



Draft Recommendations

Homeward Trust Edmonton

Community Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness

February 23, 2024

Land Acknowledgement

Homeward Trust and the City of Edmonton respectfully acknowledge our place here on Treaty 6 Territory, the traditional and ancestral lands of many First Nation, Métis and Inuit people. We acknowledge the diverse Indigenous Peoples of this land which include the Cree, Blackfoot, Dene, Iroquois, Anishinaabe/Saulteaux /Ojibwa, Nakota Sioux, Inuit, Métis and many others whose footsteps have marked this land for time immemorial. Those whose stories, languages and culture continue to thrive today. We acknowledge ourselves as visitors living and working in this Territory.

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Executive Summary

In 2024, Homeward Trust and the City of Edmonton will present a new *Community Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness* to Edmonton City Council for input, then to the homeless-serving sector and community to be realized. The original *10-Year Plan to End Homelessness* was first developed in 2008 and updated in 2017.

The Community Plan provides strategic direction, role clarity, and assignment of accountability for all actors who make up the homeless-serving sector in the pursuit of ending homelessness. This work aligns with a number of other foundational strategies, including:

- City of Edmonton's *Affordable Housing Needs Assessment* and *Affordable Housing Strategy*,
- *Stronger Foundations* - the Government of Alberta's *Affordable Housing Strategy*,
- *Recovery-oriented housing model* : report of the Coordinated Community Response to Homelessness Task Force, and
- *Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy*.

The implementation of the plan will be supported by Homeward Trust's System Framework, a data model to set objectives, and an accountability framework to connect stakeholders to the plan.

The 2024 plan is being formed in the shadow of a community crisis - the state of homelessness has shifted dramatically and paths in and out of stable housing are significantly different than in previous updates to the plan. In the wake of drastic unaddressed economic, health, and social change, the homeless-serving sector and its supportive infrastructure has housed and supported as many people as resources and circumstances have allowed for, but it is not enough to merely catch people as they are left behind by larger social systems. The process of developing this plan has heard a clear call that too many people are being lost, and in order to address this crisis, the sector needs to ramp up efforts that are working to effectively end homelessness and seize systemic change opportunities as other actors in the system change their approach. Like gathering around a fire, this plan can help sector actors find definitive direction for an aligned community, collaborative practices and shared accountability, and a collective focus on continuous improvement toward our common goals.

Project Background

Recent History and What's Changed

When the 2017 Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness was developed, Edmonton had seen a 40% reduction in homelessness over the previous 10 years – largely attributable to effective and proven approaches like Housing First programming and system innovations like Coordinated Access. Bringing forward that momentum, the 2017 Plan called for an increase in funding for homelessness interventions; increases in affordable housing; deliberate system centralization; an emphasis on data-driven decision-making across the sector; and greater attention to person-centric care to provide focus on equity-deserving communities.

Just 18 months into the 2017 Plan, the COVID-19 pandemic drastically changed the approach to social services from deliberate planning to emergency management, disrupting the intended targets of the plan. The disruptive conditions of the pandemic have reverberated throughout this complex landscape that must coordinate to prevent and end homelessness. In addition to sheer overwhelm, these conditions are worse in almost every way that matters to the process of how people are supported from homelessness to finding stable housing.

At the end of 2023, the economic, housing market, and social support conditions in Edmonton are materially different from the conditions on which the 2017 plan was based. Exacerbating these conditions is a drug poisoning crisis, a continued overrepresentation of Indigenous Peoples, and an increased visibility of homelessness and its effects on both the individuals experiencing it and the surrounding community.

