



2017 ONPHA Conference and Trade Show

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404

**Escaping domestic violence:
What can we learn from the
Portable Housing Benefit
pilot?**

PRESENTED BY:

Ryan Pettipiere, Director of Housing, County of Wellington

Tammy Morasse, Senior Policy Analyst, City of Hamilton

Gayle Saindon, Integrated Social Services Manager, Kenora District Services Board

Lisa Goodfellow, Program Manager, Social Housing, City of Ottawa

Learning goals

- Learn about successes and challenges of planning and implementing pilot program from 4 service areas:
 - Wellington
 - Hamilton
 - Kenora
 - Ottawa
- Explore observations and recommendations moving forward

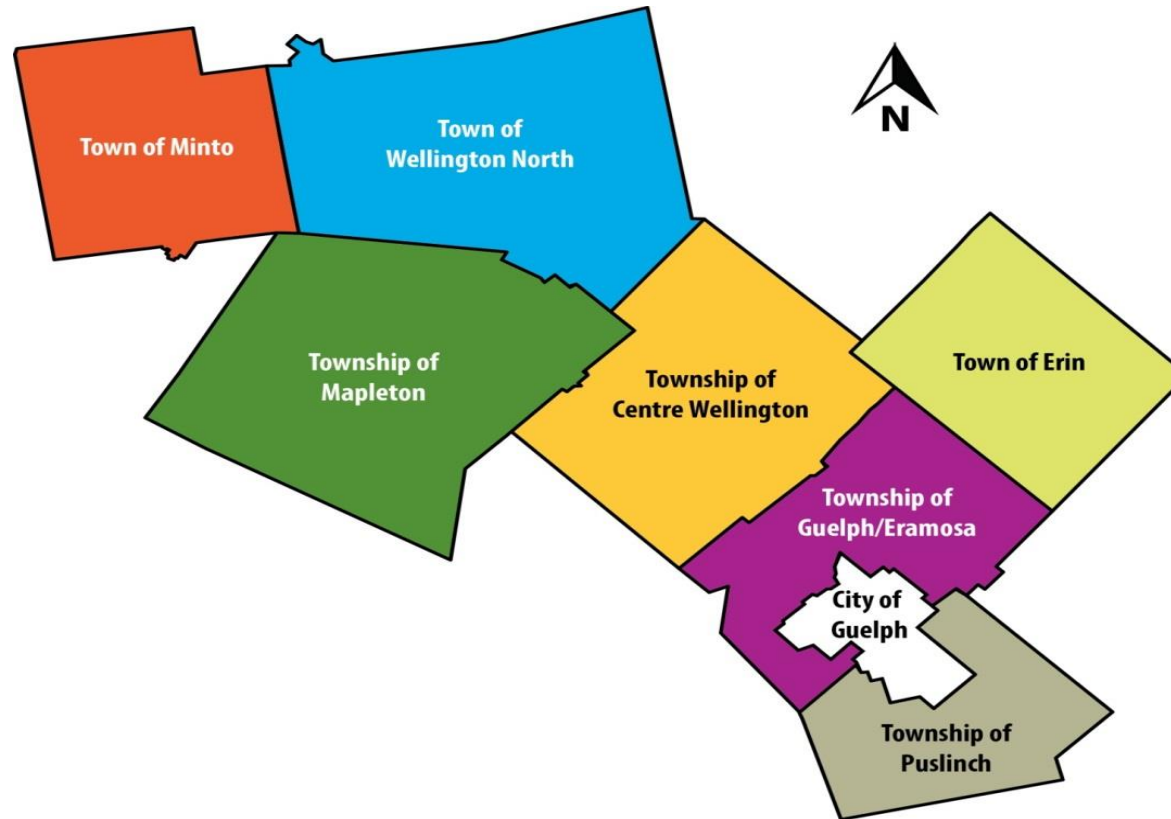


County of Wellington

Portable Housing Assistance Benefit (PHAB)



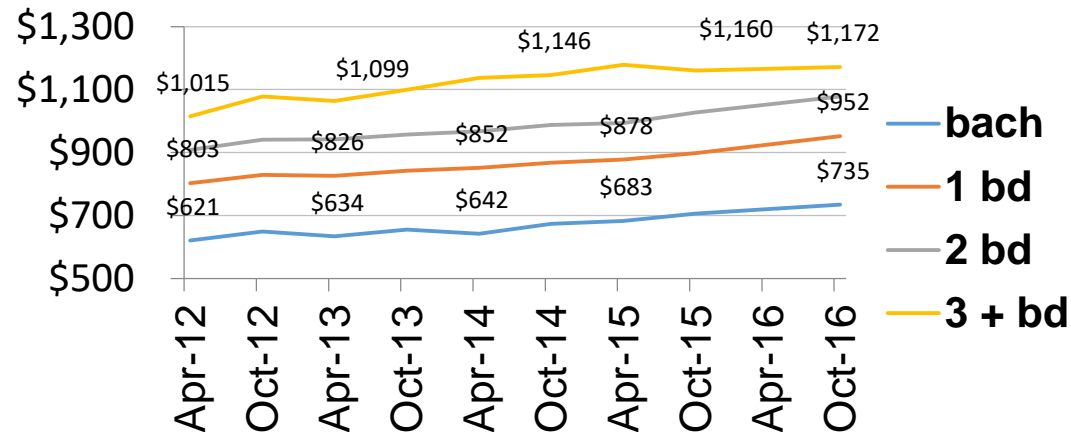
County of Wellington



County of Wellington

Housing Affordability Barriers

Guelph Average Market Rents



Average Market Rents

- The Average Market Rents of all unit sizes in the Guelph CMA have all been on a steady rise of between 4-6% every year.
- *CMHC rental Market Survey

