

2020-2021

# District of Parry Sound Housing and Homelessness Plan Report



**Housing Programs**

**Parry Sound District Housing Corporation**

**Homelessness & Integrated Services**

**Esprit Place Women's Shelter**

[www.psdssab.org](http://www.psdssab.org)



## Table of Contents

---

Letter from the Board Chair	Page 2
Achievements	Page 3
Enumeration	Page 4
Housing Programs	Page 5
Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB)	Page 6
Parry Sound District Housing Corp.	Page 7
Homelessness & Integrated Services (HIS)	Page 8
Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI)	Page 9
Esprit Place	Page 10
Golden Sunshine / Beaucrest	Page 11
Positive Outcomes	Page 12
Food Programs	Page 13
Appendix	Page 14

---



## **District of Parry Sound Social Services Administration Board Housing & Homelessness Plan Annual Report**

On behalf of the District of Parry Sound Social Services Administration Board, I am pleased to present our 2020-2021 Housing and Homelessness Annual Report.

Our communities have been faced with significant challenges as a result of COVID-19. Accordingly, we had to expand and develop programs to address the needs of our vulnerable population. Despite the upheaval that came with COVID-19, we have had the opportunity to utilize funding that was released as part of the 'Safe Restart' program, specifically the Social Services Relief Fund. We were able to financially support a number of community partners, such as; food security, virtual connections for ongoing counselling and group sessions, and programs that support youth, seniors and Indigenous groups.

A significant accomplishment in 2020-2021 was the development of temporary, short-term housing for people experiencing homelessness in our district. We have rented 26 rooms throughout the district at two hotels and have Homelessness Prevention staff working onsite. We partnered with Community Mental Health Association, West Parry Sound Health Center, Community Paramedicine, Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics and the OPP to provide wraparound supports.

As always, we will continue to rise to the challenges that are presented to us. I'd like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all the staff and community partners in our district for continuing to move forward in a positive direction while supporting the housing and homelessness issues that we are facing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rick Zanussi'. The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Mr. Rick Zanussi,  
Board Chair

## 2020 Achievements

- ✓ Implemented the new COHB program utilizing all of the 2020 funding allotment by December 31, 2020.
- ✓ We have successfully launched RGI simplification. As of July 1, 2020, all annual reviews are calculated using the most recent Notice of Assessment (NOA) from Revenue Canada rather than t-slips and monthly income such as paystubs.
- ✓ Reviewed and implemented new changes to the *Housing Services Act, 2011*.
- ✓ New exterior and screen doors were installed at the Golden Sunshine building in Powassan.
- ✓ On August 31, 2020 the DSSAB had the pleasure of hosting a tour for Minister Steve Clark, Municipal Affairs and Housing and our Member of Provincial Parliament, Norm Miller at the Almaguin Manor in Burk's Falls.
- ✓ On September 1, 2020 we attended a tour with Minister Clark and Norm Miller at the Community Hub in Parry Sound. From there, Norm Miller hosted a 'Supportive Housing Consultation' at the DSSAB with a number of community partners. This was an opportunity for community partners to discuss Supportive Housing in rural and northern settings.
- ✓ Housing Programs transitioned from using Excel for rent calculations to YARDI.
- ✓ Engagement with non-profit housing providers about changes to legislation including the 2021 rent freeze.
- ✓ New roofs were installed on several of our buildings and town homes, as well as updated entries at 2 buildings.

## 2021 Achievements

- ✓ Released our first H.O.M.E Network newsletter.
- ✓ Go Live date for Rent Café, the cloud based waitlist system, was January 18, 2021 and we hope to see on-line applications later this year.
- ✓ Acquired 18 hotel rooms at the Midtown Hotel in Parry Sound and 8 rooms at the Caswell Hotel in South River to use as transitional housing.

## Ongoing Plans

- ✓ H.O.M.E Network on-line meeting currently scheduled for September 14, 2021.
- ✓ Continue engagement with the School Board & First Nations to gain knowledge of target groups.
- ✓ One Ontario renovates project currently in the beginning stages.
- ✓ 2021 Enumeration By Name List currently in planning stages, completion by December 31, 2021.
- ✓ Installing security cameras at all LHC buildings.

