the Rent Supplement/Housing Allowance programs support over 1400 individuals and families to maintain affordable housing in Niagara. These programs are required to make monthly payments to landlords and tenants and delays could jeopardize tenancies across the municipality. The Rent Supplement/Housing Allowance suite of programs are funded by federal, provincial and municipal government. Each of these funding streams is dedicated to providing subsidies that lower the overall rental payment made by the tenant in order to make market rental rates affordable to those living with low income. These subsidies are offered for various programs to applicants on the NRH waitlist and the numbers of these transactions on a monthly basis is significant.

The programs noted above have been managed within NRH by the Manager of Housing Programs who will under the new structure continue to do so as a Niagara Region employee. NRH authorized either the Manager of Housing Programs or the Director Housing Services/Chief Executive Officer of NRH to sign all necessary documentation related to the loans including loan agreements, related security documentation inclusive of charges on real property and discharge of charges for both programs. Niagara Region's Execution By-law does not yet have an equivalent delegated authority to allow the operation of the programs in a similar manner under the auspices of Niagara Region.

The New Development Housing Allowance Program was developed to support non-profit and co-op housing providers to offer housing units at a reduced rate to applicants on the Housing Services Centralized waitlist who accept a new development unit. As

new units are being developed, housing providers are seeking subsidies to offer tenants. In order to fund these units, long term levy commitment is required. These subsidies are essential to supporting the growth of local housing providers and ultimately expanding the core number of affordable units in Niagara. Recognizing the long term nature of these commitments staff recommend more senior signing officers in the form of Commissioner of Community Services or the Director of Housing Services/Chief Executive Officer Niagara Regional Housing rather than the Manager of Housing Programs as the appropriate signing officers.

The COCHI funding stream provides capital repair subsidy for existing non-profit and cooperative housing providers for the projects that helps to address health and safety, accessibility and structural integrity. These funds are limited therefore the funds are allocated based on urgency. Recognizing the variable dollar value and the basis upon which they are issued, staff recommend more senior signing officers in the form of Commissioner of Community Services or the Director of Housing Services/Chief Executive Officer Niagara Regional Housing rather than the Manager of Housing Programs as the appropriate signing officers.

The Director of Legal and Court Services will be presenting recommended revisions to the Execution By-law at some future date. The Execution By-law covers execution authority for staff in all departments within Niagara Region and as result requires broad consultation before revisions are recommended. Staff recommend when completing a review of the Execution By-law that staff to consider incorporation of the authority granted herein within the Schedule "A" (delegated authorities) of the revised Execution By-law.

Alternatives Reviewed

The alternative available would be to rely on the existing provisions of the Execution By-law and seek the signatures of any two of the Chair, Clerk, Chief Administrative Officer and/or Commissioner of Corporate Services on every document required for the programs which would not be desirable from the perspective of the time expenditure by those officers and due to the time sensitivity of completing the transactions.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

The programs involved support a Healthy and Vibrant Community by improving the condition of existing housing occupied by low or modest income households and encouraging home purchases by persons who might not otherwise be able to do so

thereby assisting to alleviate the existing shortage of affordable housing among segments of Niagara region's population

Other Pertinent Reports

- Confidential CL-C 112-2020

Prepared by:
Sterling Wood
Legal Counsel
Corporate Services

Recommended by:
Adrienne Jugley, MSW, RSW, CHE
Commissioner
Community Services

Submitted by:
Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with Donna Woiceshyn, Director of Housing Services/Chief Executive Officer Niagara Regional Housing.

NIAGARA COUNTS

Public Health & Social Services Committee
COM 17-2021 Homelessness Point in Time Count Report

June 15, 2021

Cathy Cousins, Director, Homelessness Services and Community
Engagement

HOMELESSNESS SERVICES

NIAGARA COUNTS

*Public Health and Social Services Committee
June 15, 2021*

Cathy Cousins

Director, Homelessness Services and Community Engagement

What is a Point-in-Time Count?

- Provides a snapshot of homelessness at a single point in time
- The PiT Count is a provincial and federal requirement that supports Built For Zero-Canada (BFZ-C) objectives and A Home For All: Niagara's 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan (HHAP)
- On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the global outbreak of COVID-19 a pandemic, triggering a number of measures to prevent and mitigate the spread of infection, which postponed the 2020 PiT Count to March 23, 2021

COVID-19 Context

- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Count was modified by using community agency staff rather than volunteers and by implementing enhanced COVID-19 safety measures
- In order to try to mitigate the negative impact of not hosting an Indigenous magnet event, staff from the Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre and Niagara Regional Native Centre joined agency staff to support the count
- This interim report recognizes that additional, critical input from the local Indigenous community is still needed
- Because of changes enacted to protect the health and safety of all parties involved, the results of the 2021 Count may not be directly comparable to those of years past

Overall Results: 2021 vs 2018

Overall results	2021	2021	2018	2018
Overnight Location on the night of the Count	Surveys (#)	Individuals Counted (#)	Surveys (#)	Individuals Counted (#)
Unsheltered/Unsure	47	75	20	38
Emergency and VAW shelters	219	351	226	350
Transitional housing	128	239	125	237
Hidden homelessness	35	0	29	0
Motel homelessness	10	0	8	0
Total Surveys	439	N/A	408	N/A
Total Homeless Enumeration	----	665	----	625

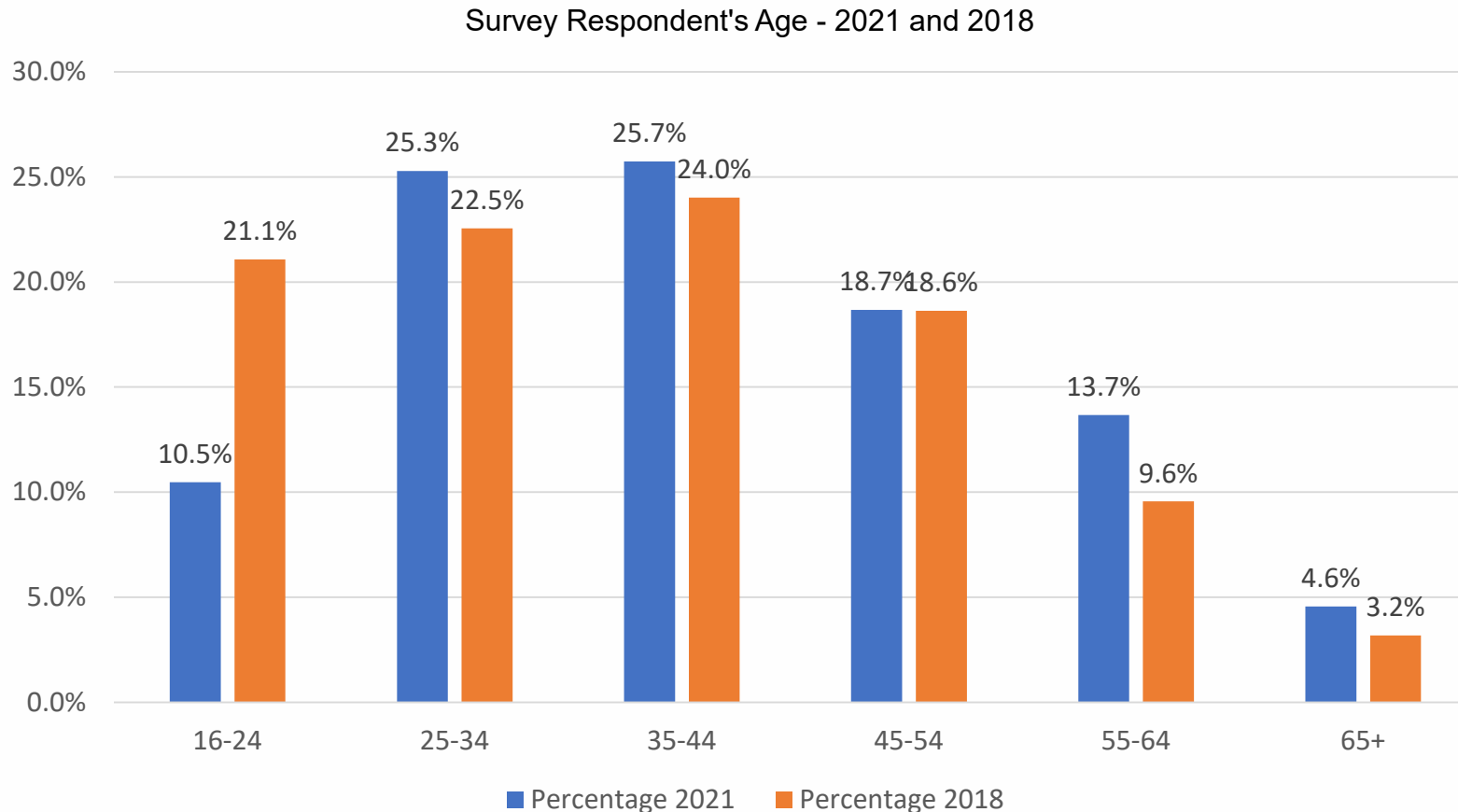
Enumeration Results

- Homeless Enumeration: A count of individuals experiencing homelessness in Niagara at a given time
- In 2021, at least 665 people were experiencing homelessness in Niagara on March 23rd, 2021 compared to 625 in 2018
- 121 children aged 0-15 years and 76 youth aged 16-24 years (144 children in 2018)
- 24 seniors (same as 2018)

Overnight Location – March 23, 2021

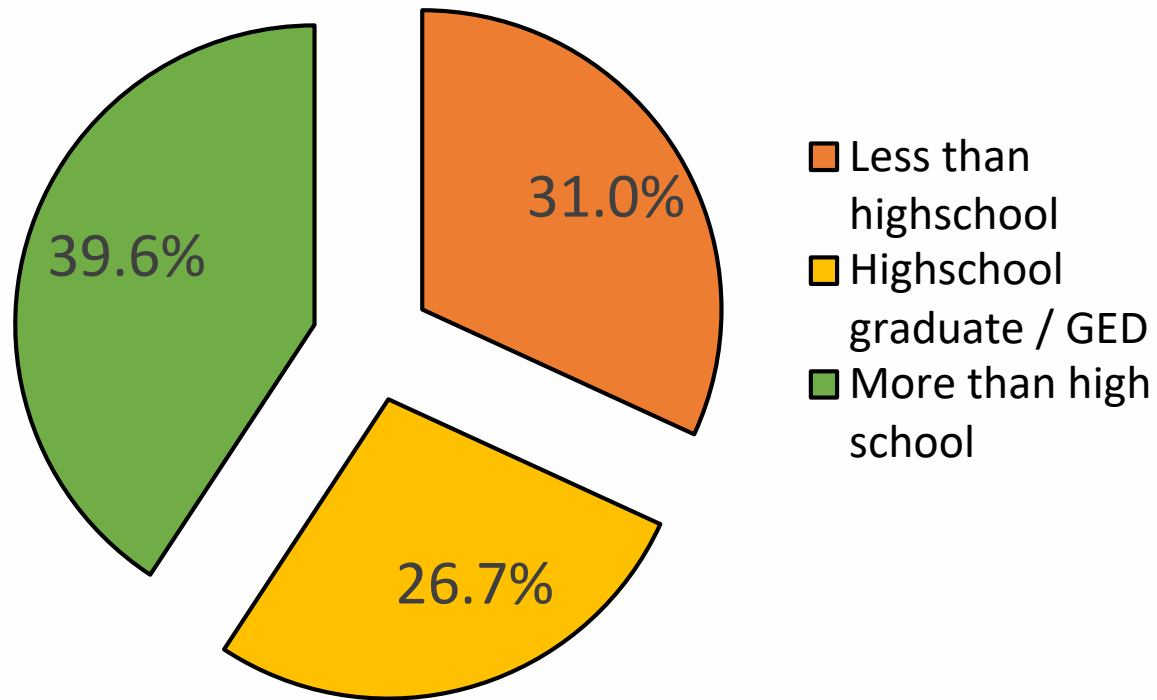
- 439 completed surveys - information on the demographics, experience, and service needs (self-identified)
- PiT Count supported by 70 agency staff including Niagara Region Native Centre and Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre staff
- 79% considered Niagara to be their home community
- Almost one quarter (22.6%) of respondents identified as Indigenous or as having Indigenous ancestry
- This is vastly disproportionate to the 2.8% of Niagara's overall population with Aboriginal identity.
- More respondents were staying in unsheltered locations or responded "I don't know" to the question of where they are staying overnight in 2021 vs. 2018 (47 vs. 20)

Age Characteristics



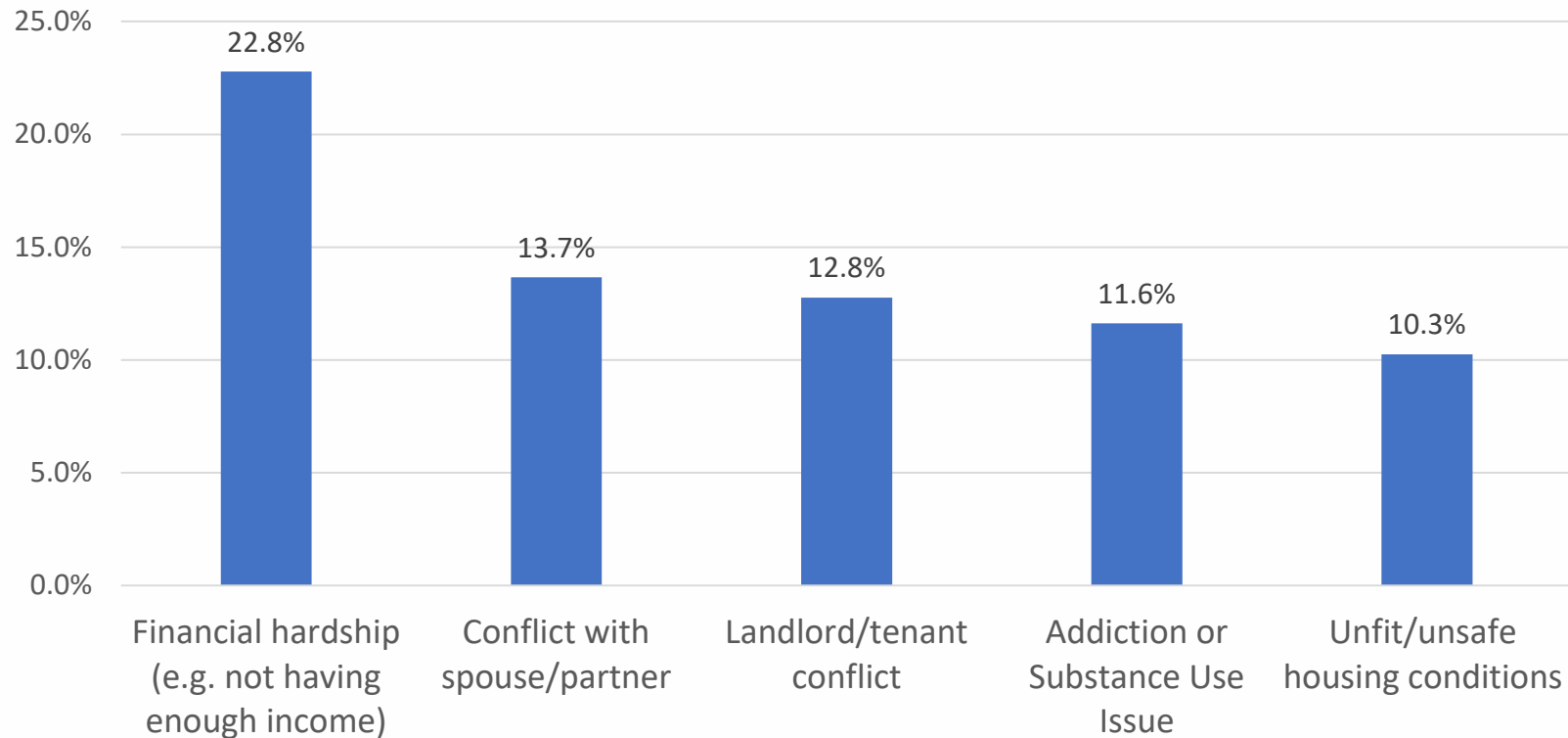
- There has been a decrease in youth aged 16-24 years experiencing homelessness, when compared to 2018 (21.1%)
- There has been an increase in older adults (65+) experiencing homelessness (4.6%)
- In 2021, 24% had experienced homelessness for the first time before 18 years of age compared to 36% in 2018

Educational Attainment



- The data suggests that more survey respondents indicated having received higher education levels than in the past
- In 2021 66.3% had high school or greater compared to 61.5% in 2018.