Guelph Vacancy Rate

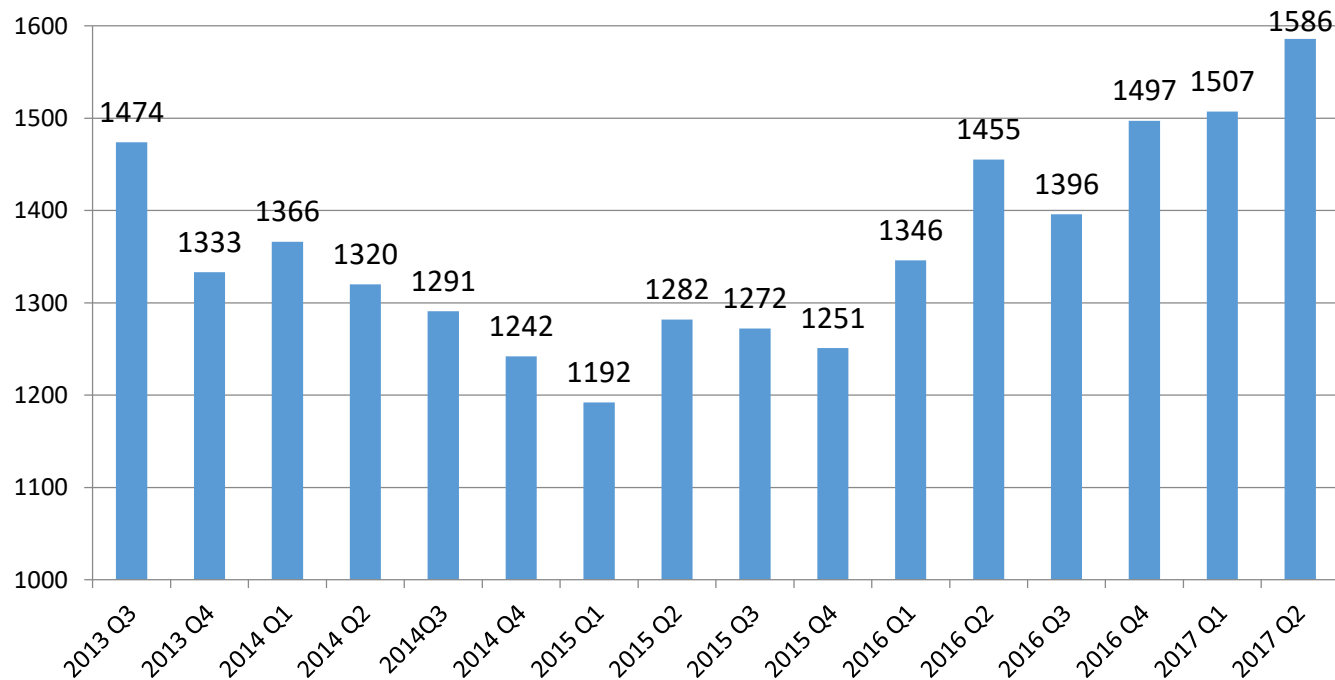
- The Guelph CMA vacancy rate continues to be one of the lowest of any CMA in the country.



County of Wellington

Housing Services System

Centralized Waiting List



Centralized Waiting List

- The Centralized Waiting List was on a long term downward trend for quite sometime, but began to experience a sharp increase in 2016.
- The steady decreases over 2 ½ years have been lost in just under 1 year.

Average Wait Times

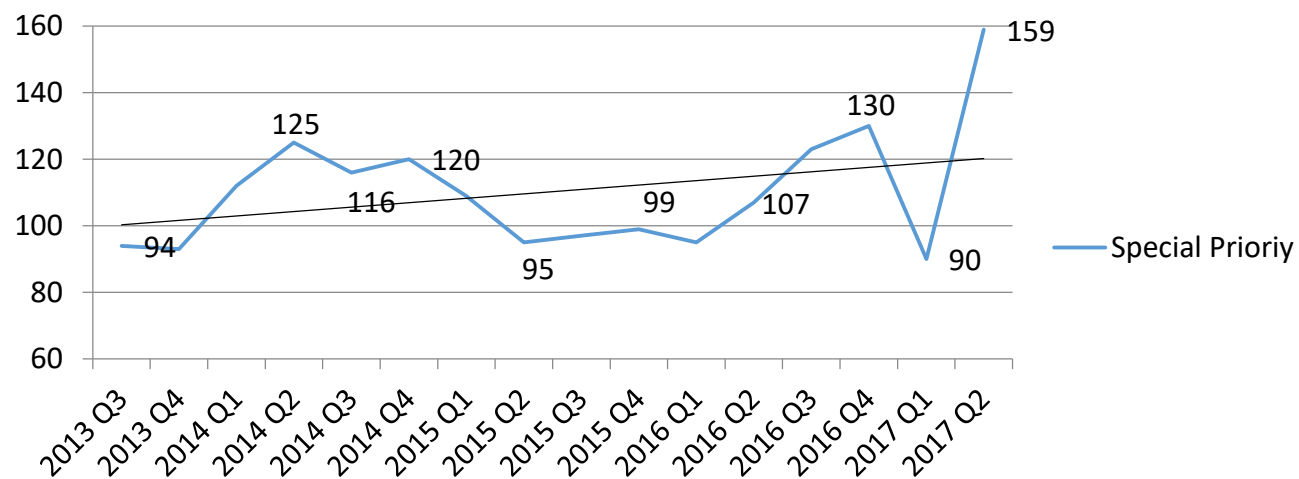
- The average length of time that people waited on the Centralized Waiting List has trended up since 2012.
- The average length of time that households currently on the Centralized Waiting List have waited is about 2.4 years (all unit types).



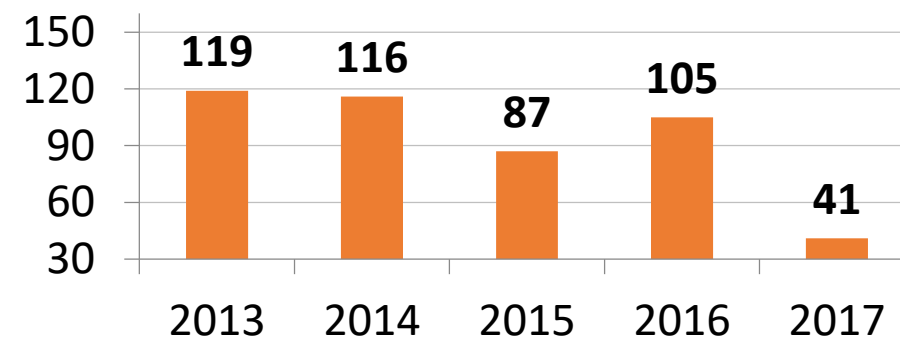
County of Wellington

Survivors of Domestic Violence

Special Priority Wait Times (days)



Housed SPP



County of Wellington

Portable Housing Assistance Benefit

Victims of Domestic Violence

Goal/Action	Further Explanation
Action 2.2	This action speaks to expanding outreach and support services, including the identification of family crisis issues in order to prevent homelessness. The language used in this action is designed to be open and inclusive of potential victims of domestic violence.
Action 3.2	The Housing First Network proposed in this action would be inclusive of agencies and services supporting victims of domestic violence.
Action 5.2	The Housing First Team proposed in this action would be inclusive of agencies and services supporting victims of domestic violence.
Action 5.3	The County will continue to collaborate with Women in Crisis as the operator of the shelter programmes for victims of domestic violence to ensure that they are supported in meeting community needs.
Action 5.4	This action specifically speaks to leveraging funding to increase transitional housing supply for victims of domestic violence.
Action 6.6	This action calls on the County to continue to meet the needs of applicants on the centralized waiting list. Victims of domestic violence are currently given special priority on the centralized waiting list, and represent about one-third of all social housing placements. Special priority status will continue to be part of the ongoing support that the County provides to these clients.



