

Spruce Grove 5 Year Strategy to Reduce Poverty & Homelessness

Best Practices Summary

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Table of Contents

- Introduction 3
- Housing First Model 4
- Systems Approach to Addressing Homelessness..... 6
 - Collaboration..... 7
 - Coordinated Service Provision 8
- Community Awareness and Education 10
- Innovative Approaches to Housing 11
- Healthy Food..... 13
- Accessible Transportation..... 14
- Additional Service Provision Best Practices 14

Introduction

Best and emerging practices offer insights, tools, and approaches to address challenges related to poverty and homelessness in Spruce Grove. Research findings are primarily drawn from Canada as communities in this geographic region share common social, political, economic and regulatory contexts.

Key themes to guide the research were identified through stakeholder engagement on September 13, 2018 where 49 stakeholders attended a Homelessness Serving Systems Workshop. Workshop participants engaged in group discussion to brainstorm the types of root causes they believe contribute to homelessness and poverty in Spruce Grove and the surrounding communities. A list of eight overarching root causes were collectively summarized by the group:

- Lack of interventions, services and wrap around supports
- Lack of a full spectrum of housing
- The role of education and skills training
- Behavioural and life challenges (physical health, mental health, addiction, domestic violence)
- The regulatory environment
- Community awareness and attitudes
- Home environment and family dynamics
- Income, the economy and financial resources

The following summary outlines key best and emerging practices that address the root causes. The complex nature of homelessness and poverty makes it challenging to identify a single best practice that addresses each root cause in isolation. Instead, it is much more likely that a tool or approach will touch on a number of the root causes. As such, the following key best practice areas were developed in order to address the eight root causes listed:

- Housing First Model
- Systems Approach to Addressing Homelessness
- Community Awareness and Education
- Innovative Approaches to Housing
- Healthy Food
- Accessible Transportation

Although not discussed directly at the Stakeholder Workshop, the lack of coordination and integrated service delivery is a key best practice that has been identified in other communities.¹ This approach is increasingly seen as a best practice in community-based homeless serving systems across Canada. As well, the single, overarching best practice to addressing homelessness that has been embraced across North America and Europe is the Housing First model. Using a Housing First and a systems approach can have a significant positive impact on homelessness, and in some cases can completely eliminate

¹ Turner, Alina and Jaime Rogers. 2016. "The First City to End Homelessness": A Case Study of Medicine Hat's Approach to System Planning in a Housing First Context. Canadian Observatory on Homelessness.

homelessness.² Both will be integral to addressing root causes of homelessness and poverty in Spruce Grove.

Housing First Model

Housing First is “a recovery-oriented approach to homelessness that involves moving people who experience homelessness into independent and permanent housing as quickly as possible, with no preconditions, and then providing them with additional services and supports as needed.”³ This approach differs significantly from a treatment-first model, which requires compliance with treatment and an abstinence from alcohol and drugs. The Housing Partnership Strategy has defined six Housing First principles:

1. **Rapid housing placement with supports:** This involves helping clients locate and secure accommodation as rapidly as possible and assists them with moving in.
2. **Offering clients a reasonable choice:** Clients must be given a reasonable choice in terms of housing options as well as the services they wish to access.
3. **Separating housing provision from treatment services:** Acceptance of treatment, following treatment, or compliance with services is not a requirement for housing tenure, but clients agree to monthly visits.
4. **Providing tenancy rights and responsibilities:** Clients are required to contribute a portion of their income towards rent.
5. **Integrating housing into the community:** This is to encourage client recovery.
6. **Recovery based and promoting self-sufficiency:** The focus is on capabilities of the person, based on self-determined goals, which may include employment, education and participation in the community.⁴

All Housing First programs strive to include these core elements; however, the implementation of the Housing First approach will differ significantly from community to community, and will change according to the population served, resources and local context.⁵

Case Studies

Tool Type	Municipality	Summary
At Home/ Chez Soi” Project ⁶	Vancouver = Winnipeg Toronto Montreal Moncton	Between 2009 and 2013 the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) funded the world’s largest and most comprehensive study of Housing First, the At Home/Chez Soi project. It set the foundation for the broad adoption of Housing First by examining it as a means of ending homelessness for people who are living with mental illness, with a particular focus on individuals with multiple barriers. The study was implemented in five Canadian cities, with each community focused on a specific demographic group.