Top 5 Reasons for Most Recent Housing Loss

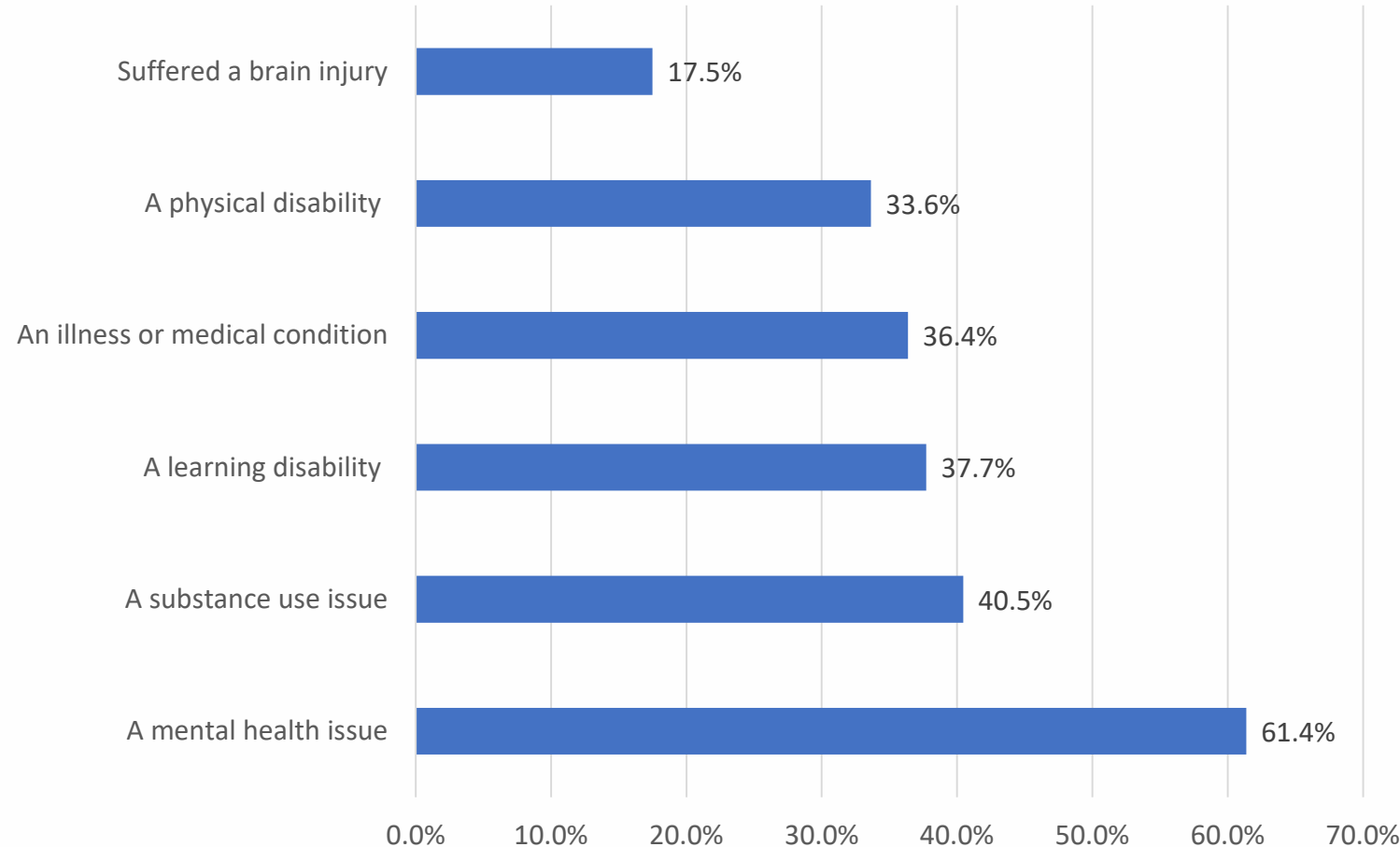


- 22.8% of respondents indicated that financial hardship (e.g. not having enough income) was the most common reason for housing loss in 2021
- 35 respondents indicated their most recent housing loss was COVID-19 related
- Over 70% of respondents indicated that rent being too high was the biggest challenge when trying to find housing

System Interactions

Number of Systems Interactions	2021	2018
Number of emergency room (ER) visits	231 individuals had visited ER for a total of 801 visits.	219 people had visited ER for a total of 663 visits.
Number of days in hospital	120 individuals had spent a total of 1,727 days in hospital.	125 people had spent a total 1,333 days in hospital.
Number of interactions with police	171 individuals had a total of 1,250 interactions.	161 people had had a total 628 interactions.
Number of days in jail	83 individuals had spent a total of 4,600 days in jail.	70 people had spent a total of 3,276 days in jail.
Total number of survey respondents	439	408

Health – Respondents Self-Identified as having:



- More than 60.0% (compared to 53.9% in 2018) of survey respondents self-identified as having a mental health issue and 40.5% (compared to 34.3% in 2018) of respondents self-identified as having a substance use issue
- Learning disability option added to 2021 survey

Questions?

Subject: Homelessness Point-in-Time Count Report

Report to: Public Health and Social Services Committee

Report date: Tuesday, June 15, 2021

Recommendations

1. That this report **BE RECEIVED** for information.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to provide Regional Council and the community with the results of the 2021 Point-in-Time (PiT) Count in Niagara.
- The PiT Count is a provincial and federal requirement that supports Built For Zero-Canada (BFZ-C) objectives and A Home For All: Niagara's 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan (HHAP).
- On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the global outbreak of COVID-19 a pandemic, triggering a number of measures to prevent and mitigate the spread of infection, which postponed the 2020 PiT Count.
- Niagara Counts 2021, Niagara's third homelessness PiT Count, was conducted in late March 2021, in consultation with Niagara Region Public Health. Similar counts took place in 2018 and 2016.
- Niagara's PiT Count found 665 people to be experiencing homelessness on March 23, 2021, in emergency and Violence Against Women (VAW) shelters, in transitional housing programs, and in unsheltered locations. This number includes 121 children aged 0-15 years and 24 seniors (65+).
- As part of the Count, 439 surveys were completed, providing valuable information on the demographics, experience and service needs of Niagara's homeless population.
- Due to the pandemic, Indigenous magnet events, in collaboration with Indigenous-led service providers, were not able to take place. As a result, this interim report recognizes that critical input from local Indigenous communities is still needed to ensure that the experiences and extent of Indigenous homelessness in Niagara is represented and heard.

Financial Considerations

Niagara's PiT Count was fully funded through Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan agreement between Niagara Region and the Ministry of Employment and Social

Development Canada. This was a new agreement for the period from April 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021 to respond to and support the increased needs of people experiencing homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic. Costs of approximately \$58,000 incurred as a result of the legislated count, were eligible under this agreement. These eligible costs mainly comprised of administrative costs and honoraria for community agencies and survey participants.

Analysis

Niagara's PiT Count, termed Niagara Counts 2021, was planned by a steering committee comprised primarily of community agency staff from across the region, with representation from emergency and VAW shelters, homelessness prevention providers, transitional housing providers, the Niagara Assertive Street Outreach (NASO) team, Niagara Regional Native Centre and Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre. It also included Regional staff, with a member of the Homelessness Services division functioning as the coordinator.

The federal government released a COVID-19 Community Impact document to allow adaptations to standard Point-in-Time Count methodology to reduce the risks of implementing the count during the pandemic. Niagara's steering committee reviewed the considerations and Niagara Region Public Health was consulted regarding all modifications. The count was modified by using community agency staff rather than volunteers, implementing enhanced COVID-19 safety measures including the use of personal protective equipment, postponement of Indigenous magnet events and the use of a digital survey platform.

A PiT Count is intended to provide a snapshot of homelessness at a single point in time (typically conducted at a similar point in time every two years) through a homeless enumeration and an accompanying survey. As a consequence of the pandemic, this interim report recognizes that additional, critical input from the local Indigenous community is still needed to ensure the experiences and extent of Indigenous homelessness in Niagara is represented and heard.

The homeless enumeration total was achieved through:

- Occupancy data from emergency and VAW shelters, and transitional housing programs
- Counting survey responses indicating an unsheltered overnight location, or with an "I don't know" response to "Where are you staying tonight?"

- A tally of observed individuals in unsheltered environments, where it was not possible to conduct the survey or the individual declined the survey

The PiT Count survey was administered to everyone over 15 years old who was experiencing homelessness on the reference night and who consented to participate. It included mandatory federal and provincial survey questions as well as optional questions deemed locally important by the steering committee. The survey population also included a small number of people experiencing hidden homelessness¹ who were not included in the homeless enumeration. All survey participants were given an honorarium for their participation, which consisted of a \$5 gift card, a two-ride bus ticket, mini chocolates and a Niagara 211 resource card.

In 2018, magnet events were held to better capture youth and Indigenous homelessness in the PiT Count. Due to provincial pandemic guidelines, magnet events were postponed and alternative plans are being discussed with Niagara Regional Native Centre and Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre for one or two magnet events to take place in the summer, dependent on the current state with the pandemic. In order to try to mitigate the negative impact of not hosting an Indigenous magnet event, staff from the Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre and Niagara Regional Native Centre joined agency staff at various sheltered sites and assisted NASO with the street count on the day of the PiT Count to increase support for Indigenous individuals experiencing homelessness.

The sheltered count took place all day on March 23, 2021, with some surveys completed over the next few days (however, only for individuals with overnight stays on the 23rd). Close to 70 agency and Friendship Centre staff from 34 different programs providing emergency shelter, VAW shelter, and transitional housing, conducted the count and administered the survey to guests/clients. The response rate in sheltered environments was 74% (compared to 80% in 2018). Agencies received an honorarium to cover any costs incurred as a result of their participation in Niagara Counts.

Instead of having community volunteers as in 2016 and 2018, the street count was conducted by the Niagara Assertive Street Outreach team partnered with staff from Niagara Regional Native Centre and Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre. Between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. on March 23, NASO and Friendship Centre staff travelled across Niagara to conduct the PiT Count survey and tally observed homeless individuals, including in hard-to-reach areas and encampments. NASO's current hot spot mapping tool, as well as the walking routes from Niagara Counts 2018 were reviewed by a mapping sub-committee² to identify locations where individuals experiencing

unsheltered homelessness would be encountered. All participating agency staff attended mandatory training prior to the count, covering methodology and survey administration.

Because of changes enacted to protect the health and safety of all parties involved, the results of the 2021 Count may not be directly comparable to those of years past. For example, the survey methodology approach was modified to account for COVID-19 health and safety protocols, which may have had an impact on the rate of response to the questions asked, when compared to previous years. Fair comparisons to certain data indicators can be made, but it is to be interpreted with caution.

Homeless Enumeration Results

Based on the PiT Count, at least 645 people were experiencing homelessness in Niagara on March 23, 2021, as illustrated in the table below. Included in this number are 121 children aged 0-15 years and 67 youth aged 16-24 years and 24 seniors. In 2018, 625 people were found to be experiencing homelessness in Niagara on the night of the PiT Count.

	2021	2021	2018	2018	2016	2016
Overnight location on the night of the Count	Surveys (#)	Individuals Counted (#)	Surveys (#)	Individuals Counted (#)	Surveys (#)	Individuals Counted (#)
Unsheltered/Unsure	47	75	20	38	5	41
Emergency and VAW shelters, crisis beds	219	351	226	350	147	210
Transitional housing	128	239	125	237	129	214
Hidden homelessness	35	0	29	0	0	0
Motel homelessness	10	0	8	0	0	0
Total Surveys	439	N/A	408	N/A	281	N/A
Total Homeless Enumeration	N/A	645	N/A	625	N/A	465

There was no significant difference in the number of individuals counted in transitional housing between 2018 and 2021. However, fewer individuals were counted in emergency and VAW shelters in 2021 than in 2018, and substantially more individuals

were counted in unsheltered locations, or who responded with “I don’t know” to the question of where they were staying overnight in 2021 vs. 2018.

There are several possible reasons for the higher number of individuals in the Unsheltered/Unsure category. A greater number of individuals may have been sleeping in unsheltered settings in order to avoid the congregate environment of an emergency shelter during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, Niagara Assertive Street Outreach, a group of outreach workers from four agencies who work together as one team, has been operating for a year and has a well developed sense of where individuals in unsheltered locations are staying. NASO also has greater capacity for outreach work than what was in place in 2018 and they were able to travel to all known locations in the region.

The occupancy rate of emergency shelters in 2021 was much lower (84%) than in 2018 (117%). While it may be true that individuals have been avoiding shelter during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is also the case that emergency shelter beds were added to the system since 2018. Approximately 70 beds were added to the regular emergency shelter system in Niagara between 2018 and 2020. In addition, over 30 beds were added as a result of the pandemic through COVID-19 funding, primarily to operate a Housing-Focused Shelter/Bridge Housing Pilot program.

In Niagara, rents have continued to increase steadily. In the five year period from 2016 to 2020 the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) average market rents in St. Catharines-Niagara increased by \$171 (from \$904 to \$1,075), representing an average annual increase of about 4.2%³. According to Padmapper, St. Catharines was the thirteenth most expensive rental market in Canada at the end of 2020, with the listing rate for a one-bedroom unit being \$1,300 and a two-bedroom unit being \$1,500 per month⁴. In Niagara, the core housing need⁵ indicator identified that non-census singles (84%) and single parent households (14%) have the highest need. These measures indicate that access to affordable housing remains a critical component in reducing the risk of homelessness for low- and moderate-income households.