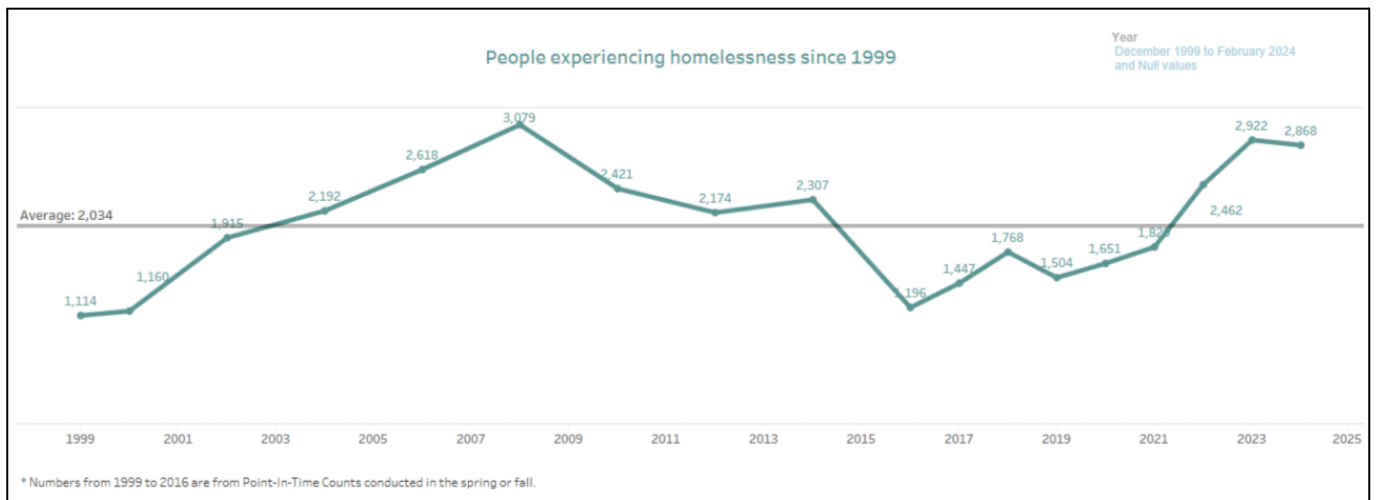
However, as the 2024 Community Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness is built, there are hopeful and important opportunities that must inform how the sector moves forward to better support those experiencing homelessness:

- There are more actors in the space, providing more attention and more overall resources that must be applied effectively in a more aligned sector.
- There is a desire across the sector to move from the emergency management practices of the pandemic back to deliberate and aligned planning practices. This will require that systems that intersect and interact with homelessness are better integrated and committed to working in support of one another towards shared outcomes.
- Housing First programming has been effective before and throughout the pandemic, particularly because of its focus on ensuring simultaneous wrap-around supports. To improve this approach, the sector needs to seize opportunities to supplement and modify housing programs with appropriate integration from allied systems such as primary health care, recovery-oriented services, justice, income support, and child and family services.
- The continued rapid development of supportive housing reflects the complex needs of the local population experiencing homelessness that require onsite supportive programming, affordable accommodations, and congregate settings that foster the building of community.

The Need for a New Plan

There are a number of drivers generating the need for a new plan:

- An increase in unsheltered people and decrease in sheltered people has an effect on required intervention types.¹
- Covid-19 has exacerbated the housing crisis in Edmonton as well as the way in which interventions and services are delivered.²
- Persistent population growth is correlated to increased housing demand across Edmonton, resulting in ongoing tightening of the rental market. This, combined with existing affordable housing demand, means fewer affordable housing options for lower-income and housing insecure Edmontonians.³
- System discharges: Increased exits from public systems, and greater complexity of individuals exiting, leading to higher demand for interventions.⁴



Source: Homeward Trust By Name List Feb 28, 2024

The 2024 Community Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness

Given the conditions of the homeless-serving sector today, there is potential for significant shifts to define the next plan, including:

- A stronger focus on the work being informed by Lived and Living Experience engagement to reflect the shifting needs of unhoused community members.
- An improved understanding of the complexity of the sector, and the people it serves.
- A shift from an emergency response mindset that emphasizes immediate decision-making and deployment to keep circumstances from getting worse to an aligned and proactive planning approach that focuses on consistent and continuous progress in determined directions.

