



HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS PRIORITIES

PEEL ALLIANCE TO END HOMELESSNESS

Amanda DiFalco

FINAL REPORT

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Peel is on Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit. Since time immemorial, Indigenous peoples inhabited and cared for this land, in particular the territory of the Anishinabek, Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunne (Iroquois), Ojibway/Chippewa peoples. This land is also home to the Métis; and most recently, the territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation who are direct descendants of the Mississauga of the Credit.

With Gratitude,
Amanda DiFalco

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PEEL'S HOMELESSNESS SERVING SYSTEM PRIORITIES AT A GLANCE



<p>ADOPT AN INTEGRATED SYSTEMS APPROACH TO PREVENT, REDUCE AND END HOMELESSNESS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Establish a governance model. ○ Create a homeless serving system map/model. ○ Continue to strengthen collaboration. ○ Increase the production and access to permanent housing solutions.
<p>CREATE A PERSON-CENTRED HOMELESS SERVING SYSTEM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Address inequities related to Indigenous identity, race, and lived experience. ○ Refresh the Housing First system orientation.
<p>RE-TOOL HOMELESSNESS INTERVENTIONS TO DECREASE INFLOW INTO HOMELESSNESS INCREASE OUTFLOW OUT OF HOMELESSNESS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coordinate entry and exits. ○ Implement Prevention and Diversion to scale. ○ Practice housing focused sheltering. ○ Increase successful exits out of homelessness through permanent housing with support interventions. ○ Build system capacity through training and technical assistance.
<p>IMPROVE DATA AND OUTCOME MEASURES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Implement a system-wide Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS). ○ Adopt performance measures.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Through the efforts of communities around the globe we now have proof that ending homelessness is possible. Peel has reached an important juncture in its efforts toward ending homelessness. The Region of Peel's strategy [Home for All: The Region of Peel's Housing and Homelessness Action Plan \(2018-2028\)](#) commits to preventing and reducing chronic homelessness. The plan signals that the Region has shifted from a program-by-program response to a new service orientation that is coordinated, person-centred and outcome focused. Peel has made significant progress in undergoing philosophical, strategic, and operational changes that move community closer to ensuring homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

While the progress is promising, there is still more work to do. This report outlines a series of recommendations to provide further guidance for Peel's housing and homelessness system transformation efforts. The report has been informed by the people of Peel, including those currently experiencing homelessness, community service providers, and the Region. The recommendations are validated through evidence-based research and practices throughout North America. A series of thirteen recommendations, and fifty-five key activities have been developed through this research project. The recommendations and key activities have been organized into four priority areas; adopt an integrated system approach, create a person-centred serving system, re-tool homeless interventions to decrease inflow and increase outflow, and improve data and outcome measures.

The recommendations have also been tested and validated by local communities in Canada and the United States. Several of these communities have since made significant progress in preventing, reducing, and ending homelessness.

A key finding of the report highlights the need to address systemic inequities impacting Indigenous peoples, people of colour, women, and youth experiencing homelessness. While some key activities have been proposed to address these inequities, dismantling systemic oppression and racism cannot be deduced into a series of activities alone. It will require an ongoing commitment of self-reflection, honest dialogue, policy reform, and practices in order to strive for more equitable housing and homelessness services.

Ending homelessness is not the end point for people, it's the beginning from which they can pursue wellness, education, employment, relationships, and citizenship. This report is intended to further support the good work underway in Peel to ensure there is a home for all.

Background and Purpose

The purpose of this research is to identify local service gaps within Peel's Housing and Homelessness sector and identify priority areas based on evidence informed findings. The priority areas in this report support the key strategies set out in **Peel's 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan (2018-2028)** and the **Region of Peel's Housing Strategy (2018)**. Peel's recent commitment in Home for All: The Region of Peel's Housing and Homelessness Action Plan (2018-2028) signals a shift from managing to ending homelessness. Specifically, the plan sets goals of preventing homelessness and reducing chronic homelessness. It includes a target of creating 1,000 new affordable housing units for low-income households annually by creating a new service model, building more affordable housing, offering development incentives, optimizing existing stock, and increasing supportive housing.

Peel's 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan (2018-2028) and the Region of Peel's Housing Strategy (2018) serve as foundational documents to Peel's Homeless Serving System Roadmap.

The consultant conducted service mapping, key informant interviews, surveys, literature reviews, benchmarking, data reviews and analysis to inform the recommendations in this report. Figure 1 provides a brief overview of the methodology. A more comprehensive overview of the research methods can be found in Appendix A.

The Time is Now

Stakeholders across the Region have articulated a similar sentiment; Together we can end homelessness, and the time to act is now.

The priority areas recommended in this report are intended to organize community efforts to enhance the capacity required to effectively achieve the goals in Peel's 10-year plan. The recommendations are intended to uplift past successes, strengthen current efforts, and examine new ways of working together toward a future where homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

Figure 1: The Approach to developing Peel’s priority areas and recommended actions.



Several community stakeholders were engaged to inform the priority areas, including people experiencing homelessness, staff providing direct services for people at risk or experiencing homelessness, housing administrators and service providers from health, justice, immigration, women, and youth services.

Themes around affordable housing, co-design, equity, lived/living experience voices, system coordination, evidence-based practices, and collective ownership emerged throughout local consultation and are further supported by the research and literature. To accomplish the goals within Peel’s 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan, the following priority areas are recommended:

1. Adopt an integrated systems approach to prevent, reduce, and end homelessness.
2. Create a person-centered homeless serving system.
3. Re-tool interventions to increase outflow out of homelessness and decrease inflow into homelessness.
4. Increase the production and access to permanent housing solutions for people experiencing homelessness.

DEFINING AN END TO HOMELESSNESS IN PEEL

What is Homelessness?

Homelessness is caused by a constant interplay of structural, systemic, and individual risk factors. Structural factors include racism, discrimination, affordable housing, and inadequate social assistance rates. Systemic factors include the effectiveness and efficiency of local homeless response systems. Individual risk factors include loss of employment, family break up, abuse and health challenges. Communities play different roles within each of these levels to reduce and end homelessness, but they have the greatest influence at the systemic level; that is, how they leverage funding, adopt evidence informed practices, coordinate efforts, and make informed decisions using data.

The Canadian Definition of Homelessness

Though Canada's Homelessness Strategy, Reaching Home, the federal government adapted the Canadian definition of homelessness developed by the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness. It is defined as a "situation of an individual or family who does not have a permanent address or residence; the living situation of an individual or family who does not have stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means, and ability of acquiring it." (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2019).

"It's a serious issue, dealing with the stigma of homelessness." – Person experiencing homelessness in Peel

Defining Indigenous Homelessness

Indigenous peoples' experiences of homelessness are intricately linked to inter-generational trauma and the impacts of colonial legacy. In 2012, the Aboriginal Standing Committee defined Indigenous homelessness as a human condition that describes First Nations, Métis and Inuit individuals, families or communities lacking stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means or ability to acquire such housing. Unlike the colonialist definition of homelessness, Indigenous homelessness is not defined as lacking a structure of habitation; rather, it is more fully described and understood through a composite lens of Indigenous worldviews. (Thistle, 2017).

Canada's Homelessness Strategy, Reaching Home, has defined Indigenous homelessness as "having no home due to colonization, trauma and/or whose social, cultural, economic, and political conditions place them in

How do communities end homelessness?

According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, U.S. communities achieving measurable reductions and functionally ending chronic and/or veteran homelessness have 5 things in common:

- A Housing First Orientation.
- Comprehensive housing focused outreach.
- A swift and efficient way to house people quickly.
- Measurable real-time data.
- Coordinated entry **and** coordinated exits.

poverty. Having no homes includes: those who alternate between shelter and unsheltered, living on the street, couch surfing, using emergency shelters, living in unaffordable, inadequate, substandard and unsafe accommodations, or living without the security of tenure; anyone regardless of age, released from facilities (such as hospitals, mental health and addiction treatment centres, prisons, transition houses), fleeing unsafe homes as a result of abuse in all its definitions, and any youth transitioning from all forms of care. (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2019).

Chronicity

Homelessness is further categorized by the length or frequency by which a person experiences homelessness. The federal government defines chronicity as “Individuals who are currently experiencing homelessness and who meet at least one of the following criteria: they have a total of at least 6 months (180 days) of homelessness over the past year or they have recurrent experiences of homelessness over the past 3 years with a cumulative duration of 18 months (546 days).” (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2019).

In September 2020, Canada **made history** by its commitment **to ending chronic homelessness**, as captured in the Throne Speech (Government of Canada, 2020). The Province of Ontario also committed to ending chronic homelessness by 2025 (Province of Ontario, 2015).

Chronic Homelessness formula

6 months within the past year OR 18 months within the past 3 years.

The Region of Peel has committed to reducing chronic homelessness through Home for All; The Region of Peel’s Housing and Homelessness Plan 2018-2028 (Region of Peel, 2019). The Region of Peel’s Housing

Strategy set a short-term target at reducing chronic homelessness (SHS Consulting, 2018). In 2020, through Canada's Built for Zero movement, the Region is working toward a chronic homelessness reduction target of 10% (CAEH website, 2021).

Veteran Homelessness

The Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness defines a veteran to include any former member of the Canadian Armed Forces, Allied Forces (e.g., U.S.A., U.K.), former member of the RCMP, former reservists, veteran civilians, and former Canadian Rangers. Veterans experiencing homelessness include those who do not have stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it (CAEH, 2021). The Region of Peel, through the Built for Zero movement, has committed to ending veteran homelessness.

Absolute and Functional Zero

Over 65 communities across Canada have committed to ending homelessness (Employment and Social Development, 2019). This is, in part, influenced by a shift in public policy from managing to ending homelessness. To work toward preventing, reducing, and ending homelessness, communities must ensure they have a common understanding of the definitions to support collective efforts in moving toward these goals and targets.

Peel's community stakeholders demonstrated strong support toward the goal of ending homelessness. The service provider surveys revealed that 80% of participants either agreed or strongly agreed that ending homelessness in Peel was possible. While this demonstrates community will, participants indicated varying levels of understanding as to what working toward an end, means or looks like. The following are nationally accepted definitions and measures.

While the goal is to reach **Absolute Zero**, a state in which there is a true end to homelessness, where no person experiences, or is at risk of becoming homeless, it is an aspirational goal. **Functional Zero** is a rigorous standard for ending homelessness (Turner, 2016). This method measures how well a local homelessness response system is functioning. It considers the constantly changing dynamics of inflow (newly identified, returns, aged into chronicity) and outflow (move ins, inactive) with the goal of reducing homelessness through a decrease in people entering homelessness and an increase in successful exits out of homelessness.

There are different Functional Zero measures for chronic and veteran homelessness. Chronic homelessness is a function of time while veteran homelessness is an identity. Both are measures to assess how well the system is responding with a goal of ensuring that a person's experience of homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring (CAEH website, 2021).

Functional Zero Chronic Homelessness means that communities have **3 or less** people experiencing homelessness for 3 consecutive months. Peel has committed to reaching Functional Zero chronic homelessness through Canada's Built for Zero movement (CAEH website, 2021).

Functional Zero Veteran Homelessness means that communities have less than or equal to the number of veterans a community has proven it can house in a month. Figure 2 provides a visual representation of the definition.

Figure 2: Built for Zero Canada Functional Zero Veteran Homelessness



Source: CAEH website

FUNDAMENTAL TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Systemic racism and discrimination cause disproportionate levels of homelessness for Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour communities.

According to Canada's Federal Anti-Racism Strategy 2019-2022, racism is defined as "any individual action or institutional practice which treats people differently because of their ethnicity or their colour".