Impacts of COVID-19 on Homelessness

The COVID-19 pandemic has created many health, social and economic impacts that have disproportionately affected individuals experiencing homelessness. It is well recognized that people experiencing homelessness are vulnerable to COVID-19 infections due to the prevalence of underlying health conditions, lack of safe housing, and the congregate living situations that most homeless individuals find themselves in

that could increase the spread of COVID-19⁶. Additionally, intersecting factors such as mental illness and substance use may contribute substantially to the difficulties faced by these individuals in being able to engage and follow public health guidelines (e.g. wearing personal protective equipment, physical distancing, and frequent hand hygiene)⁷. An increasing proportion of people experiencing homelessness are older than 65 years, a factor that also exacerbates the vulnerability and severity of COVID-19 infections⁶.

Research has indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic has amplified risks for people with substance use issues. The implementation of public health restrictions, issues and concerns with drug supply, and reduced access to a range of services including treatment and harm reduction services throughout the pandemic, has posed greater health risks for people experiencing substance use issues⁸. Among individuals who are experiencing homelessness and have substance use issues, this may contribute to increased substance use and high rates of substance-related morbidity or mortality⁶. Throughout the pandemic, opioid use and opioid-related-deaths have also continued to increase. Local data indicates that there has been an increase in the suspected opioid overdoses responded to by Niagara Region Emergency Medical Services, during the pandemic⁹.

Throughout the pandemic, many organizations that provide supports to victims of gender-based violence (including VAW shelters) saw increases in the severity of service needs. Locally, Niagara Regional Police Services saw a 9.2% increase in the numbers of calls related to domestic violence between March and November 2020, compared to the same time period in 2019¹⁰. Organizations in Niagara that provide shelter and housing supports for victims of gender violence, also saw increased service needs, documented a greater number of calls to crisis lines, and also observed women requiring supports as a result of more serious domestic violence occurrences¹¹.

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the housing market and the overall affordability of housing in many communities across Canada. Housing prices have continued to increase, while many people have experienced job losses and rising costs of living. It has made it more difficult for people, especially those who are from low to moderate income households, to ensure that they are able to remain securely housed. Due to this, many individuals may be at risk of becoming homeless, in the process of losing their housing and/or becoming homeless for the first time.

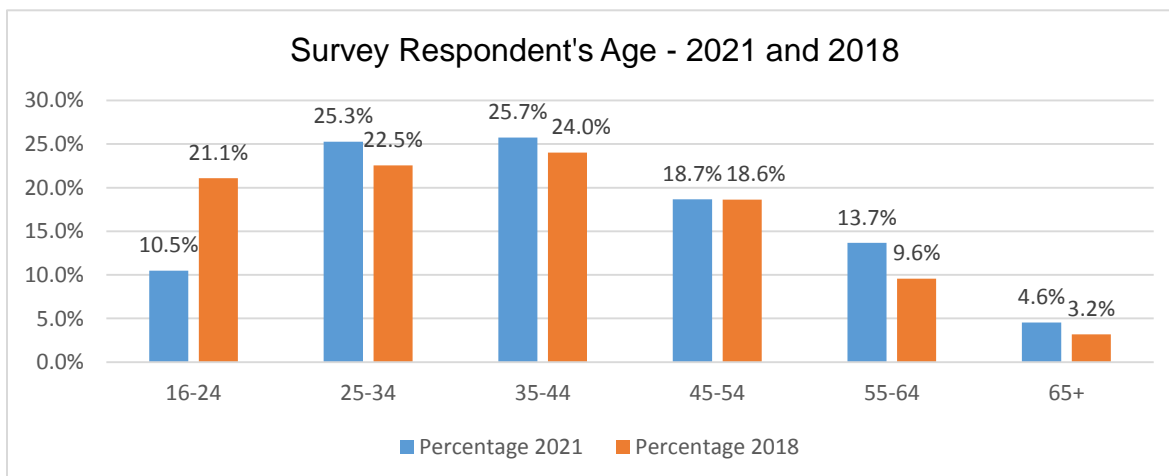
A recent report on the long-term impact of the pandemic on homelessness in Canada highlights that the pandemic has induced an economic downfall that could directly

impact the level of homelessness across the country. The report indicates that the impacts of the economic downfall on rising Canadian homelessness is complicated by a lag effect of up to five years, and several other factors, including differences from one community to another (e.g. labour market and housing market trends)¹². This means that it could be years before the full effect of rising homelessness in Canada, as a result of various factors such as reduced incomes or job loss or difficulty with remaining securely housed due to the impacts of COVID-19, is actualized. The report also indicates that young people, women, non-married persons and those without high school accreditation, have been most directly affected by the labour market changes as a result of the COVID-19 economic downfall¹².

The many health, social, and economic impacts of COVID-19 are expected to require the implementation of effective policy measures by multiple levels of government to support recovery and mitigate the continued challenges to be faced by some of the most vulnerable in our community. Housing and homelessness experts suggest that continued emphasis on the development of affordable housing, increasing social assistance income benefit levels, and incorporating housing-focused practices at emergency shelters is necessary to not only address the current issue of homelessness, but also to prevent additional homelessness, especially in light of the impacts of COVID-19.

Survey Results

In total, 439 unique surveys were completed, providing valuable information on the demographics, experience and service needs of Niagara's homeless population. The results that follow are based on self-identification in survey responses. The graph below outlines survey respondent's ages, comparing 2021 and 2018.



The 2021 PiT Count indicates that there has been a decrease in youth experiencing homelessness, when compared to 2018 survey respondents (21.1%). In Niagara, shelter diversion programs for youth have been successful in preventing youth from entering the shelter system. The shelter diversion programs, established in 2019, are a collaborative effort involving multiple shelter organizations in Niagara, and supports youth 16 – 24 with finding alternative housing options in the community. Many youth shelter programs in Niagara have also increased their focus on housing and reconnecting youth to their family, friends, schools, and their home communities. Through these efforts, youth shelter organizations such as The RAFT, have seen tremendous success in preventing youth from entering the shelter system and ensuring that youth who are in shelter are connected to long-term housing and supports. However, it is also important to note that magnet events for youth did not take place in 2021 due to COVID-19 health and safety protocols. As such, it is uncertain to what degree the impact of shelter diversion programs may have had on the decreased percentage of youth experiencing homelessness in Niagara.

The age data also highlights that there has been an increase in older adults (55+) experiencing homelessness. The 2021 survey found 18.2% of survey respondents were 55+ compared to 12.7% of survey respondents in 2018. As Canada's population continues to age, it is expected that there will be an increase in the population of older adults experiencing homelessness as well.

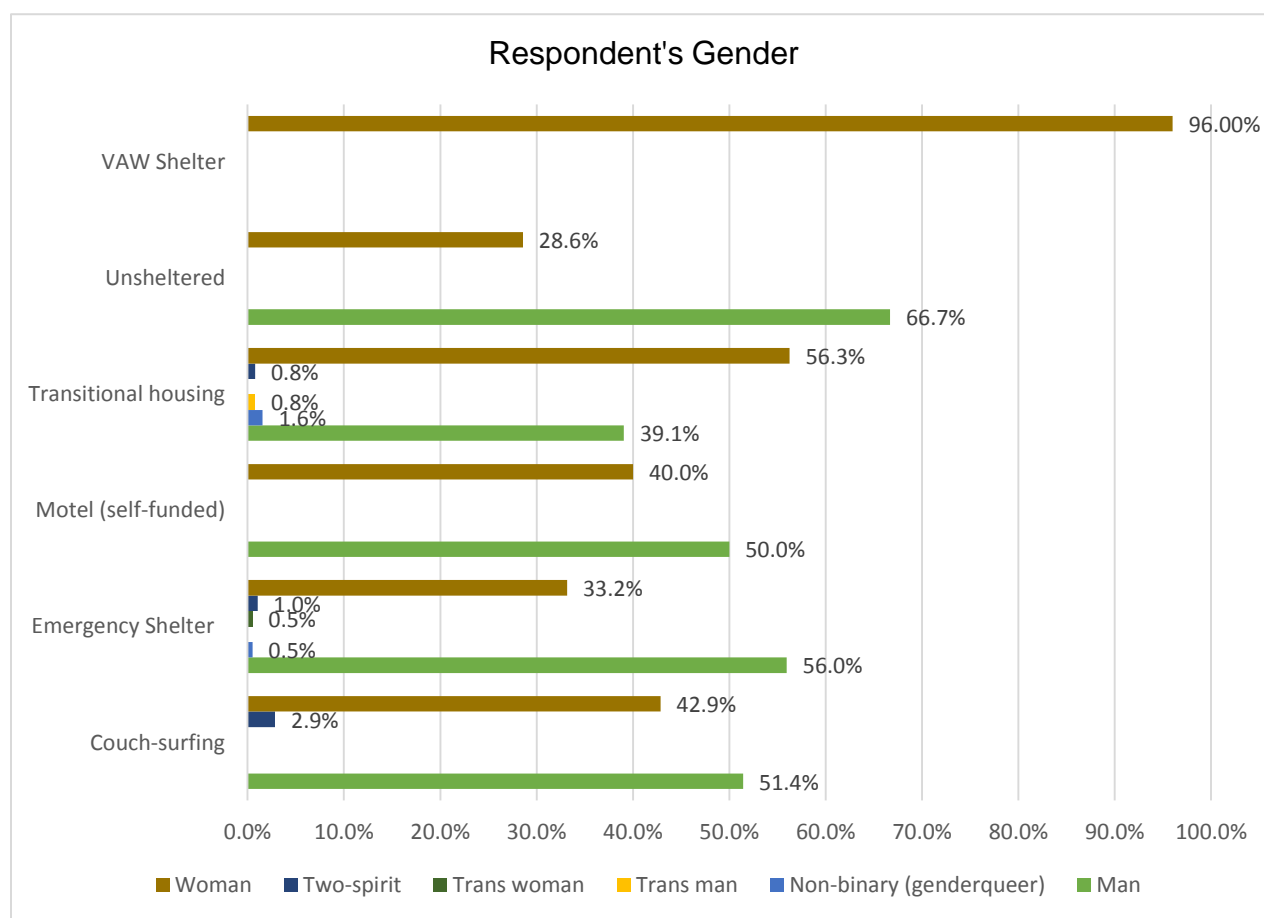
The data indicated that 22.6% of respondents identified as Indigenous or having Indigenous ancestry. This continues to remain vastly disproportionate to the 2.8% of Niagara's overall population with Indigenous identity¹³. People with Indigenous identity and/or ancestry are dramatically overrepresented in the homeless population across the country. Due to the pandemic, Indigenous magnet events in collaboration with local Indigenous-led service providers were not able to take place. Once these magnet events take place, there will be a greater understanding of the extent of homelessness in Niagara's Indigenous population and their experiences.

The majority of survey respondents self-identified as being White. Of those who did not identify as being White, 44 respondents (10.0% of survey respondents) self-identified as being Black (this includes Black Canadian / American, Black African, Black Afro-Caribbean or Afro-Latinx). Fifteen survey respondents identified as Latin American, and a further nine individuals indicated that they identified as either East Asian, South Asian / Indo-Caribbean, or Arab. In Niagara, 1.8% of the overall population is Black, which indicates that this population is also disproportionately represented in the homeless population¹³. While Niagara has service providers that offer housing supports and

services to newcomers and refugees, respondents who self-identified as being Black were not limited to individuals who indicated that they access these services.

Approximately 8.0% of survey respondents indicated that they had come to Canada as a refugee or refugee claimant, and a further 6.8% indicated that they had come to Canada as an immigrant. Among those who indicated they had come to Canada as either a refugee or refugee claimant, 64.7% indicated that they had arrived within the past 10 years. For respondents that indicated they had come to Canada as an immigrant, 60% indicated they had been here over 15 years.

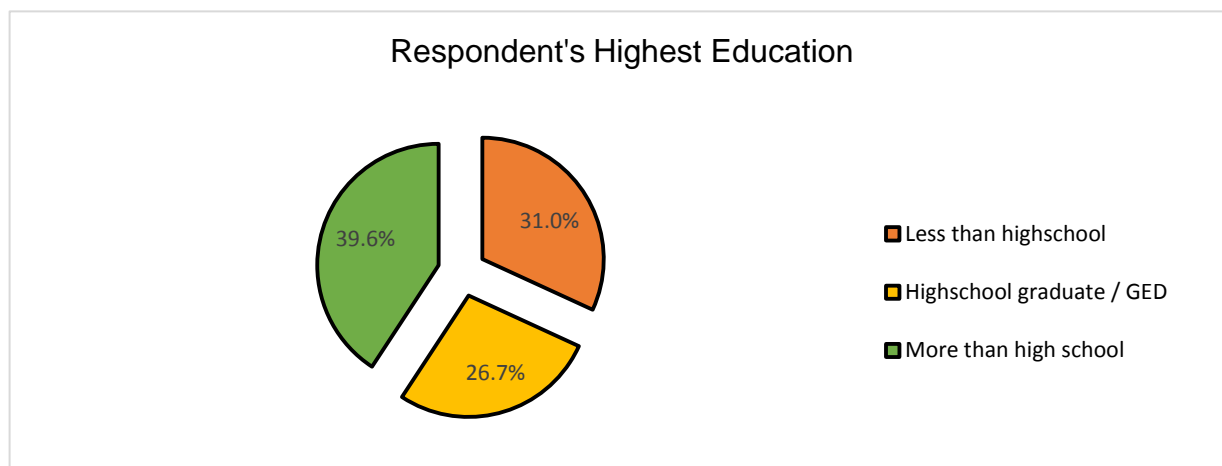
The graph below outlines survey respondent's gender identification.



The majority of survey respondents in emergency shelter (56.0%), accessing motels (50.0%), identified as 'couch-surfing' (51.4%), and unsheltered (66.7%), identified as men. 56.3% of respondents staying in transitional housing programs identified as women.

A large majority of survey respondents described their sexual orientation as straight/heterosexual (82.0%). 8.43% of survey respondents identified as being part of the LGBTQ2S+ community.

The pie chart below demonstrates the respondent's highest education.