² Turner, Alina and Jaime Rogers. 2016. “The First City to End Homelessness”: A Case Study of Medicine Hat’s Approach to System Planning in a Housing First Context. Canadian Observatory on Homelessness.

³ Gaetz, Stephen, Scott, Fiona and Tanya Gullver. 2013. *Housing First in Canada: Supporting Communities to End Homelessness*. Canadian Homelessness Research Network Press.

⁴ Homelessness Partnering Strategy. 2016. *Housing First Approach*. <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/communities/homelessness/housing-first/approach.html>

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Mental Health Commission of Canada. *National Final Report: Cross-Site At Home /Chez Soi Project*.

		<p>The final summary report for the At Home/Chez Soi project outlines seven key learnings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing First can be effectively implemented in Canadian cities of different size and different ethnoracial and cultural composition. • Housing First rapidly ends homelessness. • Housing First is a sound investment. • It is Housing First, it is not housing only. • Having a place to live with supports can lead to other positive outcomes above and beyond those provided by services. • There are many ways in which Housing First can change lives. • Getting Housing First right is essential to optimizing outcomes.
Boys and Girls Club of Calgary: The Infinity Project	Calgary, Alberta	<p>Considered an innovative Housing First program, the Infinity Project. The project uses a scattered site model to aid youth in obtaining housing in the private market. It serves youth, ages 16 to 24, by providing them with the supports they need to maintain housing. Youth are free to live as they choose in the home and community of their choice. From the beginning, most of the homeless youth who have exited the program have been able to maintain permanent housing, as well as stable incomes.</p> <p>Additional information can be found at: https://www.boysandgirlsclubsofcalgary.ca/programs/youth-housing-and-shelters/youth-housing/</p>
Adapting the 'Housing First' strategy to local context	Medicine Hat, Alberta	<p>The Medicine Hat Community Housing Society (MHCHS) leads the implementation of the Housing First strategy which leads to redefining what that means for the city. In Medicine Hat, it means connecting any person or family experiencing homelessness with a caseworker and putting them on a waiting list for a housing program within 10 days. The process requires creating space to innovate, formalizing a systems approach, and visioning beyond an end to homelessness.</p> <p>Additional information can be found at: http://homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/4.6%20Turner.pdf</p>
Housing First Landlords	City of Grande Prairie, Alberta	<p>Grande Prairie's Housing First Program includes the opportunity of being a Housing First Landlord. This part of the program offers landlords the opportunity to be part of the plan to end homelessness. They are eligible for financial support on any incurred damages. Landlords can receive support, participate in the Rental Enhancement Program, and have access to benefits including third party direct to landlord payment established with a tenant.</p> <p>Additional information can be found at: http://www.cityofgp.com/index.aspx?page=2287#Housing%20First%20Landlords</p>
Streets to Homes	Victoria, British Columbia	<p>This program follows the "Housing First with Supports" approach and offers tailored supports to the clients. Housing stability reduces the use of law enforcement and emergency services. Initially, the pilot was a collaborative effort of the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness and eight partner organizations. The pilot was proven successful in January 2012, at which time it was transferred over to Pacifica Housing Society. It has now been replicated in different Canadian cities.</p> <p>Additional information can be found at: http://victoriahomelessness.ca/community-resources/streets-to-homes/</p>
Windsor-Essex Housing Connections (WEHC)	Windsor, Ontario	<p>Windsor-Essex Housing Connections (WEHC) is a partnership of agencies who work together to help people find affordable rental housing and end the cycle of homelessness. Through the Housing First Program, Family Services Windsor-Essex (FSWE) helps people with the greatest level of need find affordable rental housing. FSWE works with people who have been chronically homeless (i.e. 6+ months) and have a significant mental health and/or addiction concern(s). This project's promising practices include: using a trauma-informed approach to providing support and utilizing a successful partnership between experienced support agencies, housing outreach services and the municipal housing corporation.</p>

