



# 2014

## WINDSOR ESSEX ANNUAL REPORT

**TO THE COMMUNITY ON THE 10 YEAR HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS PLAN**

[www.citywindsor.ca](http://www.citywindsor.ca)



# PREFACE

We are pleased to provide you with the first annual Report to the Community on the Windsor Essex 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan (Plan). As Windsor Essex approaches the anniversary of the completion of the Plan, there are a number of things that have been accomplished by the community as we continue to work towards providing a comprehensive Housing First approach to deliver a system of housing and homelessness services. This report is intended to highlight various accomplishments and challenges faced throughout 2014, and to provide a framework for items to be addressed moving forward into 2015.

## HOW DID WE GET HERE?

The Housing Services Act, 2011 (HSA) requires that each Service Manager have a ten year plan to address Housing and Homelessness. The HSA required that each plan include the following principles:

1. Housing First
2. People-Centred
3. Partnership Based
4. Locally Driven
5. Inclusive
6. Fiscally Responsible; and
7. Outcome Focused

The process of developing the Housing and Homelessness Plan for Windsor Essex began in 2012 with the establishment of the Windsor Essex Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy (LTAHS) Advisory Committee. The Committee includes representatives from the City of Windsor and County of Essex, as well as community partners and stakeholders. The LTAHS Committee developed a preliminary housing and homelessness systems model, which formed the basis for the Housing and Homelessness Plan. In early 2013, SHS Consulting was retained to assist with the development of the Plan, under the guidance of the LTAHS committee, through a series of community wide stakeholder workshops; focus groups and interviews; surveys; and agency-led discussions with persons utilizing various services. The process for developing the Housing and Homelessness Plan built on the work undertaken for the Windsor Essex Housing Analysis Recommended Strategies (HARS) Report in 2004 and 2010.



# THE WINDSOR ESSEX 10 YEAR HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS PLAN

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The Windsor Essex 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan was approved by City Council in May 2014. The Plan addresses key aspects of housing from homelessness to affordable home ownership and focuses on housing stability, homelessness prevention and quick access to permanent housing, rather than emergency responses. The Plan also considers the housing and support needs of specific population groups, including persons with disabilities, Aboriginal people, immigrants, youth, seniors and victims of domestic violence. The Plan establishes a process to measure and report on progress toward meeting the identified goals.

The Plan adopts a Housing First approach, using a common assessment priority tool (SPDAT) and provides a vision, 7 goals and 63 strategies identified by the community to achieve the principles outlined in the Housing Services Act (HSA).

## WHAT IS HOUSING FIRST?

A Housing First approach is where people who are experiencing homelessness obtain and maintain permanent, affordable housing and assists those who are at-risk of homelessness to remain housed. A range of factors can put housing security at risk, including low income; health issues/illness (including mental health issues); substance use; incarceration or other legal issues; hospitalization; family breakdown; violence; discrimination; and inadequate and/or unsafe housing. Housing First is a person centred approach that places the highest priority on retaining and attaining permanent housing as quickly as possible and then providing the support necessary to maintain their housing.

## WHAT IS SPDAT?

The Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (SPDAT) is a common assessment tool that will assist support workers in examining the components of a person's or family's life that are most likely to result in housing instability. The SPDAT will assist the support worker to understand the depth of these issues; which household is most likely to benefit from which type of housing support intervention; which household should be prioritized above others based upon their acuity; and, informs the case planning process so that time is spent working on those areas that are most likely going to result in the person/family becoming homeless again.

## WHAT IS THE PLAN'S VISION?

Windsor Essex is an inclusive community where everyone has a safe, affordable, accessible, and quality home, and everyone lives where they can actively participate.

## WHAT ARE THE PLAN'S GOALS AND STRATEGIES?

There are 7 Goals under the Plan as follows:

1. Access
2. Person Centered Supports
3. Interim Housing
4. Housing Linked with Supports
5. Rental Housing
6. Ownership Housing
7. Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation

The Plan identifies 63 strategies to be implemented by the end of 2023. Of those, the community identified 29 strategies as priorities which have been targeted for completion in 2014 - 2015.