Systemic/institutional racism is defined as "patterns of behaviour, policies or practices that are part of the social or administrative structures of an organization, and which create or perpetuate a position of relative disadvantage for racialized persons. They appear neutral on the surface but, nevertheless, have an exclusionary impact on racialized persons" (Government of Canada, 2019).

People experiencing homelessness have been systemically denied rights and socioeconomic opportunities in Canada due to anti-Indigenous, anti-black, Islamophobic, antisemitic, and homophobic beliefs, policies, and actions. Racialized, Indigenous and Black communities are disproportionately impacted by Canada's housing crisis (CERA, 2021). The result is disproportionate overrepresentation of these groups within housing and homelessness. Caution should be exercised when undertaking an analysis of people experiencing homelessness who have intersectional experiences of racism and discrimination. Factors related to the context of such under-representation and over-representation should be accounted for (Wright, A.L., 2016).

In 2016, the Government of Canada released Highlights of the National Shelter Study 2005-2016. It found that 5.9% of people accessing emergency shelter in Canada identified as immigrants, refugees, or refugee claimants. While an exact comparison cannot be made with the National Shelter Study, 16% of Peel's homelessness emergency shelter interactions were with a person who identified as a landed immigrant, sponsored, refugee or refugee claimant. (Region of Peel, 2020).

It is estimated that Indigenous peoples living in major urban centres across Canada are 8 times more likely to experience homelessness than the general population (Belanger, Y. et al, 2013). Peel's 2016 Census data revealed that 0.7% of people living in Peel identify as Indigenous, while 3% of Peel's homelessness emergency shelter interactions were with a person who self-identified as Indigenous. (Region of Peel, 2020). While this demonstrates an over representation of Indigenous peoples experiencing homelessness in Peel, the numbers are likely higher.

"It's not a one-hour long workshop and you're no longer racist. It's a lot of unlearning biases, critical reflection, examining values. It's

a lot of work... Discrimination is a big factor in homelessness, and it can prevent you from getting the right housing." – Key Informant

Working toward dismantling racism and discrimination within local housing and homelessness response systems requires an ongoing commitment to learn and unlearn harmful beliefs, policies, practices, and actions. The more diverse people are who work across the housing and homelessness sector, the better they can respectfully and knowledgeably serve people experiencing homelessness. The recommendation throughout this report encourages Peel to focus on the impacts of policies, protocols, and practices through an equity lens.

Priority Groups

The population of people experiencing homelessness is heterogeneous. Homelessness is experienced differently by various populations. Canadian responses to housing affordability and homelessness must dig deeper into the unique experiences of those who face disproportionate disadvantages. Communities are beginning to shine a light on the inequities within system responses. The Region and local service providers have increased their focus on these disparities, particularly over the last 5 years. Findings from this report present further opportunities to carefully and deliberately examine how practices may be improved to reflect

“It’s hard to be homeless, especially as a woman.” –

Person experiencing homelessness in Peel

the unique experiences based on race, Indigenous identity, gender, and age. Issues relating to race and Indigenous identity are highlighted under the section titled “Equity, Diversity and Inclusion” above.

Women, Girls, and Gender Diverse Peoples

Though homelessness is not only a women’s issue, there are issues only women, girls and gender diverse peoples must contend with and navigate. Women, girls, and gender diverse peoples face very real concerns of personal, social and economic safety. These challenges are often further magnified when looking at

the issue through an intersectional lens. The feminization of poverty causes disproportionate levels of core housing need for women, which is further compounded by intersectional factors such as race, Indigenous identity, and disability. The 2016 national census data revealed that 25% of Black women in Canada live below the poverty line, which is significantly higher than white men and women (Statistics Canada, 2017). Women’s homelessness in Canada is underestimated, as women are more likely to rely on relational supports and are

therefore less visible (Schwan et al, 2020). Another key consideration is that women who lose their housing due to gender-based violence are often categorized as ‘victims of domestic violence’ and not ‘women experiencing homelessness’. This categorization has been driven by public policy, government funding and infrastructure that segregates services for violence against women and services for people experiencing homelessness (Schwan et al, 2017). Housing and housing related supports must adopt a gendered and trauma informed perspective.

Youth

Youth homelessness differs from adult homelessness in terms of its causes and consequences and requires adaptations to evidence informed approaches. Peel’s homelessness programs and services generally serve youth between the ages of 16-24 years of age. Ending youth homelessness requires adaptations that focus on family reconnection whenever possible, supports for positive youth development and social supports as well as less time spent on the streets and/or in emergency shelters to minimize the long-term negative effects of homelessness. (Dej, E. and Gaetz, S. 2017). A series of reports recommending comprehensive and integrated prevention focused approaches for youth in Peel, further support tailored housing and homelessness interventions for youth (Newberry, 2016).

The Right to Housing and Housing First

Housing First emphasizes the right to housing. The intention of the Housing First philosophy is to bring forward the realization that housing instability itself is often the culmination of intersecting issues at the structural, system and individual levels. The underlying premise is that people are less likely to improve their conditions while remaining homeless, and that the stability of the permanent home provides the foundation for wellbeing (Goering et al., 2014).

Canada committed to the United Nations that it would recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living, which includes housing. The National Housing Strategy Act received royal assent through Bill C-97 on June 21, 2019 making it law in Canada.

To effectively implement a Housing First philosophy, a local community must strategically apply its application across the homelessness-serving system. The recommendations in this report have been interpreted through this lens.

A Systems Approach to Ending Homelessness

The purpose of using a systems approach is to systematically reduce homelessness as a collective. It is a method of organizing and delivering a range of housing and housing related services, including prevention, emergency responses, permanent housing, housing benefits, and housing related supports. The range of services are coordinated to ensure combined efforts result in preventing, reducing, and ending homelessness. The various services and program supports across organizations become part of a whole – the homeless serving system (Turner, 2014). The system is designed to tailor supports based on people’s needs and preferences, while at the same time, dismantling systemic barriers that make it difficult for people to sustain housing.

Local Context

Peel has made significant progress over the last few years and continues to create foundational building blocks for an effective homelessness response system. Considerable shifts in federal and provincial policies, emerging evidence in a Canadian context, and additional funding investments for housing and homelessness, present an important opportunity to align efforts to prevent, reduce and end homelessness. Previous reports undertaken by the Region and community partners, have laid the groundwork for Peel’s strategic focus. This report translates adopted strategies into tactical next steps, based on evidence. Doing so positions Peel to meet targets in homelessness prevention and reductions, while ensuring that services are centred around people’s experiences.

The following table provides a brief overview of some of the current trends, opportunities, and risks associated with preventing, reducing, and ending homelessness in Peel.

5 Reasons for a Systems Approach to End

- Systematically reduce homelessness.
- Identify key partnerships to coordinate efforts.
- Optimizing existing resources and identifying gaps.
- Setting standards of practice.
- Setting and monitoring performance outcomes.

TABLE 1: Environment Scan of the Regional Municipality of Peel 2019-2021

ENVIRONMENTAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ COVID-19 is a 'crisis within a crises' for housing, homelessness, and health care sectors. ➤ Emerging encampments and increase in environmental hazardous materials in public areas.
ECONOMIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Unemployment rate increased to 12.8% (up 4.9%) in one year. ➤ Ontario Works caseloads decreased by 11.5% in 2020. ➤ Housing construction fell by 15.8% in 2020. ➤ Housing starts for multiple units down by 26.2% in 2020, compared to 24% across the province. ➤ Increase in government supports to low-income individuals in response to COVID-19. ➤ Intermittent eviction freezes during Ontario COVID-19 stay at home orders.
GEOGRAPHICAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Both urban and rural areas across the municipalities of Brampton, Caledon, and Mississauga. ➤ Unique housing and homelessness conditions within each municipality.
POLITICAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Home for All: The Region of Peel's Housing and Homelessness Plan. ➤ Federal commitment to end chronic homelessness.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ New Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI) and Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI). ➤ New federal Reaching Home program with enhancements in 2020-2023. ➤ Enhancements to provincial Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI). ➤ Additional funding through federal Rapid Housing Initiative.
SOCIAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Heterogenous population of people experiencing homelessness with intersectional experiences of Indigenous identity, race, age, gender, disability, national identity, sexual orientation, and/or veteran status. ➤ Front line staff risks of trauma due to re-occurring exposure to suffering, overdoses, deaths, gender-based violence, and COVID-19.
TECHNOLOGICAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ New technology operating models and standards. ➤ Increasing coordinated workstreams to successful housing. ➤ Adoption of evidence-informed interventions and promising practices.

The current state of homelessness in Peel

As the current landscape continues to adapt in response to COVID-19 for the purposes of this report, context relative to temporary COVID-19 shelter beds and isolation centres have been removed from the data. It is not to say the current context does not have merit, rather, it provides a snapshot of the base resources available in the community, outside of external influences and factors.

KEY FINDINGS

The following key trends among people experiencing homelessness in Peel were identified by analyzing several data sets including Statistics Canada Census profiles for Peel Region, CMHC reports, the Region of Peel's 2020 shelter data (non-isolation beds), Peel's By-Name List, the 2018 Point in time count results and surveys completed throughout the consultation process. Source citations have been referenced.

Table 2: Key Findings and Trends among people experiencing homelessness in Peel.

Contributing Factors Associated with Housing Loss
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The most common reason people reported housing loss was not income or affordability, rather a family/friend conflict or breakdown for both youth and adults. It does mean housing is affordable; rather, more people are likely sharing accommodations due to high housing costs. ○ People's inability to afford rent was the second most common reason people lost their housing. The theme of housing affordability and access to housing benefits was the most prevalent theme throughout the research.
The Degree and Severity of Homelessness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ People continue to cycle through homeless services in the absence of a coordinated system response. ○ Chronic homelessness is reported at lower rates than other communities in Ontario. This is being under reported, to some degree, in the absence of a universal information management system that captures service utilization across the system, rather than at one or service type (i.e., emergency shelter). ○ Less people may also be reported as chronically homeless due to the prevalence of people relying on natural supports (family/friends) and shared accommodations. ○ The levels of acuity among people experiencing homelessness in Peel is similar to other communities across Canada. It's estimated that 25% of people experiencing homelessness have high levels of acuity.
Inequities

- Under reporting of Indigenous identity is likely a result of the absence of cultural supports, and a lack of Indigenous services and supports for people experiencing homelessness in Peel.
- Peel has greater diversity among its population compared to other cities/regions in Ontario (except Toronto). Higher rates of newcomers and racialized groups among people experiencing homelessness is due to the population's diversity **and** structural barriers created by racism and discrimination.
- Like every other community in Canada, there are more men than women and gender diverse peoples in Peel's homelessness serving system. This is due to a legacy homelessness infrastructure where more shelter beds exist for men, and women tend to rely on natural supports or will resort to unsafe conditions/situations for survival.
- Higher rates of unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness in Peel are likely connected to intergenerational conflicts, discrimination, and failed social safety nets. According to Peel's 2018 Point in Time Count, 47% of people experiencing homelessness in Peel have been involved in the foster care system at some point in their lives.

