

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

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What is the by-name list all about?

The following is part of a series about homelessness in Lanark County.

There's a man, let's call him Joe, who is working full-time at a minimum wage job. His marriage ended a year ago and he and his four children have been staying with his sister. He doesn't earn enough to pay rent on housing that would accommodate a family of five. He'd like a three-bedroom place but says he would make two bedrooms work.

Then there's the single mother of two special needs children, let's call her Ann, who is also a caregiver for her disabled brother and aging mother. They were evicted from a rented house because the landlord is taking it over for personal use.

Then there's the 66-year-old woman, let's call her Jane, whose husband has addictions and works away from the home during the week. When he returns on weekends, he is so abusive that Jane sleeps in her car. She has only Old Age Security and Canada Pension Plan and is trying to find affordable housing.

Then there's the Ontario Disability Support Program recipient, let's call him Pete, who lived with his mother. When she died, he had to leave the apartment because he wasn't on the lease.

Joe, Ann, Jane and Pete are all real people experiencing homelessness in Lanark County. They consented to be on the by-name list (BNL), which is a real-time list of all people experiencing homelessness in the community. It includes a robust set of data that supports coordinating access and prioritization at a household level. "This real-time, actionable data helps us to triage services and provide system performance evaluation and advocacy," explains Director of Social Services Emily Hollington.

A BNL committee made up of community stakeholders meets monthly to allocate services and supports, discuss complex high-acuity cases and provide encampment response and system improvements. "The group creates goals around the BNL to reduce homelessness and works to coordinate access to services for BNL clients," Hollington said. "It provides collaboration and improved communication around community need, processes and procedures and improvement."

Members of the committee include Lanark County Interval House, Cornerstone Landing, Lanark County Social Services, Lanark County Victim Services, Lanark County Mental Health (including a Housing Based Case Manager to support mental health and addictions) and Lanark, Leeds and Grenville Addictions and Mental Health.

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As of the end of February, there were 62 people on the BNL, up from 54 in January, including 17 families. The bulk of homelessness is occurring in Smiths Falls, Carleton Place and Perth. Five people were over the age of 65. Most were couch surfing or temporarily housed in hotels/motels.

The county has been encouraging agencies working with homeless individuals to make referrals – with consent – to the BNL. “The referrals help in many ways. They can connect homeless individuals or families with additional funds to support a housing plan or prioritize access to addiction supportive housing or mental health supports, for example,” Hollington explained. “There are rent subsidies available and priority access to rental units through partnerships with landlords. We can create emergency housing plans.”

The BNL helps the team to identify how many people are experiencing homelessness and to identify gaps in service. “It gives us an even better understanding of homelessness in Lanark County and ensures no one gets forgotten and has equal access to the supports and services that are available,” Hollington said.

To learn more about housing supports in Lanark County, see <https://www.lanarkcounty.ca/en/family-and-social-services/housing.aspx>. If you are experiencing homelessness, call the Lanark County Homeless Response Team at 613-267-4200 ext. 2140 or 1-888-952-6275 Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. or after hours at 613-206-1486.

Previous articles:

[What does homelessness look like in Lanark County?](#)

[What is Housing First and how does it work?](#)

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