¹ “The upheaval from COVID-19, changes in Alberta’s economy, inflationary pressures on the costs of living and other factors have contributed to increased demands for shelter. Since June 2021, occupancy in Alberta’s shelter system has risen by 18 per cent.” Community and Social Services Action Plan on Homelessness, September 30, 2022, p.7, <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/5601187b-7dfc-45ab-8238-8f4c0be3c634/resource/0e21de0d-1248-4594-8268-0d96860723a0/download/css-action-plan-on-homelessness.pdf>

² Recovery-Oriented Housing Model, Report of the Coordinated Community Response to Homelessness Task Force, p. 5, <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/0c443da7-0451-419f-9e47-135f67801969/resource/1db86f64-17b0-4fce-b015-d5ffb0f885d5/download/css-recovery-oriented-housing-model-report-of-ccrh-task-force.pdf>

³ 2024 Housing Market Outlook, Edmonton Region, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/professionals/housing-markets-data-and-research/market-reports/housing-market/housing-market-outlook#tabSwitcher>

⁴ “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.” Learnings from Implementation of the 2017 Plan to Prevent & End Homelessness, Homeward Trust, October 30, 2023, p. 16, <https://pub-edmonton.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=205898>

- A set of enhanced governance structures that reorient the system to a more planned approach.
- Building on measurement and evaluation of our community and system planning efforts to stay accountable to the community and improve service delivery and outcomes.

The foundational components that make up the commitments and guidance for the 2024 plan are:

1. Homeward Trust's System Planning Framework, which describes the foundational programs and organizations that contribute to inflow and outflow from homelessness, regardless of funding source.
2. Homeward Trust's data model to set objectives and assign resources.
3. The Accountability Framework for the Community Plan.
4. All recorded, analyzed, and validated engagement with community.
5. The combined strategic and policy direction set by all orders of government through their housing and homelessness strategies and plans.

Methodology

Indigenous Worldview

There is an over-representation of Indigenous People who are living houseless in Edmonton. Our responses to houselessness must incorporate an Indigenous worldview and acknowledge the colonial legacy of Canadian policy, including, but not limited to, housing, education, and children services.

The Visiting Way – *keoukaywin*, or The Visiting Way, is an Indigenous approach to research and engagement developed by Dr. Janice Cindy Gaudet. This decolonized methodology centres relational ways of knowing, and is “caring, respectful, and grounded in self, place, land, and family” (Gaudet 2019). Indigenous consultants pipikwan pèhtâkwan helped to develop and implement an engagement approach with The Visiting Way at its core, rooted in community care, accountability, and connection.

Working in Ceremony - The engagement work was started in ceremony with Elders leading a Pipe Ceremony and/or smudge and prayer with the project partners to bring blessings upon the impact of the work, guide the project team and Elders through the project engagement, and for the safety and wellbeing of participants informing the work directly or indirectly.

Connection to Indigenous partners, staff, and individuals with lived experience will continue to be central as we work to refine and finalize this plan, ensuring our Elders and Knowledge Keepers are actively engaged and guiding this work.

Key Inputs and Influences

The draft recommendations in this plan are generally informed by three categories of sources: **engagement, data analysis and forecasting, and relationship building and information exchange** from community and the sector. Subsequent **material** was developed for the plan process reflecting current context and advice from throughout the sector. The most significant of those sources is summarized below:

Engagement Activities

- **Lived and living experience** engagement of 150+ individuals - *Summer-Fall 2023*
- **Sector and service provider and partner** engagement sessions and surveys of 150+ individuals from over 70 organizations - *Fall 2023*
- **Engagement with the Community Advisory Boards (CABs)** - *February 2024*
 - Indigenous Advisory Council (IAC) and Project Review Committee (PRC) was engaged for feedback on March 5, 2024
 - Community Plan Leadership Committee (CPLC) will meet throughout the life of the 2024 Community Plan to ensure accountability and vigilance to planned recommendations and outcomes

Data Analysis

- Evaluation of progress against the 2017 Plan resulted in a Lessons Learned report that was presented to Edmonton City Council - *December 2023*
- Homeward Trust has been working with HelpSeeker Technologies to develop a 7-year data model designed to address homelessness and housing needs by evaluating the demand and supply of a variety of programs, including Supportive Housing, Transitional Housing, Institutional/Health Supportive Living, Emergency Shelter, Housing First, Recovery System of Care (ROSC), Affordable Housing, Prevention, and Rent Supports.
- At the time of writing, this model is still under development but can still provide point-in-time evidence about the types and numbers of units needed within the housing sector to address chronic homelessness.