Demographics

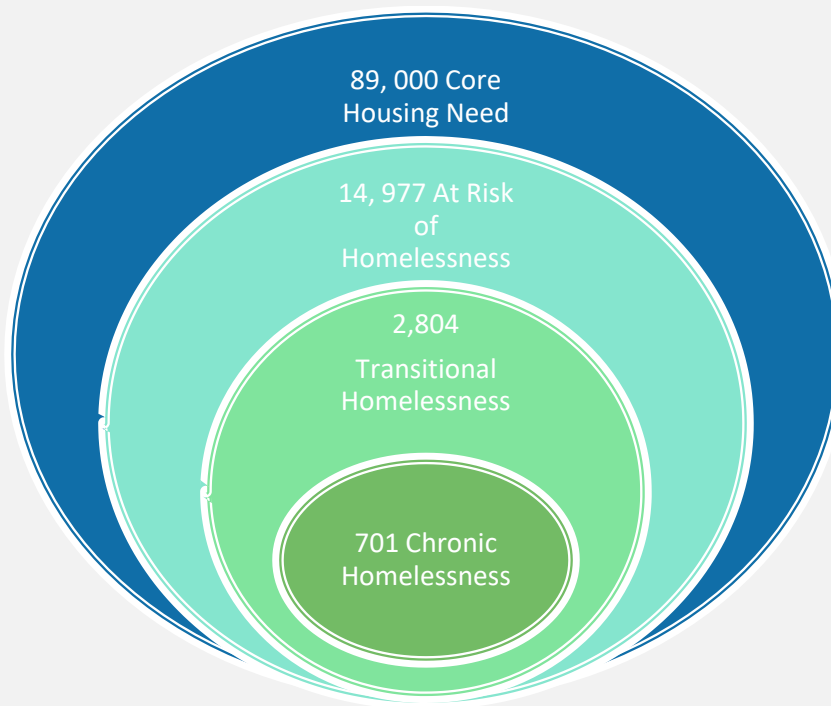
- Lower rates of older adults experiencing homelessness compared to other Canadian cities/regions is likely connected to Peel's overall population being younger. The average age based on the 2016 census was 38.3 years.
- Most people experiencing homelessness in Peel have resided there for at least 5 years.

While not everyone in core housing need will become homeless, those in lower income deciles face the greatest risk of losing their housing. Based on Peel's 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan, it is estimated that 70% of households earning under \$60,000 are at risk of becoming homeless. Peel's shelter data for 2020 indicated 11% of people staying in shelter are chronically homeless, while during Peel's 2018 point in time count, 32% were chronic. According to the Centre for Evidence-Based Solutions to Homelessness it is estimated that most people (75%) who experiencing homelessness, will experience it for a short period of time, while the remaining 25% experience chronic homelessness (White, 2018). Figure 3 represents an estimate using the 75/25 split to account for those not accessing emergency shelters or impacted by longer stays due to COVID-19.

Peel's By-Name List (BNL)

In September 2020, Peel reached an important milestone of having a real time list of all known people experiencing homelessness in the community. Unlike a Point in Time Count, a By-Name List reflects the inflow of people entering homelessness and the outflow of people exiting out homelessness in Peel over the course of each month. As of February 2021, there were 400 people who were actively experiencing chronic homelessness in one of the service provider locations participating in the BNL.

Figure 3: Estimates of the prevalence of people at risk or experiencing homelessness in Peel annually.



Point in Time Count

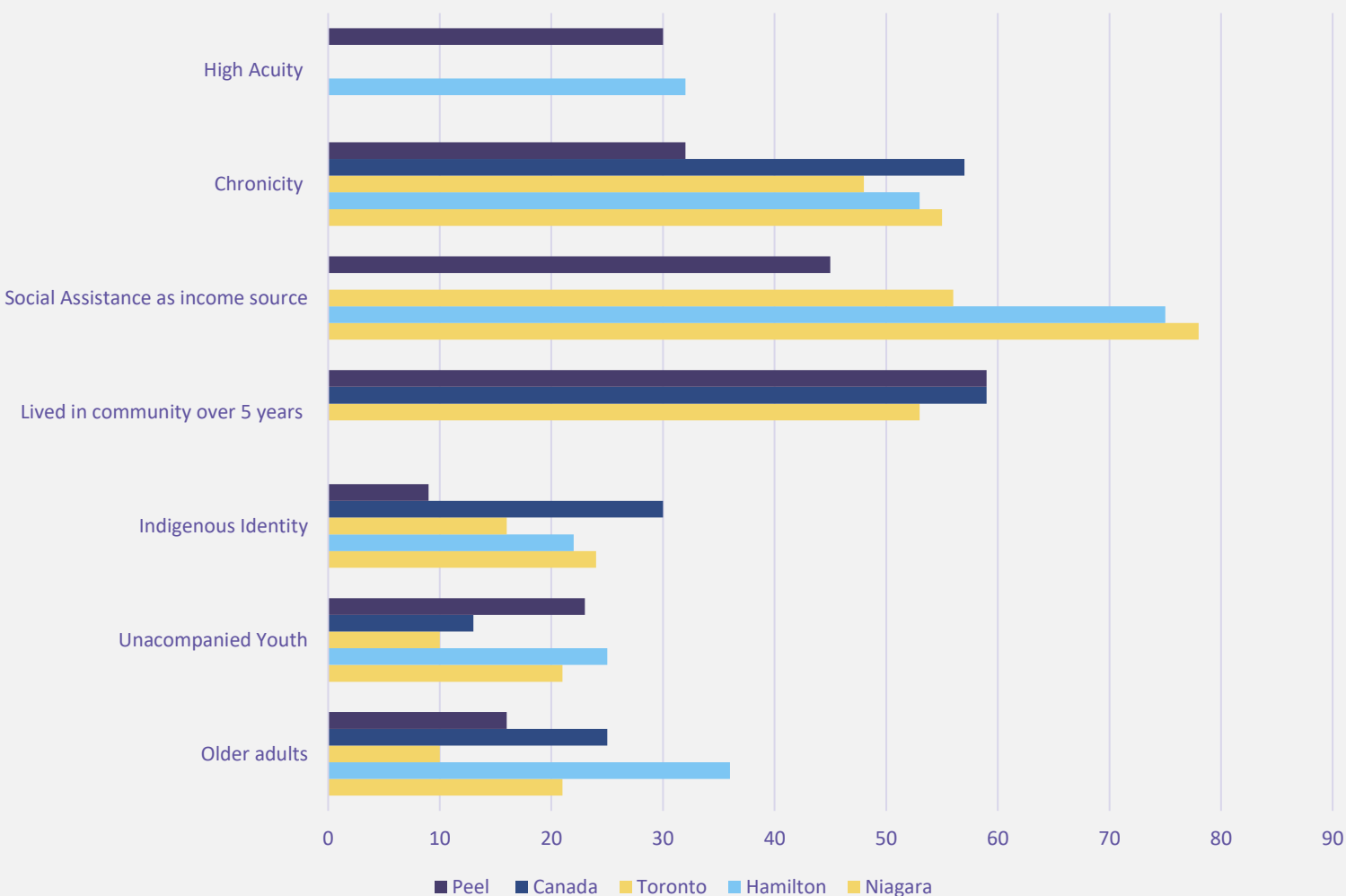
A Point in Time Count provides a one-day snapshot of homelessness in a community. In 2018, Canada coordinated a national Point in Time Count with 61 communities across the country. In Peel, 922 people were found to be experiencing homelessness, which accounted for 4.7% of the national total (ESDC, 2019). A comparison of Point in Time Count 2018 findings across Ontario Service Managers was used to identify unique strengths and gaps within Peel's population of people experiencing homelessness. Table 3 provides highlights of the key similarities and differences.

People experiencing homelessness were surveyed for this report and were asked what contributed to their most recent housing loss. The findings are presented in Figure 4 below.

Peel's 2020 Budget for Housing and Homelessness Supports

Service Managers across Ontario receive funding allocations from both federal and provincial governments. Local governments are also required to contribute a portion of funding toward social housing subsidies.

Table 3: Canada's 2018 Point in Time Count Community Comparison (%)

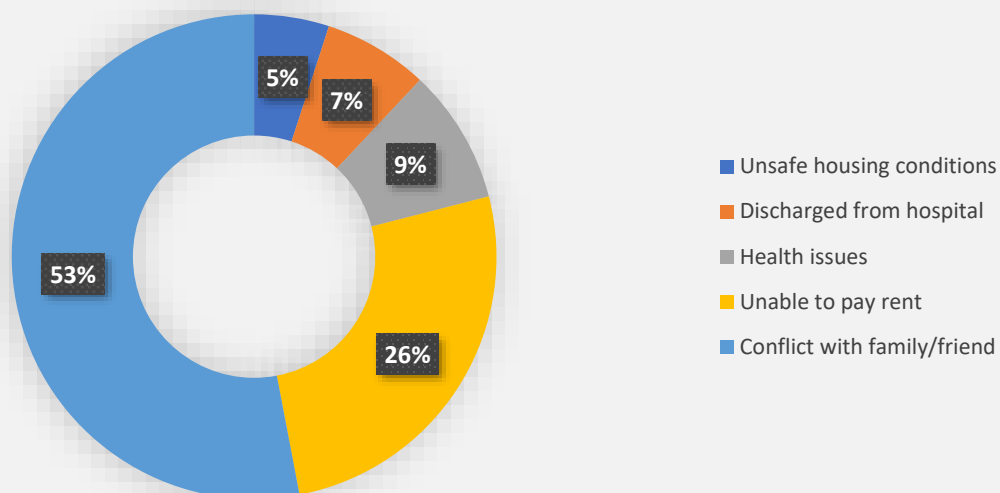


Source: ESDC 2019 Everyone Counts Highlights and Homeless Hub website.

As funding has not kept pace with the demand for housing services and related supports, nor social housing capital repairs, local governments continue to draw from property tax revenues to fill the gaps. Table 3 highlights Peel's 2020 budget breakdown for housing and homelessness. The Regional Municipality of Peel

budgeted \$129.2 Million while other funding sources, including federal and provincial contributions, were \$87M.

Figure 4: What caused you to lose your housing most recently?



Homelessness services include emergency shelters, transitional housing, and homelessness prevention. Housing services include housing subsidies to individuals and social housing providers. Table 4 provides an overview of Peel's 2020 budget for housing and homelessness services, excluding capital.

Table 4: 2020 Budget for Housing and Homelessness Services (excluding capital)

Homelessness = \$40.3 Million		Housing = \$177 Million	
Municipal Contribution	Other Sources	Municipal Contribution	Other Sources
\$13.2 Million	\$27.1 Million	\$117 Million	\$59.9 Million

Source: Region of Peel Website

The total projected federal and provincial funding allocations for Peel between 2021-2024 (excluding funding enhancements) is \$105.4 Million (Region of Peel website). Additional funding is expected as the federal and provincial governments have announced enhancements to local housing and homelessness efforts throughout 2020/2021 and beyond. In Canada's 2021 budget announcement for example, enhancements for the federal

homelessness strategy, Reaching Home, has been extended to 2022/2023 (CAEH, 2021) and an additional \$2.5 Billion through the Rapid Housing Initiative.

The complexity within federal and provincial funding streams further supports the need for a coordinated process to allocate, optimize and track progress in line with funding goals, so that gaps can be identified over time and new resources directed toward needed interventions.

Looking Ahead

The priorities and recommended actions are designed to complement existing plans. Taking the next steps with these recommendations positions Peel to create a person-centered homeless serving system that aims to prevent homelessness and connects people to the right interventions; leading to safe and affordable permanent housing and supports, as quickly and effectively as possible. Imagining Peel's 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan and subsequent plans as maps, the priority areas in this report serves as a compass to guide the way.

PRIORITY 1: Adopt an Integrated Systems Approach to Prevent, Reduce and End Homelessness.