County of Wellington

Portable Housing Assistance Benefit

In July 2016, the County of Wellington responded to the Provinces Expression of Interest for the Survivors of Domestic Violence – Portable Housing Benefit Pilot

Highlights of the proposal:

- The programme would be delivered entirely through our local Women In Crisis agency
- We would use a portion of the fund to hire an Intensive Case Management (ICM) worker through Women in Crisis.
- Women in Crisis would deliver funding directly to the client on our behalf
- Would determine housing benefit using benefit bands determined by household size.

This proposal was initially approved, however once we started to develop the programme, we were informed that we could only use our admin funding to pay for the ICM worker.



County of Wellington

Portable Housing Assistance Benefit

What we could do in the programme in the end involved a much more limited role for our Women in Crisis agency.

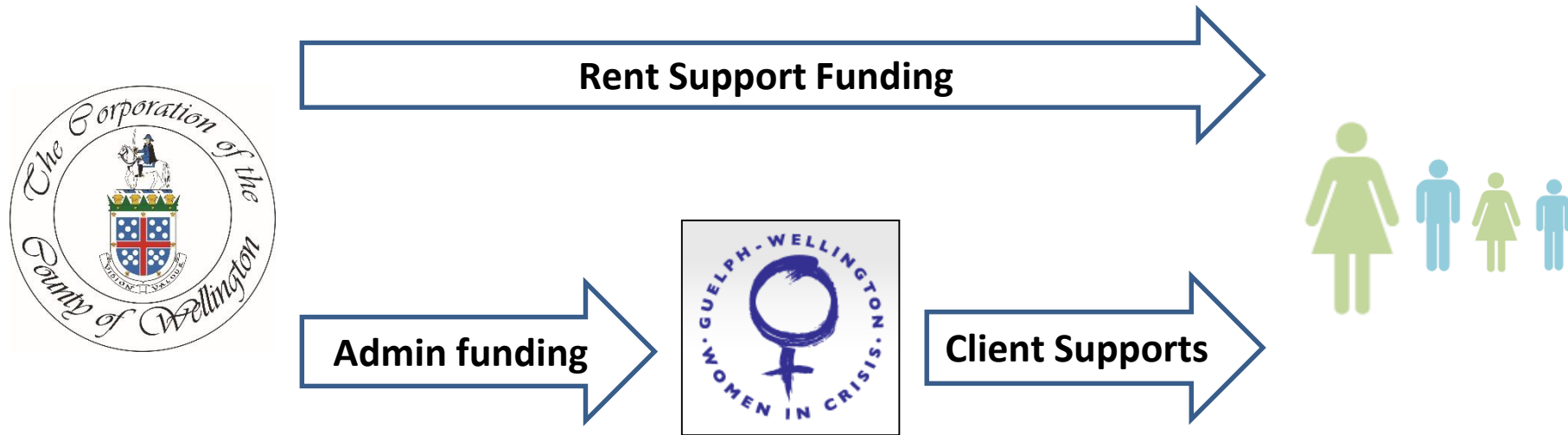
Highlights of the existing programme:

- The programme is delivered entirely through the County of Wellington
- We use our admin funding to help out Women in Crisis, but the amount would not cover an ICM worker
- The County delivers funding directly to the client
- We determine housing benefit using benefit bands determined by household size
- First and last month's rent is available
- A moving cost set amount is available to help any of the households that required it



County of Wellington

Portable Housing Assistance Benefit



County of Wellington

Portable Housing Assistance Benefit

PHAB Benefit Amounts:

The PHAB benefit is determined based on the maximum eligible unit size as determined by the Occupancy Standards policy.

Bachelor and 1 Bedroom Units	\$ 400 /Month
2 Bedroom and 3 Bedroom Units	\$ 500 /Month
4 Bedroom(+)	\$ 600 /Month

PHAB also assists with:

- First and last month's rent (full rental amount)
- Moving expenses (\$500 per move)

The benefit is fully portable and not tied to a specific unit.



County of Wellington

Portable Housing Assistance Benefit

Who are PHAB clients?

Average Age:
39 Years

Total Number of Client:
8 Current

Parental Status:
**87.5%
Parents**

16 Children have
been apart of
households helped
by the Programme

Income Source:
37.5%
OW/ODSP

Income Source:
0
EI

Income Source:
62.5 %
EMP/Support



County of Wellington

Portable Housing Assistance Benefit

By the Numbers

2017 Client Intake:

4 end of 1st Quarter
8 end of 2nd Quarter

Supports Provided:

47 Rent Supports

8 Last Months Rent

8 1st Month top-up

8 Moving Costs

Average Time Housed for PHAB clients:

6 Months

3 PHAB Clients had former arrears with a housing provider



County of Wellington

Portable Housing Assistance Benefit

Where this programme is working:

- People with arrears
- People already in units that meet programme eligibility
 - Children can stay in schools



County of Wellington

Portable Housing Assistance Benefit

Barriers:

- Vacancy Rate
- Waitlist proficiency
- Possibility of moving twice
- Short time frame Landlords not accepting of OW/ODSP clients as tenants in a landlord friendly market

Local Response to Barriers:

- Looking at adjusting subsidy level to make it more attractive
- Top up 1st and last months rent
- Moving cost benefit
- Business case for increase to Average Market Rent



County of Wellington

Portable Housing Assistance Benefit

Further Help to make to programme successful moving forward:

- Higher or no Average Market Rent
- Possibility of intensive case management worker funding above the 10% admin coverage
- Long term stable funding



What is the Survivors of Domestic Violence – Portable Housing Benefit (SDV-PHB) pilot?