Relationship Building and Information Exchange

- **7 Cities Conference - Forum on Homelessness - June 2023**
 - Forum included plenary and breakout sessions featuring presentations and speakers from homeless system leaders, researchers, front-line practitioners, and lived experience experts from across the province
- **Systems Planning Framework Discussions - September 2023**
 - System Planning Framework synthesis designed utilizing homeless sector engagement
- **Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH) Annual Conference - November 2023**
 - CAEH's Annual Conference featured homeless-system leaders and experts alongside governments, researchers, and advocates. Collected best practice learnings to be explored and applied in Edmonton's context
 - Homeward Trust Edmonton provided 7 presentations to conference attendees on emerging practices and initiatives that are improving outcomes for people in Edmonton
- **Community Update and Housing Month Event - November 2023**
 - Homeward Trust's CEO Susan McGee and system partners presented on diverse initiatives and programs happening in the sector
 - Specifically, pipikwan pêtâkwan presented on the lived experience engagement that was completed for the 2024 Community Plan
 - The City of Edmonton hosted a booth to promote the "Welcome Homes" campaign

Materials Developed

A number of supporting materials were developed to support knowledge sharing in advance of and as a result of engagement efforts. This includes 10 Issues Summaries circulated to sector engagement participants (see Appendix of this report), detailed What We Heard reports from engagements (see Attachment 2 and 3) that were circulated to engagement participants, the System Planning Framework (see Attachment 4) and a number of presentations to assist with relationship building and engagement activities.

The project team regularly attended numerous events, discussions, and presentations in their normal course of business, as well as shared articles, news coverage, and other material that has been shared over the course of the process and has no doubt influenced details within the recommendations.

Key Findings

Lived/Living Experience and Sector Engagement

These key findings were gathered during engagement sessions in the Fall of 2023. The feedback is representative of a specific point in time and is not necessarily reflective of the ongoing and fluctuating state of the sector. Some of the participants' ideas and priorities may have shifted since these sessions, but they still provide important insight into the problems the plan needs to address.

During the Lived and Living Experience engagement process, some key themes emerged, including:

- **Hierarchy of Houselessness** - Regardless of their current housing situation, people in all areas felt as if they were being ranked for eligibility for services, leading to significant system apathy.
- **Service Navigation and Access** - Individuals described a lack of common language related to program and service access that made trying to meet their needs more complex.
- **Culturally Appropriate Support** - The difference between being 'housed' and finding a 'home' was described by many of the residents living in Indigenous-designed and operated housing developments. It went beyond having access to cultural support, it was an integration of supports in all aspects of the service.
- **Illnesses** - It is commonly discussed that mental and physical illnesses increase risk of experiencing houselessness. Across engagements, individuals shared stories about a lack of support for illness which made obtaining, and retaining, housing more difficult.
- **Economic Changes** - With multiple costs of living increasing, community members noted they were experiencing fear of becoming houseless again. Many participants discussed the availability of affordable units. Participants, predominantly women, shared stories of difficulty finding new rentals that would accept their application due to children and income levels. Many participants attributed the rising costs to government policies to deregulate the cost of utilities in Alberta.

The participants of the service provider engagement sessions showed up in force and provided insightful, powerful feedback. Key high-level themes emerged, including:

- Individuals and organizations alike feel they are **working in silos, rather than collaboratively**. This causes disconnects, inefficiencies, and a frustrating and even traumatizing experience for the clients they serve.
- The **funding structure and sources creates competition** between the service providers, which is a contributor to the siloing.
- There is **not enough affordable supportive, transitional, and non-market housing**, and those that do exist are not always flexible or robust enough for the clients' needs.
- Clients have **higher complexity needs** that are not being addressed by the current systems in place, and it is making it increasingly difficult to keep clients housed.