		Additional information can be found at: https://fswe.ca/support/rental-housing/
Homes First Society – Strachan House	Toronto, Ontario	Homes First was a 1980s pioneer of permanent housing for people experiencing chronic homelessness in Toronto. It provides supportive housing and emergency shelters across the city of Toronto. The project’s promising practices include: creating a community within a community in a changing neighbourhood by attending neighbourhood meetings and speaking with nearby businesses, for example; practicing “assertive tolerance” to accommodate and support individuals with complex needs. Key outcomes in 2016: 96% of tenants remained stably housed at Strachan House and 96,360 nutritious meals were served. Additional information can be found at: https://amho.ca/wp-content/uploads/Prom-Prac-Resource-Guide-Final02.pdf

Systems Approach to Addressing Homelessness

Taking a systems approach to homelessness means moving beyond the simple introduction of new programs and instead ensuring “that all key players in our Homeless-Serving System follow the same vision, and are committed to working together towards realising it.”⁷ In “Beyond Housing First”, Alina Turner outlines seven key elements of a systems-approach:⁸

1. Planning and Strategy Development process follows a systems approach grounded in the Housing First philosophy.
2. Organizational Infrastructure is in place to implement homelessness plan/strategy and coordinate the homeless-serving system to meet common goals.
3. System Mapping to make sense of existing services and create order moving forward.
4. Co-ordinated Service Delivery to facilitate access and flow-through for best client and system level outcomes.
5. Integrated Information Management aligns data collection, reporting, intake, assessment, and referrals to enable co-ordinated service delivery.
6. Performance Management and Quality Assurance at the program and system levels are aligned and monitored along common standards to achieve best outcomes.
7. Systems Integration mechanisms between the homeless-serving system and other key public systems and services, including justice, child intervention, health, immigration/settlement, domestic violence and poverty reduction.

Case Studies

Tool Type	Municipality	Summary
Plan to End Homelessness – Systems Planning & Housing First	City of Medicine Hat, Alberta	In 2014, the City of Medicine Hat launched a renewed Plan to End Homelessness, with an end date of 2015. Their approach to ending homelessness, based on Housing First principles and a system planning approach, has led to widespread recognition of their role as the first Canadian city to end homelessness. Research on Medicine Hat’s approach identifies five critical factors in their success:

⁷ Turner Strategies. 2014. *Medicine Hat Plan to End Homelessness*.

⁸ Turner, Alina. 2014. “Beyond Housing First: Essential Elements of a System-Planning Approach to Ending Homelessness.” University of Calgary School of Public Policy, SPP Research Papers. Vol 7., Issue 30.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiatives to address homelessness had a shared community ownership, not held by any single stakeholder alone • The right people at the right time: a diversity of key proponents of the plan, combined with external expertise and a strong group of core leaders created space for innovation and action. • The plan focused on data, performance and continuous improvement: the use of a coordinated data and decision-making approach ensured actions were based on up-to-date, reliable evidence that had broad service provider and stakeholder support. • The system planning approach had community-wide buy in beyond the coordinating body, and there were intentional efforts to integrate efforts with other institutions and systems (e.g. health, corrections, etc.) • An adaptive, 'nimble' coordinating body allowed the coordinating body to shift between community development and system planning roles, with integration between the two approaches, in order to address emergent needs.⁹
Calgary Homeless Foundation	Calgary, Alberta	<p>System integration has been identified as a key component in better serving the homeless population and in coordinating efforts to address homelessness. The Calgary Homeless Foundation acts as the backbone to the homeless-serving sector by coordinating actors, as well as sharing information and best practices. It also uses Housing Management Information Systems (HMIS) to follow-up on services, their efficiency, and level of use. In this instance, the Foundation offers strategic direction to improve services and is a key piece in integrating the serving system.</p> <p>Additional information can be found at: http://calgaryhomeless.com/</p>

Collaboration

Collaborative decision-making models are a core component of a systems approach to addressing homelessness.¹⁰ In this context, collaboration usually means government (including local, provincial and federal government stakeholders) and non-government (i.e. non-profit housing and service providers) working together to make collective decisions about priority needs, strategies to address these needs, and resources required to implement strategies.

