



MEDIA RELEASE

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Providing services to alleviate homelessness

The following is part of a three-part series about homelessness in Lanark County.

Homelessness is a complex, multi-faceted and systemic challenge that requires collaboration between governments and service providers amid a range of limitations.

Progress was outlined in Lanark County's 2025 Housing and Homelessness Report Card. "Recognizing that successful housing solutions extend beyond physical infrastructure, the county worked in close collaboration with community partners to deliver innovative programs that address the social, economic and health factors contributing to housing instability," said Warden Richard Kidd (Beckwith Reeve). "These efforts included the launch of the Lanark Integrated Frontline Team (LIFT) mobile outreach program, ongoing enhancements to the homelessness response, and expansion of supportive and transitional housing options."

The report card outlines the range of supports offered by the county, including financial help for eligible households, housing units offered through Lanark County Housing Corporation and non-profit housing providers, a homeownership forgivable loan program, new builds, affordable housing grants, emergency after-hours assistance for homelessness, supports for youth, adult supportive housing for those needing assistance with daily living tasks, crisis beds, housing-based case management, the LIFT program, and the Bridge House, which is temporary transitional housing with wraparound supports related to substance use and mental health.

In addition, numerous community partners provide support for mental health and addictions, health care, system navigation, basic needs and more.

The county coordinates with the By-Name List Committee to lead homelessness response, which includes outreach and support for individuals who are unsheltered or living in encampments. "Outreach teams conduct regular visits, engaging directly with individuals experiencing homelessness to provide connections to emergency housing options, supports and essential supplies," said Director of Social Services Emily Hollington.

Even with many resources, Hollington stressed there are limitations when offering services, such as privacy considerations, enforcement constraints and broader system pressures that include a limited housing supply, increasing costs and gaps in affordability.

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Privacy laws require service providers to have informed consent from individuals to share personal information with other service providers, which can limit a collaborative approach to support. The public can be informed about an overall response to homelessness issues, but not about specific individuals.

Enforcement related to unhoused individuals in public spaces has to take the Charter of Rights and Freedoms into account, as recent court rulings about encampments have demonstrated.

Some limitations are systemic. Building enough affordable housing that includes relevant supports takes time and money and can be met with neighbourhood opposition. When demand for services exceeds supply, there are waitlists for housing, mental health care and addiction treatment.

Moreover, accepting services is voluntary, and people have the right to decide whether they are ready to accept what is offered. "People cannot be forced or tricked into accepting services," Hollington said. "We offer the supports that are available, but sometimes a person is not ready or prepared to accept them. We continue to engage, build trust and offer support when people are ready."

Hollington added everyone's experience is different and providers must consider circumstances, demographics and housing preferences as part of their response when offering supports to people. "We try to meet people where they are, address immediate needs and work toward longer-term housing solutions in a way that prioritizes dignity, access and a path to stability."

To learn more about housing supports in Lanark County, see <https://www.lanarkcounty.ca/living/social-services/>. If you are experiencing homelessness, call the Lanark County Homeless Response Team at 613-267-4200 ext. 2140 or 1-888-952-6275 Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. or after hours at 613-206-1486.

Previous article:

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