## HOW ARE WE DOING?

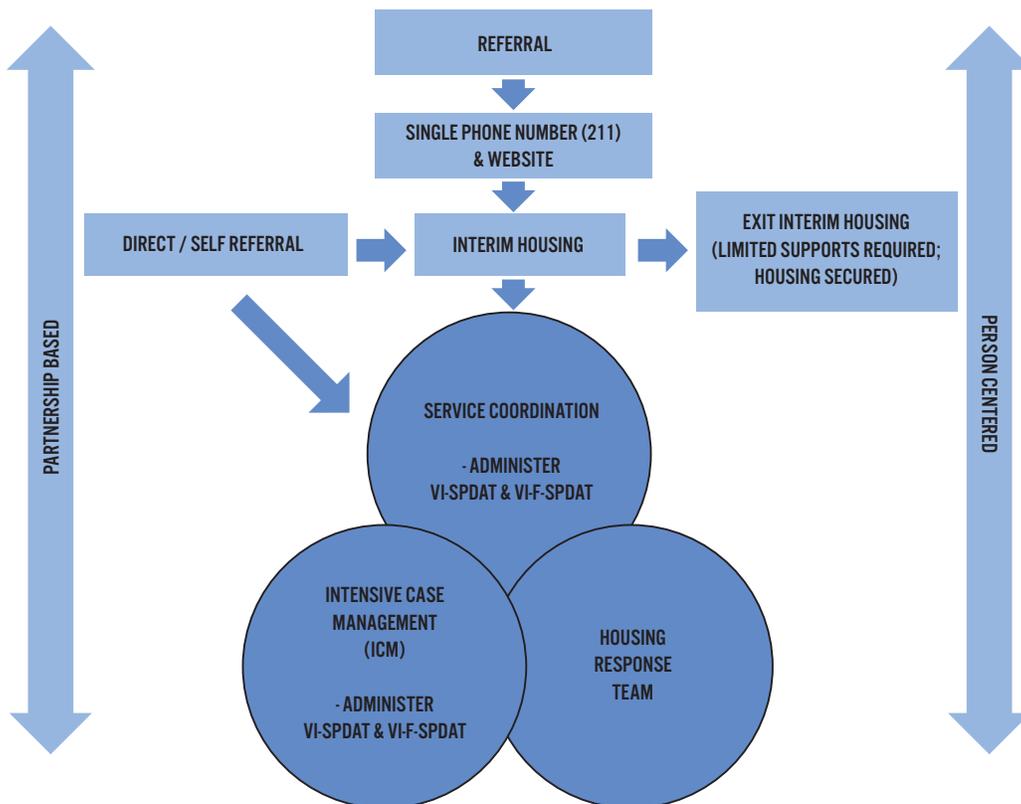
Under the following goals, 11 of the 29 strategies identified have been completed as of December 2014.

### GOAL #1: ACCESS

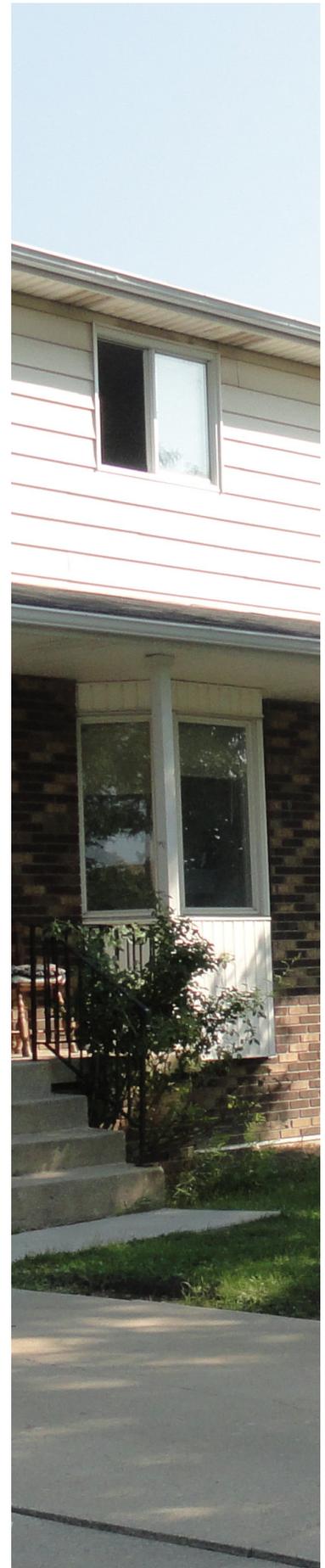
*Provide simple, coordinated and consistent access to programs, services and supports that act on what is important to the person receiving services*