Case Studies

Tool Type	Municipality	Summary
RESOLVE Campaign	Calgary, Alberta	RESOLVE is a partnership of nine established, experienced and respected Calgary social service agencies that have come together along with government with a single one-time goal: create affordable rental housing, with supports, for up to 3,000 vulnerable and homeless Calgarians. This level of collaboration is a first in Calgary and in Canada to address affordable housing.

⁹ Turner, Alina and Jaime Rogers. 2016. "The First City to End Homelessness": A Case Study of Medicine Hat's Approach to System Planning in a Housing First Context." *Exploring Effective Systems Responses to Homelessness*. Canadian Observatory on Homelessness.

¹⁰ Doberstein, Carey. 2016. "Systems Planning and Governance: A Conceptual Framework." *Exploring Effective Systems Responses to Homelessness*. Canadian Observatory on Homelessness.

		<p>Additional information can be found at: http://www.resolvecampaign.com/about/</p>
Alberta's Seven Cities Partnership	<p>Calgary Homeless Foundation, City of Grande Prairie, City of Lethbridge, Homeward Trust Edmonton, Medicine Hat Community Housing Society, City of Red Deer, Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo</p>	<p>This regional partnership enables 7 cities to work together towards ending homelessness through systems integration, knowledge sharing, and funding coordination. Through this partnership, Housing First and 'plans to end' were determined as the most cost-effective solutions based on best practices research. The partnership efforts have resulted in increased funding for affordable housing initiatives, homelessness projects, capital development, and rent supplements. All seven cities work on system planning and integration, funding and performance management, and knowledge leadership and innovation. At the same time, this offers a platform to connect with both the provincial and federal governments.</p> <p>Additional information can be found at: https://www.7cities.ca/</p>
The North Shore Homelessness Task Force	<p>North Vancouver, British Columbia</p>	<p>The North Shore Homelessness Task Force aims to "address homelessness and issues related to homelessness on the North Shore." Membership includes non-profit organizations, the local health authority, the RCMP, the faith community, municipal employees, service providers, and committed residents. The Task Force was initially formed in 1998. The District of North Vancouver provides meeting space and pays for the coordinator's contract.</p> <p>A Steering Committee consists of the Task Force chairperson, social planners from the three municipalities, two agencies, and Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH). The Steering Committee decides on the agenda for the Task Force and generally is the main decision maker. The Task Force works collaboratively to pursue the objectives of a 10-year plan (2008-2018). The Task Force is action oriented, and members are expected to play an active role; working groups are created to respond to specific needs, and these are where the majority of work happens. Working groups have included groups responding to family shelter needs, dental services, data coordination and communications. The 10 year plan identified 6 primary areas for work: 1. Maintaining linkages to related initiatives and work, 2. Fathering of information and evidence, 3. Establishing and maintaining a communications strategy, 4. Advocating for a continuum of housing, 5. Advocating for a continuum of support services, and 6. Advocating for adequate income levels and employment training.</p>

Coordinated Service Provision

It is important to coordinate of activities among front-line service providers that reduce barriers and facilitate access to all services available in Spruce Grove and the region to support long-term client recovery. Systems must be properly resourced, simple to navigate, and must target the community's resources quickly and efficiently to the people who are most in need. In Housing First, client support is typically provided by a case management team and/or a case manager that serves as a main point of contact for a client from assessment to follow-up.

An assessment of various coordination approaches to social work identified some common success factors:¹¹

- Client Level Factors- Complexity of needs on the one hand can drive the dependence of various service providers upon one another in servicing a client. However, complexity, with an increasing number of service providers involved, can tax coordination.
- Personal Relationships - Personal relationships between service providers can be valuable in different ways depending upon at which level these personal relationships exist. When there exists (positive) personal relationships between administrative or executive levels, coordination between organizations can be facilitated. Between service providers that are at the case-worker levels, personal relationships can facilitate effective communication, and help to avoid the dangers of conflict in coordination.
- Decision Making Power in Coordination - Decision making power being present within the coordination can be helpful, as one interviewee of the study noted, “things get done because there were people with power.” Having the appropriate authority represented in the coordination so that resources can be exchanged as needed can improve the effectiveness of the collaborations.
- Incentives for Coordination - Funding schemes that encourage, require, or provide incentives to providers for coordinating can be helpful in fostering the conditions, and the relationships for ongoing coordination.

