

# **Joint Social and Housing Services Advisory Committee**

## **REPORT JAC2025-01**

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**Meeting Date:** February 19, 2025

**Meeting Time:** 1:30 p.m.

**Meeting Place:** County of Haliburton Council Chambers, 11 Newcastle Street, Minden and Electronic Video Meeting

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**Subject:** Social Services Manager Report

**Author Name and Title:** Janine Mitchell, Human Services Manager,  
Social Services

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### **Recommendation(s):**

**Resolved That** Report JAC2025-01, "Social Services Manager Report", be received.

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Director

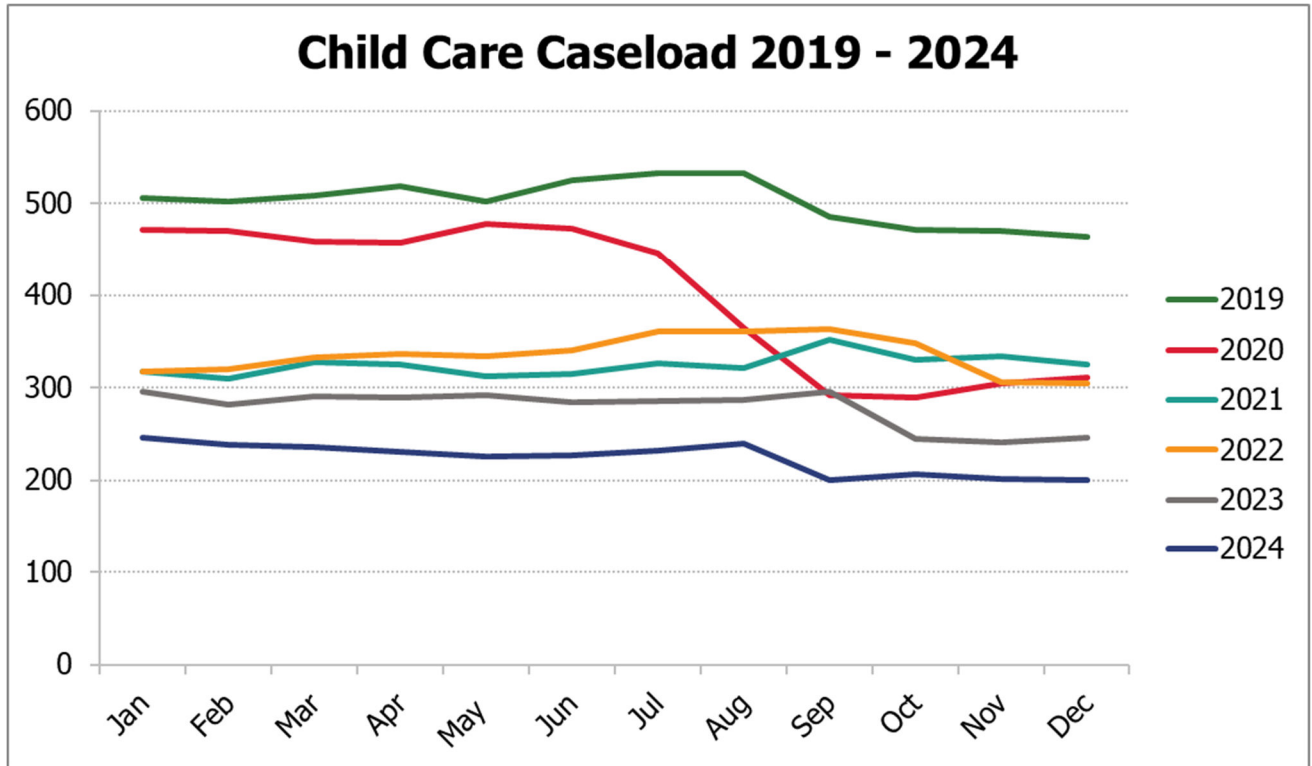
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Other

**Background:**

This report outlines key milestones and initiatives that have occurred over the last few months within the Human Services Department and pertain to the Children’s Services, Social Assistance - Ontario Works delivery and Emergency Planning Programs.