Item	Recommended Actions	Key Activities
1a.	Establish a clear governance model that guides co-design between local government and community stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Establish a voluntary Memorandum of Understanding to guide collaborative efforts between the Region of Peel and the Peel Alliance to End Homelessness. ➤ Develop a Peel Alliance to End Homelessness membership charter that affirms an integrated system's approach. ➤ Complete Built for Zero's Reaching Home and Coordinated Access Scorecards governance model component.

1b.	Create a process map for Peel's homeless serving system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review existing homeless serving system maps and models from other communities. ➤ Hold a workshop with community stakeholders to articulate Peel's homeless serving system from a person-centred lens. ➤ Create a visualization of the process by which people experiencing homelessness become housed through Peel's homeless serving system.
1c.	Strengthen collaboration across the homelessness serving sector by adopting co-design methods and techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop a collaboration continuum assessment to be completed at least annually across the sector to gauge and address gaps and uplift strengths. ➤ Establish a set of guiding principles for Peel's homeless serving system. ➤ Document and communicate how each stakeholder is working as part of the homeless serving system to achieve the goals to prevent and reduce homelessness. ➤ Profile examples on social media, at meetings or during performance reviews, on of how operational changes and front-line staff activities connect to Peel's 10-year plan. ➤ Adopt co-design practices from inception through evaluation when working on Peel's efforts to prevent and end homelessness. ➤ Complete Built for Zero's Reaching Home and Coordinated Access Scorecard requirements to align efforts underway with system component requirements.
1d.	Increase the production and access to permanent housing solutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Expand the Home for Good program and adjust service levels based on local real-time data. ➤ Apply a shelter bed/housing resource ratio when adding additional shelter beds to the system.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Prioritize housing units/subsidies for chronically homeless households. ➤ Ensure the Canadian definition of homelessness (Reaching Home) is consistently applied across all programs and services (e.g., Peel’s Access to Housing). ➤ Explore the feasibility of adding chronicity as a local priority population to Peel’s social housing prioritization criteria. ➤ Improve coordination between Peel’s centralized housing waitlist and the By- Name List. ➤ Continue to explore innovative solutions that can be implemented quickly in response to new affordable housing investments (e.g., modular housing). ➤ Require new affordable/supported housing funded through the Region in whole or in part to offer units through Coordinated Access (By-Name list). ➤ Create a “shovel ready” expression of interest list for the development of affordable rental housing.
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Where formalized strategies to address homelessness exist, they are not necessarily focused on implementing a systems approach. Yet without a formalized commitment to system planning, 10-year plan strategies can lead community efforts astray, implementing piecemeal programs instead of transforming the service-delivery landscape. This means that Peel’s 10-year plan cannot achieve its goals or targets without stakeholder engagement (CAEH, 2013). The Region highlighted the need for community awareness of the 10-year plan, particularly as it outlines significant shifts in how the Region will work (Region of Peel, 2018). Community consultation highlighted a sentiment of encouragement by increasing levels of engagement between the Region and community stakeholders, however it remains unclear as to how the plan is being operationalized.

Part of the reason for this, is that people providing direct services cannot see how the strategies impact operations.

Working from a homeless serving system orientation will

help service providers understand how they fit within a larger whole, centred around the people being served and contributing to homelessness prevention and reductions.

49% of service provider survey respondents read Peel's 10-Year Housing

Since the release of Canada's National Housing strategy in 2019, local efforts to build coordinated and collaborative homelessness serving systems are supported by increased funding investments and aligned policies. For example, the Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario both support homelessness enumeration, Housing First and By-Name Lists. While these may seem less significant independently, the unification of public policy on homelessness between different political parties signals a coalescing around ending homelessness.

In [Beyond Housing First: Essential Elements of a System-Planning Approach to Ending Homelessness](#), Turner describes an integrated system as a series of defined service-delivery components that work together toward ending homelessness. It requires identifying the basic components of a system and understanding how these relate to one another. Alignment across the system is integral to ensure the components of the system work together for optimal impact (Turner, 2014).

In reviewing homelessness serving systems in cities such as Calgary, Edmonton, Hamilton and London, fundamental key components include technical aspects such as common intakes and assessments, integrated Homeless Information Managements System (HMIS), evidence-based technical strategies, and dedicated housing resources with no side doors.

To be positioned to achieve the goal of preventing, reducing, and ending chronic homelessness, the Region will need to shift to systems-level thinking and decision making. Key community leaders will need to build capacity around governance, change management, strategic thinking, and outcome-focused decision making.

As a Built for Zero Canada community, Peel has access to coaching, resources, and a community of practice network across Canada that can support efforts toward a systems approach.

1a. Establish a Governance Model

Leadership in Ending Homelessness

- Shared measurable aim.
- Governance Model.
- Guiding Principles.
- Growth mindsets.
- Community engagement.
- Change Management.
- Continuous Improvement.

Governance and leadership are key factors in the ability of a local homelessness serving systems to effectively respond to people experiencing homelessness in an ever-evolving environment. The Regional Municipality of Peel is the delegated authority for housing and homelessness in Peel. The region has been endorsed as the Community Entity (CE) for Reaching Home and is identified as the housing and homelessness Service Manager through Ontario's Housing Services Act, 2011. Through an amendment to the Act in 2016, Service Managers are required to conduct homelessness enumeration and enhance homelessness direction, by aligning with the province's goal to end chronic homelessness.

The new direction in ending homelessness by the federal and provincial governments means that the scope and accountabilities as Community Entity and Service Manager have evolved beyond administration and service

level management. New requirements include system planning, information management and performance measurement. Local governance bodies have evolved and require an integrated serving system model that is well coordinated, people-focused, evidence-informed, and outcomes-driven (Burkholder Harris and Turner 2020).

Further to the responsibilities mentioned above, moving the community forward as a collective requires vision, perseverance, change leadership, collaboration, and trust. During community consultations, respondents cited the Region of Peel's role in ending homelessness locally as foundational, however no one was aware of the Region of Peel's specific accountabilities as either CE or Service Manager. Respondents were supportive of the Region taking a greater leadership role to help mobilize system improvements in collaboration with key stakeholders. Through Canada's Built for Zero movement Peel can access additional resources such as the Coordinated Access Scorecard Guide to support formalizing the local governance model (Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, 2020).

In 2019, two Ontario communities further documented their system planning efforts. The County of Guelph-Wellington, ON introduced a Coordinated Entry System Guide in collaboration with key stakeholders to optimize their local homelessness serving system, accelerate the adoption of proven practices and drive

"THERE IS SO MUCH POTENTIAL TO WORK TOGETHER, BUT THERE NEEDS TO BE LEADERSHIP TO PUSH THE WORK FORWARD. WE HAVE TO LEARN HOW TO WORK SMARTER AND ULTIMATELY DO BETTER FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS."

- Key Informant

continuous improvements. The City of Hamilton released "Coming Together to End Homelessness: Hamilton's Systems Planning Framework" as a secondary planning document to Hamilton's 10-year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan. The system planning framework serves to enhance the overall coordination of diverse local resources. Several other Ontario communities have made their system planning materials publicly available for further review; for example, Windsor-Essex, Region of

Waterloo, Durham Region, The City of Kingston, and the City of Peterborough.

Communicating and documenting roles and responsibilities throughout the homelessness serving system will help to clearly outline how each stakeholder contributes to a larger systems framework and contributes to ending homelessness in Peel. Stakeholders may include The Regional Municipality of Peel, City of Brampton, City of Mississauga, Town of Caledon, Peel Alliance to End Homelessness, Region of Peel housing and homelessness advisory groups/committees, Housing Services, Social Services, people with lived/living experience, local housing and homelessness service providers, senior levels of government, the private sector, and residents of Peel.

1b. Create a process map for Peel's homeless serving system

Bottlenecks, complexities, assumptions, and varying levels of understanding mask opportunities for process improvements. Creating a homeless serving system visualization will provide better visibility into system operations and opportunities for efficiencies at scale.

Consultations with key community stakeholders revealed a strong desire to coordinate efforts, however participants could not articulate what

system coordination would look like or how the various components were complimentary or connected. There was also an emphasis on the desire to streamline, coordinate and tailor the way people experiencing

"The process for people (experiencing homelessness) to access housing is convoluted. There's not a clear understanding of where to go to get what you need. – Person with lived experience in Peel

homelessness access housing and housing related supports from both service providers and people experiencing homelessness in Peel.

System mapping helps to create order out of a range of programs and services in an existing community. Without a clear agreed-upon understanding of the local homelessness service delivery landscape, efforts to end homelessness are fragmented. System mapping classifies service types. Specific service types in Peel have been outlined in Priority 3 below.

The process serves as an opportunity to assess current capacity in the system relative to the demands for those services, by applying evidence-informed diagnostics. Additionally, the process can serve as a means of identifying specific funders and their expectations. The service map can then be used to assess programs based on evidence-informed and promising practices vs. operational functioning. Gaps in capacity and divergence of processes, service standards, referral process and eligibility criteria will likely emerge over time. It is important to note that several programs and services are in the process of working toward the adoption of emerging practices. Any gaps identified are not intended to be used in a punitive manner. The strength of the system is each provider's responsibility and a collaborative, collective approach toward system improvements will optimize the effectiveness and efficiency of the system overall.

Canada's Reaching Home Coordinated Access Guide provides an overview of a coordinated access workflow using a similar mapping tool (ESDC, 2019). Several other communities across Canada have also begun to create visualization tools to help articulate the transformational changes occurring within their local homeless serving system. Figure 5 is an example from Edmonton, AB.

A visualization tool will improve a community's understanding of how coordinated access workflow occurs within the homeless serving system. It can also serve as a communication tool to help a variety of stakeholders understand the function of each homelessness intervention, and the processes that guide access to housing and housing related supports. Articulating where the homeless serving system begins and ends in the context of housing instability, will highlight opportunities for improved coordination with other social safety services such as health and education.

Figure 5: Diagram of Edmonton's homeless serving system.

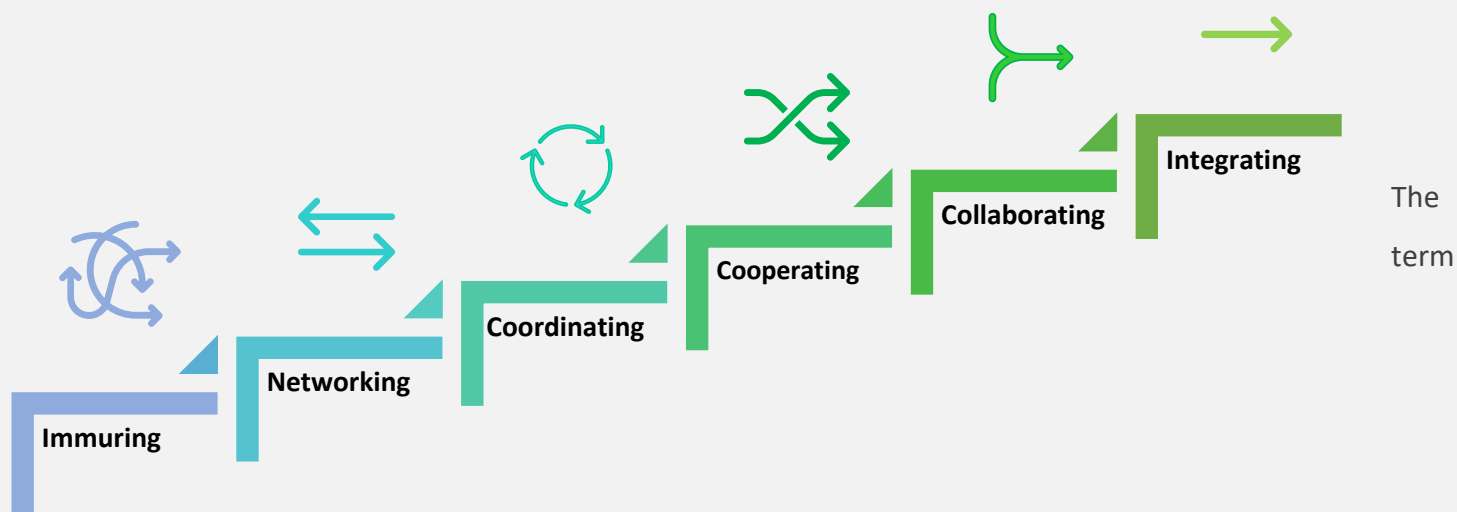


1c. Continue to Strengthen Collaboration

Ending homelessness will require a high level of commitment and cooperation and active participation throughout the community. Each of these components play a key role in responding to the political, operational, and programmatic issues that arise from the work of ending homelessness. The absence of cross-agency collaboration results in fragmented decision making, misaligned goals and competing priorities. Throughout the engagement process, a consistent theme emerged around a desire to improve the way in which community partners work together, in partnership with the Region of Peel. The fragmentation and/or role confusion, has been highlighted in other reports. For example, the Region of Peel's Housing Strategy encouraged a diffusion of power structures to generate collaborative dialogue and collective ownership of Peel's housing and homelessness system (SHS, 2018).