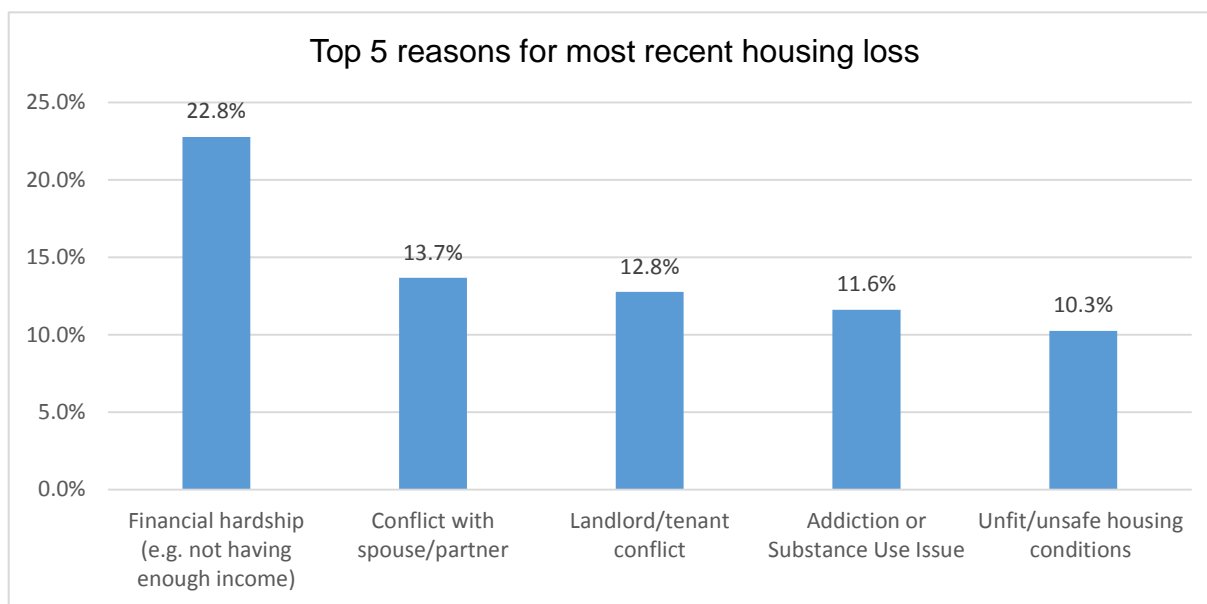
The data suggests that more survey respondents indicated as having received higher education levels when compared to individuals that were surveyed in 2018. Thirty-one point zero percent of respondents (compared to 37.5% in 2018) had less than a high school diploma, 26.7% of respondents (compared to 24.5% in 2018) graduated from high school or had received their GED and 39.6% (compared to 35.3% in 2018) had more than a high school education (e.g. post-secondary, trades apprenticeship experience, graduate degree).

Approximately 96% of respondents indicated that they had a source of income, with the top three sources of income being welfare / social assistance (Ontario Works), disability benefits (ODSP), and the GST / HST refund. Overall, 71.1% of respondents indicated that their source of income was social assistance (Ontario Works and/or ODSP). 9.3% of respondents indicated that formal employment (e.g. full-time, part-time, casual employment) was a source of income.

The survey data indicated that 78.8% of survey respondents identified Niagara as being their home community. 13.0% of survey respondents (compared to 22.1% in 2018) indicated that they did not identify Niagara as their home community (e.g. they indicated that their home community was out of the region, out of the province, or out of the country). Due to the pandemic, Niagara Region Homelessness Services implemented several changes related to admissions to emergency shelter to ensure the health and

safety of clients and staff as well as to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Similar to many municipalities across Ontario, a home shelter policy was applied such that emergency shelters were not accepting any individuals who identified that Niagara was not their home community until clients had completed the necessary self isolation. As such, this may have led to the lower percentage of survey respondents who indicated that their home community was outside of Niagara.

The graph below demonstrates the top five reasons for the most recent housing loss.



While the reasons for housing loss have not significantly changed when compared to 2018, more survey respondents indicated that financial hardship (e.g. not having enough income) was the most common reason for housing loss in 2021. It should be noted that the 2021 survey questionnaire gave respondents different options to indicate reasons for their most recent housing loss (e.g. option to indicate that housing loss was due to a landlord/tenant conflict). The 2021 PiT Count survey also looked to identify the impact of COVID-19 on housing loss and 35 survey respondents indicated that their most recent housing loss was also related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

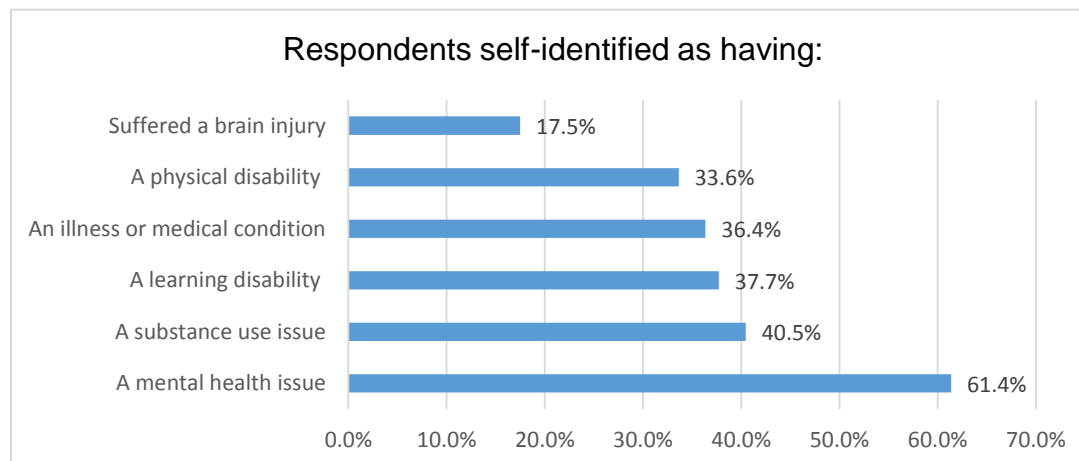
The following table illustrates the systems interactions over the past year (self-reported):

Number of Systems Interactions	2021	2018
Number of emergency room (ER) visits	231 individuals had visited ER for a total of 801 visits.	219 people had visited ER for a total of 663 visits.
Number of days in hospital	120 individuals had spent a total of 1,727 days in hospital.	125 people had spent a total 1,333 days in hospital.
Number of interactions with police	171 individuals had a total of 1,250 interactions.	161 people had had a total 628 interactions.
Number of days in jail	83 individuals had spent a total of 4,600 days in jail.	70 people had spent a total of 3,276 days in jail.
Total number of survey respondents	439	408

Over the past year, 41.5% of respondents had been homeless 6 or more months (i.e., chronically homeless).

In 2021, 39.4% of respondents had experienced homelessness for the first time as a child or youth (i.e., under 25 years old) compared to 49.3% of respondents in 2018. In addition, 23.7% of respondents (compared to 33.1% in 2018) indicated that they experiencing homelessness the first time before age 18. 22.8% of respondents indicated that they had been in the child welfare system.

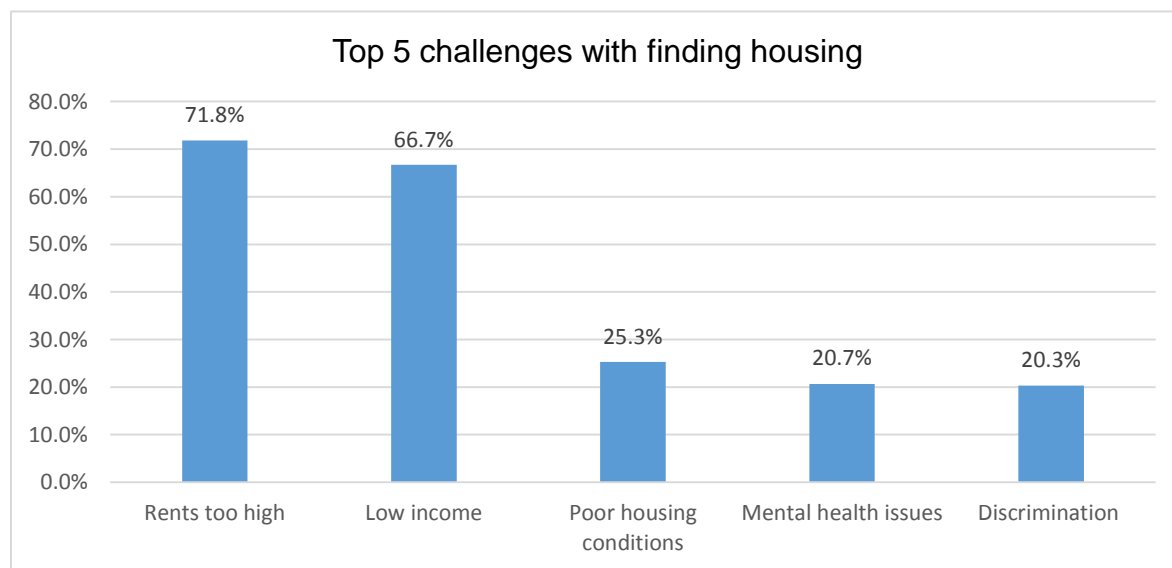
The graph below indicates conditions that respondents self-identified as having.



More than 60.0% (compared to 53.9% in 2018) of survey respondents self-identified as having a mental health issue and 40.5% (compared to 34.3% in 2018) of respondents self-identified as having a substance use issue. While having a mental health or substance use issue does not equate to experiencing or being at risk of experiencing homelessness, people experiencing homelessness are disproportionately affected by mental health and addictions issues. Often, the stress of being homeless may exacerbate a previous mental illness or substance use issue, and/or the difficulties of being homeless may encourage anxiety or depressive disorders.

The 2021 survey gave respondents the option to indicate whether they self-identified as having a learning disability or cognitive limitation (e.g. ADHD, dyslexia, autism spectrum disorder), which 37.8% of survey respondents indicated that they did. Respondents self-identified 33.7% of the time (compared to 24.5% in 2018) as having a physical disability (e.g. an issue with mobility, dexterity, capacity). Based on the 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability, this is higher than the estimated one in five (20%) of individuals that indicated they had one or more disability¹⁴.

The graph below demonstrates the top five challenges with finding housing.



The challenges with finding housing have remained relatively the same when compared to 2018, with high renting costs and low income being the biggest challenges that a large majority of survey respondents continue to face in 2021. Approximately a quarter of survey responses indicated that poor housing conditions presented as a challenge when finding housing. Other key challenges included having mental health issues, and

experiencing discrimination (e.g. discrimination based on income/social status, age, or race, etc.).

Implications and Use of Results

Conducting a PiT Count further supports the work associated with the goals of the HHAP, and supports BFZ objectives. The data captured from the PiT Count will assist Niagara, as the municipal Service Manager, to continue to build system capacity, create population-specific responses to improve client outcomes, and improve the effectiveness of the housing system.

Niagara's PiT Count data will be submitted to the provincial and federal governments to support their ongoing work to enumerate and understand homelessness.

Alternatives Reviewed

The Point-in-Time Count is a federal initiative as well as a mandatory requirement for municipal service managers under recently implemented provincial legislation.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

Niagara Counts 2021 relates to Council's ongoing commitments to BFZ, the HHAP, and increasing healthy and vibrant communities by addressing affordable housing needs.

Other Pertinent Reports

- COM 16-2018 Homelessness Point-in-Time Count Report

Prepared by:

Pam Abeysekara
Integrated Planning and Policy Advisor
Community Services

Recommended by:

Adrienne Jugley, MSW, RSW, CHE
Commissioner
Community Services

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with Maggie Penca, Manager Homelessness Services; Tara Wincott, Service System and Performance Management Advisor; Kristina Nickel, Program Evaluation and Data Advisor; Jeffrey Sinclair, Homelessness Action Plan Advisor; Stephanie Muhic, Program Financial Specialist, and reviewed by Cathy Cousins, Director Homelessness Services and Community Engagement.

¹ “...living temporarily with others, but without guarantee of continued residency or immediate prospects for access to permanent housing” (3.2 in the Canadian Definition of Homelessness). Also called “couch-surfing”.

² The mapping sub-committee was made up of Regional staff, NASO, community agencies and representatives from Indigenous partners.

³ Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation (CMHC). (2021). Rental Market Statistics Summary by Zone. [Link to Rental Market Statistics Summary by Zone.](#)

⁴ PadMapper. 2020. The average cost of rent in Canadian cities for December (MAP). [Link to the average cost of rent in Canadian cities for December \(MAP\).](#)

⁵ The Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) defines a household as being in core housing need if its housing: “falls below at least one of the adequacy, affordability or suitability standards and would have to spend 30% or more of its total before-tax income to pay the median rent of alternative local housing that is acceptable (meets all three housing standards).”

⁶ Perri, M., Dosani, N., and Hwang, S. (2020). COVID-19 and people experiencing homelessness: challenges and mitigation strategies. [Link to COVID-19 and people experiencing homelessness: challenges and mitigation strategies.](#)

⁷ Koziel, J., Savidov, M., and Frick, A. (2020). A Brief Scan of COVID-19 Impacts on People Experiencing Homelessness: Health Impacts and Responses. [Link to A Brief Scan of COVID-19 Impacts on People Experiencing Homelessness: Health Impacts and Responses.](#)

⁸ Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA). (2020). Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on People Who Use Substances: What We Heard. [Link to Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on People Who Use Substances: What We Heard.](#)

⁹ Niagara Region. (2021). Opioid Usage - Statistics in Niagara. [Link to Opioid Usage - Statistics in Niagara.](#)

¹⁰ Based on Niagara Regional Police Service data presented during a Community Recovery Planning Table meeting on December 14, 2020.

¹¹ Based on data provided by Gillian's place presented during a Community Recovery Planning Table meeting on December 14, 2020.