---

## Enumeration 2021

---

Enumeration was originally scheduled for 2020 but was put on hold by the Ministry, partly due to COVID-19 restrictions and also to rethink the strategy for collecting the data. For Enumeration 2021, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) has introduced a By-Name List approach by using a Point-in-Time Count method. Our agency is currently in the planning stages with an estimated Point-in-Time Count date sometime this fall.

What is a Point-in-Time Count method?



A Point-in-Time Count is a count of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons on a single night. A Point-in-Time Count is intended to capture numbers and basic demographics of persons experiencing homelessness at a single point in time.

What is a By-Name List?



A By-Name List is a real-time list of all people experiencing homelessness in our community. The list will be created by conducting a Point-in-Time Count which includes collecting demographic information about people experiencing homelessness using a set of 17 common questions that align with the enumeration approach used by the federal Reaching Home Program.

By-Name Lists for people experiencing homelessness can help connect people to services and can create a foundation for better service coordination. They provide a more standardized approach for assessment and referral protocols to make sure clients are being matched to the services they need.

## Housing Programs 2020 Calendar Year

### Social Housing Waitlist



### Housing Assistance Programs

#### Rent Supplement

17 households receive a rental supplement. Paying rent-geared-to-income rents in a private or non-profit market rental.

#### Housing Allowance

30 households receive a housing allowance of \$225 monthly through this Affordable Housing program.

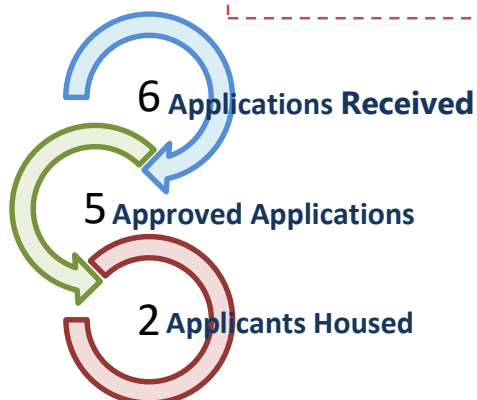
#### Home Ownership

13 households have maintained their Homeownership agreement. 2 have been discharged in the 2020 year.

#### Ontario Renovates

92 households have maintained their Ontario Renovates agreement. 4 have been discharged in the 2020 year.

### Special Priority Program (SPP)



SPP applications are available for people fleeing domestic violence situations and victims & survivors of human trafficking.

---

## Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB)

---

The Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB), a new funding program in 2020, provides a Portable Housing Benefit to assist with rental costs. This provincially mandated benefit is available to eligible priority groups who are on the Centralized Waitlist.

A Portable Housing Benefit is a monthly subsidy provided to low-income households to assist with housing costs. This is tied to the household and can be used to help pay rent anywhere in Ontario.

The COHB pays the difference between 30 per cent of the household income and the average market rent in the area. For recipients of social assistance, the COHB will pay the difference between the shelter allowance and the household rent and utilities costs.

The program is administered by the Province of Ontario and the benefit amount will be reviewed every year.

If you receive a COHB, you must agree to be removed from the Centralized Waitlist as required by Provincial program guidelines.

**The Parry Sound DSSAB has secured the new COHB funding for 33 individuals or families and exhausted our funding for the 2020 year. Beginning in March, 2021, we have received additional funding for 6-8 more spots and are currently working to get those filled in the coming months.**



**The Government of Ontario passed legislation to freeze rent at 2020 levels. This means that rents will not increase in 2021 for the vast majority of rented units covered under the *Residential Tenancies Act*. This includes all rent-geared-to-income units and market rent units in community housing, as well as any affordable housing units.**

---

## Parry Sound District Housing Corp. Tenant & Maintenance Services

---

2020 was a challenging year for Parry Sound Housing Corp. with staffing changes, retirement of senior staff, and COVID-19. We had to make sure COVID restrictions and protocols were put in place for all of our buildings across the district. Part of that was providing PPE to staff, tenants, and custodians, increasing cleaning and sanitizing, closing public washrooms and common rooms, self screening for tenants and more in depth screening for contractors coming into the building, as well as information sharing and keeping tenants up to date in order to keep them safe.

