

Creating Housing Solutions in Lanark County

...so we can all have a home

All of the municipalities in Lanark County are facing the housing crisis. Some issues may be more specific to one area than another, but the key factors are all the same. So what do we do about it? Lanark County was successful in getting a Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative grant and was then able to fund The Table Community Food Centre to organize a forum. After speaking with many groups, agencies, and individuals with insight into the housing crisis the bones of the forum took shape. Today is the culmination of that effort.

But we need more.

You will find the agenda of presenters with a description of their topics, as well as a list of the representatives from the various groups who helped organize this event. Thank you to everyone for their input. Please take time to talk to each of them about their particular perspective on housing and housing security.

A number of other things not to miss. We will be compiling information from the forum to send out afterwards. If you would like to receive any of this, please register with your email or mailing address so that we are able to send it to you.

Near the entrance will be “Speaker’s Corner” where you will have an opportunity to either write your comments or speak to someone about them. We really want to hear what you have to say. Someone will be walking around talking to people about what their interests are in terms of taking action. These will be posted on an “open board” to develop groups to work together. Between 5:30 and 6:00 p.m. these results will be roughly gathered for presentation to the whole group. A more thorough summary will be sent out following the forum.

In the information area, by the main entrance you will find a resource list. Being able to access the resources we need efficiently makes our job so much easier. We are asking everyone to please add any resources that are missing that you feel could be beneficial to the list. We will share that complete list with everyone.



Why a forum on housing security?

Across Canada we are experiencing a housing security crisis. A rough estimate in 2016 said at a minimum 35,000 people a year had nowhere to go at night, but it's hard to measure when so many stay with a friend, couch surf, live in inadequate housing, or find some other way to avoid shelters where they would be counted as one of the homeless.

Housing security includes having enough money left after the rent is paid to pay for other essentials, like food. It includes having the support available to meet the demands of daily living and as we age those demands increase as our abilities to meet them decrease. It includes having the resources to maintain your home properly, to have adequate space, to be able to access shopping and employment, to know your rights.

Like food security, secure housing is an essential component of health equity. This simply means that without a safe, secure, affordable home we cannot maintain a healthy lifestyle. The consequences of completely preventable negative influences on health, causing disparities in our communities, only endangers the health of our communities more.

In the end this touches all of us. Whether or not we believe we have ever experienced housing insecurity, we have been affected by it. This is where we live, work and play, our community, and we want it to be healthy. It is our community that has the power to make that happen.

Workshop Presentations

Bob Rintoul Hall

1 pm – 1:45 pm, Housing Issues and Options – An Evidence-Based Approach

Nelson Rogers, MSW, Ed.D. Robert Leitch, BLSc, M.Ed.

1:45 – 2:00pm, Community Bonds-What are they and how do they work?

Fraser Scantlebury, Regional Director United Way East Ontario

2:00 – 2:15pm, How the Perth and District Community Foundation works to create funding for initiatives in our community

Lynn McIntyre, Executive Director, PDCF

2:15 – 3:00pm, Housing First. An initiative to address homelessness.

Stephanie Manoni-Millar University of Ottawa

3:00 – 4:00pm, Tenant's Rights in Ontario

Linda Tranter, Staff Lawyer at the Legal Clinic in Perth

4:00 – 5:00pm, Affordable Housing Development 101

Graeme Hussey, President of Cahdco

Who are some of our presenters?

Linda Tranter is the Staff Lawyer practicing anti-poverty law at the Legal Clinic since 2000. Previously Linda has worked as a lawyer at Keewaytinok Native Legal Services in Moosonee 1997 to 2000, a Refugee Lawyer in Toronto, a Refugee Support Worker and Advocate for Sojourn House, and a Developmental Services Worker.

Linda's current position is at the legal clinic (which is distinct from legal aid) and provides free non-profit legal service for low income people in Lanark, Leeds, Grenville, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington Counties.

As the staff lawyer her role is to advise and represent clients at the Landlord and Tenant Board, Social Benefits Tribunal, Social Security Tribunal of Canada, Criminal Injuries Compensation Board and the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario.

Today's Workshop focuses on Tenant's Rights in Ontario covering such topics as the duties of landlords and tenants, evictions, maintenance/repair issues, harassment and discrimination, rent-g geared-to-income rules and homelessness prevention strategies. Know your rights and how to stay safe in your housing!

Graeme Hussey is the President of Cahdco, a non-profit real estate development corporation and sister to Centretown Citizens Ottawa Corporation (CCOC). Cahdco develops affordable housing and social purpose real estate and provides consulting in the Ottawa area. Cahdco combines the experience and resources of CCOC with a team of development, construction, and project management experts.

