

Year 2019

United Counties of Prescott and Russell



[HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS PLAN]

This document contains the 2019 report of the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan for the United Counties of Prescott and Russell.

The United Counties of Prescott and Russell (UCPR) introduced, in 2014, a Housing and Homelessness Plan, striving to improve the residents' housing conditions.

Our plan is divided into **16** strategic initiatives in order to end homelessness in our county. This document provides to the reader a glimpse of the key projects and services that were introduced or facilitated in 2019.

A. Partnerships and Collaborations

- Meeting biannually with Non-Profit Providers to review policies and procedures, resolve issues, and obtain feedback for a positive outcome. In 2019, we addressed End of Operating Agreements, follow-up on the Rent Geared to Income training, fires in Casselman, L'Original and Marionville, community housing funds, modifications to the law and terminological changes of Ministry programs, PR Transpo pilot project, Ministry of Housing auditor, Safety Element/Pioneering technology, market rent waiting list, changes to section 367/11 of the 2011 *Housing Services Act*, COCHI/OPHI programs, fire at 807 James Street in Hawkesbury, new non-profit housing corporation manager, insurance renewal and harassment.
- Meeting biannually with all agencies providing services to the community. The meeting gathers **56** agencies with the attendance of more than **120** participants under the same roof. In 2019, the following agencies presented their services to the networking group:
 - United Way of Prescott-Russell
 - Valoris for children and adults of Prescott-Russell
 - Hawkesbury General Hospital
 - Parent's Lifelines of Eastern Ontario
 - The York Centre
 - The Canadian Red Cross
 - L'Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario de Prescott et Russell (L'ACFO)
 - The United Counties of Prescott and Russell—PR Transpo pilot project
- The agency meeting provided opportunities for our Community Relations Worker to learn more about services offered and connect with individuals from the agencies that provide these services as well as share our housing programs and services.

B. Access to CMSM Services and Programs

- We have centralized access at our head office which represents 3 services, such as Housing Services, Early Years Services and Ontario Works.
- Services and programs are available on our website at: www.prescott-russell.on.ca.

Homeownership Program

Buying a house can be one of the single largest expenses someone can experience during their lifetime. It can also be a great investment. Nowadays, finding a house at an affordable price can be an overwhelming task.

The *Homeownership* Component under the IAH provides an opportunity for a forgivable loan to allow low-to-moderate-income renter households to purchase their first home. The amount of the loan for down-payment assistance is equivalent to **10%** of the purchase price. Through this program, the UCPR also have access to a revolving loan fund, whereby money is reinvested back into the fund when the houses are sold, for use by potential future buyers.

The program was available throughout 2019, helping 10 households become first-time Home Buyers.

Rent Supplement

The Rent Supplement Component has been designed to help address affordability issues of households in modest rental units across the province. The “rent supplement” is a subsidy (up to \$230 per month) paid to the landlord on behalf of a household in need of rental assistance. It is meant to help bridge the gap between the rent that a household can afford to pay and the actual market rent of a modest unit.

The UCPR helped approximately 116 households with their monthly rent; \$275,061 invested in 2019.

The Housing Allowance Component has been designed to help address affordability issues of households in modest rental units across the province. A “Housing Allowance” is a subsidy paid to the tenant in need of financial rental assistance. It is meant to help bridge the gap between the rent that a household can afford to pay and the actual market rent of a modest unit.

The UCPR helped approximately **13 households** with their monthly rent; **\$26,539 invested in 2019.**

Ontario Renovates

As the years go by, houses are aging and are in need of renovations and repairs. Ontario Renovates is a 10-year forgivable loan that provides financial assistance to homeowners so they can conduct urgent home repairs that will allow for continued safe occupancy of their home. Through this program, the UCPR also have access to a revolving loan fund, whereby money is reinvested back into the fund when the houses are sold, for use by potential future buyers.

The UCPR helped approximately **21 households** with their home repair; **\$278,327 invested in 2019.**

C. Prevention

- We use a large amount of IAH funding for the *Rent Supplement* program, as this provides more units for our dollar. This also helps renters in locations where no other Social or Non-Profit Housing exists.
- In 2019, a total of **116** households received a rent supplement of **\$230/month**. In total, **\$275,061** was awarded in this program.
- **13** households received housing allowance for a total of **\$26,539**.
- **79** households received a rent supplement for a total of **\$149,665**.

