Learnings from Implementation of the 2017 Plan to Prevent & End Homelessness

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Land Acknowledgement

We recognize we are gathered, in collaboration and with joint purpose, on Treaty 6 territory. This territory is the home and gathering place for diverse Indigenous peoples. The Cree, Blackfoot, Métis, Nakota Sioux, Iroquois, Dene, Inuit, and many others.

We know the importance of the Treaty and our responsibility to these communities and that only in partnership can we create the social change necessary to end homelessness. It is vital that we meaningfully engage and partner with Indigenous people and communities in this work.

It is important to recognize and address the conditions brought forth by colonialism. Displacement from traditional homelands, systemic racism, residential schools, the Sixties Scoop, and the ongoing overrepresentation of Indigenous people in child welfare, correctional systems, and homelessness are responsibilities we all share.

Context

This report is a precursor to the comprehensive *Community Plan to End Homelessness* currently being developed, which will provide detailed reporting on plan outcomes and lessons learned from the 2017-2023 period of implementation for the *2017 Plan to Prevent and End Homelessnes*s in Edmonton.

This document provides a preliminary analysis of the progress, challenges and learnings from the *2017 Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness* with its findings guiding our ongoing and future strategic planning, tactics and engagement.

Executive Summary

The 2017 *Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness* was informed by data, research, sector and community engagement. Despite this solid foundation, many unforeseen circumstances challenged efforts to end homelessness. This included the COVID-19 global pandemic, an economic downturn, and mental health and addiction crises. Despite these challenges, and thanks to the strategic direction of the 2017 Plan, significant progress was made. This included the following highlights:

Ongoing and tireless commitment to housing people

- Over 12, 000 housing placements since 2017
- Over 8, 500 people housed since 2017 and 15, 840 since 2009

Increased Capacity

- Investment into 71 programs and funding of over 200 support services including diversion, prevention and cultural services and programs facilitating our efforts to end homelessness

- In 2017, there were 20 teams and a focus on scattered-site Housing First programs; in 2023 there are 48 teams and an increased breadth of programs that include light-touch Supportive Referrals programming to 24/7 Supported Housing, and the full spectrum in between
- Substantial growth of housing infrastructure including Supportive Housing with 644 supportive housing units (443 units open present day, and a further 161 units in process)

Data and Community-Informed approach

By Name List created in 2019 : From the "By-Name List (BNL)"; a real-time list of all people experiencing homelessness in a community, 18,377 individuals and 1,240 families were connected to services and housing with the Coordinated Access team reviewing each person added to the BNL.

Coordinated Access: HTE is a national leader in this space, enabling the sector to be more responsive to current and changing circumstances within the homeless-serving landscape. A subset of the BNL, Coordinated Access is a list of those screened, prioritized and engaged in matching people with the best service available to meet their needs. Additionally, it is not bound to one fixed location meeting people when and where they need assistance. Over the last year, the Coordinated Access team has referred, on average, over 200 people each month to housing teams.

Community Engagement: Homelessness is a complex issue requiring engagement and collaboration among various stakeholders to ensure meaningful opportunities for feedback and evaluation and to ensure Plan implementation is responsive to current circumstances. We actively plan and conduct ongoing, frequent and deep engagement with stakeholders of key community, sector, Indigenous, lived and living experience . This guides and informs efforts to ensure we are responsive to current circumstances and provides meaningful opportunities for feedback and evaluation of Plan implementation.

In addition to highlighting achievements, this report will also detail the challenges that prevented progress in some areas, supported by a preliminary data analysis of the macroeconomic and social factors contributing to increased inflow of people into homelessness. This information provides the foundation for a summary of "lessons learned", which ultimately continues to support evidence that a robust, well-designed plan is vital to both end and prevent homelessness.

The outcomes and successes from the 2017 plan (and future efforts) depend on sector collaboration with a united and consistent homeless-serving sector. In its role as the System Planner Organization, Homeward Trust Edmonton (HTE) takes a leadership role in sector collaboration while also acknowledging the boundaries of our role and that of our partners, working separately but collaboratively in law enforcement, community safety, encampments, addictions and mental health. This includes Alberta Health Services, Edmonton Police Services as well as key community, sector and government stakeholders from frontline service providers to Indigenous

leaders and persons with lived experience – all groups who influence the landscape and play vital roles in ending the eventual end of homelessness in Edmonton.

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The Role of The Systems Planner Organization

Navigating the complexities of homelessness demands a robust, systems-based approach to addressing homelessness and its root causes. As the designated Systems Planner Organization, Homeward Trust stands at the helm of this mission, orchestrating a comprehensive response strategy and taking a leadership role in sector collaboration and response.

Homeward Trust's scope transcends the boundaries of service providers and government roles. Using a data and community-informed approach, it leads and operates Edmonton's coordinated access system, provides frontline services - and designs and implements purposeful programs to address the issues of homelessness while maintaining rigorous performance management, quality assurance, and return on investment oversight.

As shown, the role of the Systems Planner Organization is to manage the homelessness response while advancing systems integration with allied systems of care, government, non-profit, and civil society partners. It involves the development and implementation of coordinated, integrated, and efficient systems that work together to prevent and end homelessness in a community, which includes leading new approaches and a commitment to fostering continuous improvement.

Funding Coordination & Performance Management Oversight

Homeward Trust works with all orders of government to allocate funds to the areas of greatest impact and need while reporting on impact and effectively stewarding the funds it oversees. As outlined in its contractual obligations, Homeward Trust has key roles with the Government of Alberta as a Community-Based Organization (CBO), the Community Entity (CE) with the Government of Canada, and with the City of Edmonton as the funding steward, coordinator, and manager impactfully leading local efforts to end homelessness. Additionally, we make accessing funding easier and more efficient, reducing the need for each front-line serving agency to apply for funding and report on impact individually.

The core funding accountabilities HT currently oversees by source and subsequent investment:

2023/2024 Homeward Trust - Community Investments

Shelters: $4.1M	**Connections to Long-Term Solutions**
Outreach, Triage, Assessment, and Diversion: $7.4M	
Interim Housing: $3.8 M	
Rent Supplement/Graduate Rental Assistance Initiative: $4.7	**Homeless Prevention**
Prevention: $1.9M	
Discharge Planning and Coordination: $0.4M	
Scattered Site ICM: $11.7M	**Housing Supports**
Scattered Site ACT: $3.0M	
Rapid Re-Housing and Youth Housing First: $3.7M	
Congregate SH 2 - up to 8hr/day Mixed Supports: $1.5M	
Congregate SH 1 24/7 Complex: $13.8M	
Supports to assist other activities: $4.8M	**Program Supports**
Drop-In & Warming Centres: $1.0M	

Funding sources: $1.1M MUNICIPAL; $15.2M FEDERAL DESIGNATED; $45.4 M PROVINCIAL

Accountability is embedded in Homeward Trust's operations through the auditing and reporting required for the funding it receives. This includes detailed monthly reports to the Government of Alberta, quarterly reports to federal counterparts as well as community and annual reports which all ensure strict adherence to compliance standards and alignment with overarching goals. HTE is also subject to audit by its funders - inclusive of its client case files, housing operations, data management, and privacy/data security compliance in light of the highly sensitive client records it maintains on behalf of the funded program portfolio.

Systems Coordination & Community Engagement

Homeward Trust is not just accountable to its government partners but also to the community it serves. It produces a comprehensive annual report as well as a secondary report to the community, effectively communicating its strategies, outcomes, and future plans. This commitment to transparency and engagement facilitates ongoing dialogue with stakeholders, allowing for shared insight, continuous improvement, and collaborative problem-solving.

We deeply engage with a diverse range of stakeholders including government bodies, service providers, community organizations, and, most importantly, those who are experiencing or have experienced homelessness. This rich network of perspectives informs its strategic direction, ensuring efforts remain grounded in the realities of those they strive to serve.

Additionally, it leverages advanced data analytics, machine learning, and forecasting to remain a progressive leader in the evolving landscape of homelessness. This allows the organization to anticipate trends and adapt strategies proactively while providing the necessary financial and contractual controls. The organization conducts *Point-In-Time* (PiT) counts for real-time snapshots of homelessness, while ongoing research collaborations enrich its understanding of the complexities of homelessness.

Homeward Trust is the central hub for coordinating homelessness services in Edmonton. It identifies and triages those who require assistance, helping over 20,000 individuals access services since 2020. This is made possible by real-time reporting and data sharing through a *Homelessness Management Information System* (HMIS) utilized by all contracted service providers, which includes 60 points of entry into the Coordinated Access system. The image below outlines the collection and reporting process underpinning the system of care in Edmonton.
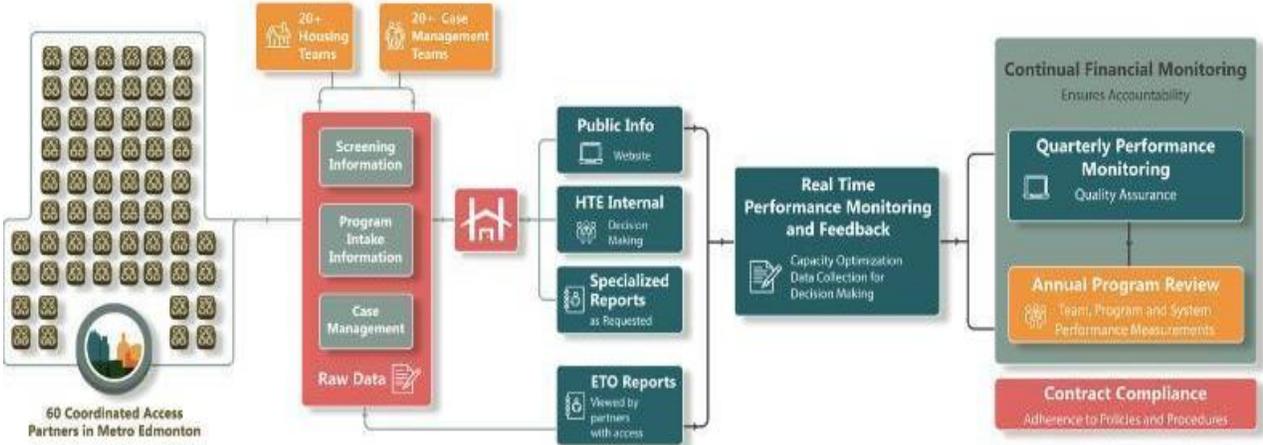
Progress against the 2017 Plan

Plan Fundamentals

The 2017 Plan distinguished itself as one of the country's most rigorous, leveraging data and forecasting to formulate effective strategies. Utilizing insights from shelter use, program performance, and scenario planning, the strategy addressed, though not entirely, the need for policy changes. This comprehensive approach set a high standard nationally for data-informed decision-making in the effort to prevent and end homelessness.