His topic will be "Affordable Housing Development 101", or how to create and finance affordable rental housing. The presentation will include recent examples of projects Cahdco has completed.

Stephanie Manoni-Millar is a graduate student at the University of Ottawa working with Tim Aubrey (co-chair Housing First ON)

Housing First involves moving people experiencing homelessness —particularly people experiencing chronic homelessness—rapidly from the street or emergency shelters into stable and long-term housing, with supports. It is an approach that offers permanent, affordable housing as quickly as possible for individuals and families experiencing homelessness, and then provides the supportive services and connections to the community-based supports people need to keep their housing and avoid returning to homelessness.

Robert Leitch and Nelson Rogers, Community Transformation Associates, Inc.

Nelson Rogers is a researcher, consultant, and conference speaker in areas related to program review and strategic planning, community development, postsecondary education, and applied research and innovation, with particular expertise in rural contexts. Nelson previously worked at Algonquin College as a professor, research manager, director and dean.

Robert Leitch is an educator, business analyst, information scientist and foresight strategist with graduate degrees in Educational Technology, and Library and Information Science. Robert has demonstrated leadership in program and project innovation, including with the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada's Financial Literacy program and the Lanark Communications Network - Canada's first community-based rural broadband network.

Housing Issues and Options – An Evidence-Based Approach

Suitable housing must be: Appropriate, Accessible, Affordable, and Available. However, the “housing needs continuum” is complex – including homelessness, formal and informal temporary housing, supportive housing, market and social rental housing, various forms of home ownership and innovations in housing. Current demographic and economic trends in rural Eastern Ontario reveal that housing challenges will become more serious in the decade of the 2020s. Considering the complexity of issues related to housing, and the urgency of effective action on many fronts, data access and analysis to support evidence-based decision-making is extremely important.

The Big Data for Small Places (BD4SP) program is a data literacy and data utilization capacity-building process relevant to a variety of topics. It was designed to allow working groups to focus on a current issue and access a wide range of data-related resources to address a specific challenge. The program includes topics such as:

- understanding the real needs of the community
- tips for reviewing community profile data to quickly identify areas of concern
- how to tap into local and national networks to enhance community data utilization
- how to balance hard data with local knowledge
- tips for communicating data-related insights to various audiences

This workshop will discuss how the Big Data for Small Places approach could address the key issues and options relevant to housing in Lanark County and area.

Community Transformation Associates, Inc. (CTA-Inc) helps rural and small-town communities thrive and prosper through effective use of data, research, and knowledge mobilization.

What We Have Learned So Far

The weeks leading up to the forum have revealed a great many things about the housing situation in Lanark County already and they bear mentioning. Most of us are already all too aware of many of the issues. Lack of resources, housing shortage, not enough supports. But some other notable factors play a key role.

- Almost everyone we have approached about the housing crisis has responded with passion and a drive to do something to rectify the issue. From every perspective, every type of organization, there has been an enormous response. We are not facing apathy. The people of this county want resolution and are prepared to work towards it.
- In some cases it has been incredibly difficult for people to look beyond their area of focus or expertise. When we work so hard to provide any real solutions in one area and see so little achievement, or when we begin to be afraid of sharing resources, it makes it nearly impossible to look beyond towards collaboration.
- In other cases, folks are forced so far outside of their area of expertise, they are no longer able to do their primary job properly. For example, landlords and property managers are not support workers.
- Open, honest, respectful communication has been very successful. Support for organizations such as tenant associations, landlord associations, workshops on understanding rights and responsibilities, facilitated conflict management and “outside of the box” thinking resolve issues that might break down housing arrangements.

Participating Organizations, Agencies and Community Partners

Please be sure to stop and speak with everyone who has come to make this dialogue possible. They are here to share their insights and to gather yours as well.

Community Representation

- **David Kroetsch:** A part of the Safe and Secure housing initiative with the Outreach Committee of St. James Anglican Church in Perth
- **Plan B:** A Lanark Highlands-based volunteer group advocating for health equity through strong community ties. Their mission reads “Towards an even more supportive and inclusive community.”
- **Susan Berlin:** Politically active Lanark Highlands community member advocating for changes to municipal policies and by-laws to permit alternative housing types like tiny houses, co-housing and secondary suites. Such changes have been recommended by Federal, Provincial and County governments, but have not been implemented where it counts -- at the local municipal level!
- **Queer Connection Lanark (QCL):** A group by and for the LGBTQ2S+ community; we exist to connect our community members to events, each other and information they need in Lanark County. Housing issues and discrimination are big issues for our community but have additional complications. Everyone is welcome to come and talk to us about it.