Residential Services Homes Program

Residential Services Homes offer long-term accommodation and care to vulnerable adults that require help to perform their daily activities.

The UCPR subsidize the accommodation and food costs to **450** people throughout the **eight** municipalities across the UCPR. Agreements are in place between the UCPR and the **29** Residential Services Homes owners offering a per diem (**\$55.50/day; \$1,688.12/month**) along with a monthly allowance for personal necessities (**\$149/month**) to every subsidized resident.

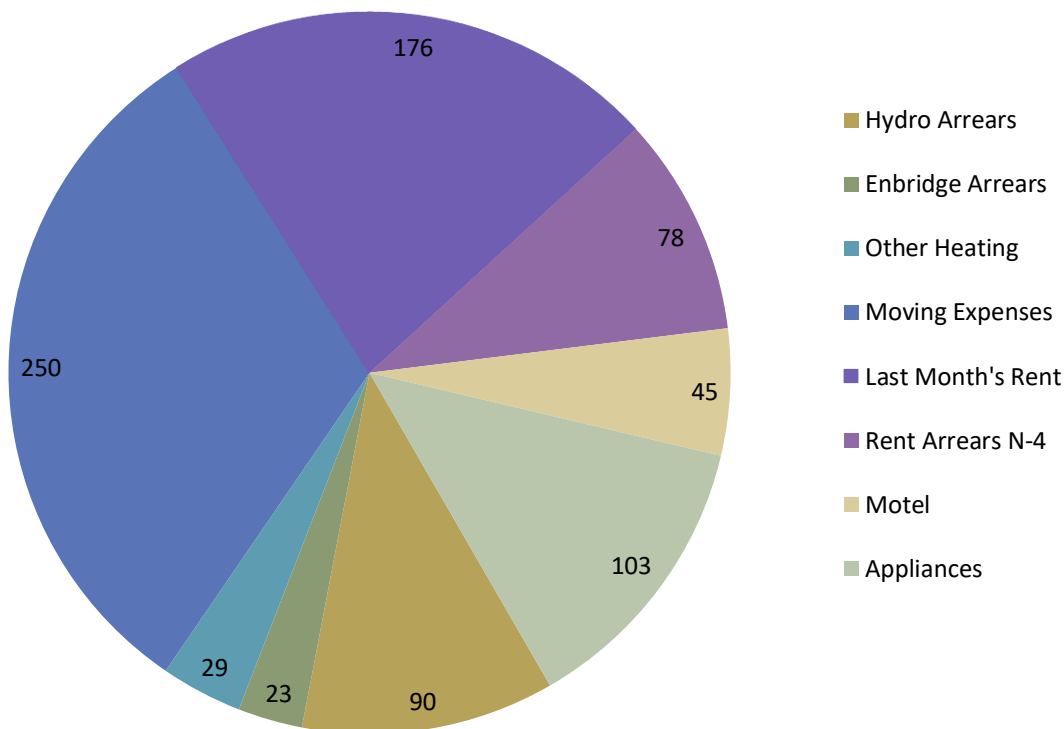
Housing loss prevention

The UCPR stabilized approximately **210 households at risk of homelessness** (includes eviction prevention services, assistance with rental and energy arrears).

Housing retention

The UCPR helped approximately **447 households at risk of homelessness** by providing an ongoing subsidy/support to retain their housing (at **six months**).

Housing Assistance Fund (CHPI)