As comprehensive as the 2017 strategic plan was, it inevitably contained assumptions and faced data blind spots. Unforeseen events, like the global pandemic, and changes in civic and social circumstances such as the

complexities of the growing mental health and addiction crises impacted our efforts and underscored the necessity for adaptability and flexibility within strategic planning to respond to changing circumstances.

Despite these unexpected challenges, there were several key areas of success as the Plan's core principles remained intact. This included the commitment to housing as a human right, the implementation of a person-centred approach, and the emphasis on addressing systemic root causes of homelessness, which remained fundamental tenets of the strategy. The Plan's call for systems accountability, particularly in areas of affordable housing, justice, and health, was a crucial step. Its recognition of the impact of colonial systems on Indigenous communities and the need for focus on key populations such as youth and racialized communities proved to be insightful and remain strategically significant and relevant.

### Progress since 2017: capacity, programs, and impact

As the diagram below illustrates, the tenets of the 2017 plan guided the investment in 71 different programs and resulted in over 8,500 unique individuals being successfully housed since 2017. The average cost to support each person through this initiative has been $21,600, showcasing the substantial resources committed to addressing the challenge of homelessness in Edmonton.

2017 - 2023 Homeward Trust-led efforts to address homelessness results

12K+	**8.5K+**	**88%**	**18%**
Housing Placements	People Housed	Chronically homeless	Unsheltered

71	**644**	**2.3K+**	**$21.6K**
Programs	Supportive Housing Spaces	Caseload Capacity	Cost per person housed

The Plan has also resulted in increased capacity including the ability to provide caseload capacity of **2,366** s at any given time, substantial growth of housing infrastructure, and increased capacity with **644 current and in-process supportive housing units in 2023**. Additionally, 12,000 housing placements were completed with 88% of those placements for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness and 18% catered to individuals who were sleeping rough or unsheltered. This demonstrates the Plan's wide-reaching impacts and ability to target, and ultimately assist, some of our population's most vulnerable while improving housing availability for those in need in Edmonton.

From the "By-Name List (BNL)"; a real-time list of all people experiencing homelessness in a community, 18,377 individuals and 1,240 families were connected to services and housing, which highlights the Plan's wide-reaching and comprehensive nature.
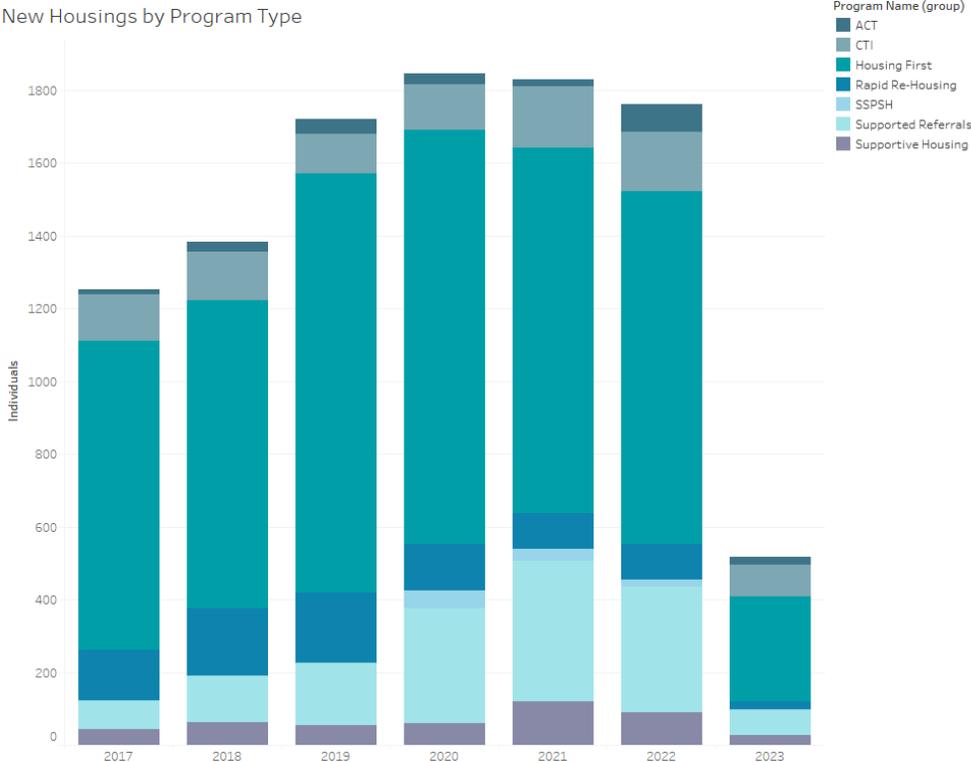
Notably, the funded services achieved a significant success rate, with **72%** of individuals remaining stably housed 12 months after initial placement despite the high rates of chronicity of those being housed. This showed the effectiveness of the Plan's strategies in not just providing immediate relief but also fostering lasting stability for those affected by homelessness.

Plan Assumptions

The 2017 Plan was rooted in several key assumptions and calls to action, some of which did not fully come to fruition, such as needed funding, reflecting the inherent uncertainties of complex systems and any planning endeavour. To meet its targets, the Plan called for a net new increase of $30 million per year of operational funding to meet unmet demand, ramping up homeless interventions to $65 million annually for Edmonton.

As governments struggled to respond to economic hits this funding was not realized, although additional funding did come through for temporary crisis responses. In 2017, Homeward Trust coordinated $30 million of

direct program funding, and while the number has increased to $48 million in 2023, this increase has not fully kept up with population growth and the inflow of individuals experiencing homelessness, as well as the increasing costs of program operations due to inflationary pressures.

The plan also called for the development of additional affordable housing units, including 916 new supportive housing spaces. New supportive housing units did come on stream but only accounted for 226 supportive housing units funded through Homeward Trust and an additional 210 units from the five new projects funded by the federal Rapid Housing Initiatives and in partnership with the City of Edmonton and operators. These units were also expected earlier in the Plan's implementation and the delay in occupancy further impacted overall system bottlenecks.

Macro-Economic & Policy Changes

Several factors have since emerged that have had a significant impact on the progression of the Plan, which will be explained in more detail in the Challenges & Opportunities section of this report. At a high level, it is helpful to understand the following factors that challenged the 2017 Plan's assumptions:

→ **Economic downturn:** The downturn in the oil and gas industry led to widespread job losses and increased financial insecurity, contributing to a rise in homelessness. This significantly increased the demand for homeless interventions and affordable housing, impacting our assumptions about the level of funding required and the number of people needing housing.

→ **COVID-19 pandemic:** The pandemic profoundly impacted the economy and people's lives, leading to increased housing insecurity. It also affected the development of new housing units and the delivery of homeless interventions, affecting our assumptions about housing supply and the number of people we could house.

→ **Changes in government and policy**: Shifts in government and policy can affect the availability of funding for homeless interventions and the development of affordable housing. They can also influence the number of people experiencing homelessness and the types of interventions needed.

→ **Increase in individuals discharged into homelessness from public systems:** The number of people becoming homeless after being discharged from health, corrections, and child intervention systems has increased significantly. This has increased the demand for homeless interventions and affected our assumptions about the inflow rates into chronic and episodic homelessness.

→ **Changes in societal attitudes towards homelessness:** Public awareness and concern about homelessness have increased over the years, leading to greater demand for solutions and affecting our assumptions about the level of support for our strategies.

→ **Increase in housing costs:** The cost of housing has risen faster than incomes in many areas, leading to increased housing insecurity and homelessness. This has affected our assumptions about the number of people needing housing and the funding required for homeless interventions and affordable housing development.

➜ **Changes in the number of unsheltered and sheltered individuals**: The increase in the number of unsheltered individuals and the decrease in the number of sheltered individuals have affected our assumptions about the distribution of homelessness and the types of interventions needed.

Implementing the Plan during the Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic presented unprecedented challenges, necessitating agile, innovative responses. Homeward Trust implemented emergency measures while relentlessly focusing on its core mission - preventing and ending homelessness. The organization expanded its support networks, offering resources for Indigenous organizations aiding individuals in temporary accommodations like hotels, which represented a crucial aspect of the organization's pandemic response, ensuring that vulnerable populations received the necessary support.

Emergency Response Measures - Amidst the crisis, Homeward Trust swiftly spearheaded and championed pivotal emergency responses such as the Expo Centre, Tipinawâw, and Pekiwewin. These strategic initiatives offered immediate shelter and essential support to the most vulnerable populations at the pandemic's peak.