- Many existing programs and practices, like supportive housing, and bridge housing, are seen as **successful models** that can be further adapted and expanded upon to continue making positive strides in this sector.
- Participating sector workers wanted more opportunities to discuss issues and **share frontline experiences**.
- **Front line workers are making the difference.** Despite many challenges faced in the sector, a common theme throughout is that the folks who are working directly to serve the community are having a positive impact in this space.

Data Modelling

Non-market housing supply is one of the critical contributing factors to rates of homelessness. Non-market and market housing supply are significantly impacted by external social, economic, and policy factors. While Homeward Trust as the System Planning Organization cannot directly address factors outside the homeless serving system of care (i.e. housing supply and population growth that affects housing demand, regulatory and policy changes, or funding decisions), it can account for those impacts in its quantitative modelling to forecast the types of non-market housing solutions needed by those experiencing homelessness.

When complete, the data model will ensure that Plan implementation is informed by real-time evidence about the housing supply and support services needs of people experiencing homelessness. It will monitor current and future needs, allowing for effective resource allocation and for program implementation to be adapted and changed in response to emerging trends. It will also include detailed financial analysis and supply projections, which are crucial for long-term planning, ensuring sustainability and the ability to adapt to changing needs over time.

The data model is still under development, with testing, refinement, and validation steps to be completed in time for the Plan’s publication in early summer 2024. *Refer to notations in the chart below for more information about the development of the data model toward the final plan.*

In the interim, the modelling can provide point-in-time non-market housing targets that are needed to end homelessness by 2030. It is anticipated that these targets will fluctuate based on aforementioned variables that influence the scope and scale of housing need. Forecasting is not provided for emergency shelter spaces given the recent investment in increasing the number and variety of shelter service options by the Government of Alberta and engagement findings. Forecasting is also not provided for allied systems of care, such as spaces for the ROSC and supportive living spaces provided by the health system, as engagement with those groups is ongoing.

Program Type	Expected Range of Additional Spaces Required			
	<i>Note: Some of the unique circumstances that need to be accounted for in developing specific program targets are reflective of individualized needs of clients and families experiencing homelessness. These considerations include physical and mental health conditions, need for tenancy support, cultural and recreational needs, affordability, and an individual’s preference.</i>			
	2024 Available Spaces	Estimated Range of Additional Spaces Required by	Service Description and Dependencies	Population Served + Rational for Estimate Range

		2030		
Supportive Housing	644	1400-1700	<p>This level of service combines affordable housing and embedded, onsite services to support tenancy, stability, and recovery. Congregate spaces and common areas allow for supportive programming, and person-centred property management services reduce tenancy risk as compared to market housing.</p> <p>Clinical, or high intensity, support for individuals with greater complexity or concurrent health issues (including mental health and addictions) may be dependent upon the availability of onsite or in-reached healthcare services.</p>	<p>Estimated range of increased spaces is derived from the number of spaces required to clear the current backlog of individuals requiring Supportive Housing, and projecting expected growth over the next 5 years. As individuals rarely leave Supportive Housing programs, ongoing growth and additional spaces are needed to meet projected demand.</p> <p>Supportive Housing program expansion across different levels of service intensity is required – this ranges from lower-intensity, daytime-only supports to 24/7 higher complexity embedded services.</p>
Transitional Housing “Bridge Housing”	92	150-250	<p>Bridge Housing spaces facilitate dedicated responses to unsheltered homelessness and are designed for rapid turnover (length of stay target of 90 days) as individuals are supported to move into permanent housing options.</p> <p>This level of service includes accommodation and basic needs support provided by embedded staff. This service is dependent on Scattered Site Housing Teams to work with individuals to move into permanent housing, and the availability of affordable and appropriate housing options.</p>	<p>Range of spaces of this specific intervention vary due to the status and type of emergency shelter spaces available; as provincially funded shelters adopt a Shelter Hub model and shelters become more housing focused, it may decrease overall need for Bridge Housing. Nonetheless, this program stream remains an important immediate intervention to resolve unsheltered homelessness.</p>
Scattered Site Supports (often referred to as Housing First programs)	1563	300-600	<p>“Scattered Site Supports” includes program streams that support individuals living in market housing. Depending on the intensity of need and anticipated length of follow-up, individuals are either prioritized for Intensive Case Management (ICM), Rapid ReHousing (RRH), or Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) streams.</p>	<p>This moderate increase in Scattered Site capacity, coupled with increased funding for housing workers embedded within emergency shelters throughout Edmonton, will address both the backlog of individuals awaiting referral to a Housing Team, as well as provide ongoing follow-up to individuals who</p>

