Social Housing Waiting List Management in Ontario:

Uncovering Practices, Variations and Similarities among Service Managers and District Social Services Administration Boards

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HSC

About HSC

The Housing Services Corporation (HSC) is a non-profit organization that delivers province-wide programs that benefit Ontario's affordable housing sector. It assists service managers, including DSSABs, by:

- Helping to protect the building asset through programs and services that support better capital asset and energy management
- Delivering business value through economies of scale with competitively procured province-wide programs in bulk purchasing, insurance and investments
- Building and spreading knowledge that supports effective decision-making with relevant research, training and by facilitating collaborative best practice sharing
- Enabling greater resident engagement and self-sufficiency by developing partnerships for social innovation with other organizations and networks.

HSC was created in January 2012 under the *Housing Services Act*. HSC, as successor to the Social Housing Services Corporation (SHSC), builds on that organization's 9 years of experience in delivering programs to social housing and working with different levels of government, the public and the private sector.

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Acknowledgements

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Executive Summary

The obligation to maintain a Centralized Waiting List (CWL) is mandated under the *Housing Services Act* as a core service manager function. The *Housing Services Act* however, enables the Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (SMs) and District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs) to make changes to their Centralized Access Services -Waiting List process and systems. With the requirement of local 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plans, SMs/DSSABs are taking the opportunity to think about new frameworks to improve the delivery of the centralized waiting list (CWL) and tap into options that may have been successful in other administration areas. In support of this, SMs/DSSABs articulated interest in mapping out Centralized Waiting List management, functions, processes and practices across the 47 SMs.

In the fall of 2012, the Housing Services Corporation conducted a scan and undertook an interview survey of social housing waiting list practices in Ontario. All 47 of Ontario's service managers and District Social Services Administration Boards participated in the study. A working group consisting of 3 service managers directed the scope of the work and played a key role in developing the content for the survey.

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Map out key CWL management practices, processes and functions across Ontario
2. Identify key practices across Ontario
3. Summarize waiting list trends and times
4. Identify the local priorities of each SM/DSSAB
5. Explore the usage of the types of Information Technology systems
6. Ascertain the types of resources and support services provided to applicants while on the waiting list
7. Make recommendations for rethinking and advancing good practice in CWL delivery

HSC aimed to examine the objectives and gain a better understanding of social housing wait lists in Ontario. The second aim was to take this understanding and with sufficient funding and resources, conduct future research that cannot be completed at present, due to the lack of understanding surrounding wait list composition, management and administration.

A subsequent phase could move in several directions depending on research responses, SM interests and needs. Some SM/DSSABs have articulated two key areas for further investigation. One possible area of research could include investigating the need for centralized housing resource centres to determine how these centres could be used in promoting access to safe, affordable, and reliable housing. A second possibility involves investigating the social outcomes of housing access over time. Households could be tracked as they move through various housing systems, articulating changes in demographics, and changes in well-being indicators, such as health, employment, education, income, and social mobility.

New technology could also be used to improve application processing times thereby ensuring that SM/DSSAB staff time is used efficiently and where it is needed most – generally in providing good customer focus and dealing with applicant needs.

Promising Practices

Although most SMs and DSSABs employ similar management practices and adhere to the same principles prescribed through the HSA, the scan discovered six promising practices in waiting list management:

1. **Moving toward integrating social services, where feasible:** In-house waiting list management functions are increasingly incorporating and working in conjunction with multiple municipal departments, primarily Child Care and Ontario Works, in order to provide integrated services to clients. This has resulted in the establishment of in-house referral systems and improved resource sharing. Adopting similar processes is dependent however, on the client case load. For example, this model may not be suitable for busier service areas.

2. **Evaluating whether to use A/B intake models in conjunction with online application systems:** Some SMs have changed requirements to collect only mandatory and smaller amounts of information at the time of application for administrative and process efficiencies. This information is used to determine eligibility which is subsequently followed by verification when a household is close to being housed. Collecting limited amounts of information can be more effective when combined with online application systems to save processing time. The benefit of this change in process is that it reduces the administrative time spent on applications

and allows resources to be directed to other functions. This model may only be practical in areas with low application volumes.

3. **Reviewing and updating applicant files on an annual basis:** The HSA requires that waiting lists be regularly reviewed. As part of this process, SMs undertake a review of active vs. inactive applications. SMs and DSSABSs may decide to remove inactive applicants from waiting lists in order to house active applicants when vacancies become available. It also allows for a more accurate understanding of who is ready to be housed and allows for a more efficient housing placement of applicants when vacancies are available.

4. **Refining Local Priorities to target more specific populations in need of housing:** SMs and DSSABSs have the authority to establish local eligibility criteria (local priorities) for those wishing to be on the waiting list. In addition, local priorities allow service areas to house the most vulnerable households. SMs and DSSABs indicated that LPs require additional staff time to obtain necessary documentation of the applicant to ensure that the individual or household qualifies. One of the repercussions of establishing LPs is the increase in the number of applicants that identify with an LP, which results in increased administrative efforts to verify eligibility. Several SMs/DSSABs have begun a process of refining LPs which includes clarification about eligibility criteria for both staff and client to be administratively efficient. This also ensures that applicants who are in absolute need of housing have the priority status.

5. **Integrating existing or creating new housing help centres with waiting list management functions:** The focus of this practice is to allow clients to receive more support when applying for housing. Additionally, it would provide support for staff persons. These centres can help provide additional housing support options for households waiting to be housed in RGI units. One of the impacts is that it may reduce the demand on the waiting list and provide an immediate or transitional housing option to households in desperate need for housing. Further, the centre can act as a resource for various related housing services to which households can turn to for assistance or to mitigate housing stress.

6. **Ensuring adequate coverage of waiting list management responsibilities in smaller service areas:** This allows for staff to take vacation time, maternity leave, and sick leave without interrupting everyday waiting list management. In addition, it allows for easy succession planning, assisting with workload when staff members move to other job opportunities, leave the workforce, or retire. This practice is only applicable to smaller areas, as large areas tend to have adequate staff coverage to manage the waiting list function, allowing some overlap of duties.

Introduction

Changes to the social housing sector in Ontario over the past 20 years have resulted in the creation of a housing system that is diverse and complex. Prior to the introduction of the *Social Housing Reform Act, 2000* (SHRA), the Province was directly responsible for most of the functions related to the provision of social housing (for example, ensuring non-profit housing provider compliance with government policies, funding providers directly and reconciling financial information annually). Housing providers maintained their own waiting lists. Some had referral agreements with the local housing authority for a portion of their rent-geared-to-income (RGI) units. The introduction of the SHRA devolved the funding and administration of social housing to its newly created administrative entities, consolidated municipal service managers (SMs) and District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs). Along with funding and administration of social housing, the new legislation required that each SM or DSSAB create a centralized social housing waiting list system.

One year after the effective date of the SHRA, and by May 2003, all of Ontario's 47 service managers (SMs) and District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs)[1] had assumed responsibility for establishing, administering and managing a centralized waiting list system for housing RGI applicants in non-profit, co-op, and former public housing units in each of their areas.

In January 2011, further minor policy changes were introduced with the *Housing Services Act* (HSA). First, the Act requires that each service manager have "a system for selecting households from those waiting for rent geared-to-income assistance". The new Act provides some leniency in terms of how service managers operate their waiting list system and does not specify that the system has to be "centralized". This leaves an opening in how SMs and DSSABs choose to organize their waiting list systems.