Interim Housing Options - To combat homelessness during COVID-19, a comprehensive system-wide approach was coordinated to mobilize resources, adding 424 new spaces at facilities including Coliseum Inn, Travelodge, Sandy's Place, Pimatisiwin, and Jockey Dorms. Additionally, Homeward Trust played a vital role in operating the Edmonton EXPO Centre and collaborated with Hope Mission, E4C, Mustard Seed, and YESS, to introduce a real-time dashboard monitoring shelter usage and overseeing 843 emergency shelter beds daily.

Maintaining Housing Accessibility - Despite the challenges posed by pandemic-induced closures, Homeward Trust and its partner service providers relentlessly ensured continued access to housing. Services were adapted and reshaped in response to the evolving circumstances. Our Coordinated Access (CA) team maintained a physical presence at emergency sites, such as the Edmonton Public Library outdoors, Radius Health Center, and community drop-ins like Bissell and Boyle upon reopening.

Challenges & Opportunities

The context in which the 2017 Plan is being implemented has undergone significant shifts, posing new challenges to addressing homelessness in Edmonton. Using newly released 2021 Census Data, findings from the 2022 Point in Time Count, By-Name List data, and information supplied by Alberta Health Services, the preliminary data analysis below provides some evidence that both explains and supports the experiences of those using the system and the sector more broadly between the 2017 Plan and today. Notable changes are highlighted below, although the work currently being undertaken on the Community Plan update to be released later this year, including its appended studies, will provide significantly more detail.
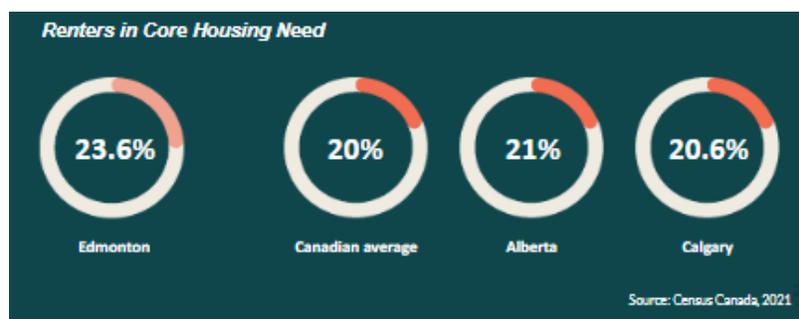
Affordable Housing Crisis Deepens Amidst COVID-19 Fallout: The long-standing affordable housing crisis in Canada and Edmonton is well known and was only worsened by the impacts of COVID and its economic aftermath on the cost of living.

While the 2021 Census was collecting data amidst significant challenges, and CERB benefits likely skewed results, it revealed the stark reality of households at the core of the housing need.

| 2021 Households in Core Housing Need, Census 2021			
Income Category	Owners	Renters	Total
Less than $20,000 (Very Low)	1,600	3,110	4,710

According to the Census 2021 data in the income category of less than $20,000 (Very Low), there were 1,600 owner households and 3,110 renter households, totalling 4,710 households experiencing core housing need. These 4,710 households represent individuals at genuine risk of experiencing homelessness, should current trends of affordability and inflation continue. This data underscores the urgency to address the pressing issue of affordable housing and the importance of finding sustainable solutions to ensure access to safe and affordable housing for all Edmontonians.

Unaffordable Rental Market Strains Edmonton's Lowest-Income Renters: At the lower end of the rental market, Edmonton renters are particularly hard-pressed to find housing they can afford. Compared to other markets, these renters are facing a worsening situation, and increasing migration into Edmonton for employment opportunities increases demand on the housing rental market and continues to drive pricing upwards.

Renters in Core Housing Need

| 23.6%	20%	21%	20.6%
Edmonton	Canadian average	Alberta	Calgary

Source: Census Canada, 2021

In turn, the inadequacy of financial support for those at the lowest levels of the income spectrum who are dependent on government benefits for income are increasingly unable to compete for the limited rental stock available. When comparing the Sources of Income data from the 2016 to 2022 PiT Counts, there is an increase in those experiencing homelessness reporting a high dependence on income support and disability benefits.

Edmonton's Significant Growth and Unmet Housing Needs

**Distribution of Main Sources of Income, Edmonton, PiT 2016 - 2022**
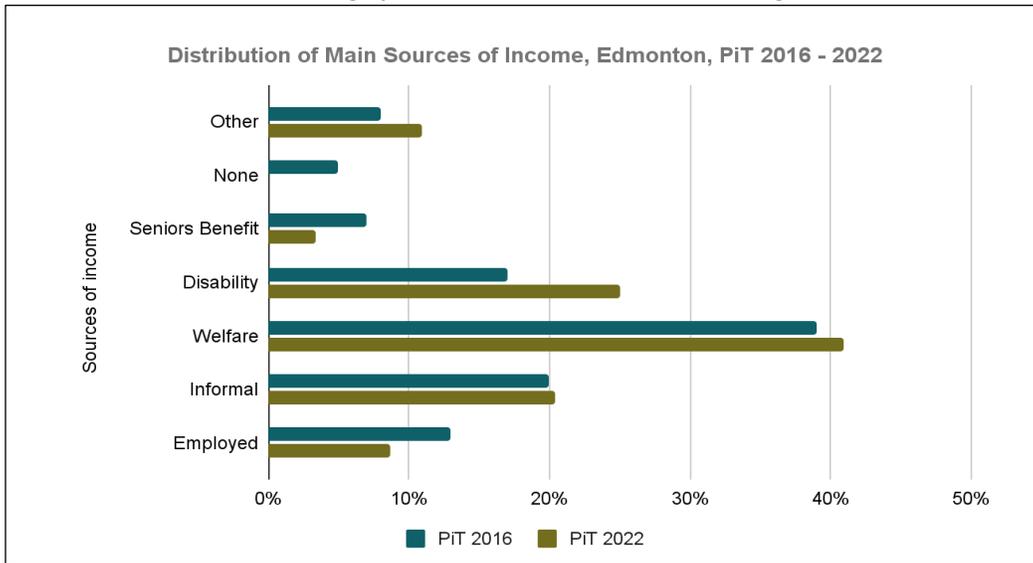
Beyond the housing market dynamics, Edmonton has emerged as one of Canada's fastest-growing major cities - faster than Vancouver, Montreal, Calgary, and Toronto, comparing 2016 to 2021 data. While growth slowed down compared to previous years, the pressure added by incoming migrants further stresses the infrastructure of the city to keep pace with social, health, and housing needs. The pressure on the low-end rental stock, which is in highest demand for lower income groups, creates conditions for the displacement of populations seen as less 'desirable' by landlords and makes re/entry more difficult.
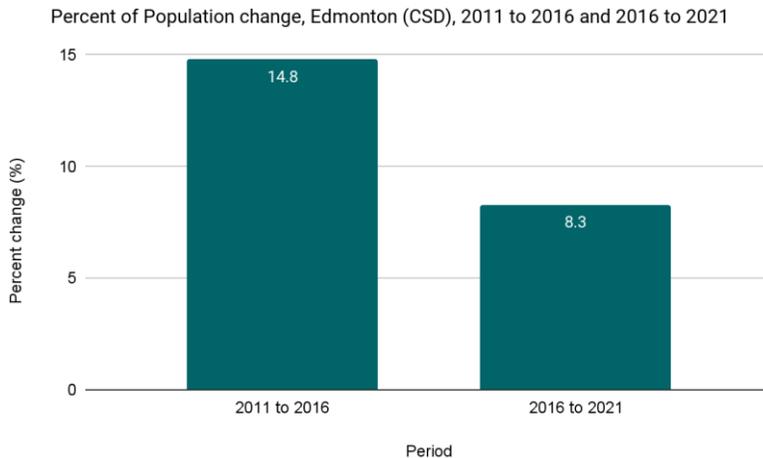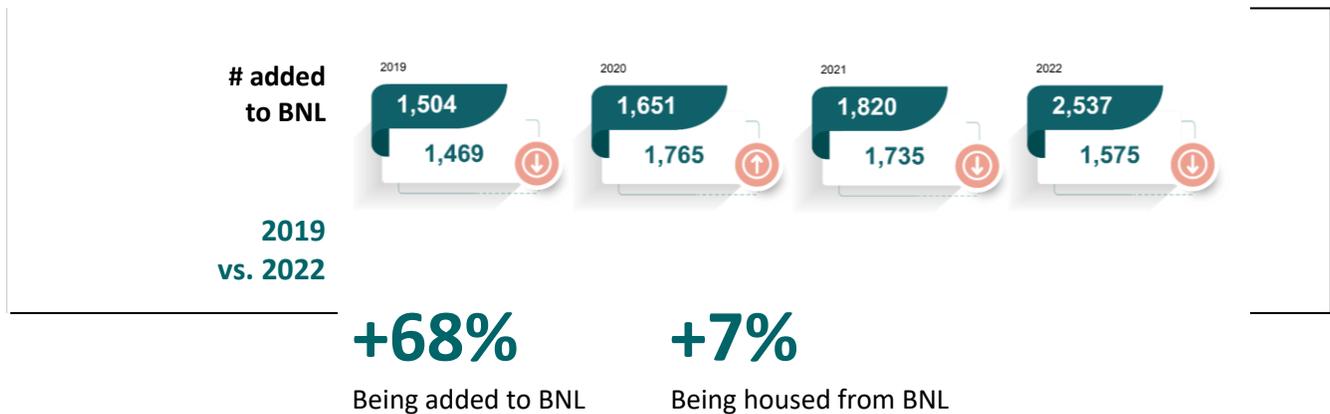

Notably, the PiT count suggests that while a smaller percentage of those surveyed noted they were new to Edmonton for less than one year, 70% have either always lived here, or been here for five years or more. This suggests that displacement is occurring within the local population alongside migration into homelessness.

