



Employment and
Social Development Canada

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Canada



Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy

December 2018

Overview

Homelessness in Canada

Reaching Home

- Announcement & Key Elements

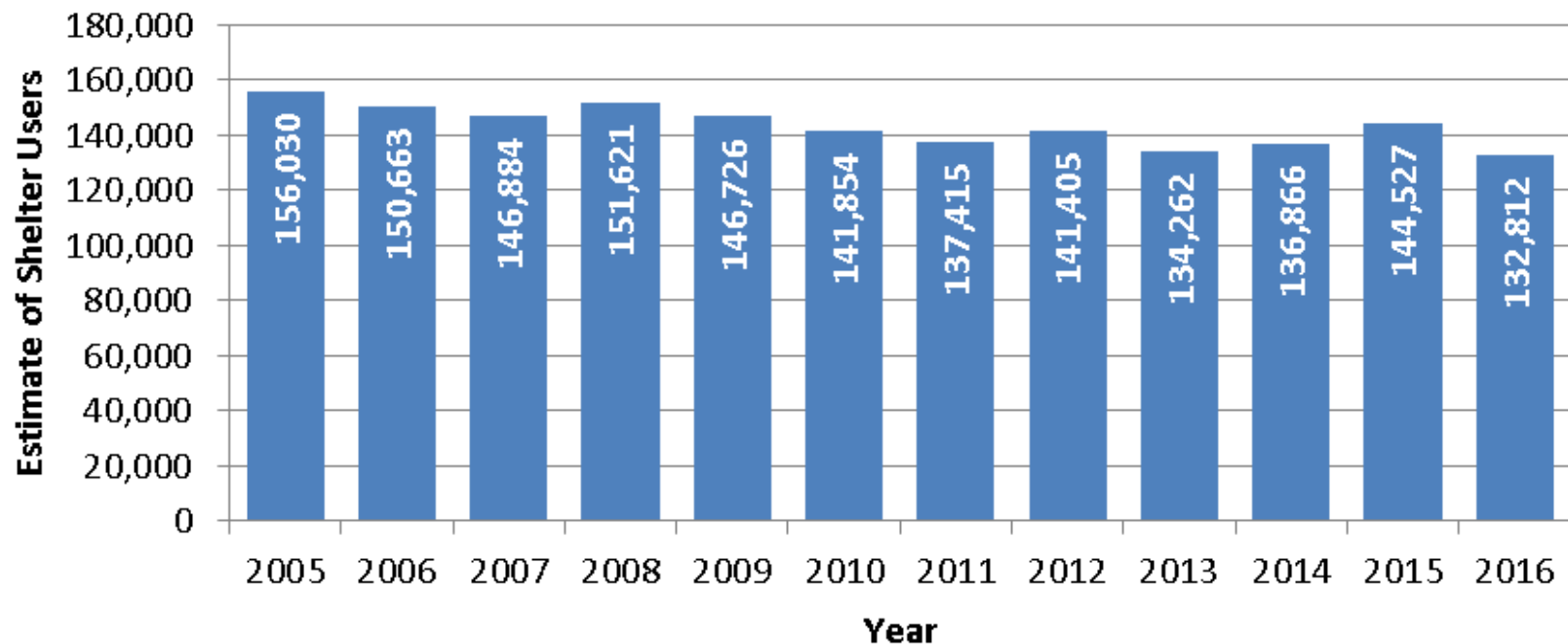
Next Steps



Homelessness in Canada

- Homelessness affects a diverse cross-section of the population (e.g. individuals, youth, families, women and children fleeing violence, persons with disabilities, Veterans, seniors).
- An estimated **133,000** people experienced homelessness at an emergency shelter in Canada in 2016. This represents a decrease of about **15%** from 2005.
 - In 2016, there were approximately 27,000 shelter users who were chronically homeless.
- Indigenous peoples continue to be over-represented in the homeless population and are 10 times more likely to use a shelter than non-Indigenous people.