**Children’s Services**



The childcare caseload refers to the number of children in Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton accessing fee subsidy for licensed child care. The chart above captures the overall caseload from 2019 through to the end of 2024. The average caseload over 2024 was 224 children. On average, 7% of the caseload were children living in the County of Haliburton. In 2024, the caseload had the lowest number of children accessing fee subsidy at 200 at the end of Q4 compared to 246 during the same period in 2023, a decrease of 19%. The decrease in caseload is due to two major factors. As fees were reduced by 50% in January 2023 through the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (CWELCC), some families with children under 6 years old no longer required fee subsidy as it was more affordable to pay the new CWELCC reduced child care fee than the fee offered through subsidy. However, due to the more affordable child care fees, demand has also increased significantly resulting in a shortage of quality licensed child care spaces. This means that families who may

be eligible for fee subsidy are waiting on a lengthy wait list for a licensed subsidized space. To address this wait for fee subsidy eligible families, we will be looking at reserving fee subsidy spaces at child care locations throughout Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton in 2025.

### **Child Care Expansion Update**

Kirkfield Project – The project is on schedule and will be expected to open later in September. This program will provide care for 10 infants, 15 toddlers and 24 preschool aged children. Families currently on our waitlist will be contacted for spaces. This program is located in the highest identified priority as identified through in our Directed Growth and Expansion Plan. The program is operated by Compass ELC – for further information, please follow this link [Compass Kirkfield](#)

Lindsay Project – This is a new project located in north east Lindsay, an area that has also been identified as a priority service area. This program will provide care for 10 infants, 15 toddlers and 24 preschool aged children. The program is expected to be fully operational by end of June. The operator currently operates a program in another municipality and is looking change to a Non-Profit program here in Lindsay.

Fenelon Falls – A program is in the process of looking for a suitable site for expansion in the Fenelon area. The program would be responsible for the purchase of the land and building and financial support is being provided for renovations that would be required. The program would support 10 infants, 15 toddlers and 24 preschool aged children.

### **Expansion in the County of Haliburton**

We continue to hold spaces for expansion in the County and recognize the need and pressures for expansion. The cost to purchase land or buildings is not eligible through the Federal and Provincial dollars we receive. Current funding can only be used to support minor renovations of existing buildings. We continue to work with service providers on potential solutions, however without either a donation of land, use of a suitable rental indoor and outdoor space, we will not be able to expand spaces. The timeline for a program to be operational is closing as we get closer to December 31, 2026.

Should a municipality be willing to donate the land, waive and fast track some of the permit fees, and set up a loan for the purchase of a building, we have been researching potential solutions that would support the expansion of child care.

There is a company in Winnipeg, JohnQ Public that has developed a Modular Child Care Centre that can be built and fully operational within 7 to 9 months.

This particular company, will lead the project from start to finish. They have expert design-build teams with child care facility expertise. The company sources our local providers for the project build.

The Ontario Municipal Service Managers Association is looking to present and share this information with our colleagues across the province. This could present an opportunity to partner with other municipalities and benefit from utilizing economies of scale to deliver value, reduce timelines, and stay on budget.

The company would be willing to make a presentation to both County and City Council to present this opportunity. City staff calculated a new centre supporting 49 spaces could be built for under 3 million dollars. Follow the link for more information about this business

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=75maFqABczg>

Modular Child Care Build - Manitoba



### **Knowing Our Numbers**

In 2023, we were one of 43 Children's Services service managers that participated in a provincial early childhood education workforce study called Knowing Our Numbers (KON). We recently received the final report, which provides the combined results for Kawartha Lakes, Haliburton, and the District Municipality of Muskoka. The results cover topics such as general demographics of the child care workforce, compensation, workforce stability, stress, and job satisfaction, as well as professional development.

The report found that the child care workforce in Kawartha Lakes and Muskoka have a low level of job satisfaction. The chart below shows the results by auspice

(note that there are no public child care centres in our region) and the level of job satisfaction by RECE status. The scale is from one to five, with one being low job satisfaction and five being high job satisfaction. An average job satisfaction of 2.7 is comparable to the province as a whole; however, we are interested to learn more.