### Wellness

As the pandemic brought things to a halt last year, the Paramedicine program suspended it's services for a while, so the Community Relations Workers (CRW's) stepped up and are making monthly phone calls to our tenants to check in on their health & well-being. The CRW's offered community information including where to access mental health services, food bank info, tax information, etc. On average the CRW's are collectively making approximately 40 wellness checks per month.

The Paramedicine program resumed in both East & West Parry Sound late fall. They currently visit 7 of our multi-unit buildings.

The CRW's assisted many of our most vulnerable tenants with the scheduling and arranging of their COVID vaccinations including in some cases transportation.

The CRW's continue to liaise with community partners on behalf of tenants who need supports or extra services. They continue to work with programs and agencies such as: The Friends, COAST, Community Mental Health, Community Living Parry Sound & Almaguin Highlands Community Living, Ontario Public Guardian & Trustee, Ontario Works, Ontario Disability Support Program, Ontario Provincial Police, ORKIN, Home and Community Care Support Services, and many other agencies and partners.

### Maintenance

Between April 2020 and present the Maintenance department created 784 work orders for maintenance.

### Tenant Engagement

Instead of running in person workshops, our CRW's designed more newsletters and ran contests to engage tenants and children. Our most recent was a children's colouring contest for spring along with a word search for adults. All adult submissions were put into a draw for grocery gift cards and all children received a Spring activity package put together by the CRW's.

The team is currently working on a Spring Dog Owner package for all tenants who own dogs.



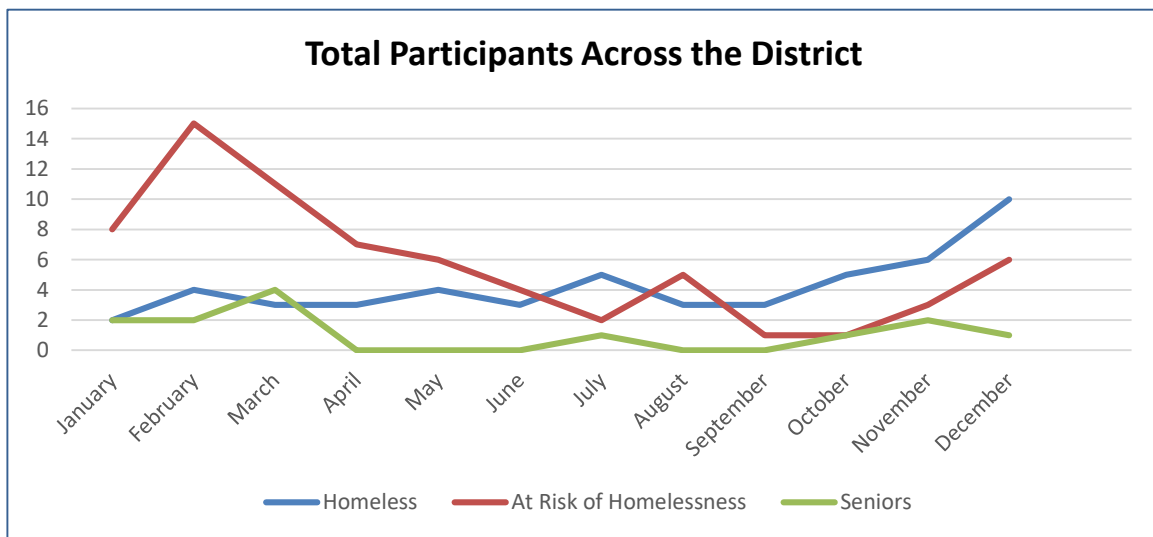
---

## Homelessness & Integrated Services (HIS) 2020/2021

---

The number of participants to Ontario Works and referrals to the Homelessness Program were less than compared to previous years, however the clients had more complex challenges that required more communication and coordination from staff.

