

Municipal Homelessness Initiatives: Jurisdictional Scan Summary

This attachment provides a summary and comparison of how other Canadian municipalities implement their responses to homelessness. The scope of these tables is limited to homelessness initiatives and does not include affordable housing project development activities. All cities consulted recognized that increasing affordable housing supply is ultimately a solution to ending homelessness; however, the delivery of emergency shelter services, housing programs and wrap-around health, cultural, and social supports are necessary in order to help chronically homeless people locate and retain appropriate housing options. The way municipalities respond to homelessness is heavily influenced by funding agreements and authorities provided in legislation.

Cities were selected based on their population size, vacancy rates, homelessness data and weather conditions compared to Edmonton. Information included in this summary was gathered through an initial web-based scan, followed by virtual interviews ranging from 60 to 90 minutes. Administration is presenting the information provided by other cities as accurately and simply as possible. However, given the emergent nature of homelessness response and jurisdictional differences between cities, the findings presented are subject to change and do not necessarily capture the full scope of operational details of each individual city's response.

This summary is divided into five key areas of comparison and investigation:

1. Municipal mandate and jurisdictional authority
2. Municipal homelessness initiatives budgets
3. Municipal role in homelessness initiatives
4. Staffing models and homelessness activities
5. Municipal homelessness activities: accountability and reporting

Municipal Mandate and Jurisdictional Authority

Some municipalities in Canada are “designated community entities” under funding streams of the federal Reaching Home: Canada’s Homelessness Strategy, which is a community-based program aimed at preventing or reducing homelessness. It provides direct funding to designated community entities, as well as to Indigenous and rural and

remote communities, to support their efforts in addressing local needs and to develop local solutions to houselessness. Some of the activities that designated community entities undertake include:

- addressing local houselessness needs by introducing a Coordinated Access system, which prioritizes people in need of services and matches them to those which best suit their needs;
- delivering housing programs;
- the development of a real-time information system which supports daily operations and data collection;
- increases the understanding of houselessness by participating in national benchmarking activities, such as the Point in Time Count;
- developing a Community Plan that is approved by the Community Advisory Board (CAB) of the designated community and includes community-wide outcomes to measure progress towards ending houselessness.

In addition, there are differences in provincial legislation as to the role that municipalities play in houselessness matters. For example, in Ontario, the *Housing Services Act* allows the province to designate municipalities as service managers who then have an obligation to address housing and houselessness within their municipality. Alberta does not have equivalent legislation to this.

Provincial funding considerations are also important. In Alberta, the distribution of Outreach and Support Services Initiative (OSSI) funding from the provincial government is distributed to both municipal corporations and community-based organizations, to deliver Housing First programming and support local houselessness priorities. In cities where OSSI funding is distributed to the municipality, the depth of the City's role is more significant than in communities where OSSI funding is distributed to a community-based organization. In British Columbia, BC Housing¹ develops, manages and administers subsidized housing options across the province and works with the ministry responsible for housing to address housing gaps, which range from emergency shelter and rent assistance. The City of Vancouver works with a range of decentralized service partners to increase affordable housing supply and connect individuals with housing programs.

All cities interviewed identified that their scope expanded due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, many municipalities temporarily led initiatives to provide housing and shelter services for the first time or expanded their

¹ BC Housing is a service delivery Crown corporation created by the B.C. government to provide programs and services for the people of British Columbia.

existing service delivery model in response to increased need and public health requirements. Most cities identified that although the temporary and expanded services have ended, the need for expanded housing and support services has not.

The table below provides a comparative summary of cities based on whether or not they receive funding from the federal and/or provincial governments.

Municipal Mandate and Jurisdictional Considerations			
City	Is the municipality a designated Community Entity for Reaching Home	Receives Regular Provincial Base Funding for Homelessness	Homelessness Plan (Community-led or City-led)
City of Edmonton	No	No	The Community Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness (2017) ²
City of Calgary	No	No	Guiding the Fight Against Homelessness Community Plan ³
City of Vancouver	No	No	Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2012- 2021 ⁴
City of Winnipeg	No	No	End Homelessness Winnipeg: 5 Year Plan ⁵

² <http://endhomelessnessyeg.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Edmonton-Full-Booklet-web.pdf>

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http://www.calgaryhomeless.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Guiding-the-Fight-Against-Homelessness-Focus-to-2025_condensed.pdf

⁴ <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/housing-and-homeless-strategy-2012-2021pdf.pdf>