			<p>This level of service works alongside individuals to support basic needs, to navigate social support systems, and to navigate the challenges of finding, securing, and moving into appropriate market housing options.</p> <p>This service stream is dependent on the availability of affordable housing and appropriate rental subsidy for long-term stability and to prevent re-entry into homelessness.</p>	<p>have been successfully housed.</p>
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Draft Recommendations

The section below represents the draft recommendations for the plan at this point in the project’s communication and engagement with the community and relevant relationship groups. Taken together, these recommendations provide the broad direction of the new plan, the issues they seek to solve, and initial draft actions. The published plan will include the specific objectives the recommendations are intended to achieve, who will be responsible for executing on the objectives identified in a public facing Accountability Framework, and the measurements that will be used to determine success.

The Plan’s Ambition

The long term solution to houselessness requires a focus on housing. Everything this plan intends to accomplish using the following principles and draft recommendations is ultimately geared toward housing as many people as possible with appropriate supports for their individualized needs and situations. No sustainable solution to homelessness exists without finding more ways to house people, creating more housing options, and having more of the right types of supports in place to allow people to stay housed.

These draft recommendations emphasize a few key principles:

- Supporting practices that will create **clear alignment** of objectives within the sector to bring the efforts and resources of this community together to leverage a bigger collective impact. This will allow our community to generate compelling and effective solutions that attract investment.
- The use of a **thorough data model** to set targets for the plan; monitor the plan’s ongoing success; allow for the ability to make adjustments on the basis of sector, relationship group, and partner collaboration; and feed into an accountability framework that provides the community with a clear sense of the plan’s progress.
- Building on **existing collaborative practices** within the homeless-serving sector to expand the working alliance of organizations putting effort and resources into addressing homelessness and create a sector-wide ethos of continuous improvement toward the aligned goals of this plan.

RECOMMENDATION 1

Homeward Trust to convene an engaged sector leadership table with an aim to build and align interests and direction for the homeless serving sector and allied system partners.

Problem we are trying to address: Competing priorities among different sector actors, confusion over the role of emerging actors, a lack of collaborative leadership spaces, and a lack of alignment on how we achieve the outcomes of the plan can challenge the pursuit of common sector-wide outcomes.

INITIAL DRAFT ACTIONS:

- Focus on incentivising as many people as possible, whether they are in the homeless-serving sector, an allied system, policy makers, or community at large, to commit to the same set of priorities
- Identify members from allied-systems (such as health, ROSC, justice) outside of the homeless-serving sector who may impact inflow and outflow into homelessness
- Develop a standard for including new members into the homeless-serving collaborative
- Develop a process for members to exit collaborative, should an organization's goals shift away from the general aligned sector direction

RECOMMENDATION 2

Continued focused improvements to the Homeward Trust System Framework

Problem we are trying to address: Lack of a comprehensive understanding of individual housing outcomes and assessing the ways that current approaches can be adapted to our modern context and program availability.

INITIAL DRAFT ACTIONS:

- Refine Homeless-System Framework to define, understand, and measure impact of all services that impact the state of homelessness
- Focus measures on a decreased recidivism rate and an increase in the number of individuals housed
- Build upon existing System Framework of service providers to increase the available service types, intensity levels, and flexible graduation timelines to meet community needs.
- Define and design service streams to better meet the nuanced needs of individuals experiencing homelessness (factoring considerations such as staff ratios, staffing types, length of service, etc.)
- Produce a public report that provides data and analysis of the frequency and cause of eviction from housing programs in order to identify program changes and interventions that can increase the sustainability of housing

RECOMMENDATION 3

Develop a sector-wide exchange to establish and share best practice, key data, and facilitate regular sector collaboration.