The Act also reinforces the Province's Special Priority Policy (SPP) with the goal of continuing to ensure expedited placement priority for victims of domestic abuse. This requires that SPP applicants be given housing

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[1] Administrators of waiting lists across Ontario are known as Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (SMs) or District Social Service Administrative Boards (DSSABs). DSSABs exist only within the northern part of Ontario and are governed by separate legislation (the DSSAB Act and its regulations). In this paper, we sometimes use the term SM interchangeably to refer to both SMs and DSSABs because the legislation governing waiting lists covers all 47 SM and DSSAB areas across Ontario.

placement priority over chronological applicants. In addition to reinforcing this requirement, the HSA provided SMs and DSSABs with greater discretion and flexibility over the administration of social housing waiting lists in their areas, allowing additional variability across the province. This new Act restated SMs and DSSABs ability to designate their own priorities, known as Local Priorities (LPs), for their own service areas. SMs and DSSABs have the ability to exercise discretion when dealing with area-based variations in housing need. An LP enables specially defined groups to get a housing placement at an accelerated rate.

Changes to Ontario's social housing policy and procedures, specifically the decentralization of housing administration and waiting lists, has resulted in SMs and DSSABs choosing solutions which make sense locally. SMs and DSSABs also have the ability to determine their own administration procedures and many have implemented LPs while others have chosen to not develop LPs but to maintain their chronological lists.

The 2012 Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association (ONPHA) "*Waiting Lists Survey*" reported that the number of households waiting for social housing had increased by 26% to over 156,000 households. This compares readily to the "*2011 Performance Measurement Report"* by the Ontario Municipal Benchmarking Initiative (OMBI) which identifies the percentage of households placed from waiting lists annually for 12 SM areas across Ontario. Over a three year time period (2009 to 2011) all 12 SMs had fewer households vacating social housing units which limited their ability to place households waiting into available units. Both reports point to a mismatch between supply and demand for housing across the province.

In the fall of 2012, the Housing Services Corporation (HSC) responded to a request from Ontario's SMs and DSSABs to conduct a scan of social housing waiting list administration practices across the Province. The key objectives of the scan were to map out management practices, processes and functions relating to the centralized waiting list, identify key practices and the designation of local priorities, document the types of IT systems used, and probe the type of resources and support services that are provided and offered to applicants while waiting for housing.

To better understand how CWL functions are delivered, phone interviews were conducted with 47 service manager representatives in November 2012. The results of the interviews are summarized in this report. In order to ensure the confidentiality of all SMs and DSSABs, this report makes reference to the composition of each area—for example urban, rural, or northern.

In general, SM/DSSABs identified some of the successes of the current system as being:

- Standardized eligibility criteria
- Allows multiple housing selections
- SM/DSSABs have local flexibility
- Does not endanger applicants' social assistance or other benefits
- System is fair and equitable
- Supports special needs

Some of the challenges with the current system include:

- It assumes that the vast majority of applicants are actively seeking and ready to move (when in fact they may not be)
- SM/DSSABs and housing providers are frustrated in having to make multiple offers to applicants who may not be ready or able to move
- Applicants are frustrated with long waits
- Applicants are treated as impassive and are not empowered to be proactive about their situation
- System is administratively complex and costly, particularly in high volume centres
- Applicant files require continuous updating
- Vulnerable households do not always get access to housing when they need it most as there is a mis-match between housing crisis and when the housing is available

Addressing these issues remains a concern for most, if not all SMs/DSSABs. Ultimately everyone is looking for sensible solutions which make sense locally and are achievable within the financial and legislative parameters surrounding housing access in Ontario.

1. Waiting List Delivery Models

Providing and managing a CWL system is an obligation of all service managers and DSSABs. Under the *Housing Services Act*, this primarily involves:

- Creating and documenting a system that meets the required rules/standards
- Determining household eligibility for the wait list
- Determining eligibility for special priority
- Determining what process is needed for current RGI households to transfer to another unit

- Determining requirements for the waiting list application and required documentation as per HSA
- Determining local rules for removing an applicant from the wait list if:
  - the applicant ceases to eligible
  - the applicant requests to be removed
  - applicant accepts an RGI unit (unless it's temporary or transitional)
- Reviewing eligibility every 24 months at least
- Determining rules for RGI applications from social housing market tenants
- Determining whether to allow temporary removal at applicant request

While the service manager is ultimately responsible to the Province for ensuring that a waiting list system is functioning within the requirements of the legislation, the *Housing Services Act* allows the service manager to delegate the operation of the system to another party. The Act makes clear that the service manager "remains responsible for the performance of any delegated powers or duties".

There is regulatory oversight for CWL obligations as well as opportunities for SMs and DSSABs to exercise discretion in establishing local rules. This does provide system flexibility at the local level but makes it challenging to compare service delivery from one CWL to another. This is particularly true where CWLs provide enhanced services in response to local needs.

In examining CWL systems, there are 3 main delivery models employed across the province:

- Direct delivery by the SM or DSSAB
- Delivery by the Local Housing Corporation (LHC) on behalf of the SM or DSSAB
- Delivery by a third party on behalf of SM or DSSAB

A new type of service model "Integrated Social Services Offices (ISSOs)" has recently emerged. In this service model, waiting list functions are housed and delivered amongst other social services. A breakdown of the structures is demonstrated in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Number of SMs and DSSABs
by Waiting List Management Type**
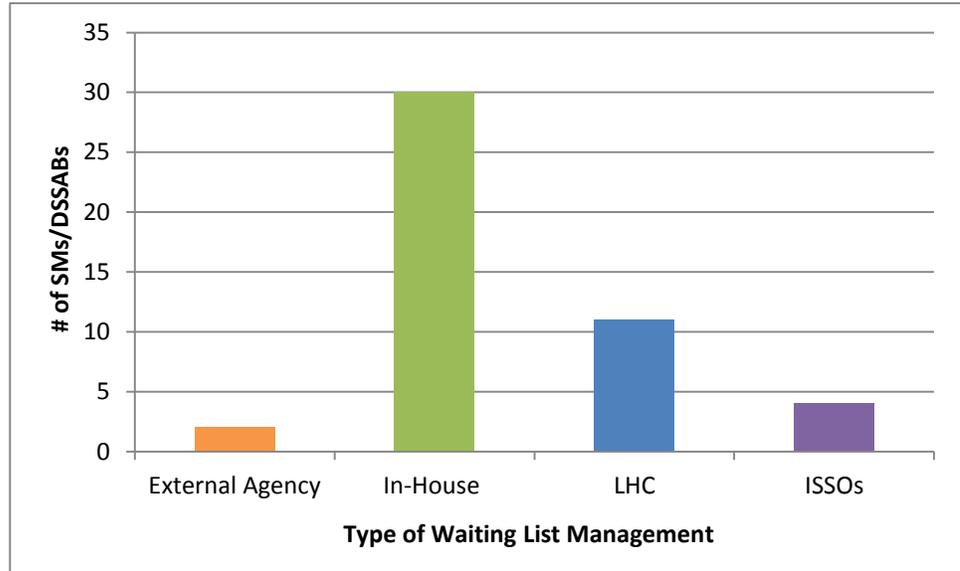
1.1 External Agency Management

Only a few of Ontario's SMs and DSSABs contract out the management and administration of their social housing waiting lists to third party (external) agencies. In these cases, SMs and DSSABs play a supervisory role and maintain control over reporting to the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH), provide funding, and are responsible for policy creation. The SMs and DSSABs can request waiting list data and statistics for reporting and monitoring related activities. The third-party agencies undertake the daily tasks associated with delivering the waiting list: intake, determining eligibility, processing, list production and maintenance, and tenant placement. In addition, they have the responsibility for performing annual or biannual updates on all applicant files and assist applicants with their files.

The external agencies usually operate "at arm's length." They are expected to follow the rules set out by the HSA and the policies and procedures provided by the SM/DSSAB. The agencies provide information to the SMs/DSSABs to allow for information sharing with the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

SMs/DSSABs articulated both strengths and challenges with this type of model. SMs that previously adopted this model but have since switched to an in-house or LHC management model have done so to gain a better

understanding of their waiting lists and to ensure data accuracy. The challenge stated with using the external agency management model is that it presents barriers to providing integrated social services to waiting list applicants. However, SMs that currently use this model have noted that there are many benefits associated with waiting list outsourcing. The benefits are decreased costs, freeing up staff time to work on policy and other functions of social housing management, and the ability to provide excellent client service using a dedicated, trained, and experienced team.