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<https://endhomelessnesswinnipeg.ca/wp-content/uploads/End-Homelessness-Winnipeg-5-Year-Plan-2020-2025-with-budget.pdf>

City of Red Deer	Yes	Yes	Community Housing & Homelessness Integrated Plan ⁶
City of Ottawa	Yes	Yes	10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan 2020-2030 ⁷
City of Toronto	Yes	Yes	Homelessness Solutions Service Plan Housing TO Action Plan ⁸
City of Hamilton	Yes	Yes	Coming Together to End Homelessness Systems Planning Framework ⁹
City of London	Yes	Yes	Housing Stability Municipal Action Plan ¹⁰

Municipal Homelessness Initiatives Budgets

In order to identify how homelessness initiatives are funded comparatively at a municipal level, the first column in the table below includes the total city budget for work as identified by the listed municipalities and then breaks out that total by contribution from varying orders of government where applicable. Unless otherwise noted, this table does not include funding for affordable housing capital projects or contributions from other orders of government to affordable housing builds, including supportive housing operational funding. For fair comparison, and to highlight

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<https://www.reddeer.ca/media/reddeerca/about-red-deer/social-well-being-and-community-initiatives/housing-and-homelessness/CHHIPTechnicalReport.pdf>

⁷ <https://documents.ottawa.ca/sites/documents/files/housingplan20202030.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2021/ec/bgrd/backgroundfile-171730.pdf>

⁹ <https://www.hamilton.ca/sites/default/files/2022-08/homelessness-hamiltons-system-planning-framework-report.pdf>

¹⁰

<https://london.ca/sites/default/files/2020-10/2020-01-24%20181029038-COL-Homeless-Prevention-And-Housing-Plan-Report-E-MAIL-WEB%20%28002%29.pdf>

the variation between cities in the amount of funding allocated for homelessness initiatives, Administration has chosen to isolate these budgets from capital development.

There is a correlation between budget size and whether or not the municipal government receives direct federal and provincial funding. The scope of homelessness initiatives in instances where the municipality receives both provincial and federal funding is much broader than what is included in Edmonton's response and can include: shelter service delivery, rent supplements, housing services coordination and delivery of Housing First programming, expanded outreach services, encampment resolution and more. All cities Administration spoke to identified a challenge in accurately depicting the cost of homelessness initiatives given the indirect impacts homelessness has on different business areas in the corporation. Depending on how the homelessness unit is structured, the costs incurred by fire departments, police services, parks and encampment clean-up, city clean-up efforts more broadly, and in some cases public health costs, may not be represented in the overall cost.

Municipal Homelessness Initiatives Budgets				
City	Total Homelessness Budget	City Funding Contribution	Provincial Funding Contribution	Federal Funding Contribution
City of Edmonton	NA	\$ 8.3 million*	NA	NA
City of Calgary	NA	Community Safety Investment Fund: \$16 million (\$8 million from City and \$8 million from Calgary Police Service for warming spaces, outreach, and other supports)** \$750,000 for winter response in 2022	NA	NA
City of Vancouver	NA	\$16 million to social supports***	NA	NA

Attachment 3

City of Winnipeg	NA	\$1.35 million	NA	NA
City of Red Deer	\$6.8 million	\$983,000	\$3.8 million	\$2 million
City of Ottawa	\$245 million****	\$152.48 million	\$68.2 million	\$24.6 million
City of Toronto	\$711.63 million	\$465.77 million	\$162.49 million	\$83.37 million
City of Hamilton	\$44.3 million	\$6.4 million	\$27.9 million	\$10 million
City of London	\$25 million	\$1.6 million	NA	NA

*City of Edmonton cost accounting is approximate and includes encampment response, funding to Homeward Trust, the Community Outreach Transit Team, homelessness prevention and extreme weather response. A full cost account of work across the corporation will occur in the next phase of the Corporate Homelessness Plan project.

** Funding supports Calgary's Mental Health and Addictions Strategy and prioritizes funding for: crisis services, outreach services and the emergency response system in Calgary. Many but not all funded programs respond to homelessness.

*** The City of Vancouver is currently developing a memo on the total cost of homelessness activities, which may provide a more holistic account in the future.

**** The City of Ottawa provided their budget breakdown including affordable and community housing development costs.

Municipal Role in Homelessness Initiatives

Every city identified themselves as funders and supporters of their nonprofit partners and/or the Community Entity (in cases where the municipality is not the Community Entity). Municipalities are partners and collaborators in various initiatives related to the community's overall homelessness response. They also identify themselves as "connectors," or "brokers" in problem solving alongside community partners and other orders of government.