Length of Time in Edmonton
2022 Homeless PIT Count (n=578); Excluded, Don't know, Declined to Answer
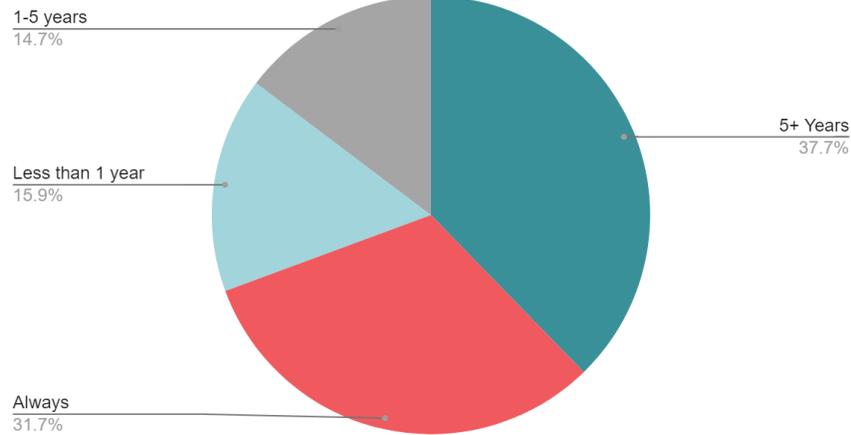
1-5 years
14.7%

5+ Years
37.7%

Less than 1 year
15.9%

Always
31.7%

As the inflows into homelessness show, there is a bottleneck effect as more people become homeless than the system can process. The figures below show that the number being added in 2019 compared to 2022 grew by 68%. The homeless-serving sector increased housing activity by 7%: however, between the challenges posed by the greater inflow, as well as aforementioned challenges of COVID, mental health and addictions, inflationary pressures, and other shifting landscapes, the rate of positive outcomes has lagged behind inflow into homelessness.

Bottleneck Effect: More People Entering Homelessness Than the System Can House

 # added to BNL

2019	2020	2021	2022
1,504	1,651	1,820	2,537
1,469	1,765	1,735	1,575

2019 vs. 2022

+68%
Being added to BNL

+7%
Being housed from BNL

As the inflows into homelessness show, there is a bottleneck effect as more people become homeless than the system can process. The figures below show that the number being added in 2019 compared to 2022 grew by 68%. The homeless-serving sector increased housing activity by 7%: however, between the challenges posed by the greater inflow, as well as aforementioned challenges of COVID, mental health and addictions, inflationary pressures, and other shifting landscapes, the rate of positive outcomes has lagged behind inflow into homelessness.

Shelter Occupancy Rates Reach Capacity, Encampments on the Rise: *Not* surprisingly, the bottleneck effect is visible in the growing shelter occupancy rates as well. The fill rate of the most recent daily pull across shelters in Edmonton shows the system is at capacity in July - usually, a time when space availability is aided by milder weather. Specifically, intox beds are consistently over capacity. This further reaffirms the challenges on encampments and the estimated 700 people who are sleeping rough across the public spaces and parks.

	Occupancy	Capacity	Fill Rate
July 25, 2023	793	793	100%
July 25, 2022	582	636	92%
July 25, 2021	551	668	82%
July 25, 2020*	433	918	47%
July 25, 2019	493	776	64%
July 25, 2018	482	716	67%

* 2020 numbers included 400+ pandemic added spaces in multiple decentralized sites, including 200 isolation spaces at the Edmonton Expo Centre

This confirms the growing trend in overall estimates of people experiencing homelessness further, which reached 3,170 in 2023 - a historical high for the city.

People experiencing homelessness
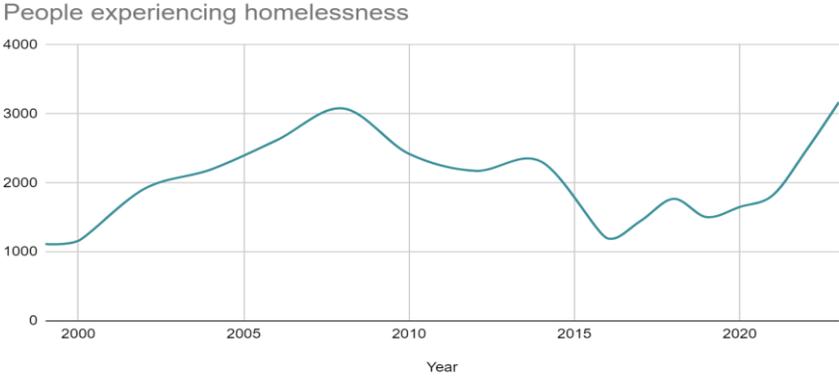
Importantly - the complexity of the needs of those experiencing homelessness today has shifted considerably. Edmonton is being impacted by the synthetic drug crisis at a much higher rate than other communities, as suggested by the Alberta Health Services Opioid Dependency Program (ODP), 2022 data:

Deaths related to Meth and Opioids Per Capita
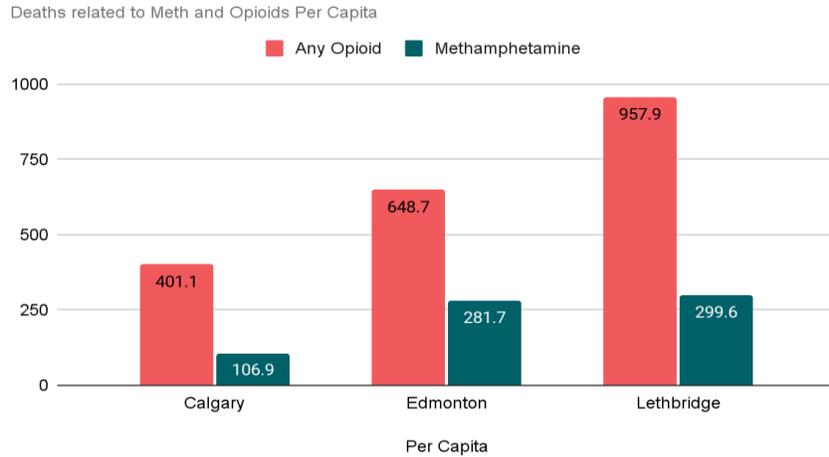
Impact of Synthetic Drug Crisis on Homelessness: These challenges are manifesting in the self-reported rates of substance use and mental health issues in the homeless population. Of those who responded, 84% reported a substance use challenge - with 66% reporting mental health issues.

Current Health Challenges, Total Responses, Edmonton, PiT 2022
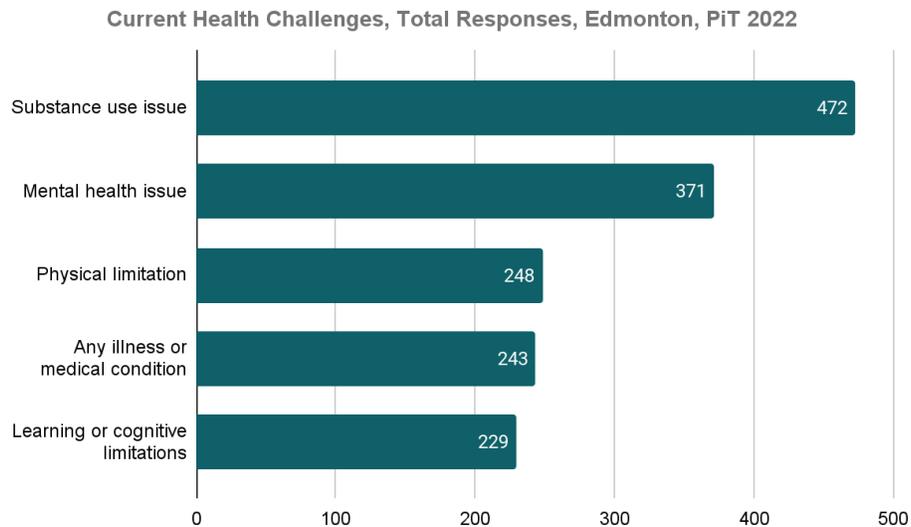
Complex Needs and Chronicity in the Homeless Population. These factors compound with underlying challenges leading to housing instability and loss. Of note, these challenges are contributing to a significant proportion of chronicity in the population enumerated in the PIT count suggesting the complexity of needs is increasing over time.

Chronic Homelessness, Edmonton, PiT Count, 2016 – 2022
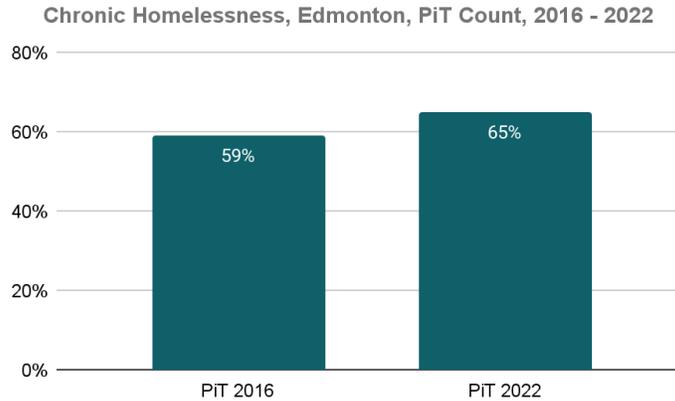
Inflow from Public Systems Exacerbates Homelessness: *The below table describes the location of individuals enumerated during the PiT count; at their current location on the night of the count.* A telltale statistic from the 2022 PiT count is the over 30-fold increase in homelessness reported from institutional health and justice facilities from the 2016 count. It is perhaps a reasonable assumption that one reason for this massive increase is that the housing status of inpatients or inmates is recorded and reported more regularly in 2022 vs. 2016, however, this data trend is still worthy of note as it is a reasonable inference that individuals discharged into homelessness from institutions may present with higher net acuity and complexity than the general population.