*(\*\*Client numbers may be down as people may have applied for and received CERB/CRB- although not truly eligible. This will be identified during the 2020/21 Tax Season)*



In July of 2020 it was announced by the Ontario Government that a new funding option was to be available called the Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF), as part of a COVID-19 Action Plan to Protect Vulnerable Ontarians.

The DSSAB was able to use this SSRF funding to secure 18 rooms at the Midtown hotel in Parry Sound, and 8 rooms at The Caswell Hotel in Sundridge, in January, 2021. These rooms are to provide transitional housing options to clients as the housing market and COVID-19 pandemic have made it even harder to find adequate and affordable housing options. They are currently both at full capacity.

The Community Relations Workers (CRW's) for HIS are now working on site at the hotels and have established partnerships with CMHA, WPSHC NP clinics, Paramedicine, and OPP, to assist in supporting the clients when needed.

---

## Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) 2020

---

*(Numbers below reflect the combined, unduplicated issuance from the Homelessness & Integrated Services Program and Ontario Works)*

---

### People Experiencing Homelessness

**Total Households Assisted: 88**

---

---

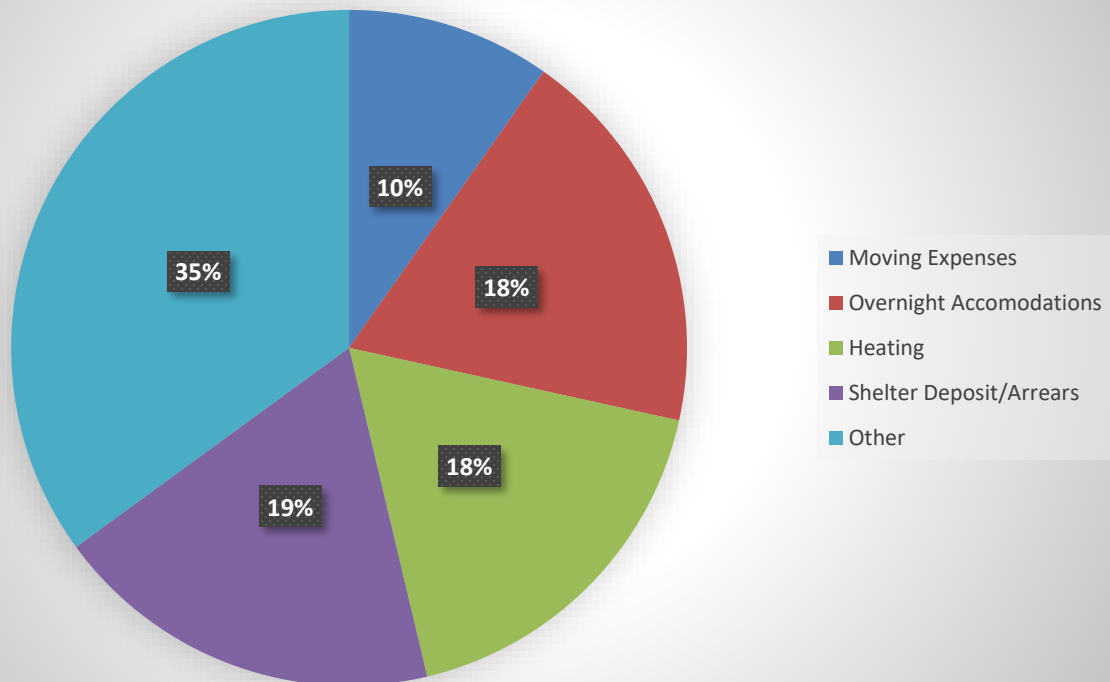
### People At-Risk of Homelessness

**Total Households Assisted: 306**

---

The Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) provides funding to support low income people, and people on fixed incomes. CHPI funding is used to help keep clients housed or prevent homelessness.