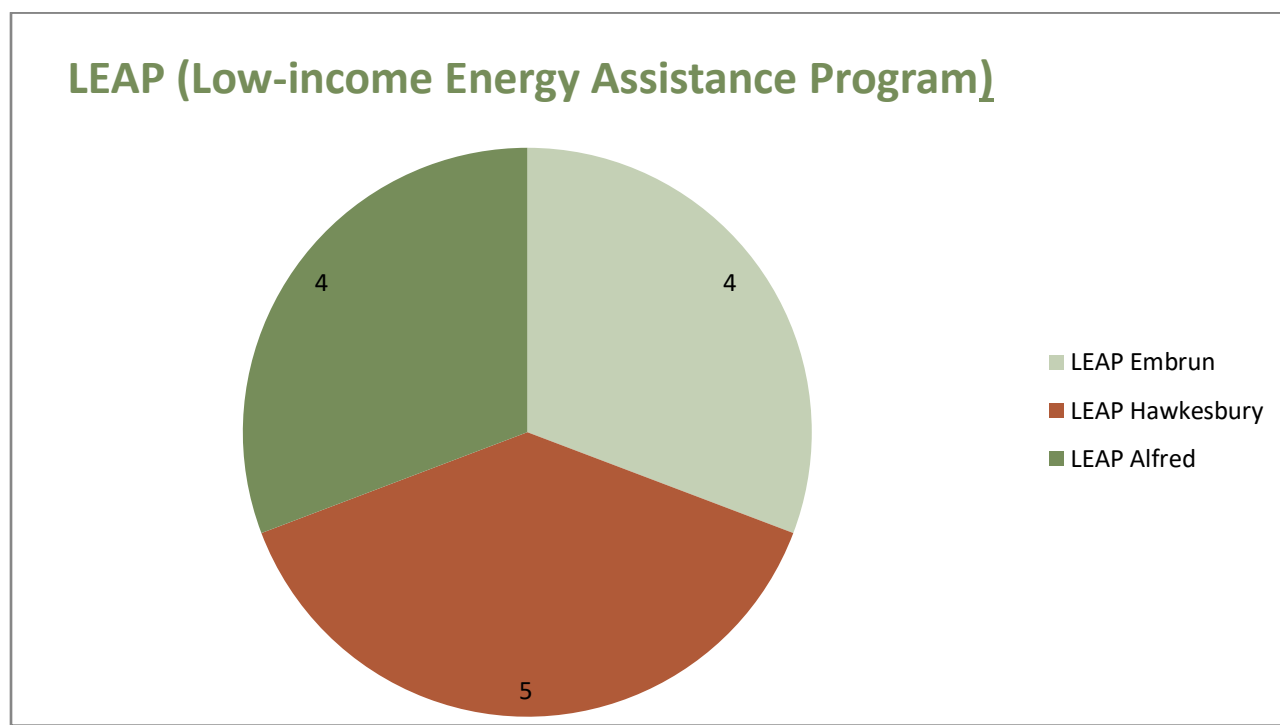


The *Housing Assistance Fund (HAF)* assists low-income households within the UCPR to obtain and retain housing and also helps those at risk of homelessness to remain housed.

The *Housing Assistance Fund* can provide annual financial assistance up to a maximum of **\$800** for singles and **\$1,000** for couples with no children, **\$1,500** for families with children.

In 2019, the UCPR provided financial assistance to **161** households with their **Energy Arrears (electricity, gas, propane and wood.**

Also, we provided financial assistance to **250 households** for their **moving expenses**, **176** with their **Last Month Rent**, and **78** with their **Rent Arrears** following the reception of a Notice to End a Tenancy Early for Non-payment of Rent.



LEAP is a grant program intended to provide emergency relief to eligible low-income customers who may be experiencing difficulty paying current arrears.

This program assists consumers with limited financial resources, through **three** unique programs:

- Emergency Financial Assistance;
- Special rules for qualified low-income customers;
- Energy conservation [established by the utility company].

The UCPR assist applicants to fill out the application form and deem eligible customers as low-income with the utility company in order for the household to qualify.

In 2019, **13 households** benefitted from this program with **5** in **Hawkesbury**, **4** in **Embrun**, and **4** in **Alfred**.

In order to help end homelessness, the UCPR also provided a total of **111** gift cards of approximately \$25 each, from CHPI funds, to low-income individuals and families who were at imminent risk of homelessness.

Portable Housing Benefit—Victims of Family Violence

Between January 1st, and July 31, 2019, **\$19,852** was allocated to **17** tenants in the Prescott and Russell area to make their home more affordable. The purpose of the benefit is to provide survivors of family violence with financial assistance other than the traditional form of rent-geared-to-income [RGI] housing to provide safe and affordable housing.

D. Transportation

- In 2019, the United Counties created PR Transpo, a transportation pilot project.