Count Setting	2016 Count	2022 Count	Difference	Change in Proportions 2016-2022
Unsheltered	388	545	157	**40%**
Emergency Shelter and VAW	690	706	16	**2%**
Transitional Housing	375	525	150	**40%**
Hotels or motels	71	7	-64	**-90%**
Treatment/Detox	0	185	185	**NEW**
Systems (Health / Corrections)	12	404	392	**3267%**
Staying with others	216	86	-130	**-60%**

Additionally, the proximity of correctional facilities in and around Edmonton results in a higher volume of individuals discharged from corrections than other Alberta cities. In total, 2798 correctional spaces are located within 1.5 hours of downtown Edmonton.

The table below outlines Alberta correctional facilities and their drive-times to Edmonton.

Facility/Institution Name	Time from Edmonton (hrs)	City	Province	Number of Spaces (2017-18)	Type (Federal/ Provincial)
Medicine Hat Remand Centre	6	Medicine Hat	Alberta	98	Provincial
Red Deer Remand Centre	2	Red Deer	Alberta	132	Provincial
Calgary Correctional Centre	3	Calgary	Alberta	291	Provincial
Calgary Remand Centre	3	Calgary	Alberta	614	Provincial
Peace River Correctional Centre	6	Peace River	Alberta	197	Provincial
Lethbridge Correctional Centre	6	Lethbridge	Alberta	322	Provincial
Fort Saskatchewan Correctional Centre	0.5	Fort Saskatchewan	Alberta	504	Provincial
Edmonton Remand Centre	0	Edmonton	Alberta	1546	Provincial
Edmonton Institution	0	Edmonton	Alberta	324	Federal
Edmonton Institution for Women	0	Edmonton	Alberta	167	Federal
Grierson Institution	0	Edmonton	Alberta	30	Federal
Pê Sâkâstêw Centre	1.5	Mâskwâcîs	Alberta	60	Federal
Drumheller Institution	3	Drumheller	Alberta	704	Federal
Grande Cache Institution	5	Grande Cache	Alberta	243	Federal

Impact of COVID on Hidden Homelessness and Support Networks: Of special note is the decrease in those entering homelessness from states of hidden homelessness and insecure housing - such as couch surfing, which saw a 60% decrease in the period. This confirms on-the-ground knowledge that informal networks of support frayed significantly during COVID - impacting the capacity of community supports to manage inflows organically further.

Disproportionate Overrepresentation of Indigenous People in Homelessness: When the specific subgroups are examined further, the disproportionate overrepresentation of Indigenous people must be noted as ten-fold that of the general population compared to those experiencing homelessness.

Indigenous People Over-Represented in Homelessness

56% By Names List - 2023

54% Homeless Point-in Time Count - 2022

6% General Population - Census - 2021
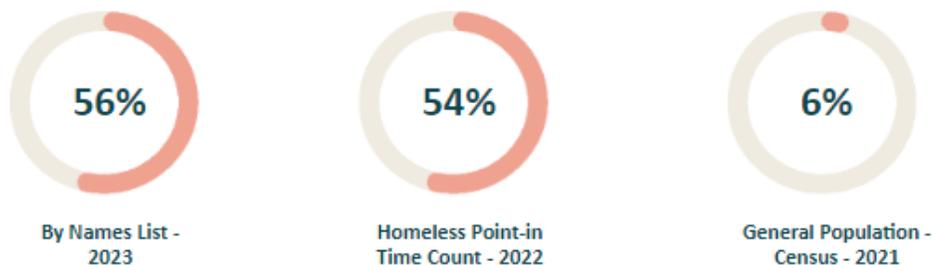
The significant overrepresentation of Indigenous people among the homeless population highlights a critical area of concern and a need for targeted efforts to address the underlying issues contributing to this disparity.

Where data was reliable in the PIT Count, Indigenous overrepresentation is corroborated in connections to public systems and those fleeing violence further:

➔ 65% of known racial identities enumerated as homeless in violence against women shelters were Indigenous

➔ 57% of known racial identities enumerated as homeless in Alberta Correctional Services Division were Indigenous

Lessons Learned

While there is significant data analysis and engagement underway to shape the Updated Community Plan, Homeward Trust will incorporate the lessons learned from executing the previous plan into future planning efforts. The section below provides a summary of the challenges our community faces in ending homelessness that must be addressed in future efforts, including some suggestions on policy and systems interventions that could be considered. These findings will be further explored with stakeholders in engagement for the Community Plan Update.

Complexity of Needs and Substance Use Challenges

The changing landscape of substance use, marked by an increase in poly-drug use and the emergence of potent substances like fentanyl, carfentanyl, and now xylazine, further elevates the vulnerability of the unhoused population. While scattered-site housing is often the available solution, it may not always be the ideal environment for these individuals. Hence, the pressing need for longer-term supportive housing, coupled with robust access to treatment and health supports, becomes evident. Despite the success of the scattered-site Housing First initiatives, recidivism is observed among individuals with high and increasingly complex needs. This underscores the importance of a holistic approach that extends beyond mere housing to address underlying issues such as mental health, addiction, and financial instability.

Increased Need for Supportive Housing and Supportive Living

There is an urgent requirement for an increased supply of both supportive housing and supportive living options for individuals experiencing homelessness and significant health issues. This is particularly critical considering the high prevalence of mental health issues and substance use among Edmonton's homeless population. With the mounting challenges posed by newer, more potent drugs, the damage to individuals' brains and bodies means they are likely to age faster, possibly triggering early-onset dementia and other accessibility issues. Therefore, it is vital to promptly address the need for more robust housing solutions that offer 24/7 services on-site. These services may be the more conventional case management and tenancy supports, in-reached medical supports (either via primary care attachment, homecare, or dedicated health teams), or higher intensities of care offered through health-system supported supportive living settings. Though this approach may be costly, it is indispensable for serving the high-need population. Furthermore, the integration of mental health services

and Indigenous cultural supports into these housing solutions is imperative to ensure holistic and culturally appropriate care.

Affordable Housing Deficit and Economic Pressure

The lack of affordable housing has been a long-standing issue in Edmonton, further exacerbated by the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. With fluctuating inflation pressures and high percentages of the population reliant on government benefits, many are unable to afford housing on low wages. This economic instability puts people at risk in the long term and increases the demand pressure on the already limited stock of low-end rental properties. This situation underscores the need to address the systemic issues affecting the affordability of housing and to advocate for policy changes that can provide better wage support, enhance income assistance, and encourage the development of more affordable housing options. High rates of government dependence and increasing costs of living underscore the need for systemic changes. This could include indexation of benefits to inflation, increased income support, and public policy advocacy to increase the supply of affordable housing.

System Inflow and Bottlenecking

The current scenario indicates that more individuals are entering the homelessness system than leaving it, thereby causing a bottleneck effect. This suggests that existing preventative measures or early interventions might be insufficient or misaligned with the complexities of the homelessness problem. It also underscores the need for a more effective and responsive prevention system to better manage the inflow and stop individuals from reaching a state of homelessness that necessitates them joining the By-Name List (BNL). The persistent inflow of individuals into the homelessness system and the subsequent bottlenecking effect are intrinsically connected to various underlying challenges. The lack of affordable housing options, exacerbated by economic pressures and inflation, pushes more people into homelessness. Additionally, the complexity of needs, particularly mental health issues, addictions, and lack of supportive housing, further contributes to the bottleneck as individuals may struggle to transition out of the system. The lack of preventative measures or early interventions that effectively address these interconnected issues hampers the flow of individuals out of homelessness and into stable housing.

Need for Extended Intervention and Support Periods

Reports from the frontline indicate that individuals with complex needs could benefit from intervention and support periods that extend beyond the conventional 12 months. Such an approach could enhance the success rates of interventions, improve overall outcomes, and reduce the risk of individuals returning to homelessness (recidivism). This further highlights the need to reassess and potentially revamp the structure of support periods based on a more nuanced understanding of individual needs and challenges. The call for extended intervention and support periods aligns with the complexity of needs experienced by individuals facing homelessness. Longer and more comprehensive support can address underlying issues like mental health, addiction, and financial instability more effectively. However, the availability of such extended interventions depends on the availability of appropriate supportive housing and medical services. A lack of affordable and supportive housing options can make it challenging to provide the necessary extended support that some individuals require. Hence, the need

for longer support periods is intricately linked to the broader issues of affordability and accessibility of medical and supportive housing options.

Enhancing Public System Accountability

The challenges of inadequate institutional support and the need to enhance public system diversion are interconnected and require a coordinated approach. Individuals with complex needs, such as mental health issues, addiction, and post-incarceration challenges, may not receive the comprehensive support they require within existing institutions. This inadequacy can lead to instability, making these individuals more vulnerable to homelessness. To mitigate this, institutions must step up and provide higher-level support that includes access to medical care and post-incarceration assistance. Collaborative efforts between healthcare, correctional facilities, and housing providers can play a pivotal role in addressing homelessness at its roots. Public system diversion efforts need improvement to prevent individuals from transitioning into homelessness after leaving these institutions. Current diversion measures may not effectively address the underlying issues that contribute to homelessness. Enhancing these efforts through tailored and effective diversion strategies can ensure that individuals receive appropriate support and resources upon leaving institutions, reducing their risk of becoming homeless.