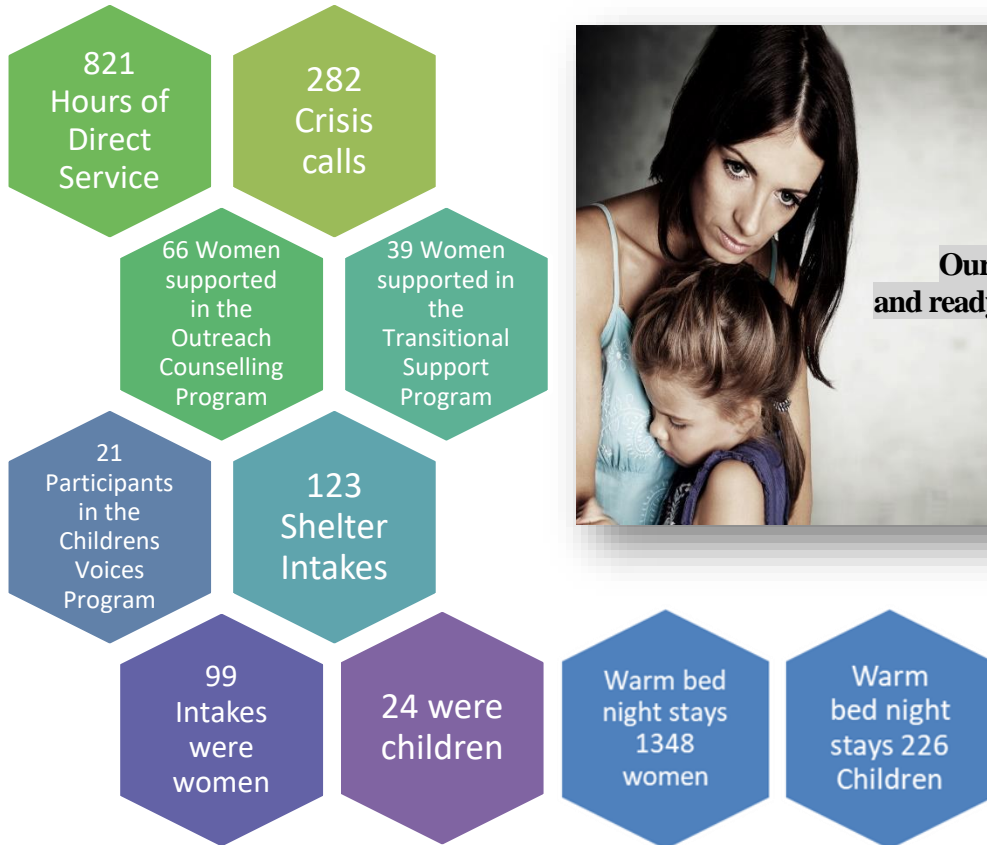
### Top 5 Reasons for Issuance in 2020



\*Other may include but not limited to; supports to obtaining housing, emergency home repair, food and/or transportation etc.



## Family Resource Centre 2020



**Abuse is never ok.  
Asking for help is.  
Our counsellors are on duty  
and ready to help 24 hours a day.  
1-800-461-1707.**



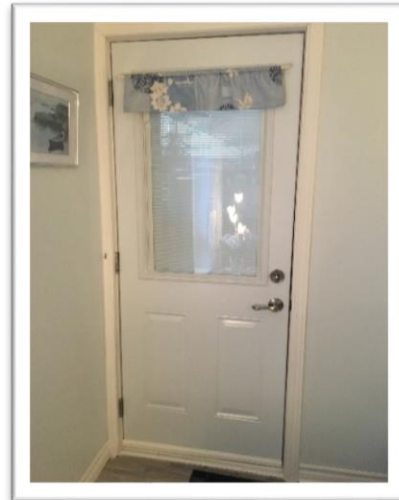
### View from the Inside:

We have had to modify capacity and change some processes during the pandemic, including intake process, PPE precautions, and restricting client's movement around the community during lockdown/stay at home orders. This has been challenging in terms of weighing risks to the clients and staff in the shelter as well as women at risk in the community, but like everyone, we've adapted with what we've had to do. We have had to limit our capacity to only serving those fleeing abuse or violence currently in their lives, which has been hard but also has allowed the shelter a reset to mandated service and focus on what we are meant for. We've been doing a lot more radio and social media information-sharing, and trying to switch to virtual services where possible.