The pilot program provides a monthly housing benefit to survivors of domestic violence who are eligible under the Special Priority Policy (SPP) on the City of Hamilton's centralized wait list for rent-geared-to-income (RGI) housing.





of



Hamilton is one of 22 municipalities participating
in the SDV-PHB pilot



Overarching goal of the SDV-PHB Pilot:



Make it easier for survivors of domestic violence to leave an abusive situation by creating easier and quicker access to affordable housing options.



Additional SDV-PHB Pilot Goals:

- Enable survivors of domestic violence to access affordable housing while they wait for RGI social housing;
- Free-up shelter beds more quickly, thereby decreasing the numbers of women and families who are turned-away from shelters when in need;
- Increase wraparound support for those experiencing domestic violence to obtain and retain housing;
- Pilot a 'made-in-Hamilton' approach to the SDV-PHB portable housing allowance program.



Eligibility Criteria:

Households must meet the following criteria to receive SDV-PHB Housing Allowance assistance:

- Must be active on the social housing wait list with Special Priority (SPP) status;
- Meet income eligibility thresholds (as determined by the Ministry of Housing);
- Have an annual income tax return with the Canada Revenue Agency; and,
- Not already be in receipt of rent-geared-to-income (RGI) or other housing assistance.



Program Overview:

- How are SDV-PHB housing allowances are offered to households?
- Where can households live while there are in receipt of a SDV-PHB housing allowance?
- Can pilot households of the program remain active on Hamilton's Access to Housing social housing wait list while receiving the housing allowance?
- Are there limits on market rents?
- What is the range of SDV-PHB housing allowance amounts?
- Who is the SDV-PHB housing allowance paid to?
- When does a SDV-PHB housing allowance cease?



Three Key Elements of Hamilton's SDV-PHB Pilot:

1. Applicants with Special Priority Policy (SPP) designation on centralized wait lists for social housing
2. Portable housing benefits (housing allowances)
3. Supports provided to SPP applicants through a partnership between the City of Hamilton & Good Shepherd Women's Services



Partnership Approach



SVD-PHB Pilot Program ~ Year I Mid-Point ~

Evaluation Survey



Response Rate:

47 %



In their own words...

Over three quarters (77%) of respondents provided a response to the open text questions at the end of the survey which ask:

"What are the things that went well with your housing search?"

"Do you have any suggestions to improve the services provided?"

"Any other comments"



What went well with your housing search?

"Staff helped me connect with the landlord to help set up the SDV Benefit. The Program was explained very thoroughly. It helped me get out of the shelter with my daughter - Thank you so much!"

"I pay rent on time. I get extra money that I didn't get before. I am no longer worried about my living."

"Grateful to have gotten out of the shelter and to get the housing supplement - It is housing availability that is the problem."

"Otherwise I would be on the street with my 2 children"

"Very helpful staff - it is very difficult as a single person to find a 1 bedroom apartment in a safe environment building. Now I do not have to be afraid or looking over my shoulders constantly."

"I got help and felt safe to tell where I want to live and to say I need help. Thank you for giving me patience and help! I worry a little less and live a little more if that makes sense."



Do you have any suggestions to improve the services provided?

" Suggest more programs to help tenants with their everyday living like this program."

"More people to get safe, barrier free, bug free permanent housing."

" Keep it so the housing allowance goes to the landlord, it is good. One less thing to worry about"

" No – everything is good as the saying goes "so far so good" Thank you"

" No"

" Can you give the allowance longer? I worry what will happen after March 2018. What if I don't get social subsidy housing before then? I don't want to be evicted. Please keep program going for me and others like me."



Other Comments

"Because of this help, the money goes to my landlord and nobody takes it from me. I pay MY rent and I feed my child and I pray to keep us safe.

Thank you!"

"Thank you! This housing money is a major help with rent. It helps me worry a little less and focus on getting my life on track."

"I used to think that may be one day my landlord would throw me out and sometimes have no food in the house because I keep all the money for rent, but now, I have no worries and I eat every day. I thank you so much for the support you give me."

"I will probably be homeless again soon if the program stops."



Themes:



One Less Worry



Lessons Learned

1. Partnership approach is fundamental to pilot program success.
2. Good Shepherd Landlord Liaison Role is key to program delivery.
3. Male-led SPP survivor households require alternative supports.
4. Housing allowance paid directly to landlords is an important feature.
5. Available, affordable units impacted SDV-PHB housing allowances.
6. Time horizon of the pilot influenced take-up.



Thank you

For more information contact:

Tammy Morasse

Senior Policy Analyst
City of Hamilton

Tammy.Morasse@hamilton.ca





Kenora District Services Board Survivors of Domestic Violence Portable Housing Benefit





Overview

The Kenora District Services Board (KDSB) delivers social services to all citizens in the District of Kenora.

We have approximately 160 dedicated employees providing Assistance in Ontario Works (OW), Social Housing, Emergency Medical Services and Early Learning and Child Care services.



Housing Snapshot



The KDSB owns and manages 528 Units located in:

Kenora/Keewatin/Minaki

Senior Units

Family

Single Non-Elderly

Dryden/Dinorwic

Senior Units

Family (Dinorwic)

Sioux Lookout/Hudson

Senior Units

Family

Red Lake/Ear Falls

Senior Units

Family

Single Non-Elderly



Housing Snapshot



- ❖ 9 Area Non-Profit Housing Operators receive funding from the KDSB & 42 Single/Family Rent Subsidy Lease Agreements are supported in the Region
- ❖ There are **815** people on the Housing Waitlist in the Kenora District which is administered by the KDSB Integrated Social Services Team



Kenora District Non-Profit Housing Providers

8 Non Profit Housing providers (includes - family, seniors, singles, second stage)

Dryden Municipal Non-Profit – Family Units

Hoshizaki Municipal Non-Profit – Second Stage Units

Machin Municipal Non-Profit – Family and Senior Units

Red Lake Municipal Non-Profit – Family and Single Non-Elderly Units

Kenora Municipal Non-Profit – Family and Senior Units

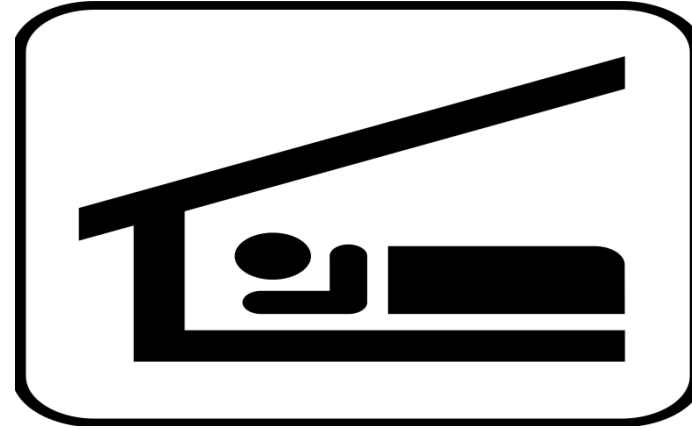
Keewatin Municipal Non-Profit – Senior Units

