

Supplementary Budget – Briefing Note

2021 Budget

Case Manager Housing Services

Briefing Note required for:

- items +/- \$50,000 or more
- changes in FTE
- Council Priority requests

Dept	Division	Business Unit	Item	Base Supp	Amount	FTE Impact
CHS	Housing Services	Public Housing	Case Manager Housing Services (Grade 8.6)	B	\$99,480	1.00
CHS	Housing Services	Public Housing	laptop initial purchase	S	\$1,739	

Background:

Public housing currently operates and serves 682 units, plus 27 affordable housing units (owned by CK), for a total of 709 owned units. The Tenant Relations Manager also manages rent supplement agreements with 30 (increased from 15 in 2018) other landlords (both private and private non-profit) with 167 units (increased from 154 in 2018, which includes 125 commercial rent supplement and 42 strong community rent supplement). In 2019, Housing Services added an additional 80 Portable Housing Benefits. In real terms, CKHS tenant relations area has only been staffed at a level to do the bare minimum in terms of landlord management of tenant issues. Over the years, there has been increasing emphasis on working with tenants to stabilize their tenancy vs. simply strictly enforcing our leases. While the end result is better for those tenants at risk of being evicted, it does take considerably more work to work with tenants to address their social and/or personal issues. In the past two years, it has become increasingly more complex to support the very-hard to house, individuals struggling with addictions and mental health, and the rights of other tenants to a safe, quiet and enjoyable place to live. In 2019, the Landlord Tenant Board as acknowledged by the Chatham-Kent Legal Clinic has increased the onus on the landlord to provide additional evidence in all cases presented. CKHS has never been staffed to the level required to provide this higher level of proactive verses reactive service.

Comment:

Case Worker or Case Manager ratios to number of clients or households clearly show that the Division is understaffed for this function. Comparisons were made to the surrounding public housing providers: Windsor/Essex LHC, London/LMHC, Lambton County/Sarnia Service Manager, Bruce County, Huron County, and St. Thomas/Elgin Service Manager.

Public Housing Provider	Tenant Relations Workers	FTE	Public Housing Units	Staff Ratio
Chatham-Kent HS	Housing Case Worker	2.0	709 owned units	1:355
Lambton (& Sarnia)	Community Support Workers	4.0	830 owned units	1:207
St. Thomas (& Elgin)	Housing Program Coordinators	3.0	530 owned units	1:177
Bruce County	Tenant Support Workers	2.0	679 owned units	1:339
(currently under review to add additional tenant support due to workload)				
Windsor Essex LHC	District Managers (6.0) plus property clerks (10.0)	16.0	4,707 owned units	1:294
London/LMHC	Community Resource Workers	12.0	3,282 owned units	1:274

Comment:

The higher service level expectations of both the internal desire to work with tenants to keep them housed, and of the surrounding tenants in all of our units to have concerns addressed within two to three business days is not sustainable with current staffing levels. Private Landlords now have a higher expectation of tenant supports to remain committed to affordable housing. Without proper staffing, the Division will have no choice but to lower standards with respect to service level.

London Housing (LMHC) has recently restructured increasing from six Community Resource Workers to 12 dedicated strictly to owned housing properties. They provide tenant relation supports, on site office hours, receive concern and address Landlord Tenant Board matters of notice and eviction. Additionally LMHC has hired one FTE as a Security Manager and three FTE Community Safety Officers to address units taken over by non-tenants, homelessness individuals within their buildings, illegal drug activity, destruction of property, and trespass concerns. In an effort to be pro-active to prevent escalation of behaviours verses reactive the restructuring included a Manager of Community Engagement who now oversees programs offered directly in housing inclusive of tax clinics, health and well-being etc. There are two FTE System navigators who work with tenants directly providing community resource referrals and assistance with applications.

Lambton (& Sarnia) have expanded supports from two Client Services Assistance and four Community Support Workers through an increase within the Social Services Division, creating a Mental Health and Social Services Team (MHASST). This is an integrated pilot program designed to directly support individuals in receipt of OW and/or in community housing. The MHASST consists of one Community Support Worker and two staff from CMHA who work collaboratively using an integrated team approach to support individuals that are marginalized and vulnerable with complex issues.

Huron County Housing has recently hired a FT Housing Stability Worker and a Housing Advocate on a one year pilot with hopes of moving this towards more permanent funding pending the success of the positions.