¹² Nick Falvo. (2020). The long-term impact of the COVID-19 Recession on homelessness in Canada: What to expect, what to track, what to do. [Link to The long-term impact of the COVID-19 Recession on homelessness in Canada: What to expect, what to track, what to do.](#)

¹³ Statistics Canada. 2017. Niagara, RM [Census division], Ontario and Ontario [Province] (table). Census Profile. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. [Link to Niagara, RM \[Census division\], Ontario and Ontario \[Province\] \(table\).](#)

¹⁴ Statistics Canada. 2018. Canadian Survey on Disability, 2017. [Link to Canadian Survey on Disability, 2017.](#)

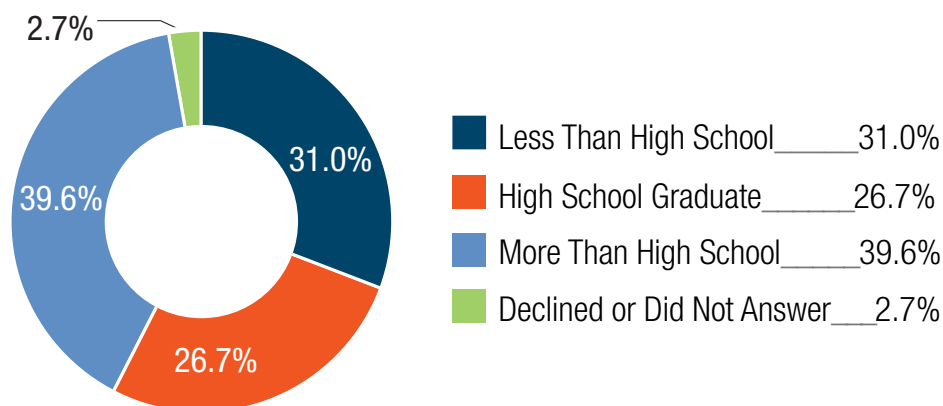
NIAGARA COUNTS

2021 POINT-IN-TIME COUNT OF HOMELESSNESS



On March 23, 2021 at least
665 PEOPLE
WERE EXPERIENCING
HOMELESSNESS

RESPONDENT'S HIGHEST EDUCATION



439 SURVEYS
WERE COMPLETED

OVER **10%** RESPONDENTS
WERE YOUTH
(16-24)

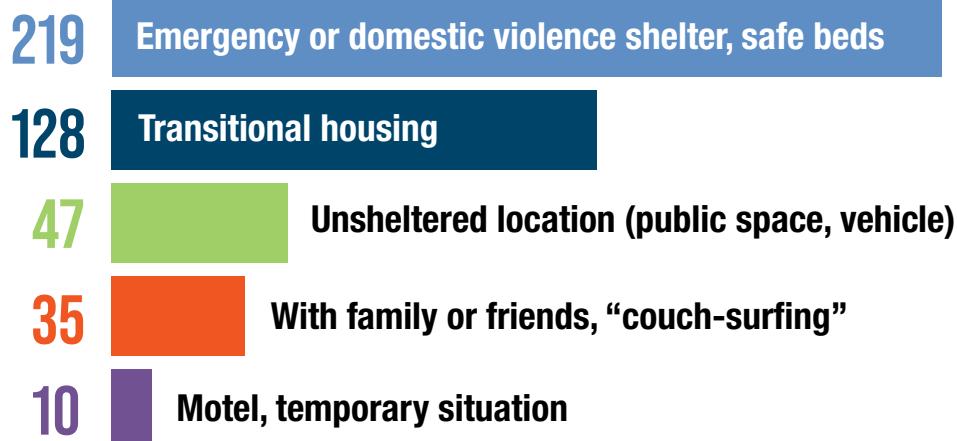
ALMOST **1 IN 4** INDIGENOUS
OR INDIGENOUS
ANCESTRY

121
Were children 0-15 years old

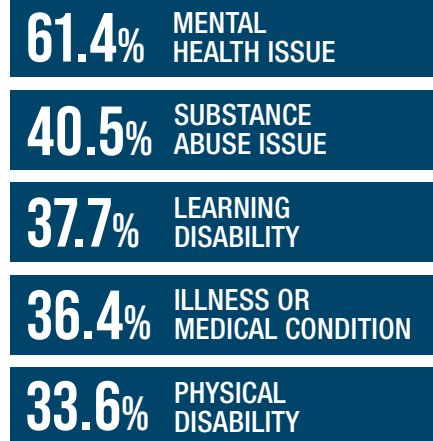
35 PEOPLE
Indicated their most recent housing
loss was related to COVID-19

42% CHRONICALLY
HOMELESS
(Had been homeless 6 or more
months over the past year)

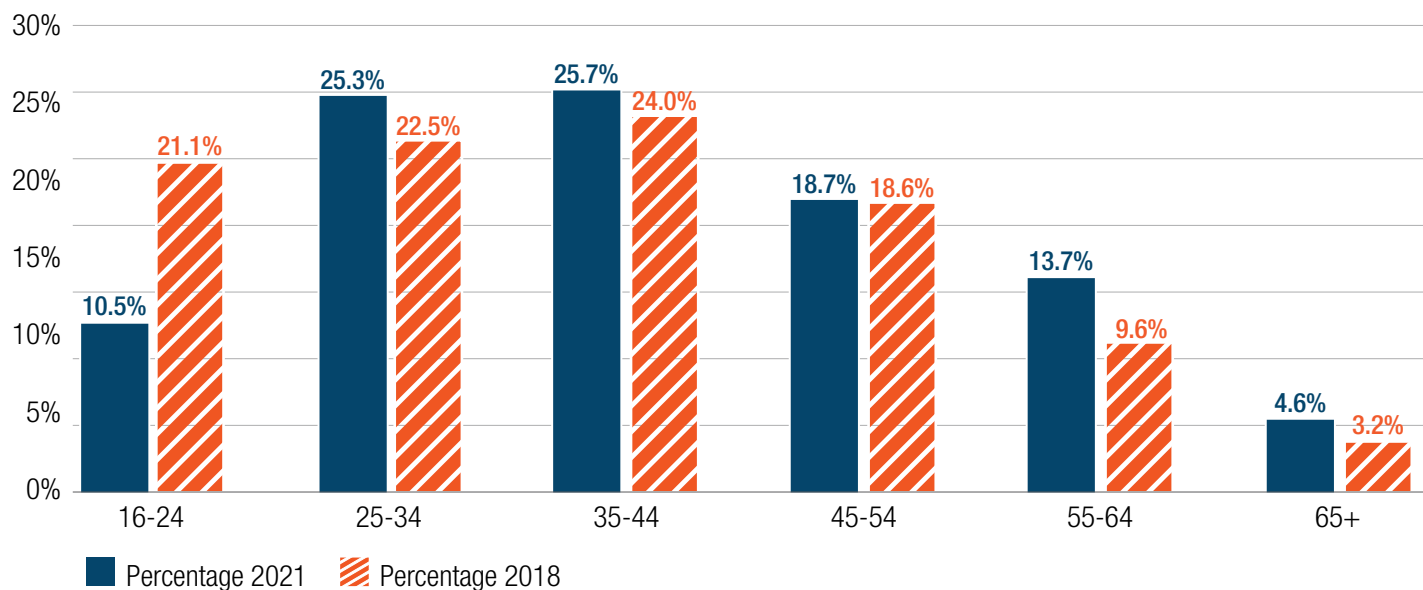
WHERE ARE YOU STAYING TONIGHT?




SELF-IDENTIFIED HEALTH CONDITIONS



SURVEY RESPONDENT'S AGE

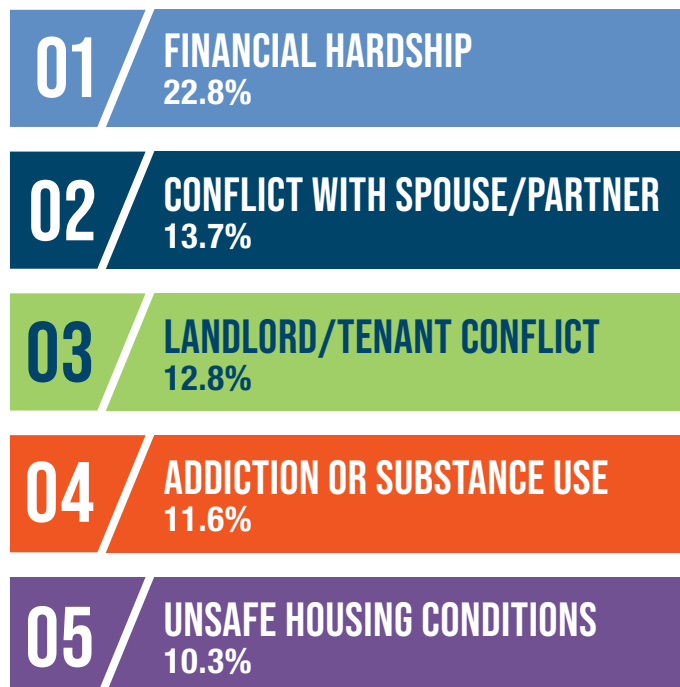


 **24%**
Had experienced homelessness for the first time before adulthood (age 18)

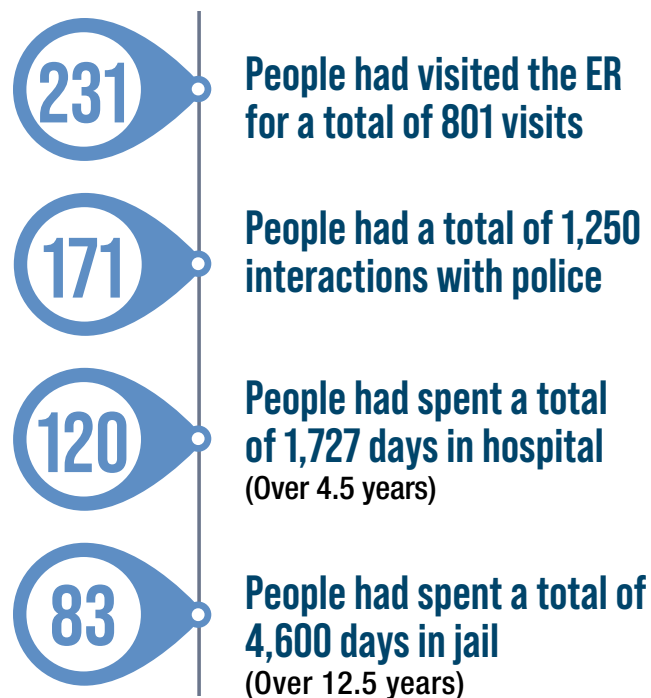
 **79%**
CONSIDERED NIAGARA TO BE THEIR HOME COMMUNITY

 **OVER 70%**
Indicated rent being too high or low income were challenges for them when trying to find housing

TOP FIVE REASONS GIVEN FOR MOST RECENT HOUSING LOSS



SYSTEM INTERACTIONS OVER THE PAST YEAR (Self reported)



Subject: Seniors Services Quality Improvement Report – January - March 2021

Report to: Public Health and Social Services Committee

Report date: Tuesday, June 15, 2021

Recommendations

1. That this report **BE RECEIVED** for information.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to provide Committee and Council with highlights of quality initiatives and outcomes for the first quarter of 2021 for Seniors Services.
- Areas of focus in this report are:
 - Highlights of new programs issued by the province to support recruitment in the long-term care sector
 - The role of Niagara Region's Seniors Community Programs in the pandemic.

Financial Considerations

The Ministry of Long-Term Care (MLTC) and Ontario Health West are the primary sources of funding for the Seniors Services division.

The province has introduced a number of long-term care recruitment initiatives to address staffing challenges in the sector. The province is providing funding to offset program related costs such as incentive bonuses and payment for internships.

Senior Community Programs provides a range of services for seniors who want to keep active and stay in their home as long as possible. Most of these services involve in-person group programs, not permitted for the majority of the year due to COVID-19 restrictions. Community Programs staff were redeployed:

- to address emerging community priorities (wellness calls, vaccine roll-out support, food security support, medication security support, social isolation support)
- to support the long-term care homes with resident social support.

Many services did resume virtually toward the end of the year; however, the interruption to service for the majority of the year resulted in a year-end surplus. The 2020 annual funding for Seniors Community Programs is \$6.68M (100% Ontario Health/LHIN dollars)

and the returnable (surplus) related to service disruption is \$433,387 (approximately 6.6%). The most significant variances relate to suspension of the Respite Companion Program and Respite Companion Program mileage costs as well as the suspension of Adult Day Program meal costs.

Analysis

Long-Term Care Recruitment

The long-term care sector has faced significant recruitment challenges due to the current nursing and personal support worker (PSW) shortage across Ontario. The provincial staffing plan to increase staffing levels to four hours per resident per day, although welcomed, further exacerbates previously long standing recruitment challenges. To address these challenges and support the development of a local pool of employees, Seniors Services has applied to three provincial recruitment support programs: the Community Commitment Program for Nurses, the Personal Support Worker Return of Service Program and the Personal Support Worker Accelerated Program.

Community Commitment Program for Nurses (CCPN)

This temporary initiative offers eligible nurses (RPNs, RNs and NPs) a \$10,000 incentive in exchange for a 12-month commitment to a long-term care home in Ontario. The province developed the program to incent nurses to return to the workforce and as such to be eligible for the program, applicants cannot have been employed as a nurse in Ontario in the 6 months prior to being hired.

Seniors Services has applied for this program and has been accepted as an eligible employer. To date we have not successfully recruited nurses through this initiative but will continue to pursue opportunities through the summer.

Personal Support Worker Return of Service (PSW ROS) Initiative

This program is designed to attract newly graduated Personal Support Workers to work in long-term care homes. This initiative provides a \$5,000 incentive to recent PSW graduates in exchange for a six-month commitment to an eligible long-term care employer.

Seniors Services has applied for this program and has been accepted as an eligible employer. To date we have successfully recruited four PSW's through this initiative. We continue to pursue further recruitment through this program.

Personal Support Worker Accelerated Program

This program was also introduced to help address the PSW shortage in Ontario. Through the PSW Accelerated Program the province provides funding to PSW college programs. The colleges in turn flow these funds to long-term care homes who hire PSW students to complete their placement hours. This unique initiative affords Niagara Region the opportunity to compensate PSW students for their placements (through provincial funding) and to offer permanent work to students when they complete their internship and successfully graduate from the program with a PSW certificate.

During the spring of 2020 Seniors Services hosted 13 PSW intern students. The students are currently completing their program and we are anticipating an 85% hire rate from this group of students.

We are working in collaboration with Niagara College to onboard 20 PSW interns into the homes in August 2021 and a further 20 interns in September 2021.

Further to these three provincial programs, Seniors Services has undertaken a number of initiatives in collaboration with Human Resources to support workforce planning, recruitment, and retention. Seniors Services will provide updates on these initiatives throughout 2021.

Seniors Community Programs

This year has presented unprecedented challenges. As Ministry of Health, and Public Health guidance were issued, much of Seniors Community Programs were temporarily suspended due to directives that prohibited in-person and/or group models of service delivery. A number of programs have been gradually re-introduced within COVID-19 restrictions and some programs have transitioned to a hybrid model of virtual and in-person support and services. A number of staff have been redeployed to support long-term care and some staff have been redeployed to help address urgent community related pressures arising.

Highlights of some key services changes are as follows:

Adult Day Program

- When lock-down measures and indoor gathering restrictions required Adult Day Programs (ADP) to be suspended, ADP staff were redeployed to a number of priority roles. One area of redeployment was to long-term care homes where ADP staff have supported the in-home recreation staff in providing over 38,000 resident interactions (facilitating client/family virtual visits, one to one meaningful activity and small group activity).
- To understand the readiness and willingness to return to in-person service and to explore virtual service options, Seniors Community Programs conducted community engagement discussions with key stakeholders (existing clients, LHIN, community support services peers). Virtual services were developed and implemented to support continued social connection while clients were isolated at home based on the feedback from this engagement.
- A hybrid ADP model was developed and implemented as a pilot, offering half-day in-person services supplemented with virtual programming. Given indoor gathering restrictions, the program has been suspended in the current lock-down.

Respite Companion Services

This program provides one to one service for clients living with dementia through a brokerage model. Respite contractors are matched with a client referral, with family paying the contractor directly. Service focusses on meaningful one to one activity directly with the client in their home. The program was effected by the restrictions of the pandemic. The program suspended service March 2020 to Sept 2020, re-opened under modified conditions September 2020 to December 2020, then closed again as per the restrictions of the current lock-down. While the program was suspended, Respite Companions provided valuable support in addressing emerging needs.

