

To:	Warden Halliday and Members of Grey County Council
Committee Date:	July 26, 2018
Subject / Report No:	HDR-CW-14-18
Title:	Results of the Homelessness Enumeration
Prepared by:	Anne Marie Shaw, Director of Housing
Reviewed by:	Kim Wingrove
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	County-wide initiative
Status:	Recommendation adopted by Committee of the Whole as presented as per Resolution CW196-18; Endorsed by County Council on August 9, 2018 per Resolution CC79-18.

Recommendation

1. That Report HDR-CW-14-18 regarding the results of the homelessness enumeration held April 23-27, 2018 be received.

Executive Summary

Ending chronic homelessness is part of Ontario's Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy and Grey County's 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan. A homelessness enumeration took place April 23-27, 2018 using the Period Prevalence Method. The results from the enumeration were 33 individuals identified as homeless and 29 completed the survey.

Background and Discussion

Homelessness is often associated with urban communities and is not as visible in rural areas. There is little data collection on people experiencing homelessness across Ontario and this is compounded in rural areas due to fewer services and smaller populations spread over large geographical areas. Rural areas experience "hidden homelessness" where individuals couch surf and do not always consider themselves homeless.

In 2016 the Province mandated each Service Manager to count its homeless population every two years. Local homelessness enumeration, which is the measurement of the number of people experiencing homelessness over a specific point in time, will assist the Ministry of Housing, Grey County, and local homelessness prevention agencies to better understand the scale and nature of homelessness and inform current and future policy and program design.

The Provincial definition of chronic homelessness is “a person that has experienced homelessness for six or more months within a year”. This period of homelessness does not have to be consecutive.

Period Prevalence Count

Grey County conducted a count over five days, April 23-27, 2018. The period was selected at the end of the month as this is when people experiencing homelessness use more services. The County used the Period Prevalence Count (PPC) methodology.

Period Prevalence Count (PPC) involves a coordinated, multi-day count of homeless persons through a variety of service organizations that are likely to be used by persons experiencing homelessness such as community meal programs and drop-in centres, in addition to emergency shelters where they exist. The PPC is done over a period of time versus a point in time count that is usually done in one day over a sample area. It is used as one tool to identify homelessness in an area.

The Bruce Grey Poverty Task Force Housing Sub Committee identified organizations across the two counties that work with people experiencing homelessness as hub sites where enumerators would be located to conduct surveys. Front line social service workers were provided enumeration training on the survey tool, empathy training and information on services/programs available for people experiencing homelessness.

Results

Over the course of the week 33 individuals identified as experiencing homelessness and 29 completed the survey. All the individuals were staying at a motel, with friends or in hospital or women’s shelter.

Data analysis:

- 52% lived in Grey County for more than 6 months, 10% Bruce County residents, 28% from out of Grey County, 10% no response.
- 24% reported to be homeless for less than 30 days, 10% reported to be homeless for more than one year, 17% did not know how long or did not respond, the remaining 49% were homeless an average of 4.6 months.
- 12 respondents met the Provincial definition of chronic homelessness
- Average age of respondent was 39 years of age. Four respondents were 18 and under.
- 41% of respondents identified as female.

Recommendations

As this was the first enumeration process for Grey County, there are a number of recommendations to enhance the process in the future:

- Strengthen the engagement process to entice other community groups to participate such as police, secondary schools, hospital.
- More education and awareness of homelessness to the broader community.

- Focus on defining homelessness. Some people that couch surf do not consider themselves homeless.
- More advertisement and promotion of the enumeration so many stakeholders and residents are aware.
- Work with the Province to revise some of the survey questions to get a better understanding of the reasons for homelessness.

Next Steps

The results of the enumeration were not a fulsome picture of homelessness in Grey County. The provincial guidelines for enumeration did not provide measures to determine an estimate of the homelessness based on these results. However the results are large enough to demonstrate homelessness exists in Grey County. These results will be used in the consultation sessions for the update to the 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan. The update to the plan will provide direction over the next five years to assist Grey County in its efforts to reduce homelessness and focus on more affordable housing.

Legal and Legislated Requirements

Notification of results to the Province and the public

Financial and Resource Implications

Relevant Consultation

Internal:

External:

Appendices and Attachments

None