Figure 2: Estimated Number of Shelter Users per Year (2005-2016)



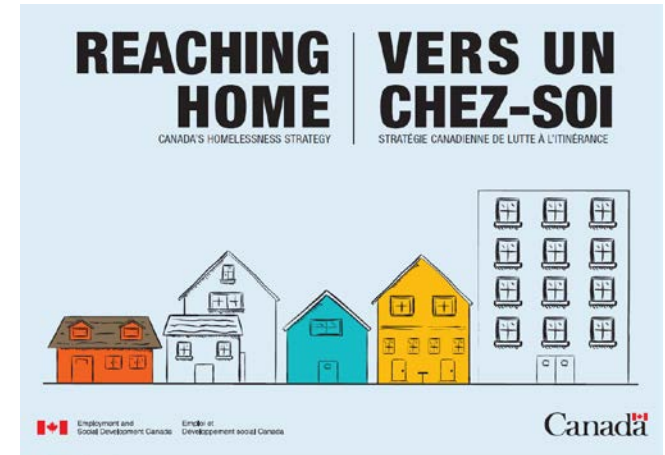
Redesigning the federal homelessness program: Community and Stakeholder Engagement

- In Budget 2017, the Government of Canada committed to consulting Canadians on how to redesign the Homelessness Partnering Strategy.
- Guided by the Advisory Committee on Homelessness, composed of experts and stakeholders in the field of homelessness and those with lived experience of homelessness, and chaired by Parliamentary Secretary Adam Vaughan, extensive consultations were undertaken in the summer and fall of 2017.
- On May 18, 2018, the Government released *the Advisory Committee on Homelessness' Final Report and the Homelessness Partnering Strategy—What We Heard Report*. Key Recommendations include:
 - Maintain the community-based approach and enhance the flexibility of communities to invest in their local priorities, including youth, women fleeing violence, and homelessness prevention;
 - Increase funding to address both Indigenous homelessness and homelessness in the territories;
 - Expand the Designated Communities stream through an open and transparent process; and,
 - Focus on the achievement of community-wide outcomes, with the requirement that communities report on progress.



Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy

- As part of the National Housing Strategy, the Government announced a total investment of \$2.2 billion for homelessness over 10 years.
 - By 2021–22, this will double annual federal investments in homelessness compared to 2015-16.
 - Across all regionally-delivered streams, no communities will see a decrease in funding.
 - Reaching Home will expand its reach by up to six new Designated Communities through an open and transparent application process expected to launch in January 2019.
- Reaching Home, which will replace the Homelessness Partnering Strategy on April 1, 2019:
 - Reinforces the community-based approach by removing Housing First investment targets, thereby giving communities more flexibility in how investments can be used;
 - Promotes cross-stream collaboration to help ensure better results for Indigenous people given their over-representation in the homeless population;
 - Supports the goals of the Government's National Housing Strategy, in particular to reduce chronic homelessness nationally by 50% by 2027-28; and,
 - Supports evidence-based decision making by communities through development of data-driven homelessness systems.



Maintaining the Community-Based Approach

- Community Advisory Boards will maintain their important advisory function under Reaching Home.
- As the local organizing committee responsible for setting direction for addressing homelessness in a community or region, Community Advisory Boards are expected to coordinate efforts to address homelessness in a community and have in-depth knowledge of the key sectors and systems that affect homelessness priorities.
- Under Reaching Home, Community Advisory Boards will continue to be responsible for:
 - Approving **Community Plans** at the local level;
 - **Assessing** and **recommending projects for funding** to Community Entities;
 - Being **representative of the community**; and,
 - Supporting Community Entities in **the governance, planning and implementation** of new features of Reaching Home, including Community Progress Reports.



Introducing an Outcomes-Based Approach

- Designated Communities will be required to adopt an outcomes-based approach, where they work to achieve set community-level outcomes.
- Communities will demonstrate progress and tangible actions to improve their homelessness response by reporting publicly on results in an annual **Community Progress Report** beginning in 2020-21.
 - With the exception of a reduction of 50% in chronic homelessness by 2027-28, communities will set their own targets for each outcome.
- The Community Progress Report will consist of three components:
 - A Coordinated Access Self-Assessment;
 - Details on the Homeless Population Served in the Community (e.g. inflow and outflow); and,
 - Community-Wide Outcomes and Indicators.
- **Community Progress Reports will not be used to compare communities.**
 - Community Progress Reports can be a tool for communities to help understand their local system performance and make changes where necessary.
 - Reporting will not be used as a way to change funding levels.
- Sections of the Community Progress Report will be phased in over time as communities make progress in implementing coordinated access.
 - Reporting on outcomes will begin once coordinated access has been in place long enough to measure year-over-year progress against an established baseline.



Introducing Coordinated Access

- Coordinated Access is a process that, within a geographic area, helps homeless individuals and families access assistance in a coordinated and standardized way. Under Coordinated Access, service providers in a community utilize a common information management system and work together to **assess, triage** and **prioritize** individuals for services in a consistent manner.
 - The goal of Coordinated Access is to help communities ensure **fairness, prioritize** people most in need of assistance, make **referrals** and **match** individuals to appropriate housing and services in a more streamlined and coordinated way.
- All Designated Communities **will be required** to have a Coordinated Access system in place by **March 31, 2022**.
- A centralized **Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS)** is required to support the community-wide data sharing necessary for successful functioning of coordinated access. Where one does not exist, those receiving funding through the Designated Communities' stream will be required to use the Homelessness Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS).
- Both Coordinated Access and a centralized HMIS are needed to enable the program's shift to an outcomes-based approach.
 - The HMIS provides infrastructure through which communities can set and report on community-wide outcomes and coordinated access the means for community to make progress towards these outcomes.