There are various ways to describe and evaluate the degree to which stakeholders and their respective services are functioning independently or in a more integrated way. Figure 6 below is a visualization of a collaboration continuum model (Mashek, 2015).

Figure 6 The Collaboration Continuum Model



collaboration is often used to refer to any working relationship between organizations. However, there are varying degrees with which organizations share information, objectives, standards, and resources. Interactions among the Region of Peel and local service providers in the homeless serving sector, fall under networking. Information is exchanged for mutual benefit, through communication channels such as the Peel Alliance Senior Leadership Table as well as Regional committees and advisory groups. The recommendations outlined in this priority area will increase coordination by altering working relationships to share a common purpose, alter activities to achieve objectives and regularly evaluate progress toward shared goals. However, the combined recommendations throughout the report move the working relationships toward true **collaboration**. To realize the goal of reducing homelessness, service providers will need to enhance each other's capacity by participating as a component of a larger system, and co-design through planning, shared resources, unified standards, and practices.

Canadian communities who have adopted an integrated homelessness serving system's approach, rely on a set of guiding principles to articulate the norms and ethics that guide decision making and stakeholder's actions, while promoting community cohesion (Homeless Hub, 2020). Table 5 provides examples of the most common guiding principles across Ontario communities. Guiding principles in ending homelessness transforms values into practice. They are fundamental to drive system performance, to prevent and end homelessness. It is recommended that the Region of Peel, in partnership with the Peel Alliance to End homelessness, lead a **community co-design process to develop guiding principles** for Peel's homeless serving system.

Table 5: Guiding Principles to End Homelessness in Ontario Communities

	LONDON	WINDSOR	PETERBOROUGH
GUIDING PRINCIPLES	Bold community leadership and collaboration.	Collective responsibility and collaborative action.	Honest dialogue and community engagement.
	Meet individuals and families where they are.	Our programs, services, and supports are person centred.	People-Centred Services and lived experience engagement.
	Design a coordinated and integrated system.	Leveraging resources from all levels of government.	Develop a supportive and integrated service system.
	Use data to identify emerging trends and make evidence-informed decisions.	We will implement evidence-based solutions.	Improve outcomes using evidence-informed approach and a bias toward action.
	Measure the results of our work , focus on achieving positive outcomes.	Responsive to Federal and Provincial strategies and initiatives.	Use real time data to direct housing resources.

Sources: City of London (2019), City of Peterborough (2019), and Windsor Essex (2019) 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plans.

1d. Increase the production and access to permanent housing solutions

Safe and affordable housing is required for healthy and successful lives of individuals and reflects the strength and sustainability of communities. Housing is established as a human right by international human rights provisions and has been referred to as a key strategy in the recent National Housing Strategy (Canada, 2019). In September 2020, Canada furthered its commitment to housing as a right by announcing the goal to end chronic homelessness (CAEH, 2019).

Canada is experiencing an affordable housing crisis. New affordability measures from federal and provincial governments have not kept pace with demand. The housing market remains out of reach for many, however households with the lowest incomes are the most negatively impacted.

Results from both the 2018 Peel Point in Time Count, and the People with Living Experience survey, demonstrate that most people experiencing homelessness are in receipt of social assistance (Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program). Social assistance rates fall well below household income thresholds, that are in the deepest core housing need. Based on the Canadian Rental Housing Index, households in Peel that earn less than \$27,635/yr. are at greatest risk and are spending an average of 79% of their gross income on rent and utilities.

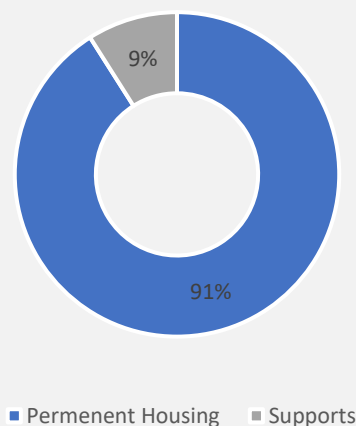
Housing is the common denominator in every person's experience; without it you can't prevent or reduce homelessness. When the need for affordable housing for low-income households exceeds available supply, as is the case in most metropolitan cities in North America, the question becomes "Who gets left out?" As **people experiencing chronic homelessness are most often in the lowest income decile, deliberate efforts must be made to connect those households to the most affordable housing options available in the community.**

The most prevalent theme throughout this research, was the need for more affordable housing to end homelessness. Figure 7 highlights how critical permanent housing is for people experiencing homelessness in Peel.

Peel's 10-year Housing and Homelessness plan (2018-2028), combined with Peel's 2018 Housing Strategy, outlines a series of targets and recommendations to increase the availability and affordability of housing in the region. It also sets a goal of preventing homelessness and reducing chronic homelessness by building more affordable housing, optimizing existing stock and increasing supportive housing. While the targets outlined will contribute to preventing homelessness, further analysis reveals that designated housing benefits for people experiencing chronic homelessness are required to realize reductions. In the absence of targeted housing benefits such as affordable housing units, rent subsidies and housing related supports, the proportion of chronic homelessness can be expected to increase over time (Gaetz et al., 2014).

In September 2020, Peel developed a Quality By-Name List. (BFZ website, 2021). This provides the community a powerful tool to monitor system trends and focus housing and housing related support efforts where they are needed the most. Peel's inflow into chronic homelessness is greater than outflow into housing for the period September 2020 – March 2021 (BFZ, 2021).

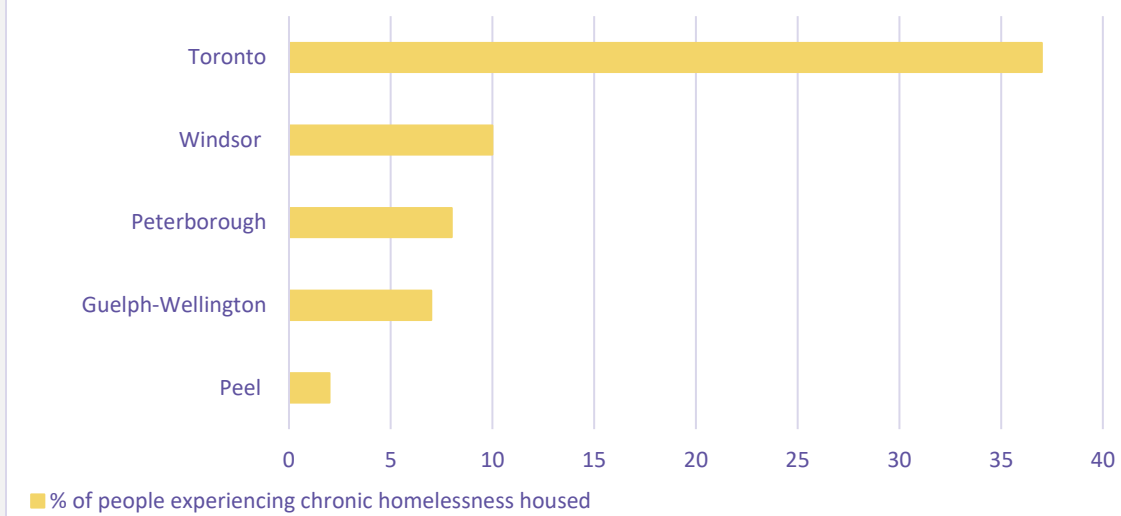
Figure 7: What's the ONE thing you think is most important to help reduce homelessness in Peel?



Peel's chronic homelessness rates are likely to increase without additional targeted housing investments directed to people experiencing chronic homelessness. Assuming current inflow/outflow rates of chronic homelessness, Peel will see an increase in chronic homelessness by approximately 25% over the next year. It is estimated that to reduce chronic homelessness by 15%, Peel's average move in rate would need to increase to at least 7 move-ins per month. Currently the average is 4 move-ins per month; therefore, an additional 3 permanent housing units (and individualized supports if needed) is required per month; which equates to a minimum of 84 additional units and supports over the next year. Additional pressures should also be anticipated, due to the economic fallout of COVID-19. It is recommended that the By-Name List inflow and outflow data continue to be monitored monthly to optimize resources to realize Peel's 10-year plan goal of reducing chronic homelessness and preventing people from becoming chronically homeless over time.

Toronto is the 5th least affordable city in the world (Urban Reform Institute, 2021), however, as part of its COVID-19 response, the City has moved more than 2,500 people experiencing homelessness into permanent housing; a 50% increase from the previous year. This was achieved through a combination of housing allowances, and rent-g geared-to income units. Through Canada's Rapid Housing Initiative, additional modular, affordable, and supportive housing homes for people experiencing homelessness will be ready for occupancy by the end of 2021 (The City of Toronto, 2020). The following graph (Figure 8) is a comparison of Toronto's targeted investments in housing people experiencing homelessness, with other communities in Ontario, for the period September 2020 to March 2021.

Figure 8: Number of Peopel Expereincing Chronic Homelessness Housed (September 2020- March 2021)



Sources: City of Toronto and Built for Zero Canada

Peel demonstrated rapid success during the initial wave of COVID-19. Peel successfully housed 287 people experiencing homelessness; 34 of whom were experiencing chronic homelessness. While this scenario emphasizes the discrepancy in accessing available housing resources for people experiencing chronic homelessness, it also highlights an opportunity to redirect housing resources to people who are trapped in the system the longest.

Direct Access to Housing is required for People Experiencing Chronic Homelessness

The following recommendations will ensure Peel is set up to realize the goal of reducing homelessness.

- Invest in programs that combine housing subsidies and varying degrees of intensive case management supports. For further details refer to Section C below.
- Expand Peel's Home for Good program. For further details refer to Section 3c below.
- Invest in additional housing subsidies and/or units when increasing shelter bed capacity to prevent people from becoming trapped in homelessness.
- Re-direct a larger share of housing subsidies to people experiencing chronic homelessness.
- Streamline access to social housing by aligning homeless definitions, investigating local priority status for chronic homelessness, and cross referencing the access to housing waitlist with the By-Name List to confirm status and assign units.

Further analysis to support these recommendations are provided below.

Emergency Shelter System Capacity and Housing

Emergency shelters are more than a location where people without housing stay the night. Today, emergency shelters serve as part of the process by which people become housed. As of February 2021, there were 393 Peel funded shelter beds available for people experiencing homelessness. This does not include “Violence Against Women” shelter beds funded by the Province of Ontario, overflow beds available when shelters are at capacity, or additional beds to respond to COVID-19.