#### STRATEGIES

- Phase 1 – Access model completed and approved - below



- Pilot with the Interim Housing Providers to administer the Vulnerability Index & Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT) which will assist in triaging persons to appropriate services and supports
- 211 chosen as the single phone number which includes an after-hours crisis line through the Community Crisis Centre
- Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) Request for Proposal issued October 2014



## GOAL #2: PERSON-CENTERED SUPPORTS

*Have supports available when needed, to act on what is important to the person receiving services, to assist the person in succeeding in their preferred housing*

### STRATEGIES

- Family Services Windsor-Essex and ACCESS County Community Support Services have collaborated with The City of Windsor Housing Services, Employment & Social Services and the United Way Centraide Windsor Essex to deliver an integrated comprehensive Trusteeship program. The funding of additional staff will allow for the increase in trusteeships required by persons seeking voluntary trusteeship

## GOAL #3 INTERIM HOUSING

*Have temporary housing, meant to bridge the gap between homelessness and permanent housing, available where appropriate and where needed*

### STRATEGIES

- The informal 14 day policy for shelter stays has been removed

## GOAL #4 HOUSING LINKED WITH SUPPORTS

*Have housing linked with a comprehensive and coordinated package of services and programs to assist a wide range of individuals with support needs in maintaining their housing*

### STRATEGIES

- One time Quality of Life funding enhancements were provided to Housing with Supports homes to enhance the quality of life for their residents. In addition, a second phase of one time Quality of Life funding was provided with a focus on staff training enhancement and resources. Examples include:
  - The purchase of a van for ACCESS County Community Support Services
  - Refrigerators, washing machines, dryers
  - Picnic tables, patio furniture and benches
  - Exercise equipment
  - Mental Health First Aid and Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASSIST) train the trainer certification
  - Motivational Interviewing training
- 4% per diem increase over 3 years approved by City Council effective April 1, 2013
- Implementation of the Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) funded FALLS prevention program delivered by the Victorian Order of Nurses (VON) within the CHPI funded Housing with Support homes.



## GOAL #5 RENTAL HOUSING

*Have a full range of rental housing that offers safe, accessible and quality accommodations*

### STRATEGIES

- In collaboration with community partners, a review of social housing policies have been initiated to identify opportunities to remove barriers to accessing social housing.
- Increase the supply of rental housing in the County. The Investment in Affordable Housing Program Extension funded a project in Amherstburg at the Blue Haven Apartments adding 20 affordable units
- Housing Allowance Subsidy Program pilot assisted 30 households to address affordability issues in rental units
- Allocated additional rent supplements units to Assisted Living Southwestern Ontario (ALSO)
- Allocated 4 Housing Allowance units to House of Sophrosyne

## GOAL #6 OWNERSHIP HOUSING

*Have a full range of ownership housing that offers safe, accessible and quality accommodations*

### STRATEGIES

- 26 households assisted with Homeownership Downpayment Assistance (HOP). HOP provides a 20 year forgivable loan to eligible households with downpayment assistance to a maximum of 10% of the purchase price.
- 39 households assisted with Ontario Renovates – Homeowner. Ontario Renovates – Homeowner provides a 10 year forgivable loan to eligible households to complete qualifying repairs and renovations to their homes.

## GOAL #7 MONITORING, REPORTING, AND EVALUATION

*Under the leadership of the Housing Advisory Committee, measure and report on progress, evaluate success, and invest in continuous improvement of the housing and homelessness system*

### STRATEGIES

- Development and completion of the Windsor Essex 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan which achieves the outcomes set out by the province
- Approval of the Windsor Essex 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and City Council
- Establishment of the Implementation Committee for the 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan (I-CHHP)



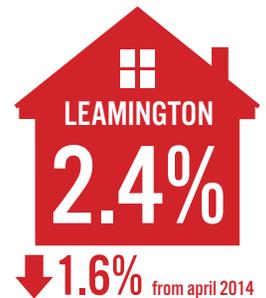
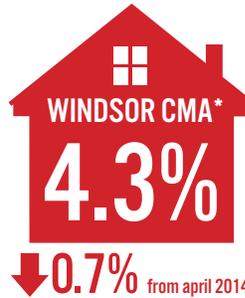
# PROFILE OF WINDSOR ESSEX IN 2014

## VACANCY DE-CONTROL

Although market rents are subject to guideline limit increases governed by the provincial legislation, the limits do not apply to the market rent when a landlord is re-renting a unit to create a new tenancy. There is no limit to the initial rent amount established for the new tenancy. After years of high vacancy and flat and declining rental rates, Windsor Essex is experiencing decreasing vacancy rates creating a trend for higher rental amounts charged for a new tenancy.