1.2 In-House and LHC Management

The majority of Ontario's SMs and DSSABs operate their social housing waiting lists using an in-house or LHC management model. This in-house form of management requires that the SM/DSSAB or their LHC to undertake primary core functions that include:

- Intake- Managing the process of receiving applications for RGI assistance
- Eligibility- The process of determining a household's eligibility in accordance with local and provincial rules
- List Production- The application entry function that includes sorting of applicant information into ranked waiting lists by project
- List Maintenance- The on-going process of maintaining up-to-date CWL data regarding an applicant's status and fielding inquiries on status. This includes conducting applicant reviews
- Tenant Placement- The process of transitioning applicants off the CWL, as they are housed by providers.

Overarching these functions is a general management responsibility for ensuring that the CWL functions are operating together effectively, that supporting policies and procedures are in place to guide responsibilities and that necessary reporting is being generated.

All SMs/DSSABs are responsible for the administration of a Local Housing Corporation (LHC) or Service Manager-Owned Housing Corporation (SMOHC) which is generally comprised of former public housing projects and municipal non-profit housing projects. Units in the corporation's housing stock are available to eligible waiting list applicants. Some SMs/DSSABs operate their waiting lists under the umbrellas of their LHC/SMOHC or through another designated corporation, whereas others have created separate departments to manage and administer their lists.

The majority of the SMs and DSSABs using an in-house or LHC management model are positive about the processes and operation of their waiting lists. The reported strengths of using this model include:

- Establishing a stronger rapport with clients
- Tracking clients throughout the waiting list, including reviewing the entire housing process
- Increased understanding of the waiting list issues and ability to adjust and improve delivery when required
- Developing effective and relevant policies which relate to client needs
- Closer monitoring and better reporting of waiting list data

Many SMs/DSSABs stated that they feel an increased need to understand current housing need trends in their areas, largely due to closer involvement in managing and administering their waiting lists. This has the opportunity to lead to the formation of stronger housing policy at the municipal level that is sensitive to local needs. Reiterated as a challenge with this type of model were issues related primarily to resource allocation. Some smaller service manager areas employ less than one full-time equivalent employee to accomplish all of the management and administrative duties associated with the waiting list.

Most of the SMs/DSSABs that have directed their LHCs to manage their waiting lists also expressed satisfaction with their decisions. However, some noted friction between housing providers and the LHCs as a result of perceived preferential placements. With designated LHCs responsible for determining eligibility, working directly with tenants, undertaking applicant placements, and providing lists to non-profit and co-operative housing providers for their tenant placements, concerns exist around the placement of tenants. The notion is that housing providers feel that LHCs were choosing the "best" tenants for their own housing units. Participants noted that the some strategies to deal with these concerns are by strictly following the HSA, communicating regularly with housing providers, and designating specific staff members to exclusively work with waiting lists.

1.3 Integrated Social Services Offices

In 2006, the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA) and the Service Manager Housing Network (SMHN) initiated the Human Service Integration Project (HSIP) with the goal of encouraging the integration of social services to increase accessibility for clients. In remote and Northern areas of Ontario, it is not uncommon to see social housing

offices placed in the same buildings as Ontario Works, Child Care, and Emergency Medical Services. However, some SMs/ DSSABs have moved toward fully integrated service delivery models. Commonly, ISSOs go beyond simply placing Ontario Works, Child Care, and social housing in the same office. Of the 47 SMs and DSSABs, only a handful have implemented an Integrated Social Service Model.

SMs/DSSABs in ISSOs still assign a selected number of staff to maintain and administer social housing waiting lists. However, clients who come in for assistance are able to fill out one application for the services they qualify for and, are placed on waiting lists if eligible.

The reported strengths of an integrated model are:

- It allows improved sharing of information and resources in a cohesive and client responsive manner if municipal social service departments that provide human services are housed in the same offices. For example, if a staff member cannot locate a household to update the information on their waiting list file, they may be able to connect with Ontario Works to verify if the household has changed contact information, and accordingly update.

  Privacy laws, however restrict the amount of information that can be provided to housing access managers by Ontario Works managers. In 2011, OMSSA created a privacy taskforce to investigate issues that cross-sect and inhibit effective program delivery. Privacy legislation, IT systems and reporting requirements can inhibit sharing of information amongst social service departments and lead to challenges in fully enabling human service integration.

- Stream-lined service provision and delivery to the client without layers of repetitive and onerous processes. Clients can receive assistance and service in an effective, one-stop shop manner. This limits fatigue from filling out multiple forms and assists clients with mobility limitations. It has allowed for improved quality of service and positive client satisfaction.

The effectiveness of this model requires initial commitment and dedicated resources (staff alignment and training) to enable moving waiting list administration into the ISSO model. Despite this, interview respondents had mixed perspectives, "*a pair of fresh eyes could improve waiting list practices*", whereas others viewed it as "a temporary growing pain".

2. Housing Intake

This section of the report summarizes intake models and the general practices adopted by SMs/DSSABs across Ontario. It provides a case study of A/B models that are functioning in two areas of the Province. It also discusses opportunities that several service managers are interested in pursuing in the near future.

2.1 General Intake Practices

In order to qualify for social housing in Ontario applicants must meet the basic criteria and service managers can decide whether or not to verify:

- at least one member of the household must be 16 years old or older and able to live independently without supports or with supports that the individual demonstrates will be provided when required, and
- every member of the household must be either a Canadian Citizen, a permanent resident (or applicant for permanent residency) or a refugee claimant who is not under a removal order.

The waiting list system assesses basic eligibility and whether the applicant is ineligible because a member of the household owes rent or damages to a social housing provider or over-payment of subsidy to a service manager. The waiting list system must also address any local eligibility rules with respect to income and asset limits and certain convictions. The applicant's household composition is assessed in light of the service manager's occupancy standards to determine unit size eligibility and the applicant is added to the waiting lists for appropriate units in the housing provider communities the applicant has selected.

Generally speaking, the intake worker assesses household income. In some instances the intake worker will also calculate the potential rent payment at this point. The rent amount a household will pay is calculated using a formula that is written in the *Housing Services Act* and is dependent on the income generated by the household. The intake function also incorporates responding to inquiries, providing housing information and collecting applications.

The most common process of intake for social housing waiting lists in Ontario is to determine basic eligibility according to provincial and local rules. Many of Ontario's 47 SMs/DSSABs indicated that they calculate a potential rent payment at the time of processing applications. This is largely dependent on the local rules in place, whether the SM/DSSAB has an internal LHC and the potential waiting time for the applicant. For

example, in some areas the housing provider is responsible for calculating the actual rent paid by someone who is housed whereas in other areas and the service manager performs this function. Due to the local flexibility allowed, there is variation amongst SMs/DSSABs in the timing of rent calculation during the intake application process. Some SMs/DSSABs screen applicants who have submitted incomplete applications, whereas others require all supporting documentation from the applicant before processing. Waiting to calculate rent amounts until complete applications are received was stated as a useful practice by several participants as it prevents performing calculations for applicants who do not update, or who provide incomplete application information.

2.2 A/B Intake Models

Two of Ontario's SMs follow a different set of guidelines for intake. These SMs use what is referred to as "A/B" models. This involves adding a household's information to a social housing waiting list prior to receiving a complete application or determining RGI eligibility. Many social housing applicants are never housed. In larger urban areas, many applicants drop off the waiting list or remain on the list due to lack of vacancies in the housing stock, which creates longer waiting times (see appendix A for list of wait times by service area). Determining eligibility, filing applications, and working with applicants to get a complete application are time consuming activities. A/B models are designed to offset the costs and time associated with performing these activities for households who may never be housed.