Agency Representation

- **Abbeyfield Canada:** The Abbeyfield concept is as simple as it is unique: create a warm, family-style, volunteer-run and community-based house that offers seniors an easy-going balance between privacy and companionship, security and independence. Abbeyfield is a proven success, a community-based housing alternative that enables healthy seniors to live independently and in place in a non-institutional setting — happily and safely.

- **Cornerstone Landing:** Cornerstone Landing is a community-based, non-profit charitable organization providing assistance to youth age 16-24 who are experiencing or are at risk of homelessness in Lanark County. Cornerstone Landing provides a continuum of care that includes prevention based, long term and evidenced based supports related to housing and homelessness. We are the only Housing First program in the County, specifically designed to work with young people. We also provide clients with information and referrals to other community resources such as food banks or mental health services. Our goal is to help youth maintain their housing so that they can focus on school and employment. Each year Cornerstone Landing supports between 75-85 youth.

- **Lanark County Interval House:** *Since 1979, Lanark County Interval House and Community Support has been providing safe, emergency shelter for women and children fleeing domestic violence. Over the years, our services have grown to include extensive community support programs including individual and group counselling, second stage housing, family court support, LCIHCS Victim Advocate and programs specific to children and youth. As we honour our 40th year of service, we celebrate the leadership of strong feminist advocates, the outstanding support of community and the amazing demonstration of courage by women and children of Lanark County. We continue to do the work with gratitude, and our evolution remains rooted in the lived experience and the strong voices of women.*

- **Lanark County Mental Health:** Lanark County Mental Health is committed to enhancing the wellbeing and to inspiring individuals and their families with serious mental illness through the promotion of wellness, self – determination and recovery focused services.
 - Crisis support
 - Counselling – Individual and Group
 - Community Treatment and Case Management services
 - Quick Response Mobile Crisis
 - Social Recreation
 - Court Diversion /Support
 - Domestic Violence Program
 - Sexual Abuse Counselling
 - Hoarding Program
 - Family and Caregiver Supports
 - General Psychiatry
 - Geriatric Psychiatry Services

- **Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit:** *One of the Health Unit's goals is individuals having opportunities to have a healthy life, realizing their own potential, in a community that effectively responds to the determinants of health. Promoting health equity requires improving the living conditions that keep us healthy, and the social, economic, and health systems that support us when we get sick. Health equity means we also identify and address the inequitable distribution of power, money and resources that are essential for improving health and well-being.*

Tanis Brown is a Registered Nurse & Health Equity Coordinator at the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit working with individuals and community service providers to promote awareness and advocate for health equity in the population, by identifying gaps and reducing barriers that support health and well-being for everyone.

- **The Legal Clinic:** *The Legal Clinic provides free non-profit legal service for low income people in Lanark, Leeds, Grenville, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington Counties with the Landlord and Tenant Board, Social Benefits Tribunal, Social Security Tribunal of Canada, Criminal Injuries Compensation Board and the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario.*
- **The Table Community Food Centre:** *The Table's mission is to foster a community that collaborates and empowers each other to improve access to healthy food, improve food skills and food literacy, advocate for individual well-being, and educate, engage and advocate on social policies to address food insecurity and poverty.*
- **Victim Services:** *Victim Services Lanark County is a community-based non-profit organization who works in partnership with Police, Emergency Services and local agencies. We are a 24/7 agency that provides immediate, confidential, crisis intervention services, practical assistance, information, referrals and emotional support to persons affected by crime, tragedy and disaster.*

Government

- **Lanark Housing:** The Social Housing Department can help you obtain/maintain housing within Lanark County. We run a variety of programs that can help you including;
 - ✓ Social Housing Registry for Rent Geared to Income (RGI) Housing or commonly referred to as the “wait list”
 - ✓ Homeownership Program
 - ✓ Renovate Lanark
 - ✓ Minor Home Repair
 - ✓ Domiciliary Hostels
 - ✓ Housing Help
 - ✓ Homemakers

- **Ontario Disability Support Program:** *Income support for adults who are in financial need and who have been determined to be disabled under the disability adjudication process defined in the Ontario Disability Support Program Act. Eligible persons receive a monthly living allowance, drug, dental and other basic benefits. Employment supports are also offered to individuals with a disability.*

- **Tay Valley Township Planning, Noelle Reeve, Tay Valley Township Planner:**

The Planning Department is here to help residents, developers, builders and others in planning, designing and building a sustainable Township.

Land use planning means managing our land and resources. It helps each community to set goals about how it will develop and to work out ways of reaching those goals while keeping important social, economic and environmental concerns in mind. It balances the interests of individual property owners with the wider interests and objectives of the whole community.

Good planning leads to orderly growth and the efficient provision of services. It affects all of us and helps us to have the kind of community we want.