Aamikkowiish Municipal Non-Profit – Family Units

Sioux Lookout Municipal Non-Profit – Family and Senior Units



Homelessness/Shelters



- The KDSB provides support to area Homeless Shelters located in Sioux Lookout, Red Lake and Kenora
- The Kenora District Services Board continues to Lobby and Advocate to improve options for Homelessness and Poverty Reduction
- Community Homelessness Prevention Initiatives, Affordable Housing Initiatives and Survivors of Domestic Violence Portable Housing Benefits and L.E.A.P. are options offered to area residents by the Integrated Social Services Team



KDSB - Portable Housing Benefit overview

- Ontario's pilot program to increase affordable housing options for survivors of domestic violence and their families was launched in 22 communities across the province of Ontario
- The Government invested more than \$20 million over two years in the Survivors of Domestic Violence Portable Housing Benefit Pilot and provides options for survivors of domestic violence and their families



- Eligible participants continue to be given priority access to rent-geared-to-income social housing
- Participants also have access to First and Last months rent along with a rent subsidy to a private landlord which provides participants options for affordable, safe housing
- This benefit provides the freedom to choose where to live, since it is not tied to a specific unit like most rent-geared-to-income social housing



Eligibility Criteria - PHB pilot program

The Participant must;

- Meet the criteria for Special Priority Placement as outlined in the Housing Services Act, 2011
- Agree to seek a private landlord lease agreement
- Be willing to develop a long term tenancy plan with the team of support agencies
- Provide monthly rent receipts and confirmation that all costs associated with housing are being paid in full



Subsidy Available

- This subsidy is not tied to a housing location, if a participant chooses to move elsewhere in their current community or anywhere in Ontario and they continue to meet the eligibility criteria the subsidy can be paid to any landlord of their choice.
- The PHB can cover first and last months' rent costs.
- For applicants receiving OW/ODSP, the amount of subsidy will be the difference of their total shelter costs, rent and utilities, less their shelter allowance.
- The maximum amount of subsidy per month is based on rent for the unit and the circumstances of the participant.



Subsidy continued

- Non OW/ODSP applicants are eligible to receive up to the full subsidy, based on monthly rent using the Low Income Measure (LIM) and Monthly income.
- Subsidies are provided in \$50 increments, rounded to the closest amount.



PHB Results

Housing Wait List stats:

- Long wait list - 815 applicants (singles, families & seniors)

Eligible applicants:

- 50 eligible, 24 ongoing (most have been offered subsidized housing)

Barriers:

- Lack of subsidized housing units and private market housing units in the communities
- Geographical struggles – applicants having to move away from family, and supports, finding suitable housing in their community

Success with PHB:

- Applicants moving forward and some have entered into Post-Secondary



City of Ottawa

- National Capital of Canada
- Population approximately 1.3 Million
- Twin city with Gatineau Quebec
- 22, 500 social housing units, of which 18,500 units are RGI
- 53 Social Housing Providers, both non-profit and co-op
- Over 200 Private Landlords in Rent Supplement Program



Ottawa Rental Vacancy Rates

Apartment (%)					
	Bachelor	1 bedroom	2 bedroom	3+ bedroom	Total
2014	1.8	2.3	2.9	5.5	2.6
2015	2.3	3.0	3.8	5.7	3.4
2016	2.4	2.8	3.0	*	3.0
Townhouse (%)					
	Bachelor	1 bedroom	2 bedroom	3+ bedroom	Total
2014	*	*	3.2	4.4	4.0
2015	*	3.5	3.0	4.6	4.1
2016	*	0	2.5	4.3	3.8
	* Not Available				