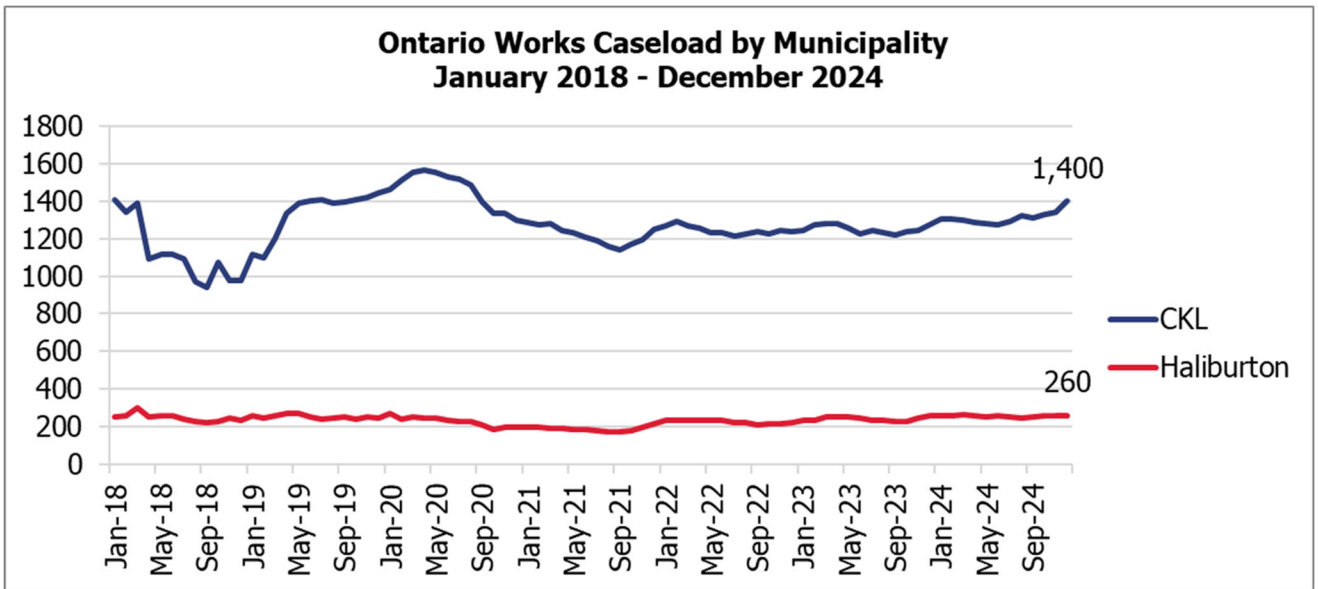
Unfortunately, we had a low participation rate in KON locally. To explore the results further, we have collaborated with Trent University Community-Based Research to have a student complete a project to further our understanding of job satisfaction in early childhood education throughout Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton. The student will conduct focus groups and interviews to supplement the KON survey results. We recently matched with a PhD student who brings over 27 years of experience working in our local child care community. The project is to be completed in June 2025.

Auspice	RECE status		Average across RECE status
	Non-RECE	RECE	
For-profit	2.7	2.2	2.4
Non-profit	2.8	2.6	2.6
Public	2.1	3.0	3.0
<b>Average across auspice</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>2.7</b>

Note: All averages are weighted.

Figure 1 Akbari, E., McCuaig, K., Schurter, M. Varmuza, P., Akbari, S., Mudie, S. (2024).

**Life Stabilization – Ontario Works Program**



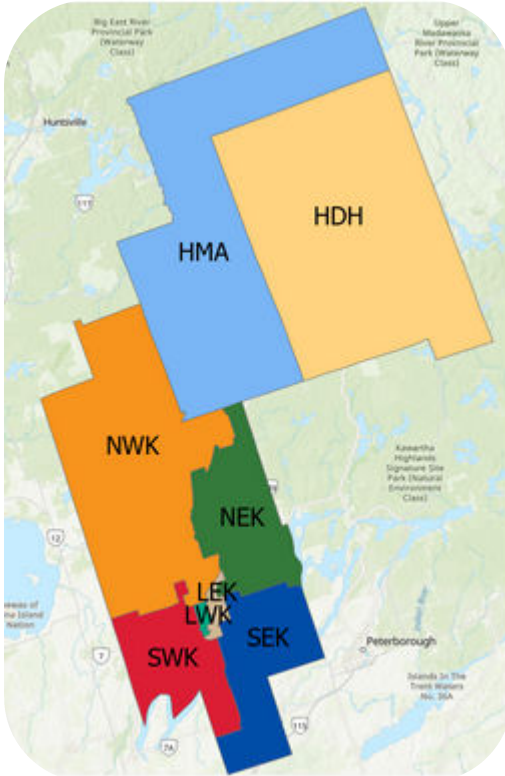
The chart above illustrates the Ontario Works caseload by city and county from 2018 to end of the Q4 2024. The caseload includes those in receipt of Ontario Works, Temporary Care, and the Ontario Disability Support Program in Ontario Works. The total caseload at the end of Q4 was 1,660 cases, up from 1,531 during the same period in 2023. The average monthly caseload in the County of Haliburton was 256 in 2024, up from 241 in 2023. The monthly average caseload has returned to pre-pandemic levels. In 2019, the County of Haliburton had an average monthly caseload of 252. The Haliburton caseload is growing at a higher rate than the City of Kawartha Lakes caseload at 6% and 5% respectively. The average monthly caseload in Kawartha Lakes went from 1,252 in 2023 to 1,313 in 2024. Pre-pandemic the average caseload was 1,336.

