

Dufferin County gets kudos for efforts on reducing homelessness in the community

Written By JAMES MATTHEWS

A national organization has recognized Dufferin County for its work against chronic homelessness.

The county reduced chronic homelessness by 32 per cent as of February 2025 and has remained at least 10 per cent below the county's baseline month since the fall of 2019.

According to the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH), Dufferin County has remained laser-focused on ending long-term homelessness for years.

"This dedicated community has sustained reductions by pivoting their energy and efforts based on the changing needs of their neighbours and trends in their By-Name Data," stated a CAEH press release.

The County's Coordinated Access Table comes together weekly to problem-solve the housing process and to ensure coordinated and intentional housing support for people. Their latest goal is to reduce the average length of time from entry into homelessness to exit into housing.

Lowering the number of folks who experience long-term homelessness is critical for reaching deeper reductions.

Brenda Wagner, the County's health and human services director, said being named a community bright spot by the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness is both humbling and energizing. It's proof positive their work has had a tangible impact.

"It reaffirms that the collaborative work happening across Dufferin County from frontline outreach to policy innovation," she said. "Reducing chronic homelessness by 32 per cent is a significant stride and it reflects the commitment of our local service providers, community partners, and those with lived experience who have helped guide our efforts."

According to the alliance, Dufferin County has sustained reductions in homelessness by prioritizing housing resources for the chronic population, including allowances directly funded by the county.

The homelessness team works closely with community housing and maintains relationships with private market landlords to maximize available housing options at every turn.

"This progress can largely be attributed to our shift toward Housing First principles, enhanced data coordination, and a deepened focus on prevention and wraparound support," Wagner said. "While there is still much work to do, this recognition is a powerful reminder that our community's compassion, resilience, and resolve are driving real change."