Upon initial application, households are added to an A list. In order to do this, contact information, citizenship, self-declaration of household income, age, and placement preferences are determined. When households are offered an RGI unit, they are then placed on a B list and contacted to complete a full application. At this stage, applicants are required to provide all supporting income verification documentation and RGI rents are determined. Households placed on A lists are still expected to respond to requests for biannual or annual file reviews and are requested to make any changes to housing preferences or need. Additionally, they are required to update their contact information so they can be contacted when they reach the B list and are offered housing.

The following case study from Kingston describes how an A/B intake model operates.

Case Study of A/B Intake Models: City of Kingston

This system has been in effect since the Housing Registry opened in October 2002. The main reason a two-part process was selected was to reduce the time that households spend updating income information while waiting for RGI assistance. Households do not need to update their income verification with the Housing Registry on an annual basis but instead wait until they are in a position to receive RGI assistance before providing income verification.

Kingston uses a two-part application for RGI assistance. Part A of the application is a self-declaration. Eligibility is determined at this stage based on the information provided by the applicant. At this point, basic information, including household income, is collected. However, income is not verified and RGI rents are not calculated.

After an RGI unit has been offered and accepted by an applicant on the wait list, the housing provider sends the Housing Registry a Notice of Acceptance and the Housing Registry notifies the applicant and advises that they must complete a Part B application where eligibility for RGI is confirmed. The household must provide full details regarding their income and also provide documents for income verification. Eligibility is determined upon receipt of this documentation, and in particular occupancy standards are reviewed and income is verified. The Housing Registry then does the initial rent calculation and sends that, together with the applicant file, to the housing provider. The Housing Registry notifies the tenant of the initial rent payable amount.

Smaller housing providers indicate that they like the Housing Registry doing the initial rent calculation because they have confidence that with the service manager completing it, it will be accurate. It also gives the housing provider confidence from which to complete future rent calculations for that household.   The other advantage of our model is that households, which can wait for several years for RGI assistance, do not need to constantly provide updated income verification. Households are advised that they must update the eligibility information which is provided in Part A application at every opportunity and in every communication sent to the applicant.

Occasionally, we have a household which did not declare their household

composition correctly (i.e. children are in care of Children's Aid Society or household members no longer all reside together). We have also had a household which did not declare all of their income at Part A of the application process, which is not discovered until the income verification is received at the Part B application. Unfortunately, if the household is found to be ineligible at time of Part B application they cannot move into the unit even though they may have waited several years to receive RGI assistance. The Registry takes every opportunity to advise households that it is their responsibility to advise us of changes to their income.

If housing providers are looking for a quick turn-around on their rent calculation, in some cases, it can take a little longer with the Registry obtaining all of the income information from the client rather than the housing provider. For example, households whose sole income is from social assistance may have their income verification with them at the time that the unit is being shown to them and may be able to move in immediately. In these cases, it may be considered a little inconvenient for clients having to leave the housing provider and go to the Registry to complete Part B application.   Nevertheless, one of the benefits is that the Registry does a thorough income review to ensure that the housing provider has an accurate rent calculation to reference going forward.

If the anticipated changes to calculating RGI assistance under the HSA are implemented, RGI calculations will become less complex as will the income verification requirements to determine eligibility.   Should the anticipated changes result in the requirement for only the Notice of Assessment from Revenue Canada to confirm income for eligibility as well as to calculate rent, City of Kingston has noted that they will review their model and consider going to a one-part application. They have recently entered into a pilot project with our largest housing provider, the Kingston-Frontenac Housing Corporation, whereby they are now completing Part B application with applicants upon offer and confirming eligibility at that time. This pilot is going well and will be used in our evaluation of the system should these anticipated changes be introduced.

Noteworthy is that there were two varying perspectives to the effectiveness of the A/B model. One of the SMs using this model found it to be highly beneficial, noting that A/B models increase efficiency and reduce unnecessary paperwork. According to this SM, A/B models save time and staff resources, as rents are only calculated for the households that are ready to be housed. The other SM using this model claims that

using an A/B system is not the most efficient way of doing things, stating the following:

> "*We put [an A/B model] into effect because of the requirement to provide updates if income changes and we thought it would be hard for clients to follow suit and someone could be sitting on the list for years. It's not the most efficient way to do it. It is harder for the bigger housing providers with a lot of staff who can do the calculation. We have just started doing the part B application for the LHC. If the notice of assessment comes into effect we will scrap the 2 steps and make them provide notice upfront. It makes a lot of work for the smaller housing providers. I wouldn't say it's really problematic but it can delay the move in. But in the end the client does have to give notice to a landlord unless they are homeless, and then there is generally a lapse in time to do the rent calculation. We can do it as quickly as the provider because staffing resources aren't as high.*"

Using an A/B model can be challenging for larger SMs/DSSABs with a lot of housing units or in areas with high turnover, as rent calculations need to be conducted for a household before moving into a unit. This may result in delays in filling vacant/available units. To deal with this issue, one SM reported that they determined eligibility for the top twenty households on their waiting lists. This ensures that there is a cohort of households ready to be contacted and able to move in when units become available. The downside of this approach is that the applicant households may not be able or ready to move. This means additional time on the part of the SM or housing provider searching for households that are in a position to move.

2.3 Opportunities with technology

In some interviews, SMs mentioned that they felt resources could be better spent working with applicants more closely and that some aspects of waiting list management could be automated. While existing IT systems in Ontario work well currently, there are potential technological solutions in how waiting list processes are managed which may improve the public's perception of access to housing.

As SM/DSSABs have looked for solutions to challenges in managing waiting lists, some have undertaken preliminary reviews of housing access models in other countries (primarily the Netherlands and United Kingdom). Housing access in both countries has evolved over time and the private sector has responded by developing IT products for housing access which rely on automation or provide a platform for improving

applicant choice. These systems also can be cost-effective and consumer-focused. During interviews for this research, some service managers expressed an interest in undertaking further research of these models to pilot, evaluate and determine if these models are feasible in an Ontario context. Regardless of how good an IT system or how processes are changed, neither can deal with the ultimate challenge in Ontario which is that there is insufficient housing stock to meet the demand for it.

3. Waiting List Trends and Times

The interviews indicated that all SMs/DSSABs experienced varied waiting list times, based on applicant type, geography and area requests. Appendix A indicates the expected waiting list times for each service area and Appendix B summarizes waiting times by household type. This section discusses the general waiting list trends and notable variations.

3.1 Measuring Waiting List Activity

The interviews indicated that all SMs/DSSABs experienced varied waiting list times (Appendix B) however, there are other measures that have been historically used to assess waiting list activity in Ontario.

Since 2004, the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association (ONPHA) has been conducting an annual survey of SM waiting lists across Ontario. The 2012 ONPHA report notes that the number of households waiting for social housing has increased by 26% since 2007 to over 156,000 households. While this report is focused on practices in waiting list management, both ONPHA's report and this one identify the pressures that SMs and DSSABs are under in managing efficiently with limited SM resources.

Since 2006, the Ontario Municipal Benchmarking Initiative (OMBI) has been collecting 5 social housing measures, one of which is publicly reported and identifies the percentage of households placed from waiting lists annually. OMBI is a partnership of 16 municipalities collecting data on approximately 900 measures across 37 municipal service areas with the goal of identifying better practices leading to improved service delivery to residents within their respective communities. The initiative is led by Chief Administrative Officers and City Managers who form the OMBI Board. There are currently only 12 SMs who participate in OMBI. Although OMBI is not applicable across all SM and DSSAB areas across Ontario, the measure is based on the same one collected annually by Housing Services Corporation through its Service Manager Performance

Indicator (PI) System which does apply across all areas. HSC's PI process is not mandatory although on average about 30 SMs participate annually in the data collection and reporting exercise.