**Caseload Analysis – Clients on Assistance Over 5 Years**

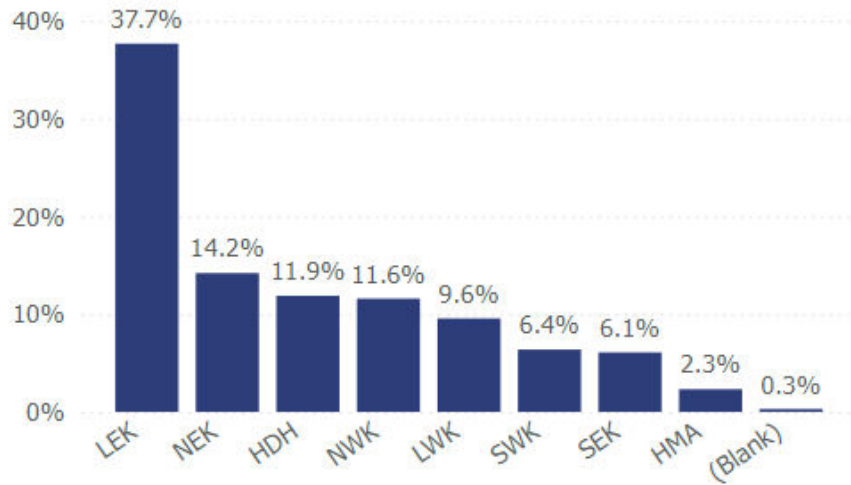
We recently completed an analysis of the caseload on assistance for over five consecutive years. As of November 30, 2024 345 clients have been on the caseload for five or more consecutive years. On average, this population is on assistance for 8.8 years with the maximum time on assistance being 22 years. Just over half are females at 54% and males at 46%.

At 38%, most of the clients are located in the eastern part of Lindsay, nearby where the Lindsay Human Services office is located. Minden area has the fewest clients on assistance over 5 years with 2.3% of this population. Note that “blank” refers to clients located outside of our service area.