- Respite Companions supported telephone based wellness calls to isolated seniors in the community and have provided ongoing regular wellness check-ins for clients to help address social isolation through the newly established Calls4Connection Program. The calls include a wellness screen which help to identify seniors at risk and coordinates community worker follow-up as needed.
- Respite Companions have also been active in providing vaccination booking support for vulnerable populations.

- The Respite Manager worked in collaboration with Public Health to:
 - provide training on ageism for vaccine clinic volunteers
 - to assess the community vaccine clinics through an “age friendly” lens to optimize the experience, safety, and outcomes of seniors at the clinics.

Healthy, Safe, and Strong Exercise Program

This community based exercise program reliant on in-kind community space (i.e. community center, churches) could not operate within the COVID-19 restrictions. To ensure seniors continued to benefit from exercise programs developed to support falls prevention, the program transitioned to a virtual model.

- Community Programs identified virtual programming platforms, developed content, addressed legal and privacy considerations and introduced a virtual pilot program in August 2020.
- Fall registration focused exclusively on virtual classes and the program welcomed 175 participants.
- Participant evaluations have informed program enhancements and the participation levels continue to grow. The program has now expanded to assisted living environments and other senior congregate settings in the community.
- Pre-pandemic, classes were closed when in-kind space was not available and/or under poor weather conditions (winter storm, excessive heat) for overall health and safety of clients and staff. In the future, Seniors Community Programs can leverage the virtual platform that has been developed, when in-person services options are impacted.

Outreach Services

Outreach Services provides one-to-one support for seniors in crisis in the community. To mitigate risk throughout the pandemic the program made a number of adjustments.

Amended practices introduced client and household screening prior to attending a home visit.

- Staff had their first contact with the senior by telephone whenever possible.

- In-home visits continue for the highest risk clients in need of supports related to food security, shelter, medical appointment/medication, and transportation.
- Clients and their respective households, as well as outreach services staff, complete screening prior to an in-home visit, and follow infection prevention and control measures including wearing appropriate personal protective equipment.
- Outreach Services has had a significant influx of referrals as a result of the pandemic.

With the transition to a pandemic recovery plan, Seniors Community Programs will continue to ensure incremental program changes and adjustments to meet the changing needs of seniors in the community.

Alternatives Reviewed

Not applicable.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

- Healthy and Vibrant Community – supporting the delivery of quality care to Niagara’s senior population

Other Pertinent Reports

- COM 3-2021 Seniors Services Quality Improvement Report, Oct. to Dec. 2020
- COM 14-2021 Approval of 2020/2021 Community Services Program Audits

Prepared by:

Henri Koning, MHSc
Director, Seniors Services
Community Services

Recommended by:

Adrienne Jugley, MSW, RSW, CHE
Commissioner
Community Services

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P. Eng.
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with Jordan Gamble Program Financial Analyst, Corporate Services; Carol Rudel Administrator Seniors Community Programs; Jennifer Butera Outreach Services Program Manager; Viviana Menendez Central Support Services Administrative Lead; Jennifer Laughher Seniors Community Programs Administrative Lead.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Seniors Services Report Card 2021

Appendix 1 Seniors Services Report Card Q1 2021

Seniors Long Term Care Home Metrics

Measures	Definition	2020 Q2	2020 Q3	2020 Q4	2021 Q1
Resident Satisfaction Survey	This metric provides a measure of resident perception of services and overall rating of a great place to live. The survey is issued annually. In 2020 the average for the eight Niagara Region LTC Homes was 94%. The 2019 MBN average for upper-tier municipalities was 93%. (The 2020 MBN report has not yet been released.)	N/A	N/A	N/A	90%
Pressure Ulcers	This is a measure of the number of residents with worsened stage 2-4 pressure ulcers. (provincial average: 2.6%).	2.71	2.65	2.66	2.34
Outbreaks	The resident home area may be declared in outbreak by Public Health if two or more residents residing in the same resident home area have two or more consistent infectious symptoms (in 2020 the total number of outbreaks was 24).	3	9	6	9 ¹
% of residents who have fallen in the last 30 days	This is a measure of the percent of residents who sustained a fall in the last 30 days. (provincial avg: 16.40% / provincial target: 16.1%)	17.15	17.70	17.31	14.6
% of residents with new fractures	This is a measure of the percent of residents who sustained a fracture during this quarter. (provincial avg: 1.4%)	1.13	0.94	1.04	0.43

¹ The 9 outbreaks were all COVID-19 related and triggered through asymptomatic testing of staff and essential caregivers. A single lab confirmed positive test result puts a home into outbreak. There was no transmission of the virus among staff and residents in Q1 2021.

Seniors Community Programs

Measures	Definition	2020 Q2	2020 Q3	2020 Q4	2021 Q1
Number of unique individuals served in 2020	Individual is counted once in a calendar year regardless of the number of services one individual may be accessing.	1247	1263	1282	1272
% satisfied with overall services	Average across all Seniors Community Programs.	N/A	N/A	N/A	90%
# of complex case consultations	Multi-agency collaboration is required to support the diverse needs of the individual in developing a community plan of support/care.	2	12	5	6

MEMORANDUM**COM-C 22-2021**

Subject: Activities related to Niagara's 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan for March, April and May 2021

Date: June 15, 2021

To: Public Health & Social Services Committee

From: Adrienne Jugley, Commissioner, Community Services

Further to Council's direction in October 2019 (COM 40-2019), staff continue to provide regular updates about activities, local targets, outcomes and challenges related to Niagara's 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan (HHAP), as new information is available.

The following highlights activities related to the HHAP in March, April, and May 2021:

- Niagara Counts 2021, Niagara's third homelessness point-in-time count (PiT count), took place on March 23, 2021. A PiT count is intended to provide a picture of homelessness at a single point in time through a homeless enumeration and an accompanying survey. As a consequence of the pandemic, planned Indigenous magnet events, in collaboration with Indigenous-led service providers, were unable to take place. As a result, the interim report will recognize that critical input from local Indigenous communities is still needed to ensure that the experiences and extent of Indigenous homelessness in Niagara is represented and heard. Given all the challenges of the pandemic, the 2021 count was still a success, with great learnings, new partnerships and processes that will continue and expand because of the PiT count. Because of changes enacted to protect the health and safety of everyone involved, the results of the 2021 PiT Count may not be directly comparable to those of years past.
- Staff began to develop an updated homelessness prevention framework. The work to date includes a review of the evidence and best practices, gathering local homelessness data to determine greatest needs and potential for impact, reconvening the HHAP prevention committee and the development of a community engagement strategy. The updated prevention framework will:
 - Support the goals of system transformation and the HHAP.
 - Be grounded in Built for Zero and Housing First principles to end chronic homelessness

- Be guided by evidence and best and promising practices
- A task group, including staff and community partners, was launched to address risks and potential barriers that Niagara's common assessment tools may present for women, youth, Indigenous people, and other priority populations trying to access homelessness services. The group will use an intersectional lens as it explores an array of tools and practices. Common assessment tools are used to assist in prioritizing and matching people to the right housing and supports to meet their needs. Common assessment is a federal requirement, a key component of Built for Zero, and essential in ending homelessness.
- To support continued system transformation, staff began to develop a revised data strategy to support outcome measurement. The work to date consisted of developing principles, framework and approach, and scanning municipalities and publications for best and promising practices. Initial work identified 280 performance measures across all areas of homeless services delivery. The measures are being prioritized for further refinement to support strategic priorities, and provincial and federal requirements.
- New development highlights include:
 - An affordable four-plex in St. Catharines and duplex in Thorold (Oonuhseh Niagara Native Homes) with construction underway and occupancy targeted for April 2021
 - Hawkins Avenue development in Niagara Falls, with 73 units (NRH) with construction 53% completed and on track for occupancy in January 2022.
 - POA land Welland development project with 32 units (NRH) planned. This will be an innovative four-storey modular construction build, which is currently delayed pending future RHI (Rapid Housing Initiative) federal funding opportunities or alternate funding sources are confirmed. This build would have an anticipated 10-month construction schedule.
 - The current development of an RFP with City of Niagara Falls for an affordable housing apartment with 200 units, including 50 RGI units to be subsidized by NRH.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Adrienne Jugley, Commissioner



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Campbell East
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way
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Main Fax: 905-687-4844
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Fax – Contractors: 905-682-8301
Web site: www.nrh.ca

May 28, 2021

Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk
Niagara Region
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way
Thorold, ON L2V 4T7

Dear Ms. Norio,

At their May 26, 2021 meeting, the Niagara Regional Housing Board of Directors passed the following motion as recommended in attached report NRH 8-2021:

That Niagara Regional Housing Quarterly Report January 1 to March 31, 2021 be APPROVED and FORWARDED to the Public Health and Social Services Committee and subsequently to Regional and Municipal Councils for information.

Your assistance is requested in moving report NRH 8-2021 through proper channels to Regional Council.

Sincerely,

Councillor Walter Sendzik
Chair



Q1 (January 1 to March 31, 2021) to Board of Directors

Recommendation:

That Niagara Regional Housing Quarterly Report January 1 to March 31, 2021 be APPROVED and FORWARDED to the Public Health and Social Services Committee and subsequently to Regional and Municipal Councils for information.

Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Donna Woiceshyn', written over a horizontal line.

Donna Woiceshyn
Chief Executive Officer

Approved by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Walter Sendzik', written over a horizontal line.

Walter Sendzik
Chair

Directors:

Walter Sendzik, Chair
Regional Councillor
St. Catharines

Gary Zalepa, Treasurer
Regional Councillor
Niagara-on-the-Lake

Tom Insinna
Regional Councillor
Fort Erie

James Hyatt, Vice-Chair
Community Director
St. Catharines

Betty Ann Baker
Community Director
St. Catharines

Betty Lou Souter
Community Director
St. Catharines

Karen Blackley, Secretary
Community Director
Thorold

Barbara Butters
Regional Councillor
Port Colborne

Leanne Villella
Regional Councillor
Welland

Q1 (January 1 to March 31, 2021)

HIGHLIGHTS:

Application Activity

610 received & processed



Work Orders

2,532 issued



Capital Program

26 purchase orders issued
11 service contract tenders closed
19 projects ongoing



Rent Arrears

= \$113,634.13
or **8.79%** of the monthly rent charges



Community Resources & Partnerships

offered supports to
398
new referrals



13
partners

Non-Profit Housing Programs

61% deemed HEALTHY



Rent Supplement / Housing Allowance

1,702 units
29 new landlords



Niagara Renovates

- 2021-2022 inspections commenced
- 14 homeowners are approved for funding



Welcome Home Niagara

4
homeowners received assistance



Housing First Project

6
Individuals / families housed



Appeals

= 8 7 upheld
1 overturned



New Development

Hawkins/Dell

- approximately 53% complete



Q1 (January 1 to March 31, 2021)

VISION

That the Niagara community will provide affordable, accessible and quality housing for all residents

MISSION

To expand opportunities that make affordable housing an integral part of building healthy and sustainable communities in Niagara

As the administrator of social housing for Niagara Region, Niagara Regional Housing (NRH) works to fulfill our vision and mission through six main areas of responsibility:

1. [Public Housing \(NRH Owned Units\)](#)
2. [Non-Profit Housing Programs](#)
3. [Rent Supplement Program](#)
4. [Affordable Housing Program](#)
5. [Service Manager Responsibilities](#)
6. [Housing Access Centre and Centralized Waiting List](#)



Definitions can be found in the attached Reference Sheet.

1. Public Housing (NRH Owned Units)

DAY-TO-DAY MAINTENANCE:

In Q1, **2,532 work orders** were issued, representing \$383,278.90. \$16,688 of this amount was charged back to tenants who were held responsible for damages.

	2020-Q1	2020-Q2	2020-Q3	2020-Q4	2021-Q1
# of work orders issued	2,575	2,302	2,656	2,500	2,532

Work orders continued to be lower due to COVID-19 with a slight increase in Q1; emergency maintenance continued within COVID guidelines.

Q1 (January 1 to March 31, 2021)

CAPITAL PROGRAM:

The Capital Program is responsible for maintaining the Public Housing (NRH Owned Units) asset and planning for future sustainability.

In Q1, 26 purchase orders were issued and 11 service contract tenders closed.

The Capital Program was responsible for 19 capital projects and 28 purchase orders valued at \$3,214,884:

- Projects
 - 479 Carlton Street – window replacements and wall system repairs
 - Scott Street – window replacements
 - 45 Ormond Street – window replacements
 - 15 Gale Crescent – parking lot replacement
 - 30 Robinson Street – exterior insulation and finish system
 - 4278 Huron Street – exterior insulation and finish system
 - 52 Ormond Street North – building renovations
 - 10 Old Pine Trail – bathroom replacements
 - Powerview Avenue/Galbraith Street/Wallace Street – bathrooms
 - 300 Davy Street – parking lot replacement
 - 3874 Portage Road – parking lot replacement
 - 124 Elmview Street – elevator modifications
 - 211 King Street – elevator modifications
 - Various locations - upgrading heating systems
- 27 RFPs and RFQs – various consulting services, elevator investigations, health and safety repairs, structural repairs, roof replacement and pavement retrofits

As of March 31, 2021, \$8,275,274 of the 2020 & 2021 budgets (\$15,534,858), excluding emergency, has been committed and or actually spent (53%).

TENANT MOVE OUTS:

Move Outs By Reason

Health	6
Long Term Care Facility	5
Deceased	18
Private Rental	3
Voluntarily Left Under Notice	2
Eviction – Tribunal	3

NRH Transfer	5
Moved to Coop or Non-Profit	0
Bought a House	0
Left Without Notice	0
Other/None Given	7
Cease to Qualify	0
TOTAL	49

Q1 (January 1 to March 31, 2021)

In Q1, there were **49 move outs**. Two involved eviction orders granted under the Ontario Landlord Tenant Board (LTB) for Arrears and were enforced by the Sherriff.

	2020-Q1	2020-Q2	2020-Q3	2020-Q4	2021-Q1
# of move outs	62	57	90	68	49

ARREARS:

NRH Housing Operations actively works to reduce rent arrears but saw a continued increase in 2020-Q4 due to COVID-19 and tenants not paying rent due to the provincial no eviction order.

	Mar 31, 2020	Jun 30, 2020	Sept 30, 2020	Dec 31, 2020	Mar 31, 2021
Rent charges for the month	\$1,302,721.00	\$1,289,907.00	\$1,295,815.00	\$1,309,353.00	\$1,292,287.00
Accumulated rent arrears	\$71,135.25	\$110,958.69	\$113,204.57	\$115,555.92	\$113,634.13
Arrears %	5.46%	8.60%	8.74%	8.80%	8.79%

INSURANCE:

In Q1, there was one property damage claim expected to exceed the \$25,000 deductible and three notice of claims delivered.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND PARTNERSHIPS:

Due to COVID-19, in Q1, we had partnerships with **13 community agencies** across Niagara. As a result of these partnerships, **199 units¹ of support and enrichment activities** were offered to tenants at NRH sites. Each partnership contributes to tenant lives and, in turn, the success of the Public Housing community as a whole.