The OMBI "*2011 Performance Measurement Report*" identifies the percentage of households placed from waiting lists annually for 12 SM areas across Ontario. The percentage in most of the 12 SM areas has reduced over a three year time period (2009 to 2011) indicating fewer households vacating social housing units, as well as a growth in the number of households waiting. The waiting list experiencing the highest change is in Windsor with 44% and the lowest being York Region with only a 4% change. Similarly to the ONPHA survey, the OMBI measures point to a mismatch between supply and demand in many areas across the province.

SMs and DSSABs are currently under immense pressure to house an increasing number of households in need. While both ONPHA and OMBI reports have been useful in identifying waiting list activity, there are outcome measures that could be developed. In light of the Province's intention as stated in its Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy (LTAHS) to revamp SM and DSSAB annual reporting and to develop housing indicators/outcomes measures related to housing, it makes sense for SMs to engage in a discussion on what that reporting looks like and what those indicators or measures might be contained within it.

3.2 General Trends

All 47 of Ontario's SMs/DSSABs reported on recent trends in their waiting list numbers. Most of Ontario's service areas have experienced increases in their waiting lists. This was more common in urban areas. However, some rural and northern areas also expressed growing demand for affordable housing reflected in the increased number of applicants on their waiting lists. Generally, increases were attributed to two main factors: 1) economic change; and 2) community composition change.

While most service areas experienced increases, others stated stable or decreased numbers. It was less common for participants to report a 'stable' number of applicants on their waiting list. This was attributed however, to low population growth, constant need levels, and public perceptions that wait times are lengthy. In particular, public perceptions were stated as one of the mechanisms that deterred people from applying for social housing.

Service areas that did experience decreases were mostly in rural areas. This was largely attributed to younger and working-age residents moving out of rural communities in search of employment opportunities. Most urban areas did not experience decreases in waiting list numbers. However, the few urban areas that noted experiencing decreasing numbers attributed this to conducting annual applicant reviews which resulted in removing a large cohort of applicants from waiting lists.

Over the past decade, Ontario has experienced significant economic instability which has resulted in differing impacts across service areas. For example, areas that are largely dependent on manufacturing and secondary industries have experienced significant economic downturn and layoffs, resulting in a larger number of people who may need housing, and therefore apply in order to deal with the change in their own economic circumstances . Further, many of Ontario's remote, northern, and rural areas have experienced community change. In one northern Ontario area, the university and medical community has grown. This has resulted in an increasing number of professionals attracted to the area, price inflation for homeownership and increases to average market rent. There has also been the unfortunate displacement of community residents. Other remote areas have experienced a boom in primary extraction industries (eg. mining), which has resulted in rent inflation. Increased cost of living and economic instability have also caused rising waiting list numbers in many of Ontario's service areas. Increases can also be attributed to urban sprawl. For example, many of the areas surrounding the Greater Toronto Area are now receiving applications from households currently living in Toronto and are willing to move outside of the city. These households are expecting (or perceive) shorter waiting times in these other areas, even though this is not necessarily the case. There are probably also some promising practices that are occurring in SM areas which are out of scope for this project. For example, some SMs may deliberately not advertise waiting times, whereas others will only show a range of years it may take for a household to be housed.

Ontario's legislation requires that SMs/DSSABs update their applicant files at a minimum of every other year. Many areas perform reviews annually. Others undertake a biannual process. Although the amount of time an applicant has to respond to letters requesting information updates varies by area, most areas remove applicants who have not completed their update forms within a set period of time, ranging from one month to nine months. This practice removes inactive households which can be artificially inflating waiting list numbers.

3.3 Waiting Times

Waiting times vary significantly among SMs/DSSABs. The challenge for many SMs is in how waiting times are communicated to the public. This study captured estimated waiting times for Ontario's service areas. Reaffirming other studies, like the one conducted annually by ONPHA, about waiting list times across the province, the interviews confirmed that there is significant variation in service areas, especially in geographically large and diverse communities. For example, a service area with a few larger rural towns will maintain waiting lists for each town even though vacancies may be rare. On the other hand, the same SM will have multiple vacancies in another town but with limited job opportunities and restricted access to public transportation, few households are willing to move there. This scan has reinforced the need to understand the factors that create waiting list times in different SM areas. It is probably more accurate to consider waiting list times as a guideline and not as a hard-and-fast number. Future work could be done to identify wait times by specific communities in service manager areas. This may be done by breaking an area into a smaller sub-area and ensuring that applicants understand the differences between areas and why they are occurring.

Based on the responses from the scan, Appendix B categorizes the responses related to waiting times into shortest, longest, and medium. With some SM and DSSAB areas, increased waiting times were attributed to lack of movement within the housing stock (i.e. households are not leaving social housing), therefore there is little turnover. Consequently, applicants are on the waiting list for a prolonged time period. This is further exacerbated if no new unit supply is added to the stock. In these areas, RGI unit supply is lower than demand. In addition to this, growing numbers of households have applied to waiting lists under SPP and LP status. This creates longer waiting times for chronological applicants.

The variations in waiting times based on applicant type between service areas is largely dependent on the demographics of residents and the supply of various types of housing stock. This is can be true in areas with dedicated seniors' buildings. For example, in the case of applicants who are seniors, there may be a mismatch of unit type to the household type. There is also an issue in that there are differences in the minimum age for seniors to apply for certain buildings, which varies between service manager areas. The Ontario Human Rights Code allows preferential treatment for persons aged 65 and older. However when social housing programs were transferred to service managers in 2001 and 2002, the province had assigned mandates to some housing providers. The Ministry

only approved mandates that it felt were acceptable under the Ontario Human Rights Code. These mandates were for seniors, frail seniors, aboriginal peoples, alternative housing (for homeless and hard-to-house), people with disabilities requiring attendant care, people recovering from substance abuse, and people living with AIDS. The legislation preceding the *Housing Services Act* continues to allow service managers to make changes to a housing provider's mandate. In this regarding most SM's and DSSAB's harmonized the eligibility age across their areas.

The majority of SMs and DSSABs have defined eligibility for dedicated seniors' housing as being a person who is 55 years of age or older. Other SMs consider the eligibility age to be 59+ years. The varying definition of a senior can make it challenging for individuals that fall in the 55 and 59+ age bracket if they choose to apply for housing in different service areas. On the other hand, singles under the age of 55 can sometimes be the hardest to house. This is because many service areas have a supply shortage of bachelor or one-bedroom units. This is not the case however, in all areas. Service areas with smaller number of family housing units find it easier to place single applicants in housing than families. Areas without dedicated seniors housing find seniors to be just as hard to house as singles.

4. Priorities

All of Ontario's 47 SMs and DSSABs are required by legislation to give waiting list priority to applicants who have been abused by someone they live with or by someone who is sponsoring them as an immigrant over non-priority applicants. In addition, the *Housing Services Act* allows SMs/DSSABs to establish a local rule around households who are over-housed (living in a unit that is too big for their family size). Some SMs/DSSABs have elected to establish a local rule and require that overhoused households be re-housed in one year or they re-enter centralized waiting lists with an over-housed priority status. This is in keeping with what previous legislation, the *Social Housing Reform Act* required. In addition, SMs/DSSABs also have the ability to develop additional priorities based on community needs. Some participants articulated that housing households from the chronological waiting list is problematic due to insufficient housing supply to house all SPP, LP, and chronological applicants. Further, chronological applicantstypically wait longer than LP and SPP applicants to be placed in housing.

4.1 Local Access Priorities

Some areas have implemented "local priorities" (LPs), whereas others have not. It is not mandatory for a service manager or DSSAB to have local priorities but areas that have chosen to implement them have made decisions locally about which group should be given priority access over regular chronological applicants. While 27 service managers have local priorities, 19 have no local priority. Appendix C provides a listing of LPs by service area and identifies which SMs have no local priority. SMs with no local priorities are largely in northern, rural or small urban areas of Ontario.

Figure 2, below, shows common local priorities and the number of service managers and DSSABs with each priority.