Improving Crisis Response

The COVID-19 pandemic has amplified pre-existing vulnerabilities and created new challenges. This emphasizes the need for adaptable, resilient, and innovative crisis response strategies. Improving crisis response is crucial as large-scale crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the Fort McMurray wildfires, and other more "regular" crises like climate-related emergencies and severe winters impact vulnerable populations, including people experiencing homelessness. Adaptable, resilient, and innovative strategies are needed to protect and support homeless individuals during such times. Building resilience, implementing proactive measures, and fostering collaboration among local authorities, non-profits, healthcare providers, and communities are essential components of effective crisis response. Integrating crisis response into homelessness prevention efforts ensures a holistic approach to safeguarding the well-being of those experiencing homelessness. By consistently updating response strategies and addressing vulnerabilities, communities can mitigate the impact of crises and create a comprehensive safety net for the homeless population.

Learning and Advancing Reconciliation Efforts

Reconciliation is an ongoing journey, and we continually strive to deepen our understanding and commitment to this process. However, there is a clear acknowledgment that the housing and homelessness sector, including governments, health and justice institutions, and community organizations, need to do more. Currently, we are falling short in addressing the profound impact of historical injustices, including the forced migration from reserves and the deplorable living conditions Indigenous communities have endured. These deeply connected issues play a significant role in contributing to homelessness in Edmonton. To make meaningful progress, institutions and organizations must critically assess their approaches and acknowledge their shortcomings. By learning from past mistakes and actively engaging with Indigenous communities, we can continue to work towards creating culturally appropriate and inclusive services that address the unique needs of Indigenous

individuals experiencing homelessness. This includes fostering partnerships with Indigenous-led organizations to develop sustainable solutions and policies that promote housing stability and well-being.

Fundamentals & Emerging Learnings

While the homeless-serving sector should be celebrated for accomplishments, it is critical to adapt to the vital insights and critical learnings that will serve as cornerstones for future planning efforts. In many cases, these build on the fundamental principles and evidence-based approaches through a commitment to continuous improvement. Our experiences underscore the importance of a holistic strategy in addressing the intricate needs and high recidivism rates among individuals grappling with homelessness. Our journey has highlighted the potential of extended intervention and support periods to yield more favourable outcomes. It is clear that enhancing public system diversion plays a key role in nipping homelessness in the bud. The necessity of addressing institutional support gaps and creating additional supportive housing options are clear takeaways for improving results.

Value of Temporary and Supportive Housing Solutions:

The value of temporary and supportive housing solutions cannot be overstated. Through various initiatives such as Supportive Housing Programs, Short-term Supportive Housing Programs, and bridge housing programs, we have recognized the significance of offering flexible and supportive housing options to individuals experiencing homelessness. These initiatives have played a crucial role in providing a stable and supportive environment for those in need, fostering their journey toward stability and well-being. By continuing to invest in and expand these housing solutions, we can make a substantial impact in addressing homelessness in our community.

Recognition of Lived Experience:

The recognition of lived experience has been a transformative aspect of our approach to addressing homelessness. The establishment of the Participant Advisory Committee and the Lived Experience Committees has allowed Homeward Trust to understand and appreciate the perspectives of those directly affected by homelessness. By actively involving individuals with lived experience, our organization and by extension the sector has gained invaluable insights which shape our services and policies. This inclusive approach has empowered those with lived experience to become active participants in finding solutions and driving positive change. Their voices serve as a guiding force, ensuring that our efforts are truly reflective of the needs and aspirations of the community we serve. Embracing and prioritizing lived experience is key to fostering a more compassionate, responsive, and effective homelessness response strategy.

Adaptability and Innovation during Crises:

The COVID-19 pandemic and the Fort McMurray wildfires presented unforeseen challenges, underscoring the need for adaptability, resilience, and innovation in our response to crises. During these times of uncertainty, we swiftly adapted our service delivery to ensure continuity and support for individuals experiencing homelessness. The ability to respond effectively and creatively in the face of adversity enabled us to address emergent needs and maintain critical services. Embracing innovation allowed us to explore new approaches and technologies to meet the evolving demands of the crisis. Moving forward, the lessons learned from these experiences will guide us in developing robust contingency plans and strengthening our capacity to navigate future challenges with

agility and compassion. Smaller-scale responses, such as *The Winter Emergency Program*, demonstrate the need for adaptability on a smaller scale. Homelessness is not static, and circumstances can change rapidly. By developing strategies that can flexibly address emergent needs, we enhance our capacity to provide timely assistance and prevent crises from escalating. This agile approach enables us to better support individuals through challenging times and align our efforts with their ever-changing circumstances.

Importance of Government Support and Funding:

The ongoing support from the Government of Alberta has been vital in our community's success, enabling us to house over 15,000 people since 2009. Additionally, generous donations from the City of Edmonton for supportive housing initiatives have played a crucial role in our efforts. Moreover, seeking federal funding to address homelessness among veterans emphasizes the critical role of government support in tackling this complex issue. Collaborative efforts with various levels of government are essential for lasting impact. By leveraging government support and funding, we can continue making strides in our mission to address homelessness effectively and create a brighter future for those in need.

Housing First Approach:

Edmonton's success in implementing the Housing First approach has been notable. This approach prioritizes offering permanent housing to individuals experiencing homelessness, effectively ending their homelessness from the outset. By providing a stable and safe home, individuals are empowered to rebuild their lives and focus on their well-being. Housing First recognizes that housing is a fundamental human right and the first step towards addressing other challenges individuals may face. Housing First does not stop at housing provision. It embraces a comprehensive and person-centred approach, offering tailored supports and services to meet each individual's unique needs. This could include mental health services, addiction treatment, employment assistance, and more. By addressing the underlying issues that contributed to homelessness, Housing First fosters long-term stability and success. By continuing to evolve the Housing First model, we can make significant strides in eradicating homelessness and building a stronger, more resilient community for all.

Data-Driven Decision Making:

Data-driven decision-making has become a cornerstone of efforts to address homelessness in Edmonton. Partnerships with the technology industry and the regular execution of Point in Time (PiT) counts have proven invaluable in guiding our strategies and monitoring our progress. By analyzing and interpreting data, we gain valuable insights into the dynamics of homelessness, enabling us to make informed and effective decisions. To enhance the impact of data-driven approaches, we must continue to invest in data collection and analysis. This means expanding our data collection to include information on the impacts of inflation, the COVID-19 pandemic, and other relevant factors. These insights will help us understand how external influences shape homelessness and enable us to respond proactively to emerging challenges.

Importance of Coordinated and Centralized Systems:

The implementation of coordinated access systems has brought remarkable efficiency to managing resources and services for the homeless population. By centralizing information and streamlining the process of accessing support, we ensure that individuals in need receive timely and appropriate assistance. Coordinated access systems facilitate better communication and collaboration among service providers, creating a seamless

network of care. This approach not only optimizes the allocation of resources but also enhances the quality of services provided. It enables us to identify and address gaps in the system promptly, ensuring that no individual falls through the cracks of other systems. The ability to track an individual's progress through coordinated systems offers invaluable insights into the effectiveness of our interventions. It empowers us to make data-driven adjustments and continuously improve our strategies to achieve better outcomes for those experiencing homelessness.

Need for Targeted Strategies for Different Demographics:

Recognizing the diverse needs and challenges within the homeless population, targeted strategies have emerged as a pivotal approach to addressing homelessness in Edmonton. Initiatives such as the Urgent Families Initiative and Youth Housing First Programs exemplify the value of tailoring interventions to specific demographics. The Urgent Families Initiative has been instrumental in addressing the unique needs of homeless families, offering comprehensive support to stabilize their housing situations. Similarly, the Youth Housing First Programs have provided specialized assistance to young individuals experiencing homelessness, empowering them to overcome obstacles and regain stability. Tailored approaches consider individual circumstances, cultural sensitivities, and specific challenges, fostering a deeper connection with those we serve.

Collaboration and Partnerships

Collaboration and partnerships lie at the core of our collective efforts to combat homelessness in Edmonton. Numerous initiatives and fruitful collaborations with organizations such as e4c and Edmonton John Howard Society have proven instrumental in delivering comprehensive services to those experiencing homelessness. These partnerships exemplify the significance of cross-sector collaboration in our endeavours. Pooling resources and expertise from diverse organizations allows us to provide a more holistic and integrated approach to addressing homelessness. By joining forces, we leverage each other's strengths and bridge gaps in service delivery. This synergy fosters a more efficient and effective response to the complex challenges faced by individuals without stable housing. This further enables us to share knowledge, best practices, and innovative solutions, promoting a culture of continuous improvement and learning.

Importance of Professional Development and Training:

The Critical Time Intervention (CTI) Training for service providers underscored the pivotal role of continuous professional development in delivering high-quality services to those experiencing homelessness. Investing in ongoing training equips frontline workers with the latest best practices, enhances their skills, and keeps them abreast of evolving challenges. By prioritizing professional growth, we ensure that our service providers are well-prepared to offer compassionate and effective support, fostering positive outcomes for individuals in need.

Significance of Community Engagement and Awareness:

Events like the Homeless Connect, Homeward Trust Walk Run Walk, and the 7 Cities Forum on Homelessness in June 2023, showcased the power of community engagement and the importance of raising public awareness and support in efforts to end homelessness. Engaging the community strengthens our collective resolve and generates a sense of shared responsibility. By rallying together, we can create lasting change, advocate for policy reform, and build a community that values compassion, empathy, and understanding.