E. Education and Training

- We continue to encourage tenants to seek legal advice as needed with Legal Aid.
- Our Community Relations Worker continues to organize each year a lunch and presentations from agencies such as Services Canada to our seniors tenant portfolio.
- We invite partner agencies to educate our Non-Profit providers at the biannual meetings.
- Inspections and education are ongoing with our Community Relation Worker.
- We send a bulletin each fall and spring on tenants' rights and obligations as well as available resources.

F. Delivery of Programs and Services

- Our Community Relations Worker maintains good working relations with community agencies.

G. Resources [Financial, Human, Material]

- The Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative [CHPI] funding is managed by two [2] full-time employees of the Ontario Works program. We refer people in need of funding to these individuals.
- We have a full-time IAH Coordinator to administer all programs mentioned above.
- We continue to use all funding allocation for Ontario Renovates, homeownership and rent supplements.

H. Input of Municipalities

- No activity.

I. Needs assessment

- We were closely involved in the development of the housing needs plan for the Town of Hawkesbury.

J. Performance measurements

- Monthly statistics of the waiting list is provided to Council members.

K. Housing Stock

- No development in 2019.

L. Public Awareness

- Through biannual agency networking meetings, we promote programs and raise public awareness.
- We maintain updated information about our programs on our website.

M. Awareness Among Government Authorities

- No new development in 2019.

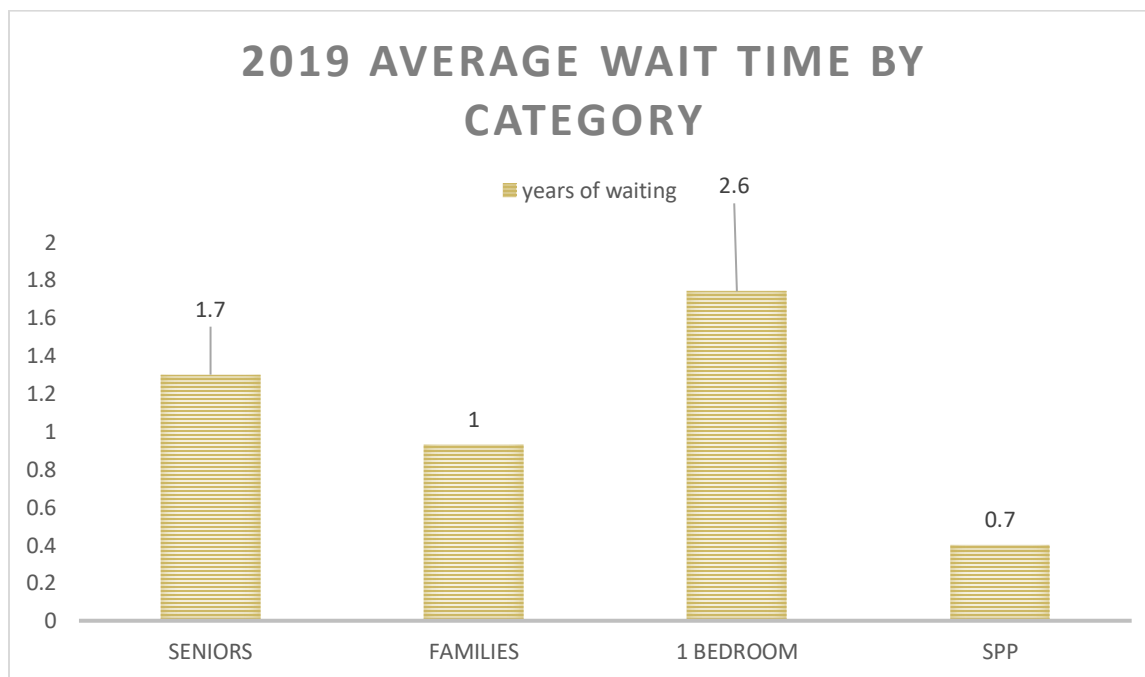
N. Complementary between Programs and Services

- No specific measures were taken in 2019.

O. Policies, Standards, and Guidelines

- We make sure that CHPI funding can be used before we go to a tribunal for arrears or damages to the units.
- On an ongoing basis, we try to make repayment agreements.
- Tenants can now make e-transfer rent payments.
- Consent forms were designed and used for all three [3] services [OW, Early Years and Housing].

P. Waiting Lists



The average wait time in 2019 for the Housing Services in the UCPR is approximately **1 year and a half**.