Case Studies

Tool Type	Municipality	Summary
Abbotsford Intensive Case Management	Abbotsford, British Columbia	Abbotsford Intensive Case Management follows an assessment process focused on acuity which uses a vulnerability assessment tool, in addition to other assessment tools, used in partnership with Fraser Health Authority. Moderate to high acuity clients are streamed in to an inter-agency team. These clients receive supports related to housing, health, income assistance, and other support connections. The program has up to 32 active spaces of case management at any one time. The program focuses on Housing First, but once individuals are housed, ongoing supports are provided in order to support clients in retaining housing beyond the active 32 spaces. A number of key factors in the success of the program have been identified. First, all components of the integration and coordination are based on stakeholder consultation and driven by working groups. Second, the program is reviewed by stakeholders annually, leading to substantial buy-in in the process. Finally, having a position funded by the City and the federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) allows high quality coordination work with the committee and a broader stakeholder network. Based on an interview with Dena Kae Beno, Homelessness Coordinator, City of Abbotsford.
Integrated Community	Victoria and Vancouver,	These teams help unstably housed individuals who are offenders with complex needs and who have frequent contact with police and emergency services. Team members have daily contact with clients. The team is

¹¹ Alicia C Bunker (2010). Defining Service Coordination: A Social Work Perspective.

Outreach Teams	British Columbia	<p>comprised of a probation officer, mental health social worker, mental health outreach worker, psychiatric nurse, income assistance worker, and a police officer. They help clients get housing, fight addictions, overcome mental health issues, and access employment. The Victoria Integrated Community Outreach Team (VICOT) helps clients develop life skills. The Vancouver Intensive Supervision Unit (VISU) helps reduce hospital and jail admissions.</p> <p>Additional information can be found at: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/justice/criminal-justice/corrections/reducing-reoffending/integrated-community-outreach-teams</p>
Centralized Access to Supported Housing (CASH) program	Victoria, British Columbia	<p>CASH is a cross-organizational hub where applications for and referrals to mental health and addictions supported housing in Victoria are collected. Through CASH, there is a single intake process for assessing and matching client needs and supported housing site's service levels. Five Coalition partners from the Service Integration Working Group collaborated to simplify the intake process. This initiative streamlines the application process. It used to be that each housing provider had its own referral and intake process, which complicated clients' access to services.</p> <p>Additional information can be found at: http://victoriasupportedhousing.ca/</p>

Community Awareness and Education

Stakeholders have identified a need for greater resources on engaging the community around issues of homelessness and poverty.

Case Studies

Tool Type	Municipality	Summary
Overcoming NIMBYism	Victoria, British Columbia	<p>The Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness created a "NIMBY Fact Sheet". This sheet highlighted facts relating to common 'Not in my back yard' provided information that challenged the common assumptions. In particular, the NIMBY Fact Sheet addressed concerns regarding property values, crime and safety, density and congestion, neighbourhood character, new resident behaviours and values, and unfair distribution of affordable housing projects within the city.</p> <p>Additional information can be found at: https://victoriahomelessness.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/NIMBY-Package-Print_FINAL.pdf</p>
Overcoming NIMBYism	New York, USA	<p>The following outlines an approach to community engagement for a housing project in New York City for the formerly incarcerated. This project had two advantages: first, the project did not use public funds, so there was less of a requirement for political support, and second, the site was already appropriately zoned.</p> <p>The project began with a 5 year plan, including an outreach element. The outreach strategy included the following actions::</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaching out to elected officials • Identifying and reaching out to community stakeholders and leaders • Hiring of a community liaison, who lived in the neighbourhood, and was involved constantly • Top leadership was available, accountable, and gave the project weight • The group balanced client needs with the need to give voice to community concerns, but also debunked myths, and educated people