In order to comply with COVID restrictions, partners continued to focus on virtual programming and care package deliveries to support tenants in Public Housing units, including fruit baskets, hygiene kits, grocery deliveries and activity kits. In January, NRH partnered with Niagara Emergency Medical Services to bring flu vaccines to seniors in Centre Street (St. Catharines) and Portage Road, Huron Street and Ailanthus Avenue (Niagara Falls). In March, the Community Resource Unit partnered with Niagara Region Community Services Seniors Programs and Social Assistance and Employment Opportunities (SAEO) to assist seniors over 80 years old to book COVID vaccines and arrange transportation to the clinics.

Also during Q1, CPCs offered supports to **398 new referrals of tenants in need of assistance**. Of those new referrals, **45% were considered medium-high need**, (e.g. child safety concerns, eviction, social issues, cognitive concerns). In particular, social issues

¹ Tracking for support and enrichment activities has changed – we are now tracking this by units. Each time a partner is in a community providing a support and enrichment program or activity, it is counted as one unit.

Q1 (January 1 to March 31, 2021)

continued to increase in NRH and Housing Provider communities, many of which stemmed from issues regarding noise. With stay-at-home orders, tenants and members are now home and more aware of, and sensitive to, the sounds of living in close quarters. NRH Community Programs Coordinators (CPCs) attempt to mediate as much as possible to prevent these issues from escalating.

Eviction Prevention and supports have been extended to Housing Providers and the Rent Supplement program on a pilot basis through Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI) funding. There is one full-time Community Program Coordinator (CPC) for Non-Profits/Co-operatives and one dedicated half to Rent Supplement and half to assisting with NRH-Owned units.

2. Non-Profit Housing Programs

As administrator of social housing for Niagara Region, NRH provides legislative oversight for **57 Non-Profit Housing Programs (non-profit and co-operative)**. Operational Reviews are conducted to determine the overall health of each.

	2020-Q1	2020-Q2	2020-Q3	2020-Q4	2021-Q1
Healthy	37	37	38	36	35
Routine Monitoring	21	21	18	18	17
Intensive Monitoring	0	0	2	3	2
Pre-PID (Project in Difficulty)	1	1	1	1	2
PID (Project in Difficulty)	1	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	60	60	60	59	57

NRH Programs continue to support Providers to keep operations going during COVID. Working toward End of Mortgage (EOM)/End of Operating Agreements (EOA) for Providers, the Loan and Grant Program was rolled out; any recipients will remain a part of Housing Services for an additional 15 years. This preservation of units is essential. January 1, 2021 marked the end of agreement with Joi de Vivre, a Federal provider. Despite the end of agreement, they will continue to maintain their rent supplement units resulting in a net loss of only five units.

3. Rent Supplement Program

Rent Supplement/Housing Allowance

In the Rent Supplement program, tenants pay 30% of their gross monthly income directly to the private landlord and NRH subsidizes the difference up to the market rent for the unit. The Housing Allowance program is a short-term program that provides a set allowance to help applicants on the wait list. In Q1, there were **1,702 Rent Supplement/Housing Allowance units** across Niagara.

Q1 (January 1 to March 31, 2021)

Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB)

The COHB is a portable rent benefit that helps applicants on the Centralized Waiting List pay their rent to their current landlord in the private market. NRH sends applications to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing on behalf of Niagara residents in need of housing. At the end of 2021-Q1, **268 of these applications had been accepted.**

In-Situ Rent Supplement

An In-Situ Rent Supplement program has been developed to engage new landlords and offer applicants on the Centralized Waiting List an opportunity to receive Rent-Geared-to-Income assistance where they currently live. This removes the need for moving related expenses and broadens the network of landlords in business with NRH. In Q1, NRH initiated new agreements with **29 new landlords.**

	2020-Q1	2020-Q2	2020-Q3	2020-Q4	2021-Q1
Fort Erie	32	31	31	30	27
Grimsby	18	22	21	21	23
Lincoln (Beamsville)	14	14	12	12	12
Niagara Falls	237	226	220	213	218
Niagara-on-the-Lake	5	4	4	.8	10
Pelham	17	17	17	17	17
Port Colborne	67	64	61	60	60
St. Catharines	798	751	712	701	715
Thorold	61	61	61	61	66
Welland	192	259	302	284	270
West Lincoln	16	16	16	16	16
COHB Region-wide			206	245	268
TOTAL	1,457	1,465	1,663	1,668	1,702

Variance in the Rent Supplement program are a reflection of fluctuation between agreements ending and new agreements taken up with landlords.

4. Affordable Housing Program

NIAGARA RENOVATES PROGRAM:

The Niagara Renovates program provides assistance to low-to-moderate income homeowners for home repairs, accessibility modifications and the creation of secondary suites in single family homes. NRH received \$651,871 through the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI) for all three streams of the program.

Inspections for new applicants for the 2021-2022 funding cycle have commenced. Inspections of completed work are being verified by homeowner photographs. Formal inspections will take place as soon as possible and will include all areas inside and outside of the home to ensure

Q1 (January 1 to March 31, 2021)

compliance with program guidelines. Issues will be identified and a detailed Inspection Report provided to the homeowner.

As of the New Year, new applications are beginning to be processed in order to begin work as quickly as possible in the spring.

14 homeowners are currently approved for funding and NRH is working toward streamlining the program as we become more proficient at working under the COVID rules.

HOMEOWNERSHIP PROGRAM – “WELCOME HOME NIAGARA”:

The Homeownership program assists low-to-moderate income rental households to purchase their first home by providing a down payment loan.

In April 2020, NRH received \$100,000 through the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI) program.

In Q1, **four homeowners** received assistance through Welcome Home Niagara.

	2020-Q1	2020-Q2	2020-Q3	2020-Q4	2021-Q1
# of homeowners assisted	4	5	7	7	4

HOUSING FIRST PROGRAM:

The Housing First program helps people move quickly from homelessness to their own home by providing supports to help difficult to house individuals find and keep housing.

In Q1, **six individuals/families** were housed through the Housing First program. Since 2012, Housing First has helped 486 individuals/families.

	2020-Q1	2020-Q2	2020-Q3	2020-Q4	2021-Q1
# of individuals/families housed	13	9	7	13	6
# of Housing First units (at quarter end)	199	201	195	187	97 ²

17 of these Housing First units were created with NRH’s new development at 527 Carlton Street in St. Catharines.

² Previous stats for Housing First (2012 to the end of 2020) included the original pilot agency numbers. With the New Housing First Agreement, pilot agencies continue to support their clients but are no longer considered Housing First – as a result, those stats have been removed from the numbers reported.

Q1 (January 1 to March 31, 2021)

RENTAL HOUSING (NEW DEVELOPMENTS & OTHER ACQUISITIONS):

Project	Description	Current Phase	Timeline	Development Cost
1. Niagara Falls – NRH – Hawkins Avenue	Two 3-storey apartments with 73 units (building A = 55 units; building B = 18 units)	Construction – buildings weather-tight	Occupancy January	\$21 million
2. Welland – NRH – York Street & Duncan Street (POA land)	4-storey apartment – Modular construction with 32 units, as per current Schematic Design	Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) funding application submitted Dec. 2020; unsuccessful at this time	Project is currently delayed until future RHI funding round(s) or alternate funding sources confirmed; anticipated 10-month construction schedule	\$10.4 million
3. Niagara Falls – NRH / Community Services	Retrofit / Conversion of 2-storey historic building to 20 transitional housing units with on-site medical services and support programs	Design complete; tender issued for Design-Build contractor	Occupancy required December 2021	\$2.9 million
4. Niagara Falls – NRH / Community Services	Retrofit / Conversion of 2-storey motel to 25 shelter units	Property acquired by NRH; tenders for Design & Construction to be issued by June 2021	Occupancy required December 2021	\$3.94 million
5. Thorold Municipal Non-Profit	5-storey apartment with 60 units	Full Design Phase & Site Plan Agreement	Break ground May 2021; occupancy December 2022	\$18 million; this project has been approved for \$4.6 million in funding for brownfield remediation through the PTIF-SCF Small Communities Fund.

Q1 (January 1 to March 31, 2021)

Project	Description	Current Phase	Timeline	Development Cost
6. Fort Erie (NRH currently retained as Project Manager)	10-storey apartment with 62 units	Schematic design complete; Official Plan & Zoning Amendment applications to be submitted Dec. 2020; Federal Co-Investment funding application in progress	Break ground November 2021; occupancy March 2023	\$18.6 million
7. Port Colborne (NRH currently retained as Project Manager)	Multi-unit apartment with 40 units	Initiation – land acquisition / rezoning & Seed funding application	Break ground April 2022; building completion July 2023	\$13 million
8. Smithville (NRH currently retained as Project Manager)	Multi-unit apartment with 60 units	Initiation – business case & Seed Funding application	Break ground April 2022; building completion August 2023	\$19.5 million
9. Welland – CCHN (Charitable Cultural Holdings Niagara) & Rankin	Affordable housing apartment building (CCHN) with 90 units; Market condo building (Rankin) with 30 units	City of Niagara Falls currently developing RFP	Break ground May 2021; occupancy June 2022	Unknown
10. Regional negotiated RFP – various owners	Niagara Region negotiated RFP for housing development – three projects have been selected, representing 175 units total; 37%, or 65 units, to be affordable	Design phase	TBD	\$1.7 million to be divided between three proposed projects

Q1 (January 1 to March 31, 2021)

Project	Description	Current Phase	Timeline	Development Cost
11. City of Niagara Falls RFP	Affordable housing apartment with 200 units – NRH to provide 50 subsidized RGI units	City of Niagara Falls currently developing RFP	TBD	\$60 million
12. St. Catharines & Thorold – Oonuhseh Niagara Native Homes	Affordable 4-plex in St. Catharines; Duplex in Thorold with 6 units total	Construction	Occupancy April 2021	Unknown
13. Welland – Southridge Community Church	3 acres of 5-acre owned land available for “Pocket Neighbourhood”; small, detached (tiny homes?) – 24 units	Planning & Funding	TBD	Unknown
14. St. Catharines – Local 175	Family townhomes; 70 units	Ownership April 30 2021	TBD	Unknown

Q1 (January 1 to March 31, 2021)

AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNIT #'S BY MUNICIPALITY:

Fort Erie		Grimsby		Lincoln (Beamsville)		Niagara Falls	
NRH Owned	116	NRH Owned	55	NRH Owned	61	NRH Owned	884
Housing Providers	354	Housing Providers	0	Housing Providers	41	Housing Providers	828
Rent Supplement	44	Rent Supplement	23	Rent Supplement	14	Rent Supplement	274
New Development	0	New Development	0	New Development	0	New Development	140
NOTL		Pelham		Port Colborne		St. Catharines	
NRH Owned	40	NRH Owned	0	NRH Owned	88	NRH Owned	1,017
Housing Providers	0	Housing Providers	0	Housing Providers	139	Housing Providers	1,606
Rent Supplement	8	Rent Supplement	20	Rent Supplement	71	Rent Supplement	796
New Development	0	New Development	0	New Development	35	New Development	346
Thorold		Welland		West Lincoln (Smithville)		Region-wide	
NRH Owned	29	NRH Owned	394	NRH Owned	0	NRH Owned	2,684
Housing Providers	85	Housing Providers	425	Housing Providers	86	Housing Providers	3,564
Rent Supplement	70	Rent Supplement	341	Rent Supplement	16	Rent Supplement	1,677
New Development	46	New Development	167	New Development	0	New Development	734*

Note: there are no affordable housing units in Wainfleet

*166 New Development units are NRH Owned

as at December 31, 2020

Q1 (January 1 to March 31, 2021)

5. Service Manager Responsibilities

APPEALS:

In Q1, NRH continued to hear appeals virtually. This process has been going well and **eight appeals** were heard (seven upheld, one overturned).

	2020-Q1	2020-Q2	2020-Q3	2020-Q4	2021-Q1
# of appeals	11	0	15	15	8

INVESTMENTS:

See Addendum #1.

6. Housing Access Centre & Centralized Waiting List

APPLICATION ACTIVITY:

# of Applications Received & Processed	610	# of Eligible Applications	589
# of Special Provincial Priority Status Applications	65	# of Ineligible Applications	21
# of Urgent Status Applications	99	# of Cancelled Applications	236
# of Homeless Status Applications	104	# of Applicants Housed	168

In Q1, **236 households were removed** from the Centralized Waiting List because they were no longer eligible, they found alternate housing or we were unable to make contact.

Q1 (January 1 to March 31, 2021)

CENTRALIZED WAITING LIST:

		2020- Q1	2020- Q2	2020- Q3	2020- Q4	2021- Q1
		# of households				
A	Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) waiting list:					
	Niagara resident RGI waiting list	5,322	5,264	5,296	5,425	5,507
	Applicants from outside of Niagara	1,045	1,078	1,129	1,173	1,204
TOTAL RGI waiting list:		6,367	6,342	6,425	6,598	6,711
	Housing Allowance: a set allowance to help applicants on the waiting list with affordability in the private market until housed in an RGI unit	739	723	702	669	648
A1	RGI waiting list demographics:					
	Seniors	2,514	2,487	2,506	2,557	2,564
	Adults no dependents	2,041	2,026	2,049	2,137	2,172
	Adults with dependents	1,812	1,829	1,870	1,904	1,975
A2	RGI list further segmented (#'s included in A & A1):					
	SPP – Special Provincial Priority (Ministry Priority): helps victims of violence separate permanently from their abuser	146	142	128	132	116
	URG – Urgent (Local Priority): for applicants with mobility barriers and/or extreme hardship where their current accommodation puts them at extreme risk and/or causes hardship	152	144	135	153	152
	HML – Homeless (Local Priority): provides increased opportunity for placement to homeless households	1,145	1,119	1,134	1,146	1,132
	SUP – Supportive/Transitional: provides targeted, provisional services to assist individuals to transition beyond basic needs to more permanent housing	23	10	11	11	10
B	In addition, NRH manages:					
	Overhoused: households who are living in subsidized accommodation with more bedrooms than they are eligible for	176	173	157	145	145
	Transfer: households who are currently living in subsidized accommodation and have requested a transfer to another provider	635	637	660	656	675
TOTAL RGI households on waiting list managed by NRH:		7,178	7,152	7,242	7,399	7,531
C	NRH maintains a waiting list for market rent units (62 Non-Profit Housing Programs):					
	Market: applicants who have applied for a market rent unit in the Non-Profit Housing Programs portfolio	810	805	808	829	861
TOTAL households on waiting list managed by NRH:		7,988	7,157	8,050	8,228	8,392
TOTAL individuals on waiting list managed by NRH:		14,197	14,180	14,429	14,737	15,125

Note: the above chart includes only those who apply to the Centralized Waiting List and does not capture the full number of those in need of affordable housing in Niagara.