**Location Reference Map**

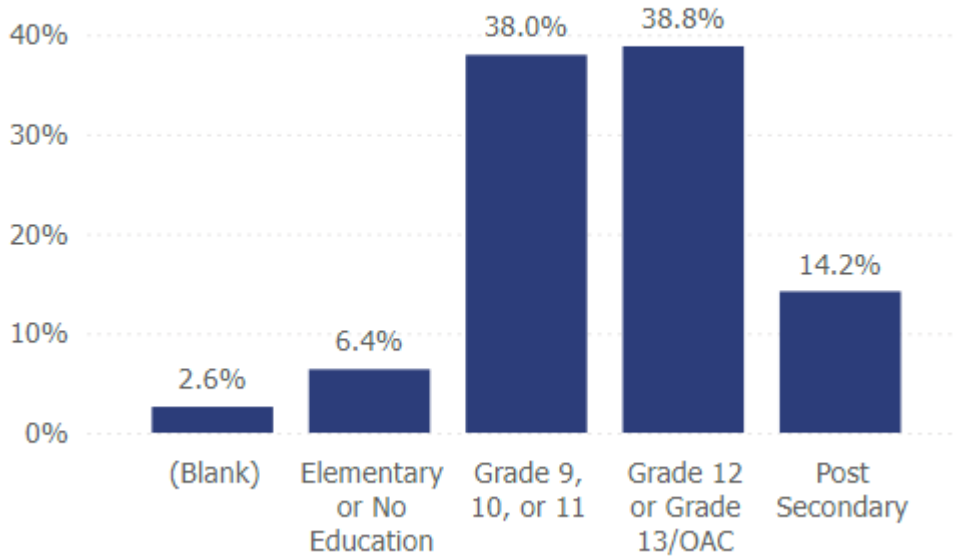


Location of Participants

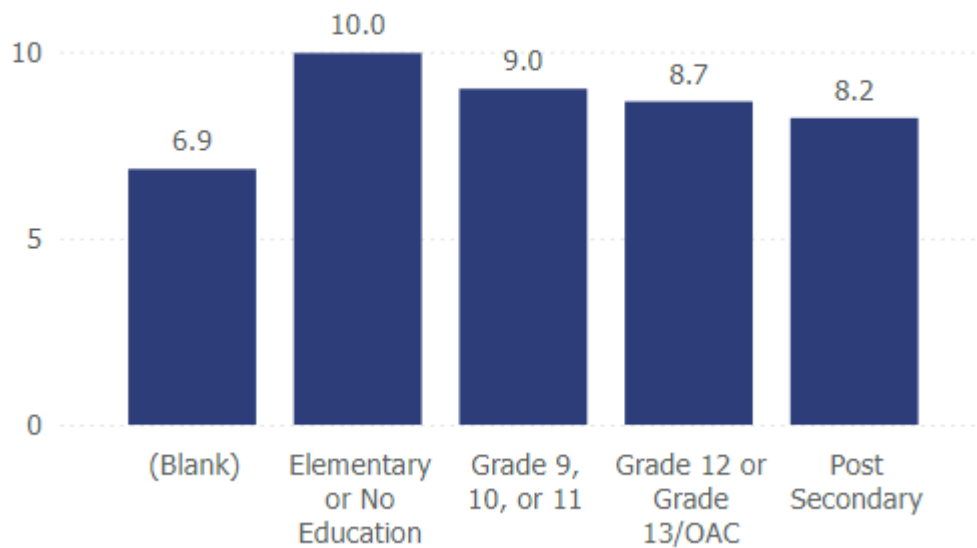


Over half of the caseload has a Grade 12 education or higher at 53%. Those with Grade 12 education have been on assistance for an average of 8.7 years and those with post-secondary on assistance for 8.2 years. Elementary or no education are on assistance the longest at 10 years. It may be surprising to see those with post-secondary education on assistance for so long, however 61% of the caseload on assistance over five years do have active earned income. Some work part-time due to other responsibilities, while others work seasonally, or they work full-time but do not make enough to come off assistance.

### Highest Level of Education



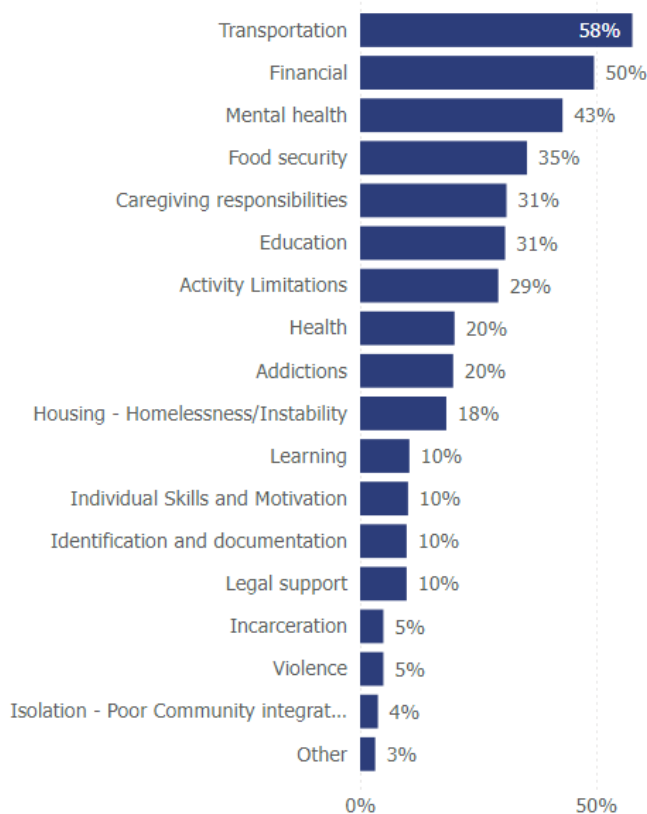
### Average Years on Assistance Highest Education





The barriers to adequate employment are complex and varied across the population of clients on assistance over five years. Many of the barriers are related to ongoing crises we see across the province and country such as mental health and addiction, housing, food security, and no family doctor. However, locally, the greatest barrier is transportation. 58% of the clients on assistance over 5 years have identified transportation, as a critical support need. Due to the rurality of the service area, nearly 95% of commuters rely on a personal vehicle to get to work. Living in a rural area outside of town is a major barrier as clients do not have the means to have access to car, rely on others for rides, do not have a valid driver's license, and there is no public transportation. No transportation is a barrier to employment, as well as attending medical appointments, and accessing other services that will help support employment search efforts.

#### Support Needs



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