Emergency shelter capacity is inter-dependent on several factors. These factors include the effectiveness of homelessness prevention and diversion interventions, available housing resources and system processes like matching and referrals. To operate successfully, the outflow of persons from emergency shelters to permanent housing solutions are critical, otherwise emergency shelters become the destination and people become chronically homeless.

When emergency shelters reach capacity, the first reaction is to increase the number of shelter beds. This may be necessary, particularly to respond to immediate demand, however, increasing the number of beds alone will not solve the issue. For example, an emergency shelter with 100 beds and an average length of stay of 5 months can serve 240 people per year. When the average length of stay is reduced to 3 months, the shelter can serve 400 people per year. Shelter stays are reduced through rapid and successful exits into permanent housing. A dynamic and inter-dependent approach must be used to address the real issues as to why people are presenting at shelters. Eviction prevention and shelter diversion are the first lines of defense to preserve existing housing or offer safe alternatives to emergency shelter. For every additional bed added to the system, available and accessible permanent housing must also be increased to create flowthrough. A 1:6 ratio is considered a good practice; for every 1 shelter bed an additional 6 permanent housing placements are needed in community (De Jong, 2018), to ensure successful exits out of shelters within 60 days. Communities should adapt their bed to housing ratio based on their set targets and goals.

Reducing length of stay in emergency shelters by increasing exits into permanent housing, increases shelter capacity and reduces chronic homelessness.

The Modernization of Social Housing to Reduce Chronic Homelessness

The Special Rapporteur on adequate housing, highlighted that non-availability of social housing for people experiencing homelessness makes people more vulnerable to the devastating impacts homelessness has on people (United Nations, Fact Sheet 21(rev 1)).

Ontario's Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy (LTAHS) update on social housing modernization is founded on the goal of **decreasing the number of people who are homeless** and increasing the number of households achieving housing stability (Ontario, 2016). The modernization of social housing aims to move toward more person-centred, outcome-focused, housing options so that people can access a range of housing types and supports based on their needs and preferences. The new framework moves away from compliance based regulatory service delivery, toward a more flexible approach. Social housing and portable housing benefits are good options for people experiencing chronic homelessness, particularly when paired with community partners who offer housing related supports. (Pomoroy, 2018).

People experiencing homelessness in Peel were asked whether they have applied for social housing. Most (62%) answered yes, while others expressed various reasons for not applying. Notably, some people were interested but didn't know how to apply. This observation was also evident during consultation with community service providers, who cited difficulties understanding and navigating the process to help people apply. Figure 9 provides a further breakdown of the responses from people experiencing homelessness.

The demand for social housing exceeds supply. In December 2020 Peel had 13,820 social housing units with an estimated 22,445 households on the waitlist. The modernization of social housing and the Region of Peel's priority to transform service delivery for people to find and keep housing, as outlined in the 10-year plan, presents a point of inflection. While Peel is bound by regulations outlined in Ontario's Housing Services Act 2011, there are opportunities to exercise greater flexibility in the administration of the social housing waitlist.

Figure 9: Responses from people with lived/living experience of homelessness survey.

Have you applied for Social Housing?

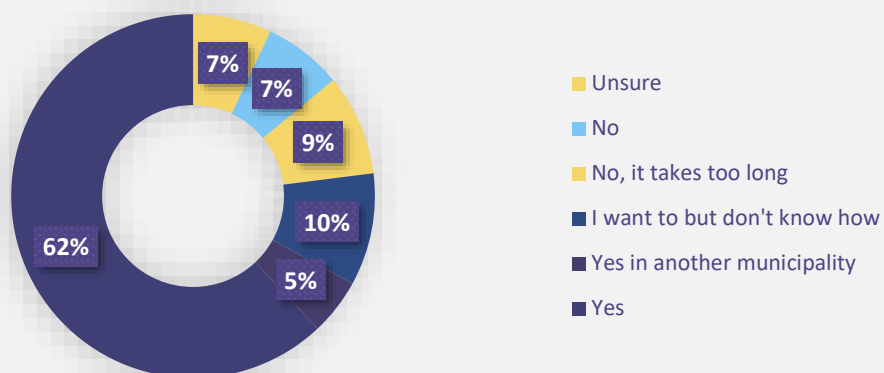


Table 6 below provides a series of practical recommendations to improve access to social housing for people experiencing chronic homelessness.

Table 6: Practical approaches to facilitating access to Social Housing for people experiencing chronic homelessness

Current Practice	Recommended Action
Definition of homelessness not aligned between housing and homelessness providers.	Adopt standardized Canadian definition of homelessness as per Reaching Home directives.
Peel's centralized waitlist and the By-Name List are not cross referenced.	Cross reference the centralizes waitlist with the By Name List to identify how many people experiencing homelessness to ensure people experiencing homelessness have active applications for social housing.

	Consider further integration to streamline access to social housing for people experiencing homelessness through service transformation.
Social housing applications require updates annually to remain active on the waitlist. Notices for renewal are usually mailed, which is a barrier for people with no fixed address.	Use Peel’s Homelessness Information Management System (HMIS) to help locate people experiencing homelessness and find alternative ways to notify people without an address (e.g., through community partners).
People experiencing homelessness are not prioritized for access to social housing.	Consider adding a local priority population category for people experiencing chronic homelessness. Most Ontario communities offer a unit to a person experiencing homelessness for every 10 units that become available (1:10). Some are moving toward a 1:5 offer ratio for people experiencing chronic homelessness.
As of January 2021, people must accept the first offer of social housing, otherwise they are removed from the waitlist.	Provide additional supports to help people experiencing homelessness complete the application forms and ensure that only desired locations are selected.

Source: Ontario Housing Services Act, 2011

Portable Housing Benefits/Housing Allowances to Reduce Chronic Homelessness

Portable housing benefits provide financial assistance to help offset the cost of housing expenses. Unlike Rent-Geared to Income (RGI) in social housing, portable housing benefits are connected to an individual/family rather than a specific unit. This allows for greater choice and flexibility. Housing allowances are typically entitlement programs based on income thresholds to help pay for rent and have a fixed term (e.g., 2 years)

(CMHC, 2006). Research from Nelson and Aubry (2017) demonstrated that people experiencing homelessness typically live in 'regular' housing like the rest of the population, not in specialized housing. Specialized housing should be reserved for the highest acute population in a community.

Portable housing benefits can help people exit out of homelessness, rather than waiting for social housing, which ranges between 1.5-12yrs depending on household size (Peel, 2021). A recent study conducted in Waterloo, Ontario showed 88% of participants experiencing chronic homelessness were stably housed longer term, and had significantly improved their quality of life, when a community partner provided Intensive Case

“The entire system is a fight to get housing.”

– Person experiencing homelessness in Peel

Management (ICM) intervention along with a portable housing benefit (Pankratz, Nelson, & Morrison, 2017). Aligning available portable housing benefits with community housing related supports through Coordinated Access presents opportunities to leverage more affordable housing options while ensuring people are supported to stabilize in their housing.

Expanding Affordable Housing Supply for people experiencing homelessness

There is no single solution to address the lack of affordable housing. As the need for more affordable housing continues to climb, local communities are turning to a variety of innovative approaches to expand the supply.

Financial incentives, regulatory changes, new housing construction types (e.g., modular housing), policies, provisions through partnerships and the modernization of social/community housing provides, are just a few of the strategies being tested and implemented across Canada. A number of these strategies have been identified in Peel's 10-year plan. Additionally, other communities in Ontario have applied key measures to evaluate whether their new approaches to building supply are yielding anticipated results. London, Ontario outlines 17 specific actions to retain and create new affordable housing stock. Progress is measured annually based on the net gain of new affordable units, percentage of depth of affordability, percentage decrease in facility condition index, and the increase in investments for new development (City of London, 2019).

Federal and Provincial governments have begun responding by increasing investments in affordable housing. In August 2020, Peel received a historical funding investment of \$276 Million from the National Housing Co-Investment Fund (NHCF), for the creation of up to 2,240 affordable rental units and shelter beds over 8 years (CMHC, 2020). In October 2021, the Government of Canada announced additional affordable housing investments to cities across Canada through the Rapid Housing Initiative, the Region of Peel was allocated \$30.4M through the major cities stream (Canada, 2020). Canada’s 2021 budget announcement includes an additional \$2.5 Billion in affordable housing investments through the Rapid Housing initiative as well.

A significant increase in investments provides opportunities to target new affordable housing options for people experiencing homelessness. It will also require local communities to be prepared to act quickly as new government investments are issued or available through grant applications. Some communities in Ontario have leveraged a Community Improvement Plan through the Ontario Planning Act for the provision of affordable housing (Ontario, 1990). Other measures include having a “shovel ready” list of affordable housing development projects on standby to respond to funding announcements quickly, and requirements in Requests for Proposals for new development to include a requirement for proportional allocations of those units to be filled through local By-Name Lists.

PRIORITY 2: Create a person-centred Homeless Serving System

Item	Recommended Actions	Key Activities
2a.	<p>Crte a more equitable homeless serving system by addressing inequities related to Indigenous identity, race, and lived/living experience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ask people what they want and need. Recognize that people living the experiences are the experts. ➤ Conduct a racial impact analysis. ➤ Engage Peel’s Indigenous community in developing an agreed upon model for engagement and consultation. ➤ Provide culturally appropriate housing and services for Indigenous people by Indigenous people. ➤ Train and continue to educate all staff working in Peel’s Homelessness Serving System on Decolonization, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI).

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure adequate representation of Indigenous, People of Colour, and lived/living experience where decisions are being made. ➤ Build equity in hiring practices, starting with leadership and front-line staff positions, within the sector.
2b.	Refresh the Housing First system orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Establish an agency cross-functional team to inform the Housing First Change process ➤ Clarify the scope of change (i.e., what's different?) ➤ Undertake agency self-assessments to determine strengths and potential barriers to the change. ➤ Develop a plan and timeline for Peel funded programs to implement a Housing First approach transition based on assessment results. ➤ Develop a system wide orientation, training, and support materials for all staff serving people experiencing homelessness in Peel. ➤ Invest in change leadership training, coaching, and support.

2a. Create a More Equitable Homeless Serving System

A high performing homeless serving system relies on everyone's ideas and knowledge being fully harnessed. Allyship requires that we pay attention to the silent and/or missing voices in policy development, funding, service provision and decision making. There were noticeable gaps in representation throughout community consultations which was further validated through evidence.

To end homelessness, it is critical to close the gaps that lead to disproportionality and disparities and aim to achieve outcomes that support racial justice and equity. It is critical that representation from historically marginalized groups have decision making power through governance, planning, design, implementation, and evaluation activities related to Peel's homeless serving system. Lack of representation from Peel's Indigenous community, People of Colour and lived/living experience voices were emphasized as either absent or significantly under-represented.

Truth and Reconciliation

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada was officially launched in 2008. It was intended to guide Canadians through the difficult discovery of the facts behind residential schools and outlined a way toward reconciliation. The final report, released in 2015, contained 94 calls to action (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). The cultural genocides that occurred in the past and continue today against Indigenous peoples, impact the work to end homelessness.

First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples are significantly overrepresented among people experiencing homelessness in Ontario (Province of Ontario, 2015). It is estimated that 1 in 15 Indigenous people living in urban centres experience homelessness, compared to 1 in 128 non-Indigenous people (Belanger et al, 2013). Indigenous people are thus 8 times more likely to experience homelessness.