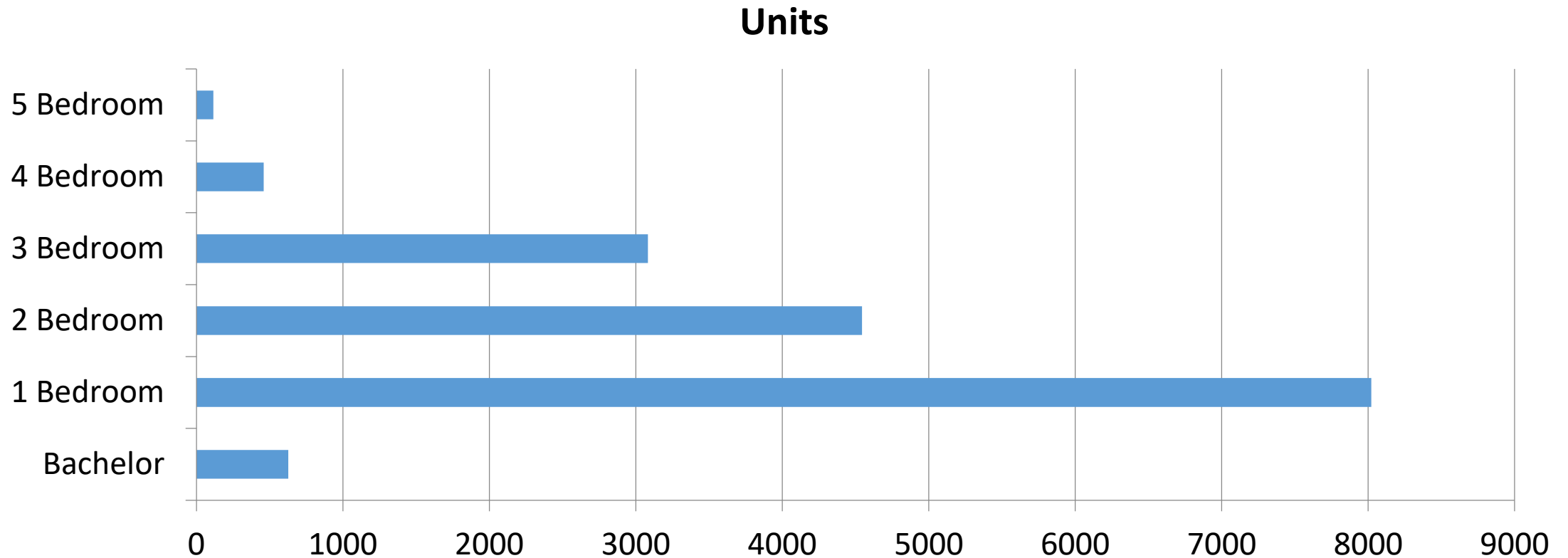


Ottawa Average Market Rent

Apartment (\$)					
	Bachelor	1 bedroom	2 bedroom	3+ bedroom	Total
2015	801	972	1,174	1,390	1,056
2016	812	982	1,201	1,457	1,073
Townhouse (\$)					
	Bachelor	1 bedroom	2 bedroom	3+ bedroom	Total
2015	*	932	1,172	1,299	1,254
2016	*	797	1,196	1,332	1,295
	* Not Available				



Social Housing RGI Unit Stock

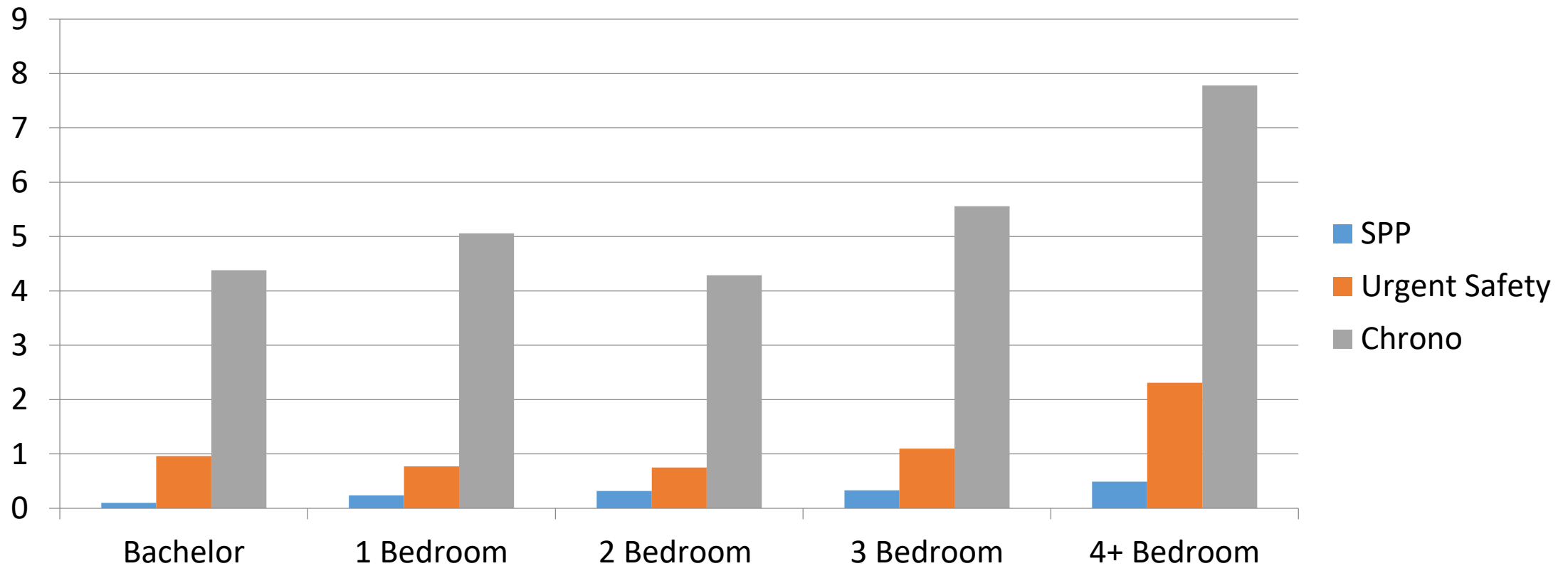


Centralized Wait List – RGI

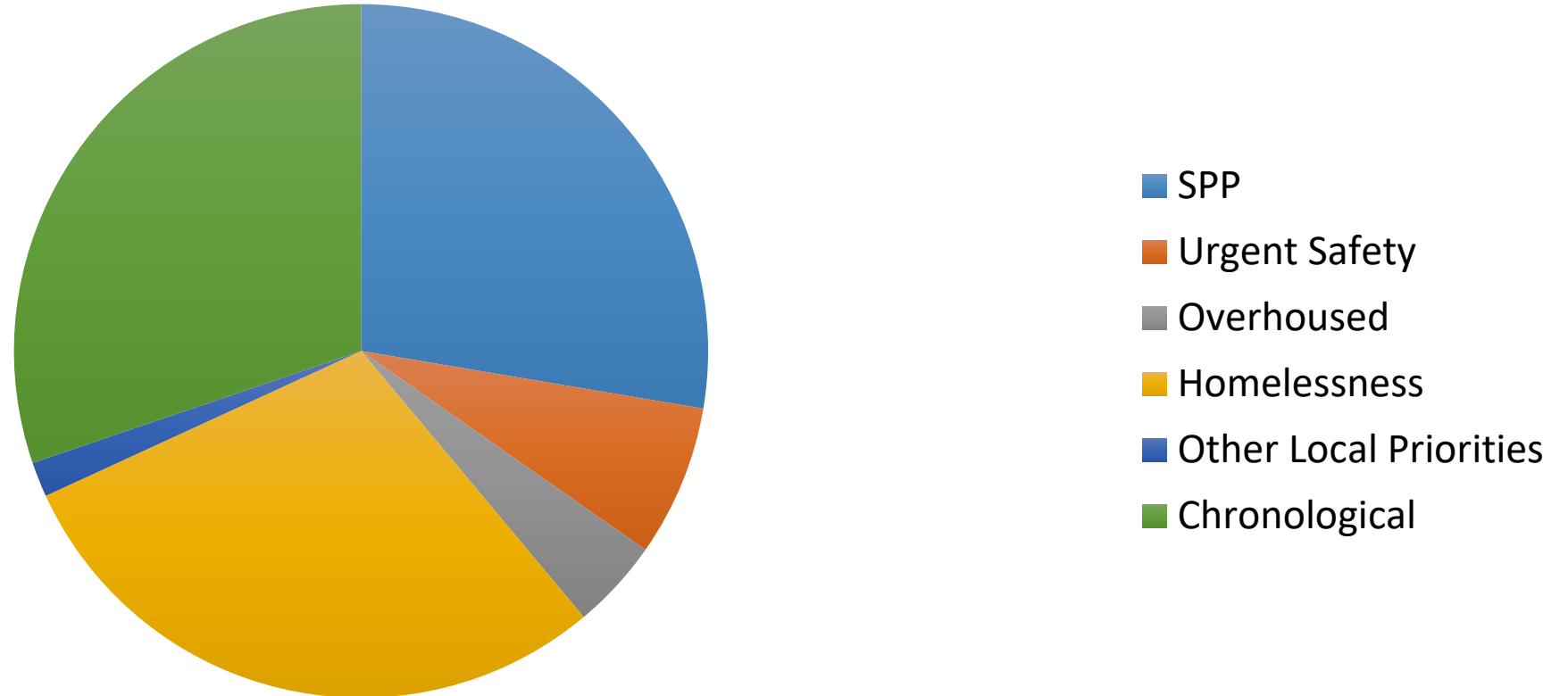
- On average 10,000 – 10,750 Households on CWL
- 6 Local Priorities
- 2 Priorities to address personal safety concerns
 1. Provincial – SPP
 2. Local – Urgent Safety Priority