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project focused on the importance of being a good neighbour and responding promptly to community concerns • Creation of a community advisory board <p>Overall, the approach, and its key themes can be summarized as a focus on, and commitment to: a) organizational readiness, b) identifying and engaging stakeholders, c) trust, accessibility, and accountability, d) being a good neighbour, and e) effective leadership.</p> <p>Additional information can be found at: https://issuu.com/thefortunesociety/docs/fortune_news-_community</p>
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Innovative Approaches to Housing

Ensuring there is a diversity of housing types across the spectrum, from temporary, to supportive, to a variety of below market and market housing options, including both rental and ownership, is the key to healthy housing system. While housing types on the affordable end of the spectrum often require resources from senior government (capital or operating funds), forms of housing can be regulated by local government to encourage a greater diversity of housing, which in turn can help encourage new low-end of market and market rental and ownership options. Local governments can also encourage different forms of tenure (e.g. through zoning that allows secondary suites or carriage homes, rental incentivization programs, etc.).

The term ‘missing middle’ housing often refers to middle density-housing: homes that are more dense than single-family dwellings, but lower density than high-rise apartments. Missing middle homes can include carriage homes, secondary suites, duplexes, multi-plexes, townhomes and small apartment buildings. The examples described below show some examples of how local governments have encouraged diversity of tenure and housing form.

Case Studies

Tool Type	Municipality	Summary
Carriage houses	City of Kelowna	<p>The City of Kelowna currently allows carriage homes, a small house located on a property that can be used for family or rentals. Typically there are size and height restrictions relative to the principal dwelling. The City of Kelowna allows carriage homes in certain zones within the Permanent Growth Boundary. Carriage homes can provide private market rental housing through infill development, that will not affect the form and character of a community or neighbourhood, but over time has significant potential to increase available rental stock.</p> <p>Additional information can be found at: https://www.kelowna.ca/homes-building/carriage-houses</p>
Mixing housing in institutional buildings	Regional Municipality of York	<p>Local governments, places of worship, and community organizations are exploring how to enhance institutional uses with services for social good. It presents an opportunity to scale and combine capital infrastructure funds and deliver housing close to – and within – buildings that provide community amenities. In doing so, jurisdictions can actively incorporate residential and affordability goals into services and institutions supplied on public land.</p>

		<p>The Regional Municipality of York has laid out in their Regional Official Plan “...affordable housing initiatives be given priority on publicly owned lands with a focus on locations on or near transit corridors.” Currently, Housing York manages Richmond Hill Community Hub, which provides 202 affordable housing units for seniors, singles, and a mix of subsidized and market rental units. 360kids, a non-profit, incorporates housing with a youth-focused drop-in centre, recreational space, activity rooms, and emergency bedrooms.</p> <p>Additional information is available here: http://www.york.ca/wps/wcm/connect/yorkpublic/0dc3cfc2-2e0f-49d2-b523-dc7c14b08273/15001_yropConsolidation2016AccessibleMay42016.pdf?MOD=AJPERES</p> <p>and here: http://www.york.ca/wps/wcm/connect/yorkpublic/429a9237-475a-4798-b8e8-f794603b1ca4/Richmond+Hill+Housing+and+Community+Hub+Information+Sheet.pdf?MOD=AJPERES</p>
Affordable housing incentive programs	City of Kamloops	<p>The City of Kamloops currently provides a range of incentives to encourage affordable rentals within the community. Developers can receive contributions from the City’s Affordable Housing Reserve Fund of any from \$2,000-\$5,000/unit, depending on the size of the development. The City also provides a downtown revitalization tax exemption, reduced parking requirements, and expedited processing support and application processes. These tools can reduce the cost of affordable housing for non-profits or developers, and can be leveraged to access support from senior government, such as the province or CMHC.</p> <p>Additional information can be found at: https://www.kamloops.ca/sites/default/files/docs/homes-businesses/16-kamloopsaffordablehousingdeveloperspackage.pdf</p>
Encourage greater diversity of forms, particularly ‘missing middle’ housing	Metro Vancouver	<p>Research in Metro Vancouver into tools and measures for local government to address housing diversity and affordability show that a number of the tools most commonly used by local governments to shape housing trends have to do with form and density of housing. Some of the most widely used measures included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased density in areas appropriate for affordable housing • Secondary suites permitted in <i>all</i> single family residential zones • Infill housing measures encouraged • Smaller lots in new subdivisions • Broadening ‘missing middle’ zoning such as townhomes and duplex <p>These measures can have a significant long-term impact on the type of housing being built which affects future supply of housing.</p> <p>Additional information can be found at: http://www.housing.gov.bc.ca/pub/CMHC_MunicipalMeasures.pdf</p>