Problem we are trying to address: Absence of a formalized place for frequent and inclusive collaboration within the sector, with the necessary resources for participants to work together to develop experience-informed, evidence-based and innovative solutions.

INITIAL DRAFT ACTIONS:

- Develop both “best practice policy centre” and “general table” sector gatherings to allow for dedicated connections between sector providers
- Develop expectations that sector providers will be able to share and present information at quarterly gatherings
- Ties into current sector training and professional development for all affiliated system partners
- Develop a system that will allow the system planner to present policy and data findings at the “general table”
- Create space at the “general table” gathering to propose and collaborate on solutions
- Tie funding decisions to the data/policy shared at the general table
- Develop a coordinated research agenda to support best practice

RECOMMENDATION 4

Identify, define, and provide projections for new system framework targets to meet our current and anticipated future housing and program needs to prevent and end homelessness in Edmonton.

Problem we are trying to address: Absence of a consistent and reliable forecasting process that supports long range planning and evaluation.

INITIAL DRAFT ACTIONS:

- Define program streams and clarify taxonomy of all supports
- Provide calculations/projections on inflow and outflow of homelessness based on different environment and policy scenarios, activities of allied systems (e.g. healthcare, justice, recovery, etc.)
- Define development targets of program streams, including:
 - Supportive Housing
 - Bridge Housing
 - Scattered Site Supports
- Develop a plan to measure preventive subsidies for market housing
- Create targets for institutional housing referrals
- Design of service streams that are currently gaps in the existing system framework

RECOMMENDATION 5

In the context of plan objectives, targets and the plan’s data modelling, set a data policy and standards for the sector to standardize data design, collection, sharing, and publishing practices across all sector actors.

Problem we are trying to address: We do not collect, synthesize, and analyze data in a consistent way across all sector actors, which makes it difficult to know what relevant data the sector has available and how it might be applied to system-wide solutions to prevent and resolve homelessness.

INITIAL DRAFT ACTIONS:

- Create a sector standard for collection, retention, and sharing of data and apply to the new plan objectives.
- Create ways for relevant data from other partners and systems to be incorporated into the data model of the plan
- Articulate specific concerns and rules around usage of identifying and non-identifying data within applicable privacy legislation

RECOMMENDATION 6

Find new ways to measure success: Refine the accountability and reporting framework of the Homeless-Serving Sector to capture complexities and system dependencies beyond housing-focused outcomes, showing the holistic ways that people make progress through the housing spectrum.

Problem we are trying to address: Current reporting and assessment mechanisms lack the nuance to develop more precise and appropriate solutions to housing people.

INITIAL DRAFT ACTIONS:

- Develop communication planning and protocol to explain the importance of these nuances to the public
- Position system measures as aggregate of individual measures
- Tie measures to the progress of the sector, programs and allied systems (e.g. both tangible service provision such as ID, income supports, access to affordable housing, as well as services like recovery and health practitioners and facilities)
- Make this the basis of the Accountability Framework and data hub
- Measure holistic staff supply, retention, and health as a success measure of the sector

RECOMMENDATION 7

Embed Indigenous ways of knowing and doing into sector activities and system delivery approach as much as possible, applying Indigenous cultural standards and practices.

Problem we are trying to address: The overrepresentation of Indigenous people among people experiencing homelessness is not adequately matched in system delivery by Indigenous-focused approaches and opportunities for Indigenous ways of learning and knowing.

INITIAL DRAFT ACTIONS:

- Building capacity with Indigenous-based support systems that reflect the proportion of Indigenous people experiencing homelessness
- Braid funding with Indigenous-specific funding streams to maximize investment in Indigenous-led programming

- Create Indigenous-informed service approaches, with Indigenous evaluation models that acknowledge the distinct ways Indigenous-led programs operate and consider success
- Continue to increase funding and units to align with the overrepresentation of Indigenous people experiencing homelessness
- Increase access to culturally appropriate support for trauma
- Increase the number of Indigenous-led land-based programs
- Explore shared planning with Indigenous-led funding programs
- Explore Indigenous-led performance measurement or evaluation

RECOMMENDATION 8

Implement a housing focused strategy for people experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

Problem we are trying to address: The presence of unsheltered homelessness is a byproduct of insufficient supports throughout both the homeless-serving system and allied systems of care. Currently, not all actors are aligned to a consistent, proactive, and long-term health, housing, and support strategy for people with complex needs who are living in places unfit for human habitation.