Attachment 3

One common lever that all municipalities control to some degree are zoning and land-use policies. This explains why every municipality plays, at minimum, a land-use role in affordable housing development. However, when it comes to the development of homelessness policy and corresponding delivery of programs and services, it is observed that the scope of the work depends on the level of funding and/or statutory authority. For example, some cities have policies around rent protection, others indicate where people can and cannot sleep outdoors. The level of policy development and corresponding action then appears to have impacts on the levels of accountability, evaluation and reporting completed by a municipality. It was observed that municipalities with a higher level of statutory authority (for example, those found in Ontario, conferred upon them by the province), had more independent accountability and evaluation processes. These municipalities develop and implement their community plans to end homelessness with their partners and these municipalities are then required to report back to council on their progress.

Municipal Role in Homelessness Initiatives						
City	Funder/ Contractor	Homelessness Service Provider (front line)*	Housing Services Provider	System Planner	Housing Developer	Policy Developer
City of Edmonton	Yes	No	No**	No	Yes	Yes
City of Calgary	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
City of Vancouver	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
City of Winnipeg	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
City of Red Deer	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
City of Ottawa	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
City of Toronto	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Attachment 3

City of Hamilton	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
City of London	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

*Specific to the delivery of housing and homelessness case management and support services that connect individuals experiencing homelessness to permanent health and housing options.

**Administration will manage affordable housing units on a temporary basis due to special circumstances.

Staffing Models of Homelessness Activities

All municipalities identified that there is shared responsibility and integration across departments to respond to homelessness that cannot be neatly defined through FTE allocation. This is also true for the City of Edmonton as demonstrated in the City Auditor's report (OCA01289, June 17, 2022, Audit Committee).

Municipalities that are the designated Community Entity were more clearly able to define their staffing models than those who are not. This is due in part to the fact that homelessness service delivery is clearly defined as a part of their scope and funding agreements with other orders of government as indicated in the Municipal Homelessness Initiatives Budgets table above. In circumstances where a clear FTE allocation was not available, the municipality provided notes which have been included in the table below.

Staffing Models of Homelessness Activities		
City	Dedicated Homelessness FTEs	Homelessness Initiatives and Activities
City of Edmonton	4	The FTEs included in this table are representative of the Affordable Housing and Homelessness section and do not include representation across the corporation and from EPS as indicated in the City Response to Homelessness Audit. Work to identify these staff and include them in future cost accounts will happen in the next phase of the Corporate Homelessness Plan project.

Attachment 3

City of Calgary	NA	The City of Calgary's role in the homeless sector, outside of frontline operations like police and bylaw services, is to convene City services and community partners for both immediate issues and longer term planning. These efforts are spread across multiple work areas. The City also delivers numerous targeted funding investments to community agencies supporting Calgarians experiencing homelessness.
City of Vancouver	36	The City of Vancouver has a team of 30 Homelessness Outreach Services workers responsible for supporting vulnerable citizens on the street through storefront sites in Vancouver. They also offer shelter services in some community spaces and include warming and cooling centres as part of their weather response. There is a dedicated coordinator position within the City of Vancouver to align homelessness services across departments for internal systems planning. There are also 4 regular full time staff and one Administrative position, these positions are funded by the city.
City of Winnipeg	NA	The City of Winnipeg does not have full-time dedicated staff for homelessness responses; however, there are four staff that support homelessness response initiatives as part of their workload. The Community Services Department focuses on homelessness and poverty reduction initiatives along with other duties. Their staff response includes a member of the Fire Department that sits on their Encampment Response Team and City funding supports their encampment response. The City of Winnipeg also allocates grant funds to service organizations for mobile outreach services and 24/7 safe spaces.
City of Red Deer	4 FTEs and 2 PTEs	The City of Red Deer has one dedicated FTE in the Safe and Healthy Communities Department that coordinates the internal and external response to homelessness. Of the total six positions, two FTEs are tax-levy funded and the remainder are grant supported. Responsibilities of the City include: system planning, funds administration, and encampment response. Not included in the FTEs are tax-levy funded Parks & Public works and Community Policing staff who respond to encampments.
City of Ottawa	83	The City of Ottawa has 83 staff in the Homelessness Branch, 51 staff (including casual staff) fall under the Family Shelter Unit and are responsible for operations of the City owned/operated family shelter. City staff play a variety of other roles including system planning and coordination, funding allocation and direct service delivery.