Figure 2: SMs and DSSABs by Type of Local Priority
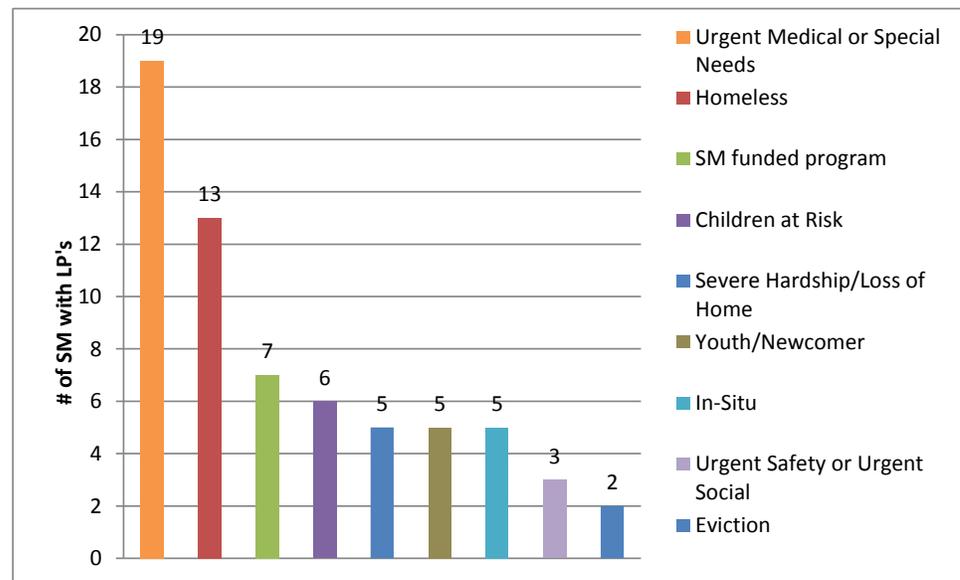
Although there are commonalties in the types of LPs, the scan revealed that the LPs are defined differently and there are varying criteria across service areas. For example, with the 'urgent' LP some areas include medical and homeless in their definitions. However, in other SM/DSSAB areas applicants applying under medical LPs must provide proof from a doctor that they are terminally ill, whereas with some service areas, proof of long-term illness is sufficient. Further, some service areas accept individuals who are couch-surfing to apply under their homeless priority, whereas others do not. Given the variation and broad definitions of some of the local priorities (e.g. 'urgent medical' and 'homelessness'), some SMs and DSSABs noted that they were redefining and clarifying the

definition. This will reduce confusion and allow better screening for applicants/households to determine who meets the LP status.

Creating and designating LPs has not been an easy task for Ontario's SMs/DSSABs. Although SMs/DSSABs have the flexibility and discretion to choose how to serve their residents in more targeted ways, the supports and resources to do so are not always available. Some areas have found LPs beneficial and effective in assisting extremely vulnerable populations to find housing faster. However, many areas have been concerned with the growing number of chronological applicants who are stagnating on their waiting lists. For example, one participant noted that after word spread that their SM area had LPs for urgent-need households; people from other service areas began applying. They are now unable to house chronological applicants at a quick rate. Some SMs/DSSABs have offset the impact of these LPs by designating a certain number of housing vacancies for urgent cases. For example, one in every ten vacancies that becomes available is offered to someone who is homeless. This has helped to offset the impact of LPs on chronological waiting lists. However, it does not adequately address housing need in urgent populations.

5. Technology

A large part of successfully managing social housing waiting lists is having the technological capacity to handle and keep track of applicant files. Information technology (IT) systems allow SMs/DSSABs to communicate with one another, check applicant eligibility using the province-wide arrears database, and establish tracking systems to manage applications and generate waiting list data.

This study discovered that some SMs/DSSABs are using online systems to accept applications for housing. There is general interest from SMs/DSSABs to learn about the effectiveness of this process as several are considering adopting and developing online processes. The benefits of online processes are that they allow individuals to submit applications much more easily without having to incur transportation or postage costs. Almost all service areas have electronic PDF forms available on their websites for applicants to print and mail in. This, however, is dependent on the applicant having access to the technology to complete online applications.

5.1 Information Technology Systems

Presently, all 47 of Ontario's SMs/DSSABs have an information technology platform to manage their waiting lists. Yardi is the most common IT system used for managing the process of receiving applications for RGI assistance, the application entry function that includes sorting of applicant information into ranked waiting lists by project, the generation of wait list by project and the provision of these lists to providers, managing status changes and wait list updates, and the process of transitioning applicants off the CWL as they are housed by providers. Figure 3, below identifies which IT systems are currently being used by service managers to manage their waiting lists.

Figure 3: IT Management System Users by Type
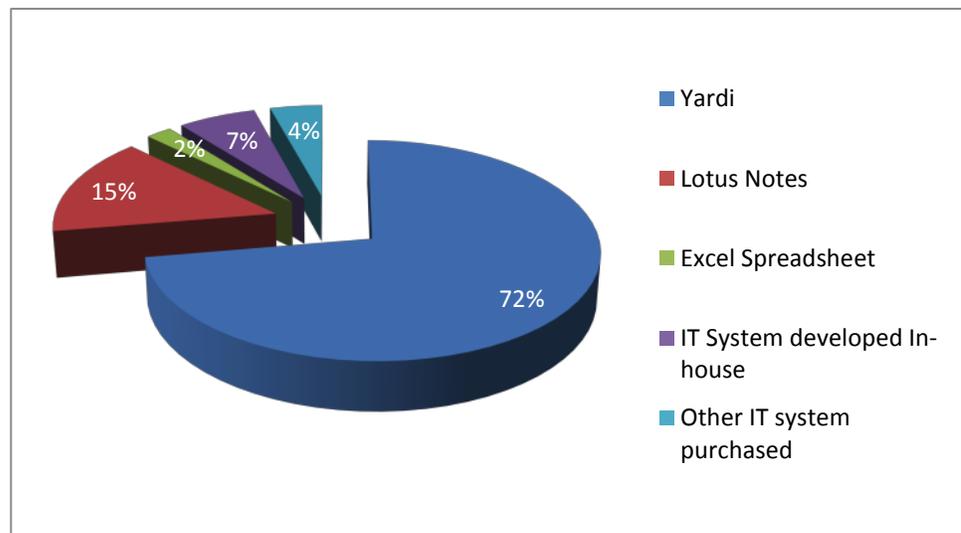
The commonly stated benefits of Yardi include the:

- ability to track applicants through the waiting list housing process

- ease of report generation, user friendliness, and responsive customer support from Yardi

Despite the benefits, some users claimed that reports were difficult to generate and were often inconsistent or inaccurate. Further, some users felt that Yardi was expensive to operate. As is common with IT systems, fees are charged for licenses, for support, and for the volume of applications received. Yardi also works on a demand system. Upgrades and additions to current software packages are limited unless a large proportion of users ask for alterations. There may be opportunities in the future for SMs and DSSABs to work collaboratively with Yardi and other

IT system providers to make system changes that all SMs need, rather than make requests on an ad hoc basis.

Other common information technology systems included Lotus Notes, Excel, and internally developed software. Excel is also used to supplement existing software packages. However, some SM areas exclusively using Excel did so because their service areas are small and they find it more cost-effective and manageable to use spreadsheets.

SMs/DSSABs using software developed internally spoke positively about their experience with the programs, as the customization specifically met the needs of their area and demands of administering their waiting lists. Those using Lotus Notes and other packages were satisfied with the way they are currently used. However, some SMs did note that they would like the ability to link or access other areas' databases – not in the sense of accessing personal information of applicants but in the sense of being able to monitor trends across services areas. Several SMs indicated an interest in exploring if all SMs/DSSABs could use the same information technology system, developed exclusively to meet their needs and provided at a reasonable cost. Many participants noted that developing an in-house system, such as the one used by Ontario Works, would be ideal for social housing waiting list management. This would also help with consistent report generation that would enable to producing comparable data, setting indicators and common reporting requirements.