---

## Parry Sound District Housing Corporation 2020 Golden Sunshine Update

---



Golden Sunshine is a seniors building located at 325 Catherine Street, Powassan, ON. The building is independent living for people who are 65 years of age and older. The units consist of 18 one bedroom and 2 two bedroom units. In 2020, they were able to update all exterior doors including new screen doors with OPHI funding.

---

## Beaucrest Update

---



Beaucrest is a 40 unit seniors building located at 21 Bowes Street in Parry Sound. OHPI funding was also secured for Parry Sound Non-Profit Housing Corp. to update the windows at Beaucrest. This project was to be completed in 2020, however, construction has been delayed due to COVID. The hopes are that this project will be completed by the Fall, 2021.



## Positive Outcomes Despite COVID-19



We have been adjusting to our 'new normal' and have made ongoing changes to our practices ensuring that our staff, clients and community members are able to access our services in a safe and appropriate manner. Even though it has been a challenging year, there have been some positives.



Esprit Place has been able to shift back to mandate at the shelter. Due to lower capacity, only clients who are fleeing violence or abuse currently are being admitted. This has allowed staff to become reacquainted with the anti-violence work they are actually meant for, while other programs have stepped up in helping out those clients who don't fit the current mandate.



Housing Programs has had the opportunity to interact with clients differently than before. Staff have been calling clients to do waitlist updates which has reached quite a number of people that they might not have otherwise. They have been able to do wellness checks and share information at the same time as updating their waitlist info. They have also adapted to a more digitally friendly working environment which has allowed them to be less paper based.



The HIS department was able to use the Social Services Relief Fund to secure hotel rooms across the district for transitional housing that was so desperately needed. Community partnerships were also established which is key in providing wrap around supports for our communities most vulnerable.

## Harvest Share Community Food Programs

Harvest Share Community Food Programs is a non-profit, charitable organization based in Parry Sound, ON. Our mission is to improve access to healthy, nutritious food for individuals and families in need in the District of Parry Sound.

**WE BELIEVE THAT ACCESS TO FOOD IS A BASIC HUMAN RIGHT, NOT A PRIVILEGE.**

In 2020 we provided a total of **287,154** meals to our community. The total number of visits to our food bank last year was **13,674** - an average of **400 clients** needing our services each month. We were able to reach **8,970** Adults, **1,377** Seniors, and **3,327** Children under 16 that were in need in our community.

**Total number of deliveries of hampers and hot meals to community members in need in 2020 - 964**

Our Food Rescue Program allowed us to rescue **113,623lbs** of food in 2020. Through our new Outreach Program, we were able to share **55,157lbs (48.5%)** of our rescued food with our community partners.

**We offer curbside pick up 4 days a week and delivery services 3 days a week.**

 @psharvestshare  Parry Sound Harvest Share

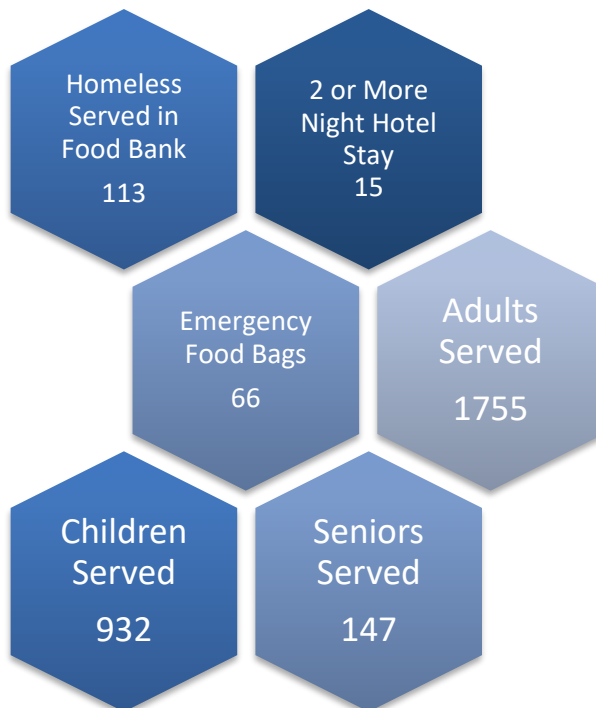
Website: [www.parrysoundharvestshare.com](http://www.parrysoundharvestshare.com)

IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW COULD USE OUR HAMPER SERVICE PLEASE CONTACT 705-774-9111 OR EMAIL [harvestsharedelivery@gmail.com](mailto:harvestsharedelivery@gmail.com) to make arrangements for a curbside pick up or delivery.



Harvest Share provides a bi-weekly (every other week) Community Dinner through take out or delivery, to access this service please call 705-774-9111

## The Salvation Army Food Bank – 2020



### Salvation Army Rainbow County Church Emergency Food Bank

61 Gibson Street

Parry Sound

705-746-5341

Tues - Fri 1-3 pm

\*By appointment only



Giving  
Hope  
Today

## Appendix A: Annual Reporting Template: Reporting on the Progress of the Plan

Objectives	Outcomes	Measures	Targets	Annual Progress/Achievements
To focus on creating additional transitional units within the District to assist chronically homeless people.	Increase transitional housing including supports.	Number of transitional units created per year.	Increase by one unit per year.	One-year pilot underway for the "Hotel" project which includes 25 total units: 18 West, 7 East
To work with Non-Profit and private sector developers to increase market and affordable homes within the District.	To improve access to housing for people across all levels of the housing spectrum.	Number of market and affordable homes created per year.	Create 10 affordable units per year.	The NOAH project is underway and will house 25 Affordable Units and 25 Market Units.
To focus on building stronger relationships with our Indigenous Communities. To utilize COCHI funding to support the sustainability of our Indigenous Non-Profit housing provider.	Working toward a Memorandum of Agreement to increase partnerships, coordinated access to services with culturally based services with Indigenous Partners.	Number of Indigenous rent-geared-to-income units supported by COCHI.	Repair 5 units through COCHI.	N/A *PSDSSAB did not receive COCHI in Year 1 or Year 2. We will utilize Year 3 COCHI for repairs/sustainability.
To provide Home Ownership and Ontario Renovates programs to assist homeowners in remaining in their homes & supporting those looking to enter the homeowner market.	To assist with the high cost of purchasing a home & the costs associated with aging housing stock.	Number of households supported through Home Ownership & Ontario Renovates programs.	Complete two Home Ownership agreements & eight Ontario Renovates projects over five years.	Due to COVID and rising real estate market in our district, Home Ownership was not a viable option for new home owners. Currently 1 Ontario Renovates in progress, with more possibly coming soon. OPHI funding was able to provide funding to 3 Non-Profit housing providers for repairs.
To continue to work toward development of innovative Housing First strategies in an attempt to reduce homelessness.	To continue rapid rehousing & providing the supports necessary to achieve long-term housing stability.	CHPI statistics including number of people housed.	Successful interventions as determined by the number of people housed.	The Homelessness department has been able to house 32 individuals or families.
To focus on the development and maintenance of relationships with community partners and services across the District.	To continue to build and maintain coordination and communication networks to further support clients.	Ongoing commitment to participating in networks.	Continuing active participation in community networks.	Developed a newsletter for HOME Network group to update on the year. Continue to attend IMPACT (Situation Table on a bi-weekly basis).



“We are committed to the provision and promotion of services that assist individuals in attaining an optimum quality of life and that contribute to the well-being of the community”

## District of Parry Sound



Social Services  
Administration Board

1 Beechwood Drive

Parry Sound, ON

P2A 1J2

[www.psdssab.org](http://www.psdssab.org)