Supporting Communities through the Community Capacity and Innovation Funding Stream

- To support communities in their implementation of Reaching Home and to foster innovation in the sector, a new Community Capacity and Innovation (CCI) stream will be introduced. This stream replaces the existing Innovative Solutions to Homelessness and National Homelessness Information System streams.
- CCI funding will support communities with the implementation of Coordinated Access by:
 - Providing incremental funding to communities to support their initial investment in their Coordinated Access systems;
 - Support collaboration across the Designated Community and Indigenous Homelessness streams where they overlap; and,
 - Providing training and technical assistance.
- Set-up funding will support communities in, for example:
 - Hiring a dedicated project manager for Coordinated Access;
 - Developing and implementing various elements of a Coordinated Access system (e.g., governance structures, access model, prioritization criteria, assessment, matching and referral process);
 - Onboarding HIFIS (should communities not already have a HMIS in place); and,
 - Developing partnerships with other sectors (e.g., corrections, health services, housing providers).



Collaboration across the Designated Community and Indigenous Homelessness streams

- Indigenous Community Entities, Community Advisory Boards and service providers are a critical partner in a community's efforts to prevent and reduce homelessness, and their collaboration in designing and implementing the Coordinated Access system in the community is essential to its success.
- While the Indigenous Homelessness stream is not required to use a Coordinated Access system, it is strongly preferred that streams that exist in the same community work together to implement one approach to Coordinated Access.
 - Similarly, service providers who receive funding under the Indigenous Homelessness stream will be encouraged to utilize Coordinated Access to support the community's efforts to achieve community-wide outcomes.
- Recognizing that some Indigenous clients use services across streams, in communities where streams co-exist, and there is interest from the Indigenous Community Entity, Designated Communities will be expected to facilitate collaboration between the streams to implement a single Coordinated Access system.
- Reaching Home will support collaboration on Coordinated Access within communities.



Indigenous Homelessness Stream

- Housing First targets will be removed as of April 1, 2019, to provide communities receiving funding under the Indigenous Homelessness funding stream more flexibility to meet the needs of Indigenous peoples experiencing homelessness.
- Under Reaching Home, funding dedicated to addressing Indigenous homelessness will increase.
- The Aboriginal Homelessness stream, to be renamed the Indigenous Homelessness stream, will **maintain funding** to the communities currently being supported.
- To develop an approach on how to allocate the **additional funding**, the Government is engaging with National Indigenous Organizations and Indigenous service providers to ensure this funding is delivered in alignment with the unique rights, interests, and circumstances of the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Nation.



Territorial Homelessness and Rural and Remote Homelessness Streams

- A new Territorial Homelessness stream will be created by merging all HPS regional funding streams (i.e. Designated Community, Rural and Remote Homelessness and Aboriginal Homelessness) into one funding envelope with enhanced funding available (\$43M over nine years). Each territory will be represented under this stream.
 - Collapsed streams will streamline management of funds and offer more flexibility in how funding can be used (i.e., more flexibility on capital investments for new shelters).
 - Similar to Housing First, while the stream will not mandate the implementation of coordinated access, communities will be encouraged and supported in its adoption.
- The development of the Territorial Homelessness stream is being undertaken in consultation with territorial, municipal, and Indigenous governments and Indigenous partners.
- Addressing homelessness in rural and remote areas continues to be a priority for the Government of Canada. Under Reaching Home, the Rural and Remote Homelessness funding stream will be maintained, with an investment of \$98 M over nine years.
 - No design changes are planned for this funding stream.



Reaching Home: Next Steps

- Service Canada will provide Community Entities with an application package in the coming weeks.
- Negotiations of the new contribution agreements with Community Entities will take place in January 2019.
- As no community will see a decrease in their allocation, the processes to extend existing projects to ensure service continuity will begin as soon as possible.
- Community Entities will have an opportunity to meet in Ottawa at the CE Forum in January 2019, where further details on the outcomes-based approach and coordinated access will be provided.
- Official launch of Reaching Home on April 1, 2019, and start of new community planning processes. Communities will also benefit from full flexibility with the removal of Housing First investment targets.