Peel's data, however, does not reflect this reality. People who identified as Indigenous during Peel's 2018 Point in Time count represented 9% of people surveyed Compared to Toronto, Niagara, and Hamilton which ranged between 16-24%. (Canada, 2019). Under-reporting is also reflected in Peel's 2020 shelter data where only 3% of people who accessed an emergency shelter self-identified as Indigenous. A lack of cultural services and awareness within the sector may be preventing people from self-identifying.

A commitment to ending homelessness is a commitment toward reconciliation. Several communities across Canada have been working to strengthen relationships with local Indigenous communities. Key strategic documents such as Reaching Home (Canada, 2019), and A Place to Call Home (Ontario, 2015), have set priorities to prevent, reduce and end homelessness among Indigenous peoples. Peel's 10-year Housing and Homelessness plan states that efforts will continue to engage Indigenous communities in the work of ensuring that housing is available to all. A series of key actions to further this commitment include, offering housing related services for Indigenous people by Indigenous people, representation at all stages of decision making and honoring self-determination and autonomy.

"Housing is too expensive in Peel and there's a lot of racism and discrimination."

- Person experiencing homelessness in Peel

Racial/Ethnic Equity

Racism and homelessness are inextricably linked. Racialized people are disadvantaged in housing and homelessness in several ways. Systemic racism is often caused by hidden institutional biases in policies,

practices, and processes that privilege or disadvantage certain groups of people. The Colour of Poverty-Colour of Change highlights that systemic racism can be the result of doing things the way they have always been done without considering how they affect groups of people (Colour of Poverty-Colour of Change, 2019). People of colour are overrepresented among people experiencing housing insecurity and homelessness. A research study on differential experiences of discrimination among ethnic and racially diverse persons experiencing mental health and homelessness, revealed very high rates of discrimination related to homelessness (61.5%), which was further increased by race/ethnicity or skin colour (Zerger, et al., 2014).

Lower income levels are correlated with housing insecurity. The 2016 Census of Canada shows that 20.8% of people in Canada are low income compared to 12.2% of non-racialized people. Intersectional experiences such as gender and age further disadvantage people of colour. Black women earned 58 cents for every dollar a white man earned in Ontario in 2015. Young people of colour make up approximately 19% of the Canadian population but make up more than 27% of young people experiencing homelessness in Canada. (Statistics Canada, 2016).

Canadian communities need to better understand and address systemic racism, including within housing and homelessness serving systems. While Canada lags in research on this issue, there are promising practices that have begun to emerge out of the United States. For example, Community Solutions, who leads the U.S. Built for Zero movement, have worked with racial justice groups to identify concrete actions to address systemic barriers within local homelessness serving systems. A racial equity analysis as well as further analysis relative to the length of time people of colour remain homeless, recidivism rates and the rates of exiting into permanent housing can help identify specific areas for further action.

Lived/Living Experience

Directly engaging with people who have lived or living experience of homelessness, is critical in ending homelessness. The work of ending homelessness is frequently centred around the barriers and challenges caused by people's 'complexity'. How would our responses to homelessness shift if we acknowledged that people's 'complexities' are part of a human experience, and it is the systems that are designed to serve people that aren't set up to optimally support people requiring housing stability? People experiencing homelessness are resourceful and have strengths and assets that are often missed by middle class mindsets. Engagement provides an opportunity to begin shifting the dynamics, toward empowering people and removing the stigma attached to them, by virtue of them being homeless.

During the 2014 Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness Conference in Vancouver, BC, a group of people came together to ensure individuals with lived/living experience, received equitable representation from those who influence service provision, funding, policy and research. A series of seven principles titled “Nothing About us Without us” were developed. The recommendations highlighted in this report relative to engagement practices with people experiencing homelessness are guided by these principles. (Lived Experience Advisory Council, 2016). Peel’s housing and homeless service providers, and the Region of Peel are encouraged to continue to create intentional spaces and structures to ensure people are engaged in decision-making about the local homeless serving system.

2b. Refresh the Housing First System Orientation

Peel’s 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan signals an important shift, by developing and implementing a Housing First approach to serving people experiencing homelessness. One of the fundamental changes through

HOW WOULD RESPONSES TO HOMELESSNESS SHIFT IF WE ACCEPTED PEOPLE’S ‘COMPLEXITY’ AS PART OF A HUMAN EXPERIENCE AND FOCUSED ON DESIGNING RESPONSES TAILORED TO PEOPLE’S NEEDS AND PREFERENCES?

the plan, is to reorient services and policies to reflect a *Housing First* approach. In addition, investments have been allocated to support a collaborative Housing First program, Home for Good. Like many communities, Peel is in the process of developing a new model to ensure people can access housing and the supports they

need to remain stably housed. Extensive research has documented the effectiveness of a Housing First approach. In recent years, additional research to tailor Housing First program models to support women, youth and Indigenous people have also demonstrated success. Further details on the research are highlighted in Section C of this report.

Why make the shift to a Housing First Approach?

Social service organizations are designed to help people. Those organizations that embrace Housing First out of a desire to improve housing outcomes for people they serve, are motivated by their missions rather than external mandates. The shift toward Housing First is aligned with moving toward a rights-based approach to housing. During consultations, service providers agreed around the principles of housing first, but were less certain about putting those principles into action. Adoption of a Housing First approach requires a committed coalition of stakeholders, a shared vision and direction and benchmarks. The change

is a process and not an event. It requires taking incremental steps, having difficult community conversations, and supporting people impacted through change itself. The National Alliance to End Homelessness provides a toolkit to support communities planning on shifting toward a Housing First model (National Alliance to End Homelessness, <https://endhomelessness.org/resource/organizational-change-adopting-a-housing-first-approach/>). It is recommended that service providers, under the guidance of the Region, use existing toolkits and materials to fully adopt a Housing First system approach.

The term “Housing First” has become a catchphrase, particularly as the federal government required its application through the Homelessness Partnering Strategy in 2014. Since then, both the federal and provincial governments have mandated Housing First as a key tenant in public policies and funding mandates.

While several advances have been made as a result, the inconsistencies of its application have led to confusion and doubts. Unless communities apply the foundational principles of Housing First at a systems level, the effectiveness of Housing First will be diluted. To fully understand Housing First, it is important to distinguish the context in which the term is used. Table 7 provides an overview of the differences in Housing First as a philosophy, a systems approach, and a program model. More insights into Housing First as a program model will be shared in Section 3c of this report.

TABLE 7: Housing First – A Philosophy, A Systems Approach, and a Program Model

HOUSING FIRST PHILOSOPHY	HOUSING FIRST SYSTEMS APPROACH	HOUSING FIRST INTERVENTION
Emphasize the right to housing.	Emphasis on interventions and services coordinating and collaborating to streamline access to housing and housing related supports.	Housing is offered without any conditions.
No “readiness” requirements to accessing a basic human right.	Planning immediate access to barrier-free housing for people who are experiencing chronic homelessness.	People’s housing is not conditional on participating in services.

Consumer choice and self-determination	System is designed from a person-centred lens. Engage people with lived/living experience in system planning from inception through to evaluation	People’s housing preferences are considered, and people have a right to direct the type and level of supports they participate in.
Full acceptance and Harm reduction	The system is designed to reduce harm to people rather than trying to “cure” or “fix” people.	Housing related support services focus on recovery.
Social and community integration	Emphasis on community integration, ensuring that people aren’t labelled “homeless” for the rest of their lives.	People have access to housing subsidies and integration into typical community settings and networks is encouraged.

Paraphrased from the Canadian Housing First Toolkit

Housing First as a philosophy, systems approach and program model all work together to form responsive homeless serving system that is designed to prevent and end chronic homelessness.

PRIORITY 3: Re-Tool Homelessness the Homeless Serving System to Decrease Inflow and Increase Outflow

Item	Recommended Actions	Key Activities
3a.	Continue to build Coordinated Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Adopt the key components for an effective Coordinated Access Model. ➤ Invest in human resources to support the functionality of Coordinated Access and Change Management. ➤ Assess Peel’s investments in interventions against real-time data and make adjustments to achieve reduction targets and goals.
3b.	Decrease inflow into homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Test and implement evidence-based Diversion across Peel’s homeless serving system.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Target homelessness prevention services to the most vulnerable households at risk of becoming homeless.
3c.	Increase successful exits through permanent housing with supports.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Include street outreach as an access point into Coordinated Access. ➤ Emergency shelters in Peel complete Housing Focused Shelter Self-Assessment to begin moving toward a more housing focused orientation. ➤ Adopt Emergency shelter considerations for gender integrated sheltering and safety considerations for women accessing homeless emergency shelters. ➤ Adopt Rapid Rehousing as part of Peel's permanent housing with support responses. ➤ Consider time limited Intensive Case Management supports and housing subsidies.
3d.	Build System Capacity through Training and Technical Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide access to the Canadian Shelter Transformation Network emergency shelter learning series for all emergency shelter staff in Peel. ➤ Explore the feasibility and desire to coordinate a system wide staff training curriculum which could be centralized through PAEH. ➤ Invest future training activities in equity, decolonization, rights-based housing practices and housing focused practices (e.g., landlord engagement, housing stabilization)

3a. Continue to Build Coordinated Access

Local responses to homelessness are facing a significant paradigm shift. In the past, responses to homelessness have been reactive and ad-hoc. A constellation of services emerged to address the immediate needs of people without housing, night to night beds, mechanisms for food distribution and healthcare in

emergency rooms. These types of services continue to serve as important components and play a key role in short-term responses and alleviating crisis. These services, however, were never designed to end homelessness. Over the last decade, communities in North America, Europe and Australia have turned to longer term solutions to move from managing homelessness to ending it. Figure 10 illustrates the shift from managing, to ending homelessness. The State of Homelessness in Canada 2014 report states “For years we have been investing in a response to homelessness that, while meeting the immediate needs of people in crisis, has arguably had no impact on reducing the scale and scope of the problem.” (Gaetz et al, 2014).

Figure 10: Shifting from Managing to Ending Homelessness



Homeless Hub (<https://www.homelesshub.ca/blog/why-homelessness-still-problem>)

A growing number of researchers, policymakers, service providers, governments and people experiencing homelessness have turned to devising long term solutions which requires the development of integrated, comprehensive, person-focused, and sustainable responses. While ending homelessness is an ambitious goal, is not impossible. To date, Finland (Housing First Europe Hub, 2021), 14 communities in the United States (Community Solutions, 2021), and one community in Canada (Built for Zero Canada, 2021) have functionally ended chronic and/or veteran homelessness, and more are well on their way. A systematic review of North American research was conducted to examine the core elements of local homeless serving systems, to determine the key factors that lead communities to prevent and reduce homelessness. These findings were applied to Peel’s circumstances to identify gaps and opportunities to reorient local efforts toward ending homelessness. The objective of a Homeless Serving System is to help people find and maintain housing. The

right mix of interventions that match people’s needs, and can be easily navigated by people experiencing homelessness, are set up to reduce and end homelessness.

Coordinated Access

Movement through the Homeless Serving System depends on organizing philosophies, shared standards and

Core Elements of an Effective Homeless Serving System

- Housing First Orientation
- Coordinated Entry
- Coordinated Exits
- Designated Housing Resources
- Access to stabilization supports
- One Homelessness Information Management System
- Performance measures

coordinated processes for ending a person’s experience of homelessness. People experiencing homelessness and service providers alike expressed a strong desire to re-design the way people access housing related services, to put people at the centre.

The purpose of **Coordinated Access** is to align service providers and resources within a homeless serving system, to ensure every person experiencing homelessness is known By-Name in order to understand their needs and preferences. Service providers are responsible for rapid **coordinated exit**, by connecting people to permanent housing and tailored supports, based on the individual needs and preferences.

