

Permanent Supportive Housing - Background

The homeless-serving system of care, which includes government income assistance, and community-based services like those offered through agency partners in areas of employment and emergency shelter, and community-based housing, including private market, social housing, and rent subsidies, work together to achieve the ultimate goal of ending homelessness in Edmonton.

Permanent supportive housing is an essential component of the homeless-serving system of care. In order to prevent homelessness and increase the housing retention of formerly homeless individuals, diverse and appropriate affordable housing options are needed.

Individuals and families who need permanent supportive housing are likely to have been evicted from other types of housing and experienced chronic homelessness. This type of housing offers resources to ensure that tenants are supported in addressing complex mental and physical health needs while also providing community and recreational opportunities to increase social inclusion. Permanent supportive housing also provides round the clock tenancy management to ensure proactive resources for eviction prevention and neighbourly property management practices.

Some examples of permanent supportive housing in Edmonton include:

- *Canora Place* provides housing for individuals who are chronically homeless; who have addictions and/or mental illness, and at least 60 percent come from Indigenous ancestry. It has 30 units and is a Low Intensity Model.
- *Hope Terrace* is a Housing First program that houses and supports individuals diagnosed with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. This model provides integrated case management services through a team of support workers with 24/7 tenancy management. It has 15 units and is a Medium Intensity Model.
- *Ambrose Place* provides housing for Indigenous individuals and couples who have experienced chronic homelessness and have complex physical and mental health needs. Clinical supports are offered on site in partnership with Alberta Health Services, supplemented by support workers who operate an integrated case management model. It has 42 units and is a High Intensity Model.

Development Costs

The typical development cost for permanent supportive housing in Edmonton ranges from \$200,000 - \$350,000 per unit (including land). The cost range is a result of support program model design considerations, accessibility requirements, private amenity space and compliance with Designated Assisted Living requirements. Land costs significantly impact the cost to build permanent supportive housing.

System Savings

There is significant cost avoidance to be considered when individuals move from regular interaction with emergency, health, and justice services due to their homelessness into safe, appropriate and supportive housing.

Housing first programs including permanent supportive housing have been shown to reduce inappropriate system usage and free up resources associated with homelessness – such as emergency shelter costs, police and Emergency Medical Services response calls, emergency room utilization, justice and court system costs, and transitional housing. In Edmonton, housing first participants have demonstrated significant reductions and these vary by program and site.

Examples:

The **Hope Terrace** permanent supportive housing project for individuals affected by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder recorded a 70 percent drop in days spent in hospital. Similarly, the Indigenous Housing First team at Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society has demonstrated an 80 percent decline in days hospitalized among program participants after a year in the program.

The **Managed Alcohol Programming** in Edmonton Report, 2016, estimated the annual average cost for people experiencing chronic homelessness and alcohol addiction as \$116,000 per client. For high users of service the minimum net benefits of housing with harm reductions services including managed alcohol are estimated \$63,000 to \$130,000 per client.

In Edmonton, **Ambrose Place** fills a gap in permanent supportive housing through a harm reduction approach that is rooted in Indigenous ways of knowing and being. In addition to providing a permanent housing solution for people with complex needs who experienced chronic homelessness, Ambrose Place has demonstrated significant cost savings by improving the health and stability of residents.

Based on residents use of health services 24 months prior to and 24 months after their move in date, Alberta Health Services found:

- A decrease in emergency department visits, from a total of 1,055 visits to 360 total visits (66 percent improvement). It is important to note that prior to moving in to Ambrose Place, residents would have also been using the emergency department for non-health related issues (ie. shelter).
- A 67 percent decrease in addiction and mental health related Emergency Medical Service events after move in date.
- A 66 percent reduction in total inpatient stays after residents moved into Ambrose Place, with an estimated cost savings of \$4,793,481.