Building Relocation:

MacDonald Lofts and Dwayne's Home are examples of strategic initiatives implemented as responsive measures, effectively preventing tenants from facing eviction without alternative housing options. This further underscored the Plan's commitment to preventing homelessness and ensuring housing stability for all community members. By providing alternative housing options and relocation support, we avert evictions and ensure housing stability for vulnerable tenants. These strategic initiatives exemplify our dedication to preventing homelessness before it occurs, preserving the dignity and security of those we serve.

Role of Data Collection and Analysis:

Regular Point in Time (PiT) counts and partnerships with the technology sector for advanced data analytics emphasized the importance of systematic data collection and analysis in informing strategies and tracking progress in efforts to end homelessness. Data-driven insights guide our decision-making, helping us tailor interventions and allocate resources effectively. By continually assessing progress and identifying areas for improvement, we strengthen the impact of our initiatives and work towards more targeted and equitable solutions to homelessness.

Importance of Cultural Sensitivity and Inclusivity:

The implementation of the Indigenous Culture Experiential Learning Program and funding of Two Indigenous Youth Housing First Teams highlighted the value of integrating Indigenous cultural knowledge into programs and offering culturally appropriate services. We recognize that cultural knowledge and practices are integral to providing meaningful and relevant support to Indigenous individuals experiencing homelessness. By incorporating Indigenous perspectives, we strive to create an environment that respects diversity and empowers those we serve, fostering trust and building stronger connections with Indigenous communities.

Appendix - Annual Plan Implementation Highlights

2016/17

Formal Implementation and Launch of Coordinated Access: The formal implementation of Coordinated Access demonstrated the importance of having a centralized system for managing resources and services for the homeless population. This approach allows for more effective coordination of services and better tracking of individuals' progress, leading to more efficient and targeted use of resources. Through this, organizations learned the value of a streamlined system for delivering services and the need for close collaboration between different service providers.

Urgent Families Initiative: The Urgent Families Initiative sheds light on the specific and urgent needs of homeless families. This initiative brought to the forefront the understanding that different demographic groups

within the homeless population have unique needs and challenges. Therefore, service providers need to develop and implement targeted strategies to address these specific needs.

Community Strategy to End Youth Homelessness: The development and implementation of a strategy specifically targeting youth homelessness underscored the significance of addressing this issue. It reinforced the understanding that preventing youth homelessness can have long-term benefits, as it can potentially prevent chronic homelessness in the future. This strategy highlighted the need for early intervention, comprehensive support services for youth, and the importance of involving the whole community in these efforts.

Winter Emergency Response: The initiation of the Winter Emergency Program emphasized the need for responsive strategies that address the changing needs of homeless individuals based on seasonal variations. Particularly in places with harsh winter conditions, it is crucial to have measures in place that ensure the safety and well-being of individuals experiencing homelessness during these times.

Supported Canadian Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis (through Temporary Rental Assistance Relief): This initiative highlighted the importance of flexible and responsive approaches in addressing homelessness. The ability to support an international crisis through local resources demonstrated the value of having versatile tools, such as temporary rental assistance, in place.

Launch of 20,000 Homes campaign - Included Registry Day at Edmonton Public Library (Milner). The 20,000 Homes campaign and the introduction of the Functional Zero concept emphasized the importance of setting clear, ambitious goals in efforts to end homelessness. The campaign helped highlight the power of collective action, while Functional Zero provided a valuable framework for understanding and measuring progress.

Fort McMurray wildfires relocation help - Summer 2016: The support for relocation efforts during the wildfires demonstrated the need for emergency response capacity in homelessness services, highlighting the reality that unexpected events can exacerbate housing insecurity.

EPS Community Action team events: Collaboration with law enforcement through the EPS Community Action team events emphasized the need for multi-disciplinary approaches to address homelessness, involving not just service providers but also law enforcement and other community entities.

CTI Training for service providers - T3: The CTI Training for service providers underscored the value of continuous professional development and training in delivering high-quality services to the homeless population.

Homeward Trust Walk Run Walk: This event highlighted the power of community engagement and the importance of raising public awareness and support in efforts to end homelessness.

Youth Housing First Programs and Youth Short-Term Supportive Housing (NOVA): The implementation of these youth-focused programs highlighted the importance of tailored approaches for different demographics within the homeless population. It reinforced that youth homelessness requires specific interventions and support systems.

Morning Fire Protector Supportive Housing Program Opened: The opening of this program emphasized the value of supportive housing programs in providing stable, long-term solutions to homelessness.

Implementation of Supported Referral Program (IAAW being the first organization): The launch of this program underscored the value of a coordinated approach in service delivery, where referrals can ensure that individuals get the comprehensive support they need.

Participant Advisory Committee: The formation of the Participant Advisory Committee (exact start date not provided) highlighted the importance of including the voices of those with lived experience in shaping services and policies related to homelessness.

Point in Time (PiT) Count: The execution of the PiT count provided valuable data about the scope of homelessness, reinforcing the importance of regular, systematic data collection in informing strategies and tracking progress in efforts to end homelessness.

2017/18

Assigned Relocation of MacDonald Lofts Building: The large-scale relocation project of 120 residents at MacDonald Lofts underlined the importance of crisis management and the need for robust, flexible support systems to accommodate large-scale housing transitions in emergencies.

LGBTQ2S+ Safe Spaces Program Added: The addition of this program demonstrated the need for services that specifically address the unique needs of certain marginalized populations within the broader homeless community, underscoring the importance of inclusivity and respect for diversity in efforts to end homelessness.

Youth Housing First Programs Implemented: Partnering with e4c and Edmonton John Howard, the implementation of these programs and partnerships highlighted the effectiveness of the Housing First model and the value of collaborative approaches in addressing youth homelessness.

Implementation of Indigenous Culture Experiential Learning Program (inclusive of Oskapewis positions): This initiative underscored the importance of cultural sensitivity and inclusivity in service delivery. It highlighted the value of integrating Indigenous cultural knowledge into programs, thereby enhancing their effectiveness for Indigenous participants.

Launch of Built For Zero (USA). Coordinated Access in Edmonton achieves "Quality By Name List": The launch of the Built For Zero initiative and the achievement of a "Quality By Name List" emphasized the power of coordinated, data-driven approaches in efforts to end homelessness. This led to improved tracking and prioritization of housing needs.

Edmonton's Updated Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness: The Plan was finalized and endorsed by the City of Edmonton with an emphasized importance of having a clear, comprehensive strategy in place, backed by local government support, to address homelessness effectively.

Constructed and completed a new Supportive Housing site: Balwin Place. The construction of Balwin Place, with 25 units, underscored the critical role of increasing the supply of supportive housing in efforts to end homelessness.

Homeward Trust was nominated as one of 12 Vanguard Cities by the Institute of Global Homelessness, making Edmonton the only Canadian city to qualify for this status: This recognition reinforced the value of the efforts being made in Edmonton and provided an opportunity to share best practices with and learn from other leading cities in the global fight against homelessness.

Developed the Extreme Weather Protocol: The development of this protocol highlighted the need for specific strategies to protect vulnerable homeless populations during extreme weather conditions, emphasizing the importance of flexibility and responsiveness in service delivery.

Coordinated two Homeless Connect events: These events reinforced the value of community engagement and multi-service events in raising public awareness, connecting individuals to needed services, and fostering a sense of community in efforts to end homelessness.

2018/19

Launch of Built For Zero Canada and the continued attendance of Build for Zero USA: This international collaboration reinforced the importance of a global, coordinated approach to ending homelessness and the value of shared learning across different contexts.

Learning Sessions and Implement Quality Improvement: This approach emphasized the importance of continuous learning and improvement in service delivery. The use of the Plan Do Study Act approach provided a structured framework for agencies to trial and refine their practices.

Development of Housing Outreach Prototype Project: This project highlighted the importance of understanding and addressing the specific barriers faced by unsheltered individuals, as well as the reasons why they may not utilize shelter services.

Initiation and Leadership of "Housing Hot Spots": By co-locating housing outreach and intake services at locations frequented by unsheltered individuals, this initiative improved access to services and provided insights into more effective ways of reaching and assisting this population.

Completion of Point in Time Count: Regular counts provide critical data on the scale and nature of homelessness, thereby informing service planning and performance measurement.

National Leadership through Reaching Home: This engagement helped to shape national directives for coordinated access programs, contributing to more consistent and effective practices across Canada.

Coordination of Homeless Connect Events: These events would have continued to foster community engagement and service integration in the fight against homelessness.

Development of a Plan for Supportive Housing Expansion: This plan emphasized the ongoing need for increased supportive housing options and provided a roadmap for future developments.

McDonald Lofts Relocation Completed in Full: The successful completion of this large-scale relocation project would have provided further experience and learning about managing complex housing transitions.

7 Cities Conference in Red Deer: As a 7 Cities partner organization, these conferences provide a platform for knowledge exchange and networking among cities committed to ending homelessness.

Launch of RECOVER Initiative by the City of Edmonton: This initiative provided new insights into improving connections between services and enhancing public safety and access for vulnerable populations.

Implementation of Family and Natural Supports Programs for Youth: The implementation of these programs demonstrated the importance of providing youth-specific services and supports in efforts to prevent and end homelessness among young people.

2019/20

Approval of funding through the Reaching Home Initiative: Taking on this role provided insights into federal funding mechanisms and increased capacity to support local homelessness reduction initiatives.

Received significant commitments from the City of Edmonton: This substantial financial support highlighted the importance of local government partnerships in the effort to end homelessness.

Housing Partnership between Programs (HOW+ CA) with EPS Downtown Division: This partnership underscored the value of cross-sector collaboration in addressing homelessness and associated challenges.