Healthy Food

Stakeholders have identified a need to integrate healthy food and food programming into any efforts to address poverty and homelessness. Food programming often takes the form of food banks or soup kitchen meal programs. While these have long been a cornerstone of the homeless and at risk-serving sectors, there are examples of food programming that go beyond the traditional charitable model and embrace an enterprise or choice-based approach to food security. Three examples below outline some recent innovations in food programming.

Case Studies

Tool Type	Municipality	Summary
Food for Friends by Operation Sharing	Oxford County, Ontario	<p>Food for Friends is a program operated by Operation Sharing, serving individuals and families experiencing low-income or financial difficulties in Oxford County, Ontario. Families and individuals in need of emergency food assistance receive a specially designed food card in pre-determined denominations (typically \$25 for individuals and \$45 for families) as an alternative or supplement to the food bank. Households can use these cards to do their grocery shopping at any of the participating grocery stores in Oxford County. Operation Sharing fundraises for the program through the donation of quarters by the public at local businesses. This method of providing food assistance is vital for those with special diets or serious health issues, and allows significantly more choice in food planning for households experiencing food insecurity than a food bank program.</p> <p>Additional information can be found at: http://homelesshub.ca/blog/are-grocery-cards-better-approach-food-banks-solving-food-insecurity</p>
Carnegie Centre Cafeteria	Vancouver, BC	<p>The Carnegie Community Centre cafeteria is open seven days a week, 365 days a year. The cafeteria “provides nutritious, tasty hot meals with a different menu each day.” Meals are provided at an extremely low cost to assure that local low-income residents can readily access nutritious, fresh and affordable food. Meals are produced using seasonal, local ingredients where possible.</p> <p>The Cafeteria program steps away from a charity-driven model of food provision, that relies on donations, and the free provision of food. Instead, the Carnegie model is based on a cost-recovery model, where patrons pay between \$1 and \$3.00 depending on their meal. Individuals can also volunteer in the kitchen in order to receive meal credits.</p> <p>Additional information can be found at: https://dteskitchentables.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/DTES-Kitchen-Tables-Community-Action-Plan-Phase-1-FINAL-REPORT.pdf</p>
LeftOvers Rescue Food Society	Calgary, Alberta	<p>LeftOvers Calgary is an organization that strives to divert food away from the garbage and toward those in need. With nearly half of all food worldwide being wasted, this program ensures that good food that might go to a landfill is redirected to service agencies who can use it. LeftOvers delivers perishable food to a range of food service agencies, including food banks, shelters, and other services for individuals and families experiencing homelessness or low-incomes.</p> <p>Additional information can be found at: https://rescuefood.ca/what-we-do/</p>

Accessible Transportation

Lack of access to (affordable) transit is often cited as a key barrier to service access for individuals experiencing homelessness and low-income. Better supporting individuals to access transit can strengthen their ability to access services, seeking housing, or retain employment. Below are some Alberta-based examples of innovative transit-related programs.