City of Toronto	1,060.9 positions (21.0 capital and 1,039.9 operating)	The City's housing and homelessness-focused areas in their Community and Social Services Department are: (a) Shelter Supports and Housing Administration, and (b) the Housing Secretariat. Shelter Supports and Housing Administration is the homeless services system planner in Toronto. The scope of this work includes funding and delivering emergency shelters and overnight services, street outreach, and refugee services.
City of Hamilton	31	13 FTEs are allocated for frontline case work; 15 FTEs are on the Homelessness Policy and Programs Team and are responsible for research and policy development for the City's coordinated access system, the management of Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS), and all contracts for administering funding to community providers. There are three FTEs dedicated to Housing Focused Street Outreach.
City of London	36	This number includes six FTEs who are seconded Municipal Enforcement Officers who sit in the Housing Stability Services Unit. The unit is responsible for shelter funding and operating and includes encampment and coordinated informed responses. City staff are partially funded through provincial and federal funding agreements.

Municipal Homelessness Activities: Accountability and Reporting

Table 5 indicates how different Canadian municipalities track activities and evaluate effectiveness. Municipalities that are the designated Community Entity for their community are more likely to have goals and targets related to ending homelessness and a clear framework for achieving those goals than municipal governments who are not the designated Community Entity. This is due to the fact that in most cases the designated Community Entity also acts as the system planner organization, meaning they host and coordinate client data that can be used to produce evaluation reports of programs and services. In cities where the designated Community Entity is a community-based organization, the strategic plans that include targets and evaluation frameworks, often called Community Plans, are created and implemented by the designated Community Entity and supported by service partners and other orders of government. Typically the municipality will use the Community Plan as a framework for identifying the municipal role in responding to homelessness.

In Edmonton, Homeward Trust is the host of the Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS) and produces the By Name List, which is a real-time public facing dashboard that demonstrates the movement of individuals and families through housing programs and the number of people experiencing homelessness at any given time. Homeward Trust also produces annual Community Updates, which provide an evaluation of progress and impact against targets previously defined in the Community Plan.

The City of Edmonton does not currently have an evaluation framework for all of the homelessness response activities undertaken by impacted business areas across the corporation. Other municipalities who are also not the designated Community Entity identified that they are in a similar position, where there was no single framework to evaluate efforts, although specific initiatives often have internal measures to account for their work. For example, most municipalities track the impacts of encampments with similar measures to the City of Edmonton and provide updates to their City Council as required.

Municipal Homelessness Activities: Accountability and Reporting			
City	City Goals and Targets	City Evaluation Framework	Public Facing Dashboard
City of Edmonton	No (identified by Community Entity)	No	No
City of Calgary	No (identified by Community Entity)	No	No
City of Vancouver	No (identified by Community Entity)	No	No
City of Winnipeg	No (identified by Community Entity)	No	No
City of Red Deer	Yes	Yes System Framework for Housing and Supports ¹¹	No

¹¹

reddeer.ca/media/reddeerca/about-red-deer/social-well-being-and-community-initiatives/housing-and-homelessness/January-24,-2023---Red-Deer%27s-System-Framework---Performance-Management-Guide.pdf

Attachment 3

City of Ottawa	Yes	Yes- Measures in Plan 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan ¹²	Yes - Dashboard ¹³
City of Toronto	Yes	Yes- Measures in Plan Service Plan outcomes and measures ¹⁴	Yes - Dashboard ¹⁵
City of Hamilton	Yes	Yes 5 Year Action Plan Update in 2019 ¹⁶	Yes - Dashboard ¹⁷
City of London	Yes	Yes Stability Plan 2021 updates and 2022 priorities ¹⁸	No

¹² <https://documents.ottawa.ca/sites/documents/files/housingplan20202030.pdf>

¹³

<https://ottawa.ca/en/family-and-social-services/housing/temporary-emergency-accommodations-dashboard#section-2b8eb56a-9b52-4bdd-a880-4437473652ad>

¹⁴ toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/9885-Attachment-2-Homelessness-Solutions-Service-Plan.pdf

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toronto.ca/city-government/data-research-maps/research-reports/housing-and-homelessness-research-and-reports/shelter-system-flow-data/

¹⁶ <https://pub-hamilton.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=232007>

¹⁷ <https://housing-and-homelessness-dashboard-spatialsolutions.hub.arcgis.com/>

¹⁸ https://london.ca/sites/default/files/2022-08/CofL_HousingStablityReport_2022.pdf