CWL – Average Wait Time (Years)



Number of Placements (2016)



Housing and Homelessness Plan

Everyone has a Home

- A range of options meets demand through:
 - construction
 - purchase
 - redevelopment
 - housing subsidies
- Social housing stock is in a good state of repair and is well-managed.

People get the support they need

- People receive the right types of support to keep their homes and to prevent homelessness.
- People who become homeless are safe and receive adequate temporary shelter and supports to find housing.
- There is no chronic homelessness.

We work together

- Ottawa has an integrated housing system that is responsive to the housing and support needs of residents.
- Improved service planning and coordination as well as adequate and sustained funding from all levels of government meet people's needs.



Portable Housing Benefit Pilot - EOI

Expression of Interest Highlights:

- Established housing allowance program experience
- In-person SPP eligibility review protocol
- High number of SPP placements
- Established community supports
- Provide housing alternatives for SPP households



PHB – Take Up Plan

Year 1

- \$1,100,000
- 100 households assisted

• Year 2

- \$2,737,026
- 275 households assisted



Program Roll Out - Stakeholders

SPP Eligibility Determination:

- Centralized Wait List Administrator

Household Initial Contact and Application Completion:

- Service Manager – Social Housing Unit

Housing Benefit Financial Administration:

- Ministry of Finance

Counselling and Support:

- Community Partners



Program Roll Out – Eligibility Criteria

- SPP Provincial Priority Status (tier 1)
- Urgent Safety Local Priority Status (tier 2)
- Can remain on CWL
- SPP status suspended while in receipt of Housing Benefit
- Original SPP date accorded if Housing Benefit terminated
- Self contained rental unit at or below AMR
- Income at or below 2016 Household Income Limit (HIL)



Program Roll Out - Benefits

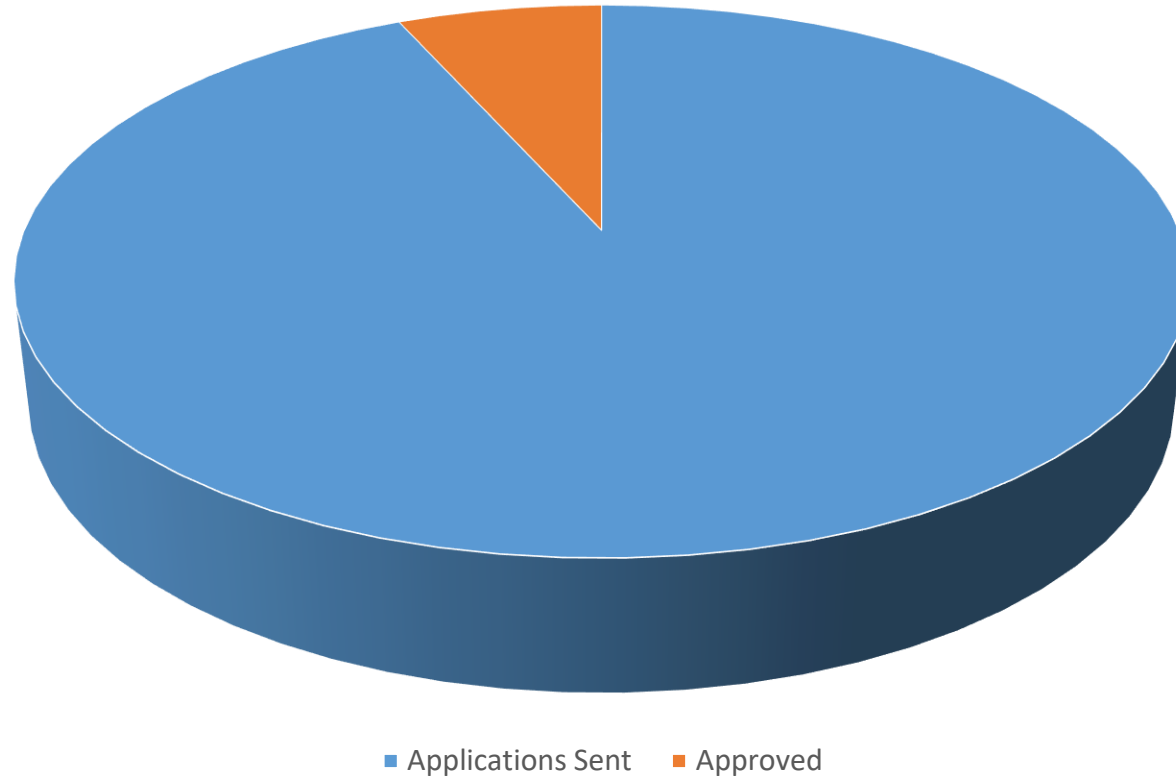
1) Tiered Housing Benefit:

- \$250 for primary household member
- \$50 for each additional eligible household member
- No benefit limit