5.2 Online Application Systems

Nine of the 47 service areas were identified as using online application systems (Table 1). The online system is primarily set up to accept housing applications. The benefit is that they increase accessibility for applicants.

Table 1: SMs and DSSABs Using Online Applications

Algoma DSSAB
Brantford
Halton (under development)
Hastings
London
Oxford
Peel
Toronto
Wellington

Some areas have an electronic signature option that requires applicants to upload scans of their personal documentation, whereas others accept basic information online, add the household to the waiting list, and then mail out an additional request for information.

Online systems seemed to be more effective within the context of the A/B model structure. Basic information, including self-declaration of income, for A applications could be received through online forms and, when a household becomes close to being housed, additional information can be sought out through other means. Adopting a model like this could be useful in larger service areas. Using an online system to gather basic applications and following-up at a later date could significantly reduce the amount of administrative work required to maintain waiting lists.

The SMs/DSSABs using online systems for application processing reported that it provided improved service for an increasingly techno-savvy population, increased accessibility, and decreased the amount of work required for intake as the application information comes in an electronic format. To help facilitate online usage, SMs/DSSABs have made computers accessible at local offices, in addition to providing staffing support in the office and/or over the phone for assistance in filling out applications. This allows people with lower levels of computer literacy or limited access to computers the opportunity to complete online applications in a timely fashion.

Issues addressed with regards to the functionality of online systems are:

- Uncertainty about how to collect signatures and supporting documentation from applicants

- Concerns that sending out requests for additional information would increase the amount of paperwork required to process applications.

6. Resources for Applicants

One of the main challenges associated with managing any aspect of social housing is the lack of available funding and resources. Despite these challenges, almost all of the SMs/DSSABs interviewed were focused on providing applicants with a client-centered service, focused on meeting applicants' needs. Several reiterated the importance of connecting with applicants and providing resources and supports while waiting for housing placements.

6.1 Staffing

Social housing waiting list staff have responsibility for applicant intake, assessing eligibility, liaising with housing providers, and maintaining and administering waiting lists. In addition to this, many staff members working with LHCs and waiting lists are responsible for placing tenants in LHC units. Most of Ontario's smaller service areas employ roughly one full-time equivalent employee to complete these functions. Only one SM area reported employing 35 full-time equivalent staff for list management. This is primarily because the SM has the largest social housing portfolio compared to the rest of the SM/DSSABs in the province.

Many smaller service areas where one person is solely or mostly responsible for list management may experience problems as staff take time off (ill or vacation), begin to retire or move on to other opportunities. This has resulted in a back-log of applicant files and/or substitute staff requiring the knowledge to take on wait list maintenance. More SMs/DSSABs stated that they are realigning staffing resources in order to ensure that tasks associated with wait list management are split among two or more staff members.

6.2 Resources for Applicants

Most service areas noted that they make available variety of resources and information to assist applicants. Some of these resources were financial, while others were referral-based.

Most SMs/DSSABs are able to offer a select number of Housing Allowances (HAs) to households on their waiting lists. These payments offer support with current market rents while applicants wait to be housed. However, funding for these types of programs is limited and many individuals on the waiting list are not able to receive financial assistance. All SMs/DSSABs offer applicants support and assistance with filling out housing applications.

Several SM areas reported the existence of Housing Help Centres. A few reported having these centres in-house, while others indicated that housing help centers were largely available in the community. Resources both staffing and financial were primary reasons for housing centers not being established in-house. Housing help centers in the community tend to be provided by charitable, non-profit, and private organizations. These centers provide listings of current vacancies, information about the rents for each unit listed, and lists of resources, such as food banks, that applicants can access. In addition to this, some SMs/DSSABs maintained a list of market rent units available to provide to social housing applicants.

Referrals are an area of support activity that SMs were mostly providing. Common referrals included guidance toward housing registries listing lower market rent units, shelters, food banks, rent banks, utility banks, local community agencies, housing help centres, and resource centres. In areas with strong community organizations, these referrals were quite helpful for applicants. In one area, intake interviews were conducted with all applicants to assess need. Staff would determine which resources were being accessed by applicants and what resources were available that they may be eligible for. They would often provide referrals during these interviews. However, this area is considering cancelling the interview portion of their intake process, due to a lack of time and funding.

Ontario's ISSOs aim to provide a "one stop shop" for households that require assistance. Participants working in ISSOs stated that these offices serve as an excellent resource for clients. Oftentimes, when a client comes in to apply for housing, a staff member will refer them to OW or childcare in order to assist with their other basic needs. Obtaining other forms of financial support reduces household expenditures, making it easier for households to pay market rents while waiting for social housing. However, policies surrounding information privacy management need to be addressed before social service units providing human services can share all relevant applicant information.

7. Recommendations

This scan of social housing waiting list management in Ontario has uncovered various strengths and challenges that are associated with housing low-income families. From this scan, the following suggestions for future investigation are to :

1. **Explore the development of a single information technology system for all SMs and DSSABs:** This would allow better monitoring and tracking of the social housing

waiting list and allow comparisons to other service areas. It would foster the development of system indicators to help service managers and social housing providers measure various facets of the business they deliver. Operationally it may allow for areas to stream-line processes if applicants are on more than one waiting list in different service areas, and improve the integration of information on the arrears database.

2. **Explore the use of technology to improve waiting list management:** Ontario SMs and DSSABs are looking for solutions to address the challenges in managing applicant expectations around being housed. Technology has been used effectively in other countries to enhance the applicant's involvement in the process. A made-in-Ontario solution could be developed with the right combination of SM/DSSAB interest, IT platform and acknowledgement of financial and legislative parameters.

3. **Determine an agreed-upon way to illustrate variations in waiting times:** Ontario's SMs and DSSABs are geographically diverse and have varying levels of housing stock available for different client types (e.g families, seniors, singles). In addition to this, each service area has housing units which are considered to be more desirable to live in than others. These factors can result in large variations in waiting times within jurisdictions. Dividing service areas into communities or by client type to describe waiting list times may assist in providing a more accurate picture of waiting times within and across service areas.

4. **Explore the development of housing indicators/outcomes measures that relate to how the waiting list functions**: SMs and DSSABs are currently under immense pressure to house an increasing number of households in need. Previous ONPHA studies on waiting list statistics have been used for advocacy purposes and the need for federal and provincial government investments in housing. Publicly available measures on waiting list statistics through OMBI identify waiting list activity. The ultimate goal of having a waiting list is to house applicants who need housing. Future indicators or measures need to be developed that speak to waiting list outcomes. This process also aligns with the provincial Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy.

Conclusion

The primary aim of this scan was to generate an understanding of waiting list practices in Ontario. This scan has confirmed that there is variation in how centralized waiting lists are managed across Ontario. However, uncovering these variations has generated a better understanding of waiting list practices. Based on information provided by SMs and DSSABs, the following recommendations may assist SMs and DSSABs with social housing waiting list management:

1. Moving toward integrating social services where feasible
2. Evaluating the usefulness of using A/B intake models in conjunction with online application systems
3. Reviewing and updating applicant files on an annual basis to ensure waiting list accuracy
4. Refining Local Priorities to target more specific populations in need of housing
5. Integrating existing or creating new housing help centres with waiting list management functions
6. Ensuring adequate coverage of waiting list management responsibilities in smaller service areas

A general trend runs throughout these scan findings: there is a lack of available RGI units for the number of social housing applicants in most of the service areas in Ontario. In addition, SMs and DSSABs are functioning in an environment with a limited housing stock and limited financial resources. One of the main concerns with implementing LPs is the inability to house chronological applicants. This is a problem because there is not enough social housing stock available to meet demands at the local level. In order to efficiently maintain waiting lists, SMs need to continue their efforts to increase the number of units available for households in need of affordable housing in their communities.