Case Studies

Tool Type	Municipality	Summary
Routes to Home, Transit and Social Skills Support	Edmonton, Alberta	<p>Routes to Home project was a transit and social support intervention for homeless youth. The project was researching the impact of free or subsidized transit passes (monthly bus passes or bi-weekly bus tickets) had on personal safety, social exclusion, access to social supports and negative interactions with transit authorities. The study found that the impact of receiving a monthly bus pass or biweekly transit tickets was overwhelmingly positive for homeless youth, reducing negative interactions with transit authorities and allowing them to access social supports beyond their normal walking range.</p> <p>Additional Information can be found at: http://homelesshub.ca/resource/routes-homes-transit-and-social-support-intervention-homeless-youth</p>
Low Income Monthly Transit Pass	Calgary, Alberta	<p>In spring 2017 City Council approved the cost of a low income monthly pass with a sliding scale pricing system. The sliding scale assesses income and assigns a purchase price. There are three tiers of pricing for different income levels (2018 prices)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Band A: \$5.15/month • Band B \$36.05/month • Band C: \$51.50/month

Additional Service Provision Best Practices

In addition to the defined categories above, there are a number of innovative practices, approaches and services currently being implemented across Canada.

Case Studies

Tool Type	Municipality	Summary
Cambridge STEP Home Collaborative	Waterloo, Ontario	<p>This project serves people on the Priority Access to Housing Services who have experienced chronic homelessness and who have mental health and addictions issues. The project's promising practices include: using a three-phase approach to transition homeless individuals into housing; supporting tenants to maintain their housing following a five-stage work plan to recover from homelessness; partnership between the Region and four organizations with experience in outreach, housing and support.</p> <p>Additional information can be found at:</p>

		https://amho.ca/wp-content/uploads/Prom-Prac-Resource-Guide-Final02.pdf
Turning the Key (TTK)	Nanaimo, British Columbia	<p>Through the Nanaimo Women's Centre, TTK offers tenancy support to all individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of being homeless. The program offers outreach services for viewing rental homes, mediation services between the tenant and landlord, assistance filling out B.C. housing & other non-profit housing applications, support towards finding and maintaining a safe home, support claiming all relevant benefits, support reporting repairs & problems to your landlord, start-up kits, and help finding furnishings.</p> <p>Additional information can be found at: http://www.nanaimowomen.com/programs</p>
CMHA Lambton-Kent	Lambton Kent, Ontario	<p>CMHA Lambton-Kent provides a range of mental health supports from crisis intervention, to ongoing case management, clinical services and mental health promotion activities. The project's promising practices include: supporting tenants to transition from living in group homes to self-contained supportive housing units; housing tenants with private landlords under a housing first model. Tenants receive the mental health supports they need to be able to maintain housing. In the CHPI funded program, the first reporting cycle of 8 months, there was an 80% reduction in ER visits across their entire supportive housing program.</p> <p>Additional information can be found at: https://amho.ca/wp-content/uploads/Prom-Prac-Resource-Guide-Final02.pdf</p>
Homeward Trust	Edmonton, Alberta	<p>This is one of the leading organizations addressing homelessness in Edmonton and one of the key partners in the 7 Cities initiative. Homeward Trust also uses the Housing First model and funds and coordinates the development of new housing for homeless, at-risk, and in-need populations. One of the key distinguishing factors of the organization is the active participation of Indigenous people at the decision-making level through the Indigenous Advisory Council (IAC). The IAC provides knowledge, cultural perspectives, and awareness of the urban Aboriginal experience to the advisory process. It reviews all funding applications and provides feedback and recommendations as to the cultural appropriateness of delivery models. Indigenous relations and perspectives are a key component in the organization's approach to end homelessness.</p> <p>Additional information can be found at: http://homewardtrust.ca/who-we-are/committees/</p>
Red Deer Native Friendship Society	Red Deer, Alberta	<p>Considering the over-representation of Indigenous people in the homeless population in cities across Canada, culturally sensitive housing practices are integral to effectively ending homelessness. The Native Friendship Society is an Aboriginal agency that provides culturally based supports and services to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people through programs and services where cultural diversity is understood, and Aboriginal identity is nurtured. The Aboriginal Housing Team aids in housing prevention for individuals, couples or families at risk of losing their home. It offers Cultural Connections by serving those in housing programs who are interested in support through cultural teachings and ceremonies. PIMACIHOWIN offers intensive care for those who have been chronically homeless.</p> <p>Additional information can be found at: http://rdnfs.com/housing/</p>