## VACANCY RATES

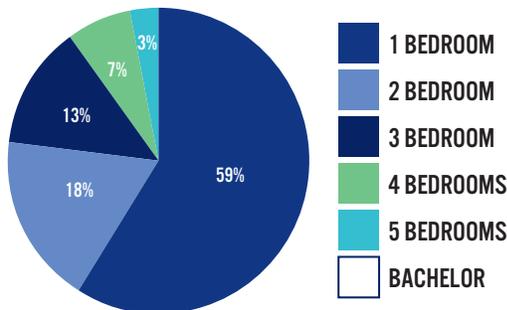
As of October 2014



\*Census Metropolitan Area - Windsor-Essex County excludes Leamington

## CENTRAL HOUSING REGISTRY WAIT LIST

### SOCIAL HOUSING WAITING LIST



ACTIVE HOUSEHOLDS  
ON WAITING LIST  
AS OF  
DECEMBER 2014

**2,700**

NUMBER OF  
PEOPLE HOUSED  
AS OF  
DECEMBER 2014

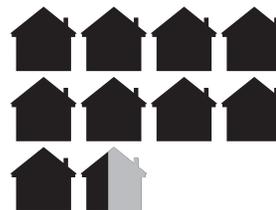
**842**

## SOCIAL ASSISTANCE RATE

ONTARIO WORKS

**9,400**

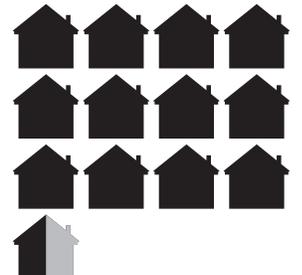
AVERAGE HOUSEHOLDS  
IN RECEIPT



ONTARIO DISABILITY  
SUPPORT PROGRAM

**12,500**

AVERAGE HOUSEHOLDS  
IN RECEIPT



## AGING SOCIAL HOUSING STOCK

THE  
MAJORITY  
OF WINDSOR  
ESSEX  
HOUSING  
STOCK IS



## UNEMPLOYMENT RATE



WINDSOR CMA



CANADA

## COMMUNITY HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION INITIATIVE (CHPI)

The CHPI aims to prevent, address and reduce homelessness by improving access to adequate, suitable and affordable housing that is linked to flexible support services based on peoples' needs.

The goals of the CHPI are as follows:

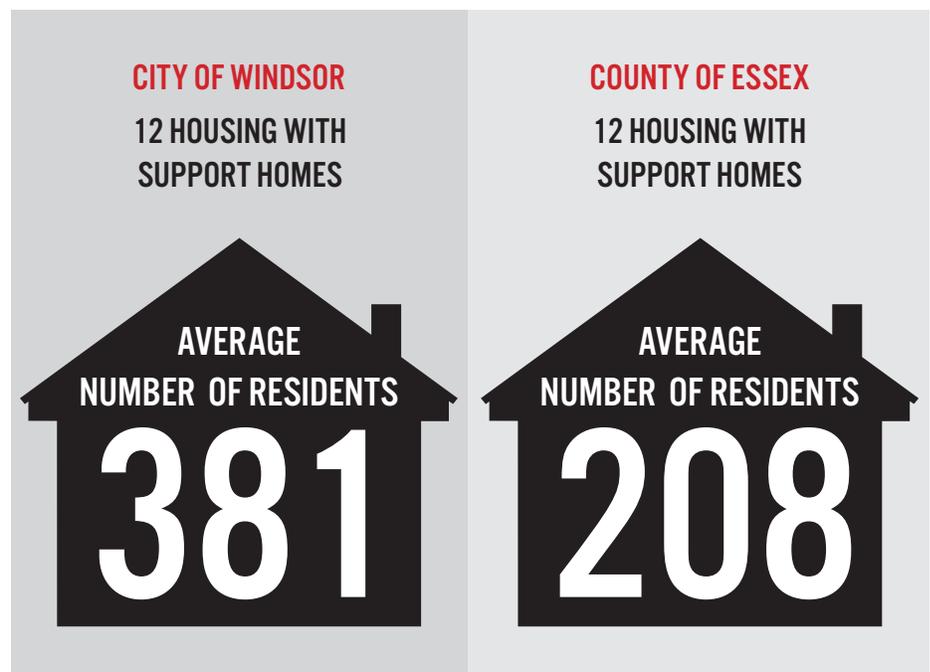
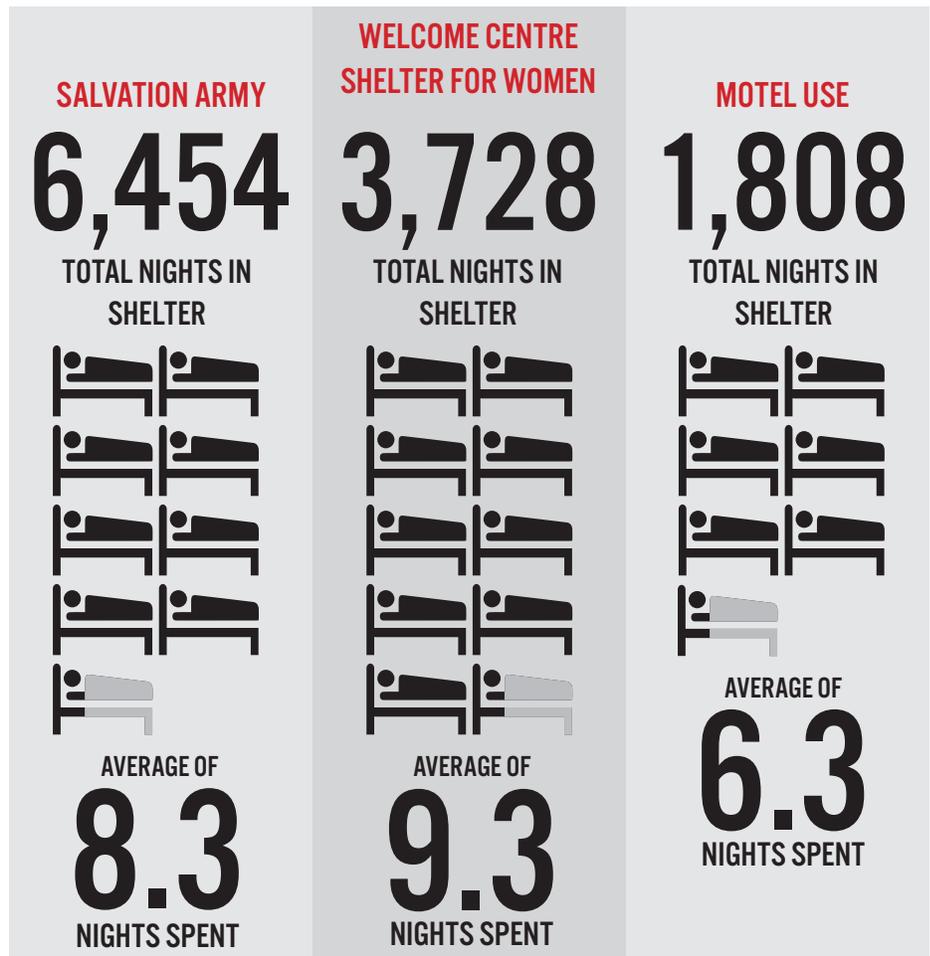
1. To help people who are experiencing homelessness to obtain and retain housing; and
2. To help people at risk of homelessness remain housed

### INTERIM HOUSING USE

(formerly Emergency Shelters) Short-term accommodations intended for 30 days or less for individuals experiencing homelessness. Emergency shelters provide sleeping arrangements with varying levels of support to individuals. 271 households have moved from interim housing to long term housing. 2,775 households at risk of homelessness have been stabilized (includes eviction prevention services, assistance with rent and energy arrears).

### HOUSING WITH SUPPORT HOMES

Housing with Supports is a place of board or lodging maintained and operated by a person under an agreement with the Municipality. Housing with Support Services means the provision of board and lodging and personal requirements, including personal care on a long-term basis for vulnerable adults that are low income and that are not eligible for long term care. Currently there are 24 Housing with Support Homes located throughout the City of Windsor and the County of Essex.



## HOUSING STABILITY PLAN (HSP)

The City of Windsor is committed to preventing homelessness and, in response to these changes, has developed the Housing Stability Plan (HSP).