Implementation of Encampments Response: This effort provided key insights into effective strategies for managing encampments and supporting the individuals residing in them.

Piloting of New Outreach Team Model Approach (HOPP team): The piloting of this model offered a valuable opportunity to innovate and test new approaches to outreach.

Organization of ROOPH Awards: Recognizing outstanding contributions in the field would have helped to foster a culture of excellence and commitment within the homelessness sector.

Conducting Homeless Connect Events: Continued coordination of these events reinforced the importance of integrated service provision and community engagement.

Partnership in the Raising the Roof Campaign: Participating in this national campaign highlighted the value of collaborative advocacy efforts in the fight against homelessness.

Hosting of the National Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness Conference: This provided an important platform for knowledge sharing and networking among professionals in the homelessness sector across Canada, set in Edmonton.

Relocation of Dwayne Home Housing Project: Managing this complex relocation project would have offered further learning on handling large-scale housing transitions.

Implementation of Work to End Veterans Homelessness: Targeting this specific population underscored the importance of tailored services and supports for different sub-groups within the homeless population.

Funding of Two Indigenous Youth Housing First Teams: This initiative highlighted the importance of culturally appropriate services and the need to target supports to specific demographic groups.

Definition of Permanent Intensive Case Management Model and Addition of Sites: This provided a clear model for effective case management and expanded capacity to support individuals experiencing homelessness.

2020/21

Pandemic Response: The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic led to significant adaptations and innovations to maintain service delivery in a challenging context.

Expo Centre Shelter: The establishment of this shelter provided insights into rapid response measures and large-scale shelter operations.

Coordinated Access Locations: Placing access points at Edmonton Public Library and Radius Health Centre could have highlighted the importance of accessible service locations.

Camp Pekewewin and Tipiniawaw Shelter: These initiatives provided valuable lessons in managing and supporting encampments and large shelter operations during a pandemic.

Identified 5 sites for new Supportive Housing Projects: This development highlighted the importance of strategic planning and partnerships in expanding supportive housing.

Bridge Housing Implementation: The implementation of bridge housing at the Coliseum Inn offered insights into effective interim housing solutions.

Family and Natural Supports Projects: Implementing projects like YMCA Youth Diversion underscored the importance of family and natural supports in homelessness prevention and response.

Niginan Belvedere Project Contribution: Participation in this project provided further experience in collaborative housing initiatives.

Development of the Community Plan: Involving broad stakeholder participation in this process reinforced the importance of collective action and alignment in ending homelessness.

Active Participation in Various Associations: Continued engagement with local, provincial, national, and international entities would have helped to stay informed about best practices and emerging trends in homelessness reduction.

Expansion of Intensive Case Management Teams: The addition of Cultural Support and Caseload Support Workers to these teams improved their capacity to support individuals with significant barriers to housing.

Engagement with End Poverty Edmonton: Collaboration on various initiatives with this entity enhanced the intersectional approach to poverty reduction and ending homelessness.

Partnership in Affordable and Supportive Housing Initiatives: Involvement in initiatives like the Shovel Ready initiative and engagement with various housing agencies helped in addressing gaps in the affordable and supportive housing stock.

2021/22

Pandemic Adaptation: As the COVID-19 pandemic continued, the organization had to address rapidly shifting priorities and fiscal situations, highlighting the need for adaptability, resilience, and fiscal management in crises.

Tipinawaw Shelter Operation: The operation of the Tipinawaw Shelter from September 2020 to April 2021 offered insights into the challenges and successes of large-scale shelter operations during extended periods of public health crisis.

Bridge Housing Projects: The addition of multiple bridge housing projects, including Jockey Dorms, Sandy's Place, Travelodge West, and Sands Hotel (Pimitiswin), underscored the importance of providing flexible, temporary housing options for individuals experiencing homelessness and the role of strategic site identification and project management in this process.

Shelter Transformation Work: The development of the Shelter Transformation initiative, which led to the Shelter HUB model for Hope Mission in Edmonton, provided crucial learnings about the process and impacts of transforming shelter operations and service delivery models.

Future of Home: Housing Solutions Lab: Participating in the Housing Solutions Lab project facilitated by Skills Society highlighted the importance of collaborative problem-solving and innovation in addressing housing needs for specific populations, in this case, individuals with developmental disabilities.

Sector Coordination: The establishment of extensive weekly and biweekly coordination groups across the sector underscored the importance of regular communication, collaboration, and strategic alignment in managing operations, enhancing capacity, and coordinating system responses to homelessness.

Outreach Coordination: The assignment of an Outreach coordinator to a service co-location project, working at the Edmonton Police Union building, highlighted the value of multi-disciplinary collaboration and integrated service provision in addressing the complex needs of individuals experiencing homelessness.

Veterans Homelessness: Ongoing leadership and participation in national initiatives to address veterans' homelessness, such as the RESPECT forums, enriched understanding of this specific population's needs and the strategies effective in supporting them.

Shelter Standards Project: The implementation of a Shelter Standards Project, led by the City of Edmonton, offered an opportunity to refine and enhance shelter operations based on a set of defined quality-focused standards.

2022/23

Modular Housing Sites: The completion of five modular housing sites, adding a total of 215 supportive housing units in Edmonton, provided critical insights into the project management, stakeholder coordination, and operationalization of modular housing as a solution to homelessness.

Procurement and Coordination: The procurement of operators and extensive coordination with Alberta Health Services (AHS) to develop on-site service delivery and prioritize case files for move-in upon opening highlighted the importance of cross-sector collaboration in housing operations.

Bridge Housing: The continuation of funding spaces in bridge housing (135 units) emphasized the role of this flexible, temporary housing model in the continuum of housing services.

Community Locations: The expansion of Coordinated Access community locations in partnership with Edmonton Public Library and Radius Health and Healing showed the effectiveness of leveraging community resources and partnerships in expanding service reach.

Community Response Plan: Participation in a community-wide response plan in Chinatown and surrounding areas offered insights into the dynamics and best practices of community-based approaches to addressing homelessness and related challenges.

Task Force and Forum: The initiation of the Coordinated Community Response to Homelessness Task Force and the reinstatement of the "Data that Makes a Difference" Forum highlighted the importance of structured, collaborative platforms in driving strategic, data-informed responses to homelessness.

Research and Development: Engagement in federal research projects, such as the National Housing Inventory, and the development and early implementation of a Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) with 211 (CMHA) and Coordinated Access to improve diversion-based services, underscored the role of research, innovation, and continuous improvement in enhancing service delivery and outcomes.

Encampment Response Project: The renewal and implementation of the Encampment Response Project, inclusive of the development of five prototypes geared towards addressing encampments, provided key learnings about effective strategies for addressing the complex issue of encampments.

Operations Centre Project: The development of the Healthy Streets Operations Centre Project emphasized the importance of centralized, coordinated operations in enhancing service delivery and system-level responses to homelessness.

Youth Program: The implementation of the Diversion First for Youth program highlighted the necessity of specialized, population-specific programs in addressing the unique needs and circumstances of different subpopulations experiencing homelessness.

Hosting the 7 Cities Conference in Edmonton: As a 7 Cities partner organization, hosting this conference provided a greater opportunity to provide sector collaboration, leadership and provide a platform for knowledge exchange and networking among cities committed to ending homelessness.

2023/24

Training Sessions: Hosting three week-long sessions for the sector with Org Code Consulting to provide core training on Housing First practices, encampment approach, and leadership development highlighted the importance of continuous professional development and capacity-building within the homelessness sector.

Supportive Housing Sites: The operation of all five supportive housing sites and the addition of three short-term supportive housing projects reinforced the essential role of supportive housing as a solution to homelessness and provided further opportunities to refine operational practices and service delivery.

Outreach Programs: The addition of two outreach programs for unsheltered homelessness underscored the importance of proactive, outreach-based service delivery in engaging and supporting individuals experiencing homelessness.

Building Acquisition: The acquisition of two buildings for supportive housing purposes – the Grand and Coliseum Inn Hotel – offered insights into the process and implications of property acquisition as a strategy to increase housing stock.

Network Participation: Participation in Alberta Rural Development Network Coordinated Access sessions and Shelter HUB project enhanced cross-sector learning, collaboration, and alignment of approaches to homelessness.

Veterans Funding: Applying for federal funding for veterans' homelessness would have provided an opportunity to strengthen resources and services for veterans, a particularly vulnerable subpopulation.

ARCH Research Project: The development and preparation for the implementation of the ARCH Research Project emphasized the role of research in generating evidence-based insights and informing service delivery and policy development.

RFP & Partnerships: The release of RFPs for solutions to address unsheltered homelessness and supportive housing demonstrated the value of partnerships and collaborative initiatives in driving innovation and broadening service scope.

Forums and Presentations: Hosting the Housing First Forum in Edmonton for 7 Cities, making 11 presentations for CAEH, and reinstating the "Data that Makes a Difference" forum underscored the importance of knowledge exchange, advocacy, and collective dialogue in advancing the sector.

Lived Experience Committees: The development and implementation of training for the housing sector led and delivered by Lived Experience Committees (called kawegehanowak: Together We Will House Them) highlighted the invaluable role of lived experience perspectives in enhancing sector understanding and responsiveness to the needs of those experiencing homelessness.

CHMC Solutions Lab: Participation in the CMHC Solutions Lab on encampments offered critical insights into innovative, effective strategies to address the complex issue of homelessness encampments.

Advanced-Data Analytics: The partnership with HelpSeeker Technologies to evolve Homeward Trust's capabilities to use data in systems planning and in-depth analysis, evaluation, demand forecasting, and scenario modelling emphasized the importance of leveraging advanced data analytics to inform strategic decisions and enhance system performance.