INITIAL DRAFT ACTIONS:

- Create a specific and long-term housing strategy for unsheltered people
 - Understand and implement strategies to address bottlenecks that prevent unsheltered people from quickly moving into temporary housing and shelter options
 - Introduce and scale bridge housing options with no pre-housing work required
 - Understand specific support requirements for individuals sleeping outside and design program supports to specifically meet those needs (considering scope of practitioners, caseload ratios, length of stay in program, etc.)
 - Pilot an integrated dispatch model for all front line workers that interact with unsheltered individuals
- Increase appropriate housing supply for individuals moving out of unsheltered homelessness (including considerations of community living, supportive settings, and congregate options)
- Identify stable, long-term funding streams for bridge housing options
- Add additional funding and support to homelessness prevention programs for people who are precariously housed
- Create a specific emergency housing focused strategy for unsheltered people that can be deployed without disrupting the rest of the system
 - Define a threshold for the deployment of the emergency response

RECOMMENDATION 9

Increase access to and quality of shelter services.

Problem we are trying to address: The current shelter system is undergoing growth and change, and work needs to be done to accelerate service delivery improvements that are comprehensive enough to meet the complex needs of community members seeking shelter services.

INITIAL DRAFT ACTIONS:

- Facilitate sector participation in the review, update, and adoption of Edmonton's Minimum Emergency Shelter Standard
- Provide enhanced real-time operational information on shelter spaces, including the types of shelter spaces and associated services available (e.g. differentiating between spaces designated for specific populations, differences in service available by site, referral-based spaces, continuous-stay, and longer-term transitional or short-term spaces)
- Increase 24/7 youth intake and youth crisis stabilization spaces across the city, ideally through colocation of agencies
- Prioritize the development of culturally safe shelter models led by Indigenous people for Indigenous people
- Coordinated access and data sharing for youth serving agencies
- Increase the number of sleep support spaces for youth
- Expand diversion for youth experiencing homelessness through family reunification and family support efforts

RECOMMENDATION 10

Work with the existing youth collaborations to uplift and advance youth homelessness prevention and youth homelessness strategies and services.

Problem we are trying to address: Youth are underrepresented in programs and policies relating to resolving and preventing homelessness, experience unique intersections within the system, and have not been a substantive part of decision making within the sector.

INITIAL DRAFT ACTIONS:

- Support and uplift the recommendations of the YAC, which include:
 - A coordinated system of care for youth, "no wrong door" philosophy
 - Increased access to support services in underserved areas of the city
 - Increased access to 24/7 support services for youth
 - Enhanced youth homelessness diversion and family reunification programs
 - Increased youth mental health supports
- Facilitate meaningful opportunities to include youth in plan governance
- Create dedicated supports for the unique needs of Youth Housing First programs, including those designed for Indigenous youth
 - Youth tenant supports
 - Emergency rent support
- Find opportunities for organizations like school boards, Child and Family Services, and the Child and Youth Advocate to contribute to the plan through data, best practice, or other partnership

Next Steps

Following the conversation with the Community and Public Services Committee, Homeward Trust and the City of Edmonton will further refine the recommendations, produce objectives and indicators of success, and follow-up with stakeholders to validate a draft of the 2024 Plan. Homeward Trust, as the system planner for the homeless serving sector, will continue to socialize, validate, and steward execution of the Plan. This process will be undertaken with the support and guidance of the Homeward Trust Community Advisory Boards --the Indigenous Advisory Council, Project Review Committee, and Community Plan Leadership Committee-- and by stewarding the efforts of the homeless-serving sector and allied partners. To finalize and publish the Plan, the Homeward Trust Board will put forward, and approve, a motion that the Plan be recognized and implemented until such time that a new Plan is developed and approved.