Additional Resources:

Ontario Municipal Benchmarking Initiative (OMBI). (2011) *2011 OMBI Performance Measurement Report*. Toronto, ON: OMBI.

Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association (ONPHA). (2012) *Waiting Lists Survey: ONPHA's 2012 report on waiting list statistics for Ontario*. Toronto, ON: ONPHA

SPP Research Task Force. (2011). *SPP impact study PHASE 1 – STEP 1 impact review of the special priority policy for victims of domestic abuse, applying for assisted housing – outcomes*. Toronto, ON: Housing Services Corporation.

SPP Research Task Force. (2012). *SPP impact study PHASE 1 – STEP 2 impact review of the special priority policy for victims of domestic abuse, applying for assisted housing tenure status of applicants housed in 2007, 2008 and 2009.* Toronto, ON: Housing Services Corporation.

Swanton, S. (2009). *Social housing wait lists and the one-person household.* (CP Net Internship Program). Toronto, ON: Housing Services Corporation.

Appendices

Appendix A: List of SMs and DSSAB General Waiting Times

Service Area/Municipality	General Waiting Times
North/Northwest	
Algoma	Varies geographically, 0 months to 3 years
Cochrane	Approximately 5 years
Greater Sudbury	Up to 2 years
Kenora	1 to 5 years
Manitoulin -Sudbury	Varies geographically, up to 2 years
Nipissing	1 to 5 years
Parry Sound	Varies geographically, 1 to 10 years
Rainy River	Up to one year
Sault Ste. Marie	1 to 2 years
Thunder Bay	Up to five years
Timiskaming	Varies geographically, 2 to 7 years
South/Southwest	
Brantford	1 to 4 years
Bruce	Varies geographically, 0 months to 3 years
Chatham-Kent	In Chatham: 2 or more years. Surrounding areas: 0-12 months
Dufferin	Varies geographically, average 7 years
Grey	Varies geographically, 1 to 5 years
Haldimand-Norfolk	Varies geographically, 2 to 10 years
Huron	Varies geographically, 6 months to 5 years
Lambton	1 to 4 years
London	3 months to 10 years
Oxford	Varies geographically, 6 months to years
Niagara	2.75 to 8 years
Stratford	Varies geographically
St. Thomas	1 month to 2 years
Waterloo	1 to 6 years

Service Area/Municipality	General Waiting Times
Wellington	Varies between rural and urban, 2 to 9 years
Windsor	6 months to 2.5 years
GTA and Central	
Durham*	3 to 20 years
Halton	Varies, shortest wait is 2 years
Hamilton	Roughly 2 years
Peel	1 to 11 years
Simcoe	1 to 5 years
Toronto	2 to 7 years
York	Varies, up to ten or more years
East and Central East	
Cornwall	3 months to 6 years
Hastings	5 to 6 years
Kawartha Lakes	2 to 5 years
Kingston	6 months to 8 years
Lanark	2 to 5 years
Leeds & Grenville	0.2 years to 5.4 years
Lennox and Addington	Varies geographically, 1 to 5 years
Muskoka	3 to 5 years on average
Northumberland	Varies geographically, 2 to 5 years
Ottawa	5 to 10 years
Peterborough	3 to 5 years
Prescott and Russell	3 months to 3 years
Renfrew	Varies geographically, 1 to 4 years

Appendix B: List of Wait Times from Shortest to Longest by Applicant Type for Each SM and DSSAB

○ Shortest; ▲ Longest; ◊ Medium

Service Area/Municipality	HOUSEHOLD TYPE- WAITING TIMES		
	Singles	Seniors	Families
North/Northwest			
Algoma	▲	◊	○
Cochrane	▲	◊	○
Greater Sudbury	▲	Varies based on application type	Cyclical
Kenora*	▲	◊	○
Manitoulin -Sudbury	▲	Comparable to singles	◊
Nipissing	▲	○	◊
Parry Sound	▲	◊	○
Rainy River*	▲	◊	Almost as long as singles
Sault Ste. Marie	▲	◊	○
Thunder Bay	Almost as long as families	◊	▲
Timiskaming	Varies based on lists	Varies based on lists	Varies based on lists
South/Southwest			
Brantford	▲	◊	○
Bruce	*Varies geographically*	*Varies geographically*	*Varies geographically*
Chatham-Kent	Marginal Variation	Marginal Variation	Marginal Variation
Dufferin	*Varies geographically*	◊	*Varies geographically*
Grey	Marginal Variation	Marginal Variation	Marginal Variation
Haldimand-Norfolk	▲	◊	○
Huron	▲	◊	○
Lambton	▲	○	◊
London	◊	▲	○
Oxford	▲	◊	Longer for larger families
Niagara	▲	◊	○
Stratford	▲	○	◊
St. Thomas	▲	◊	○
Waterloo			
Wellington	▲	◊	○
Windsor	▲	◊	▲ or 4+ Bedrooms
GTA and Central			
Durham*	▲	◊	○
Halton	▲	◊	Varies significantly
Hamilton	▲	◊	○
Peel	▲	◊	○
Simcoe	▲	○	◊
Toronto	▲	Similar to families	Similar to seniors
York	▲	◊	○

Service Area/Municipality	HOUSEHOLD TYPE- WAITING TIMES		
	Singles	Seniors	Families
East and Central East			
Cornwall	▲	◊	○
Hastings	▲	◊	○
Kawartha Lakes	○	▲	◊
Kingston	▲	Varies based on application type	◊
Lanark	▲	○	◊
Leeds and Grenville	*Varies geographically*	*Varies geographically*	*Varies geographically*
Lennox-Addington	▲	◊	○
Muskoka	▲	○	◊
Northumberland	*Varies geographically*	*Varies geographically*	*Varies geographically*
Ottawa	▲	◊	▲
Peterborough	▲	◊	○
Prescott & Russell	▲	○	◊
Renfrew	▲	▲	◊

Appendix C: List of Local Priorities by SM and DSSAB

Service Area/Municipality	Urgent Medical or Special Needs	Homeless	In Situ	Urgent Safety /Urgent Social	Youth / Newcomer	Children at Risk	Eviction	Severe Hardship/ Loss of Home	In SM funded programming/ In community programs
North/Northwest									
Algoma	√								
Cochrane	√		√						
Greater Sudbury		√		√	√	√		√	
Kenora	√*								
Manitoulin-Sudbury									
Nipissing								√	√
Parry Sound									
Rainy River	√*								
Sault Ste. Marie			√						
Thunder Bay	√					√	√	√	
Timiskaming	√								
South/Southwest									
Brantford		√							
Bruce									
Chatham-Kent	√			√		√	√		
Dufferin									
Grey									
Haldimand-Norfolk									
Huron									
Lambton									
London	√	√							√
Niagara	√	√						√	
Oxford									
Stratford									
St. Thomas			√						
Waterloo	√	√				√			√
Wellington	√					√		√	
Windsor		√				√			√
GTA and Central									
Durham	√*								
Halton		√		√					
Hamilton	√	√			√				
Peel	√		√						√
Simcoe									
Toronto	√	√			√				
York			√						
East and Central East									
Cornwall									
Hastings	√	√							
Kawartha Lakes	√	√							√
Kingston		√							

Service Area/Municipality	Local Priorities								
	Urgent Medical or Special Needs	Homeless	In Situ	Urgent Safety /Urgent Social	Youth / Newcomer	Children at Risk	Eviction	Severe Hardship/ Loss of Home	In SM funded programming/ In community programs
Lanark									
Leeds & Grenville									
Lennox-Addington									
Muskoka	√				√				
Northumberland									
Ottawa	√	√	√	√					√
Peterborough									
Prescott & Russell									
Renfrew									

* Kenora- Urgent Medical or Special Needs (internal transfers only)

* Rainy River- Urgent Medical or Special Needs (internal transfers only)

* Durham- Urgent Medical or Special Needs (large medical expenses only)

▭ SM/DSSAB with no Local Priorities