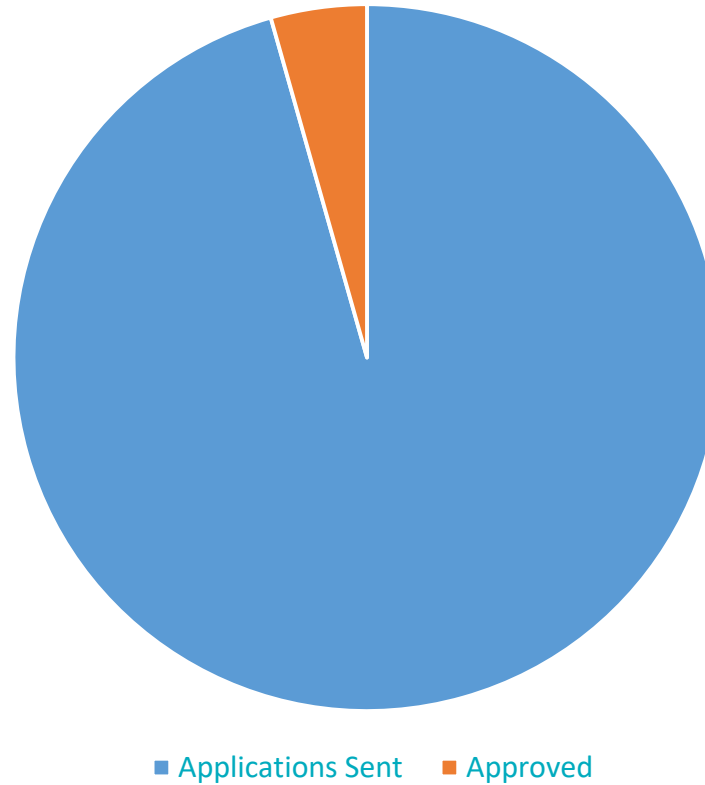
2) First and Last Month Rent (where required)



PHB Take-Up to Date - SPP



PHB Take-Up - Urgent Safety Priority

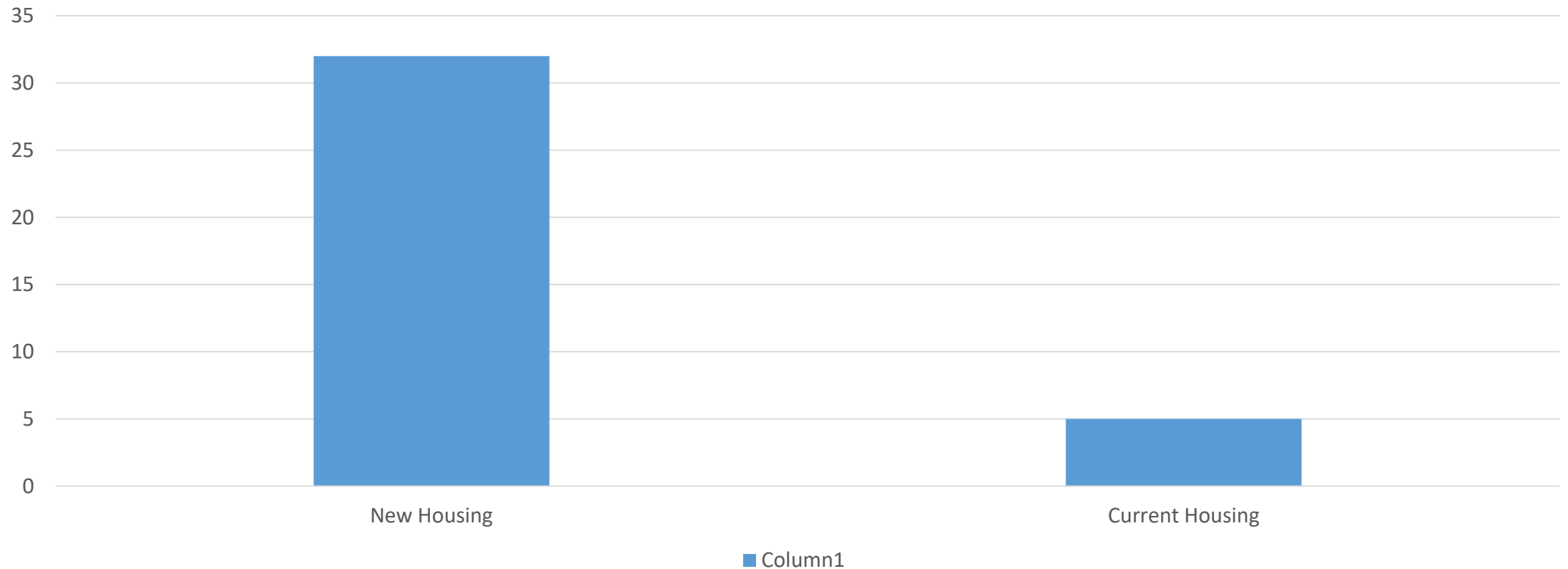


Benefits Provided to Approved

- 31 Households received first and last month rent
- 1 Household received retroactive payment to September 2016
- 31 Households received retroactive payment to April 2017
- Average monthly benefit is \$325.00



Housing Location of Approved



SDV Households Since Pilot Start

- 173 SPP applicants have been housed in RGI
- 25 SPP files have been closed
- 14 Urgent Safety applicants have been housed in RGI
- 20 Urgent Safety files have been closed



Lessons Learned - Households

- PHB not appealing to most SDV applicants
- Efficiency of SPP eligibility determination and RGI placement is a significant deterrent
- Most households want long term stability of RGI subsidies
- Most households are willing to wait for an RGI offer
- Traditional RGI subsidy is more advantageous for small households
- Only interested in benefit if SPP status was preserved



Lessons Learned – Program Admin

- Program administration was significant, required .75 FTE
- Outcomes do not support administration cost
- Significant program implementation delay as a result of utilizing MFO for ongoing administration – program start January 2017
- Financial benefit not adequate to attract households away from RGI
- First month rent and last month rent was the key factor to persuade households to use benefit



Next Steps

- Program Close-Out
- Contact all benefit recipients
- Confirm interest and/or eligibility in provincial program effective April 1, 2018
- Absorb most households into existing municipally funded housing allowance programs
- Work to stabilize housing situation in the long term





QUESTIONS?



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How ONPHA can help you

1. Visit ONPHA online:

onpha.on.ca

- handbooks and guides
- sample lease, policies
- Info Ons

2. ONPHA Member Support Hotline: 1-800-297-6660

3. ONPHA Education Program

- Online courses: RGI, RTA, Finance and Governance
- Webinars
- In-person training

4. ONPHA Conference

- Join us in Toronto
October 26 – 28, 2018



Thank you!

ONPHA values your opinion. Please complete the course evaluation.