The Housing Stability Plan is composed of the following components:

Rental Assistance

1. Utility Assistance
2. Housing Essentials Fund

# 4,059 TOTAL HSP PEOPLE SERVED

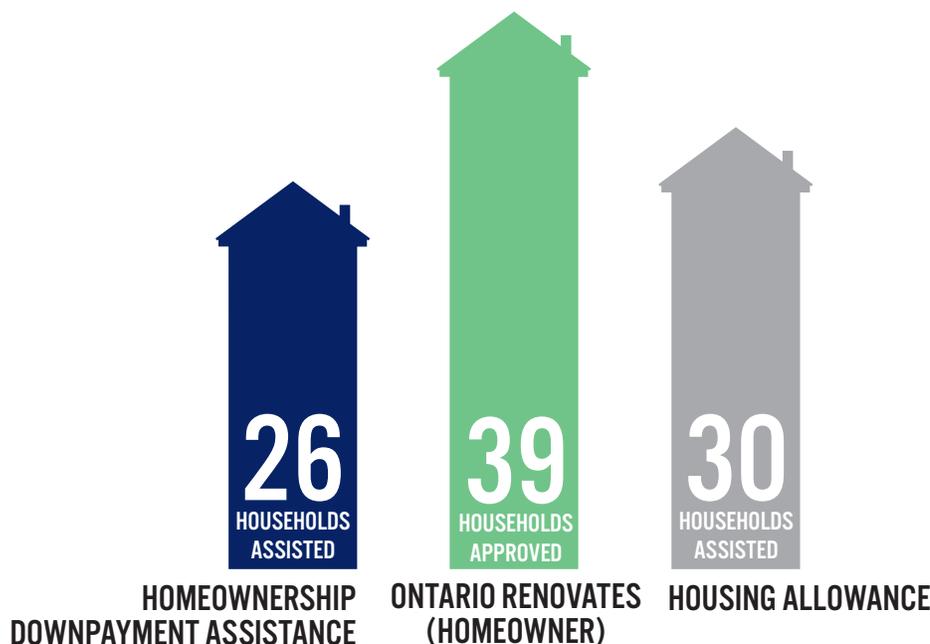
## HOMELESSNESS PARTNERING STRATEGY

The Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) is federally funded through Employment and Social Development Canada. It is a community-based program aimed at preventing and reducing homelessness by providing direct support and funding to 61 designated communities across Canada. HPS programs take a Housing First approach with a focus on the chronic and episodic homeless population.

# 976 PEOPLE SERVED THROUGH HPS FUNDED PROGRAMS IN 2014

- HPS Request for Proposal issued October 2014
- Mental Health Commission of Canada Training & Technical Assistance held on October 14 and 15, 2014 (combined over 150 attendees were present). In addition to this on-site training, Windsor Essex is participating as a Community of Practice (CoP) which will allow for transfer of knowledge about the implementation of the Housing First model within a regional context.

## INVESTMENT IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAM



## INVESTMENT IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAM EXTENSION

In August 2014, the provincial and federal governments announced an extension to the Investment in Affordable Housing for Ontario program. This six-year initiative will assist to improve access to affordable housing that is safe, sound, suitable and sustainable for households in need throughout Windsor Essex.

In summary, as of April 2015, 24 of 29 strategies are currently underway or in process, with the assistance and dedication of our community partners, we are well on our way to exceeding the anticipated targets identified in the Windsor Essex 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan for 2015.

## YEAR TO COME & STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR 2015

- Increase the supply of rental housing for households on, or eligible to be on, social housing waiting lists.
- Strengthen the Interim Housing sector, which will include a transition to block funding and right sizing the system.
- Expand the availability of Aboriginal Housing Support Workers.
- Continue dialogue and collaboration with the health sector and community stakeholders to increase coordination of support to maintain housing.
- Implement a Housing First intensive support initiative for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness and/or who have the highest need within the community.
- Implementation of coordinated access and common assessment for individuals experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness with triaging to appropriate services.
- Implementation of 211 as the single phone number for housing help.
- Implement an education / public awareness campaign.
- Expand use of the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS).

## THANKS AND APPRECIATION

The City of Windsor Housing Services Staff would also like to extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to all those persons, agencies and committees who have contributed their time and efforts in participating in the countless number of meetings and consultation sessions that have made this work possible, as well as their contributions to the successes achieved to date.

*“The best part of my day is being able to go home to my kids and to a comfortable home where they are happy and safe.”*  
- 2014 Housing Allowance Recipient



**Prepared by the City of Windsor  
Housing Services Staff**

*June 2015*