Q1 (January 1 to March 31, 2021)

ESTIMATED WAIT TIMES:

CITY	SENIORS Age 55 and older		SINGLES Age 16-54		HOUSEHOLDS WITH DEPENDENTS			
	Bachelor	1 Bed	Bachelor	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 Bed
	Y E A R S							
Fort Erie	-	11	3	7	2	2	6	-
Grimsby	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lincoln	-	6	-	10	6	10	-	-
Niagara Falls	5	7	-	18	5	5	12	16
Niagara-on-the-Lake	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Port Colborne	-	8	-	12	5	3	4	-
St. Catharines	-	5	9	16	3	3	3	11
Thorold	-	7	-	13	3	11	-	-
Welland	-	6	7	16	7	3	8	7
West Lincoln	-	5	-	-	10	6	-	-

- no units of this size available in this community

January 2020

Please note:

- wait time information can fluctuate and is an approximation only
- wait times may not reflect the actual time one may wait for affordable housing

Quarterly Report on Cash / Investments for Period Ending March 31, 2021

	This Quarter Balance	Last Quarter Balance	Variance \$	Variance %	Comments
CURRENT BANK ACCOUNT					
Royal Bank account used for day-to-day operations for the owned units. Also to cash flow various short terms programs funded by Prov and Fed gov't usch as development, homeownership and capital repair programs.	6,028,120	12,898,157	(6,870,037)	-53.26%	Since the February 2016 transition to PeopleSoft, day-to-day accounts payable transactions are paid by the Region through PeopleSoft. Reconciliation of the due to the Region account will be performed on a quarterly basis to transfer amounts due to the Region.

INVESTMENTS					
Various investment vehicles are used to protect and optimize the cash that is held for specified purposes. Investments are both short-term and long-term in nature. These funds are intended to ensure continued growth without capital erosion by inflation.					
Current Investments:					
RBC High Interest Savings Account	2,921,885	2,920,510	1,374	0.05%	
1 Year GIC, \$1,530,000; due date is 10/21/2021; interest rate of 0.5% to 0.75%	1,534,367	1,531,926	2,441	0.16%	
2 Year GIC, \$1,530,000; due date is 10/21/2022; interest rate of 0.7% to 0.75%	1,534,923	1,532,171	2,751	0.18%	
Bond, \$499,887, maturity date is 10/16/2022; Yield to maturity of 0.47%	500,492	500,047	444	0.09%	
Total	6,491,666	6,484,655	7,011	0.11%	

Q1 Report on Reserves as at March 31, 2021

COM-C 23-2021

Description	Balances at December 31, 2020	Year-to-date Net Transfers from (to) Operating	Year-to-date Capital Transfers	Balance at March 31, 2021	Forecasted Net Transfers Forecast from (to) Operating	Forecasted Capital Transfers	Forecasted Balance at December 31, 2021
NRH Owned Units Public/Local Housing Corp:							
Jubilee/Broad oak	359,569	18,000	-	377,569	54,000	-	431,569
Fitch Street	439,040	22,250	-	461,290	66,750	-	528,040
Carlton	291,000	20,250	-	311,250	60,750	-	372,000
Roach	-	4,208	-	4,208	12,623	-	16,830
Welland Ave	-	-	-	-	93,750	-	93,750
Other Owned Units	4,181,976	618,639	(962,072)	3,838,543	1,855,916	116,821	5,811,281
NRH Owned Units Public/Local Housing Corp TOTAL	5,271,585	683,346	(962,072)	4,992,860	2,143,789	116,821	7,253,470
Niagara Regional Housing:							
Emergency Capital Funding for Housing Providers	4,740,195	291,482	-	5,031,677	874,445	-	5,906,122
Title Normalization for NRH Owned Units	712,381	-	-	712,381	-	-	712,381
New Initiatives, other social housing purposes and any new deposits are added to this category	1,252,310	-	-	1,252,310	-	-	1,252,310
Niagara Regional Housing TOTAL	6,704,886	291,482	-	6,996,368	874,445	-	7,870,813
Total NRH Capital Reserves	\$ 11,976,471	\$ 974,828	\$ (962,072)	\$ 11,989,228	\$ 3,018,234	\$ 116,821	\$ 15,124,283
NRH Rent Supplement:	249,301	(4,750)	-	244,551	(14,250)	-	230,301
NRH Stabilization Reserves TOTAL	\$ 249,301	\$ (4,750)	\$ -	\$ 244,551	\$ (14,250)	\$ -	\$ 230,301
NRH Employee Future Benefits:	792,733	-	-	792,733	-	-	792,733
NRH Future Liability Reserves TOTAL	\$ 792,733	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 792,733	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 792,733
Total	\$ 13,018,505	\$ 970,078	\$ (962,072)	\$ 13,026,512	\$ 3,003,984	\$ 116,821	\$ 16,147,317

503 NRH Owned Units
This reserve was set-up by the Board of Directors as a Reserve Fund in September 2004 for capital expenses related to the NRH owned units.

502 Niagara Regional Housing
This reserve includes three major elements: (1) Emergency Capital Funding for Housing Providers - intent to support capital repair program for housing providers; surplus from housing programs should be directed to this component of the reserve (2) Title Normalization for NRH Owned Units (3) New Initiatives / New Development

NRH Rent Supplement: This fund was set-up by the Board of Directors in December 2008 (year end) for a new Rent Supplement program. This Rent Supplement program is budgeted annually and withdrawal from the Reserve matches that year's expenditures.

NRH Employee Future Benefits: This fund was set-up by the Board of Directors in 2011 to fund Employee Future Benefits. (retiree benefits, sick leave, vacation. etc.).

Quarterly Report Reference Sheet

A	AFFORDABLE HOUSING RENTS: Rents are established at 80% market of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Average Market Rent, with no ongoing rental subsidy.
	APPEALS: Social Housing tenants/members can request reviews of decisions related to applicant eligibility, priority status, transfer requests, overhoused status, ongoing Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) eligibility and rent calculation issues. The NRH Appeal Committee makes decisions on appeals from applicants and tenants in Public Housing, Social Housing (where they have not established an Appeal Committee) and Rent Supplement units. All appeal decisions are final, per legislation.
	ARREARS: To assist with arrears collection, tenants/members are provided the option of entering into a repayment agreement but are still expected to pay full rent on time.
B	
C	CANADA-ONTARIO COMMUNITY HOUSING INITIATIVE (COCHI): A program that provides funding to protect affordability for households in social housing, support the repair and renewal of existing social housing supply and expand the supply of community housing over time.
	CANADA-ONTARIO HOUSING BENEFIT (COHB): A program that provides a monthly benefit payment to households that are on, or are eligible to be on, the Centralized Waiting List (CWL) to help them pay their rent. The COHB payments are portable (i.e. the benefit follows the household if they move to another address) and based on the household income and local market rent. In order to receive the COHB, applicants must agree to have their application removed from the CWL.
	CAPITAL PROGRAM: Responsible for maintaining the Public Housing (NRH-owned) asset and planning for future sustainability, as well as issuing tenders for service contracts.
	CENTRALIZED WAITING LIST (CWL): Is comprised of almost 200 subsidiary lists of Public Housing, Social Housing and private units through the Rent Supplement program. It is maintained on a modified chronological basis (i.e. in order to ensure that applicants are treated fairly, units are offered based on the date of application). The needs of particularly at-risk populations are addressed through Priority Status groups that are offered units before other applicants on the Centralized Waiting List: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Provincial Priority (SPP) Status • Urgent Status • Homeless Status <p>The <i>Housing Services Act, 2011</i> (HSA) requires that the Centralized Waiting List is reviewed on a regular basis. Applicants are asked to confirm their continued interest and to update information annually (# of household members, total household income) so that NRH can verify ongoing eligibility for housing subsidy. If a household is no longer interested or is deemed ineligible the application is cancelled and removed from the list.</p> <p>The Centralized Waiting List includes various types of households (i.e. families, seniors and singles/adults without dependents) from both within and outside Niagara, the</p>

Quarterly Report Reference Sheet

	<p>priority groups mentioned above, RGI and Market applicants and existing tenants who are overhoused (have more bedrooms than they need).</p> <p>COMMUNITY HOUSING: Housing owned and operated by non-profit, co-operatives and municipal governments or district social services administration boards including subsidized or low-end-of market rents.</p> <p>COMMUNITY PROGRAMS: NRH's community partners offer events, presentations, activities and programs to help mitigate the effects of poverty by building community pride, offering life skills training and enhancing the lives of the tenants. While NRH does not deliver these services directly to tenants, NRH's Community Resource Unit facilitates partnerships by identifying evolving community and tenant needs, connecting with appropriate programs and supporting their ongoing success.</p>
D	
E	<p>END OF OPERATING AGREEMENTS (EOA): EOA refers to the expiry of federally signed operating agreements. NRH is working with these providers to find innovative solutions to maintain the existing number of social housing units in Niagara and protect existing tenants/members from losing subsidy.</p> <p>END OF MORTGAGE (EOM): Federal/provincial and provincial housing providers (non-profits and co-ops) legislated under the Housing Services Act (HSA) do not have operating agreements that expire when the mortgage matures. The relationship between service manager and housing provider continues with the housing provider still obliged to follow the HSA. The obligation of service manager to pay a mortgage subsidy ends.</p> <p>EVICTIION PREVENTION/SUPPORT: Supports to help NRH tenants stay in their homes through identification of tenant needs and connection with supports and services (e.g. Mental health issues, cognitive decline, addiction, family breakdown etc.)</p>
F	
G	
	<p>HOMEOWNERSHIP PROGRAM – "WELCOME HOME NIAGARA": The Homeownership program assists low-to-moderate income rental households to purchase their first home by providing a down payment loan. The loan is forgivable after 20 years if the household remains in the home.</p> <p>HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS ACTION PLAN (HHAP): Niagara's 10-year Community Action Plan to help everyone in Niagara have a home.</p> <p>HOUSING ACCESS CENTRE: Housing Access is the gateway to affordable housing in Niagara. All applications for housing are processed through the Housing Access Centre including initial and ongoing eligibility assessment as well as management of the Centralized Waiting List. Options include accommodation with Non-profit and Co-operative housing providers (Social Housing), NRH owned units (Public Housing and two mixed income communities), or for-profit/private landlord owned buildings (Rent Supplement/Housing Allowance).</p> <p>HOUSING ALLOWANCE PROGRAM: A variation of the Rent Supplement program that provides a set allowance of up to \$300 per month to private landlords to assist applicants who are on the Centralized Waiting List.</p> <p>HOUSING FIRST: Helps people move quickly from homelessness to their own home by providing supports to help difficult to house individuals find and keep housing. NRH</p>

Quarterly Report Reference Sheet

	partners with Niagara Region Community Services and community agencies to provide rent supplement to landlords while agency staff provide a range of personalized supports to encourage successful tenancies and, if the tenant chooses, address personal challenges.
I	<p>IN-SITU RENT SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM: A program developed to engage new landlords and offer applicants on the Centralized Waiting List an opportunity to receive Rent-Geared-to-Income assistance where they currently live. This removes the need for moving related expenses and broadens the network of landlords in business with NRH.</p> <p>INVESTMENT IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAM – EXTENSION (IAH-E): Provincial and federally funded program designed to improve access to affordable housing that is safe and suitable, while assisting local economies through job creation generated by new development and home repairs/modifications, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Niagara Renovates • Homeownership (Welcome Home Niagara) • Rent Supplement/Housing Allowance • Rental Housing (New Development)
J	
K	
L	LOCAL HOUSING CORPORATION (LHC): Also called “Public Housing”, LHC refers to the communities that Niagara Regional Housing owns and manages.
M	
N	<p>NIAGARA RENOVATES PROGRAM: Provides assistance to low-to-moderate income homeowners for home repairs, accessibility modifications and the creation of secondary suites in single family homes. Assistance is provided in the form of a forgivable loan, written off over a 10-year period, as long as the homeowner continues to live in the home.</p> <p>NON PROFIT HOUSING PROGRAMS (FORMERLY “SOCIAL HOUSING”): Includes Non-Profit and Cooperative Housing Providers, who own and manage their own housing communities and have their own independent Boards. NRH provides legislative oversight to ensure they are in compliance with the <i>Housing Services Act (HSA)</i>. Generally, 25% of these units are designated as market rent units. The remaining 75% of units are offered to households on the Centralized Waiting List that pay RGI.</p>
O	<p>ONTARIO PRIORITIES HOUSING INITIATIVE (OPHI): A program to address local housing priorities, including affordability, repair and new construction.</p> <p>OPERATIONAL REVIEWS: In order to ensure that Non-Profit Housing Programs comply with legislation and local policies, NRH investigates their overall health by analyzing many factors including finances, vacancy losses, governance issues, condition of buildings etc. NRH then works with them to bring them into compliance and provide recommendations on best business practices.</p>
P	PORTABLE HOUSING ALLOWANCE: Direct financial assistance given to the household (tenant) on the Centralized Waiting List; not tied to a housing unit.
	PRIORITY STATUS GROUPS: Priority Status groups are offered units before other applicants on the Centralized Waiting List:

Quarterly Report Reference Sheet

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Provincial Priority (SPP) Status is the only legislated priority and is intended to help victims of violence separate permanently from their abuser • Urgent Status is intended for applicants with (1) Mobility Barriers (i.e. physical limitations that require barrier-free units) and/or (2) Extreme Hardship (i.e. where the applicants' current accommodations puts them at extreme risk and/or causes hardship and relocation would reduce the risks and/or alleviate the hardship) • Homeless Status provides an increased opportunity for placement to households that are homeless (1 in every 10 households offered housing)
	<p>PUBLIC HOUSING (ALSO CALLED "LOCAL HOUSING CORPORATION"): NRH owns and manages 2,660 units of Public Housing stock in 9 of the 12 Niagara municipalities. Tenants pay 30% of their income for rent. <i>*Note: NRH owns and manages an additional 91 units that have affordable (80% market) and market rents.</i></p>
Q	
R	<p>RENT SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM: Tenants pay 30% of their gross monthly income directly to the private landlord and NRH subsidizes the difference up to the agreed market rent for the unit. <i>*See also Housing Allowance Program and Housing First Project.</i></p>
S	<p>SERVICE LEVEL STANDARDS (SLS): Establishes minimum number of RGI and special needs units to be maintained by each service manager</p> <p>SERVICE MANAGER: As administrator for affordable housing on behalf of Niagara Region, NRH's main responsibilities include: administering Rent Supplement Programs, oversight of Non-Profit and Cooperative Housing Providers, determining RGI eligibility, maintaining Centralized Waiting List, establishing Local Policies etc.</p> <p>SOCIAL HOUSING (FORMERLY "AFFORDABLE HOUSING"): All NRH programs and services, including Public Housing (NRH-owned), Non-Profit Housing Programs, the Rent Supplement Program and the Affordable Housing Program</p>
T	
U	
V	
W	<p>WELCOME HOME NIAGARA: Assists low-to-moderate income rental households to purchase their first home by providing a down payment loan. The loan is forgivable after 20 years if the household remains in the home.</p>
X	
Y	
Z	