Peel has begun the process of designing a local Coordinated Access model. Several service providers reflected on being engaged in this process with the Region of Peel staff. While many of the elements to Coordinated Access are in development, the findings are intended to help support the progress that is well underway. Coordinated access

requires homeless interventions to rethink how people access, and are referred across services, regardless of how these services are funded. This process centres the responsibility of navigating and accessing services back onto the system itself, rather than requiring people in crisis to figure it out.

Through the federal Reaching Home program, local communities are required to implement a Coordinated Access System (ESDC, 2019). The key components of an effective response to ending homelessness through Coordinated Access was first implemented in the United States through the federal strategic plan “Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness (United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, 2015). Table 8 outlines the key differences in community responses to homelessness through the implementation of Coordinated Access.

Table 8: Key Differences in a Homelessness Serving System with Coordinated Access

With Coordinated Access	Without Coordinated Access
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program-Centric 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person-Centric
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each agency/service has its own intake and assessment forms and processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard intake and assessment forms across all agencies and services for every person experiencing homelessness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ad hoc referrals between programs/services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streamlined processes and triaging based on people's needs and local prioritization
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variability in the adoption of evidence-informed practices and measuring performance within the program/service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed upon system performance measures that are driven through the collective efforts across agencies.

Reaching Home Directives 2019

The notion of Coordinated Access is about working together to improve results. Communities across Canada are at varying stages of implementation of a Coordinated Access model (Built for Zero Canada, 2021). It is common for communities to focus almost exclusively on setting the model based on homelessness access points such as emergency shelter, outreach, and other locations where people experiencing homelessness present for service. Lessons learned from communities who have been through the design process have

“I don't know how people experiencing homelessness navigate the system. I find it very difficult to understand myself.”

- KEY INFORMANT

focused on the importance of focuses efforts on the coordinated exit into permanent housing with supports. It is recommended that Peel focus on both coordinated intake and coordinated exits in the design of their local model.

Coordinated Access simplifies access to permanent housing and housing related supports by using a **By-Name List**. The By-Name list serves as a compass that guides efforts based on people's needs and preferences. It helps guide operations and access to resources, using a transparent **prioritization** process that clarifies how and why people are receiving housing resources. It also Improves client targeting for system impact and enhances service provider collaboration.

Efforts at a local level are required to improve direct service provision, while also investing in resources to support working on the system. It is recommended that Peel consider the human resources required to support the functionality of the system, and the human elements of change through change management. For example, communities across Canada have implemented staff supports to provide project management supports, coordinate collaborative efforts, develop policies and procedures, monitor funding agreements, provide training across all stakeholder organization, oversee communities, and manage the homelessness information management system (ESDC, 2019).

Local Prioritization

The demand for housing and supports surpasses the availability of resources. Programs serving people experiencing homelessness dedicate a significant amount of time sourcing and referring to available housing and housing related supports. Traditionally front-line staff are all vying for the same limited resources, which leads to people accessing housing ad hoc rather than triaging based on level and severity of risks and needs. In the absence of enough affordable housing supply, local communities may be unaware that prioritizing is already happening based on first-come first-serve. The intention behind creating local

prioritization is to create a more transparent and agreed upon way of allocating housing resources to people who need them most acutely in that moment. According to Peel's 10-year plan, the Region of Peel will shift from a first-come first-serve to a needs-based approach to housing subsidy. This will help the region be in a better position to optimize limited resources and improve housing outcomes for those that are at greatest risk. While the focus in Peel's 10-year plan on service transformation may be focused on internal housing services, it is recommended that community service providers move toward a needs-based model using prioritization.

EQUITY THROUGH PRIORITIZATION

Further recommended considerations based on recent racial justice and equity work in ending homelessness include:

- Examining contributing factors that lead to over representation of Indigenous, Black and People of Colour experiencing homelessness, and include those risk factors within local prioritization criteria.
- Apply an equity lens to homeless interventions, and tailor specific permanent housing with supports to be adapted based on the needs and preferences of women, Indigenous, People of Colour, and Youth.

(Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority Committee of Black People experiencing homelessness, 2018)

Ultimately, each community decides on its own local prioritization criteria. Prioritization should be determined through a community engagement process and reviewed on an annual basis. Based on Peel's local context, and the literature on prioritization and equity, the following prioritization criteria should be considered for assigning housing resources and intervention types (e.g., units, subsidies, housing related supports). The higher a household's acuity and chronicity, the more intensive the level of permanent housing with support intervention. A recent Canadian study found that prioritizing people with the greatest acuity and chronicity to permanent housing with support interventions based on needs, improves the health and wellbeing of persons with lived experience of homelessness (Pottie et al., 2019).

The most common prioritization criteria presented in nearly every community across North America is the length of time homeless and severity of need (acuity). There are three main reasons highlighted in the research:

- Ethical – Serving people who are at the greatest risk is part of our social ethos, like triaging people in an emergency room. The longer a person remains homeless, the more their health and wellbeing declines (Gaetz et al, 2014).
- Outcome Based – Both the federal and provincial governments have set goals to end chronic homelessness and have set outcome-based targets through homelessness funding programs. (Province of Ontario, 2015) (Reaching Home, 2019).
- System Efficiency – As communities reduce chronic homelessness, system capacity increases to serve more people, preventing chronic homelessness from occurring due to system bottlenecks.

Specific populations who experience homelessness can experience it differently due to systemic barriers created by oppression. One of the ways to put equity into practice, is by examining the process by which housing and related supports are allocated. Business as usual for access and allocation of housing resources, likely has hidden biases-built in.

Further criteria found in Canadian communities such as Edmonton Alberta, Waterloo Ontario, and Saint John New Brunswick, also include household composition, tri-morbidity, and location (i.e., rough sleeping or in emergency shelter).

Programmatic Building Blocks to prevent, reduce and end homelessness.

Research suggests that permanent housing with supports is more likely than other interventions to reduce the rate at which people return into homelessness. Different kinds of interventions serve different typologies of homelessness, and at different points of the process by which people become housed. These interventions may also be tailored to service different population groups.

Figure 11 provides an outline of the most common intervention types in a local homeless serving system.

Figure 11 Homelessness Intervention Types

Prevention	Diversion	Emergency/Crisis Response	Permanent Housing with Supports
<p>Goal: Prevent people from entering homeless response system</p> <p>Target population: Imminent risk of homelessness</p>	<p>Goal: Prevent people from entering the homeless response system</p> <p>Target population: Entering "front door" access point already homeless</p>	<p>Goal: Engaging people in the re-housing process providing temporary accommodations</p> <p>Target population: Already homeless with no safe alternative</p>	<p>Goal: Successful housing placements and housing stabilization</p> <p>Target population: People experiencing homelessness who have not been able to self resolve and may require additional supports to stabilize housing</p>

3b. Decrease Inflow into Homelessness

Strategies and interventions to reduce the rate at which people enter homelessness is a critical element of a community's efforts to reduce homelessness. A person at risk of becoming homeless may access services to avoid housing loss.

(CMHC, 2006). Research from Nelson and Aubry (2017) demonstrated that people experiencing homelessness Typically, the term 'prevention' is used to describe interventions that may, in the long run, contribute to housing stability. Such interventions might include life skills and employment training and addictions support.

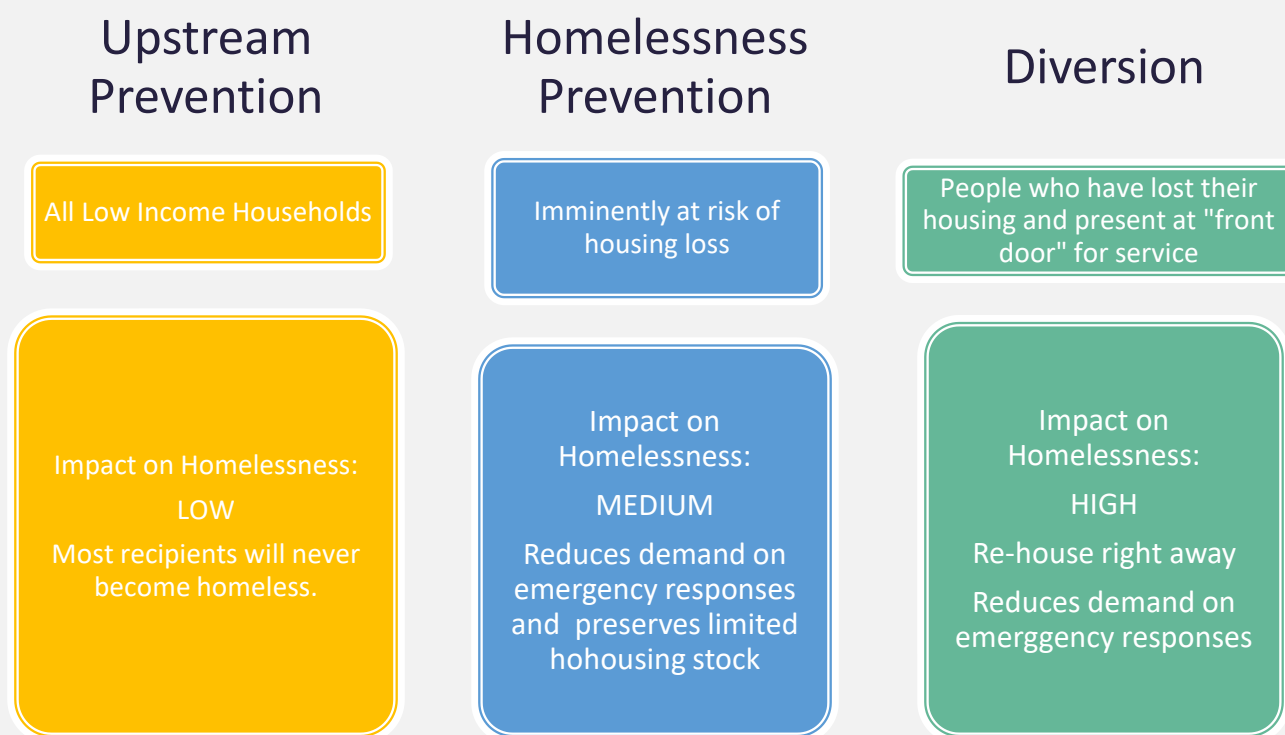
"The entire system is a fight to get housing."

– Person experiencing homelessness in Peel

These supports, usually called ‘upstream’, are highly valuable and critically important to improving overall quality of life. However, they cannot be considered preventative as part of a homeless response unless they also provide immediate access to housing. At its core, homelessness prevention is a housing-led response (Dej and Gaetz, 2017). Figure 12 highlights where the intersections between where prevention begins and ends within a local homeless serving system.

While some aspects of these interventions exist within Peel’s homelessness interventions, further adoption of evidence-based practices would optimize outcomes for people experiencing homelessness. The information below provides an overview of these intervention types.

Figure 12 Prevention Interventions and the Impacts on Reducing Inflow into Homelessness



National

Alliance to End Homelessness, 2020

Homelessness Prevention

Goal/Objective: Intervene before a household at imminent risk becomes homeless.

Target Population:

- Households at imminent risk of losing housing.
- Households with previous experiences of homelessness should be prioritized.

Measures of success

- ✓ Fewer households entering the homeless crisis response system.
- ✓ Household served remains stably housed (up to 12 months).

Examples Intervention Activities:

- ✓ Landlord mediation.
- ✓ Housing relocation.
- ✓ Rent/utility arrears.
- ✓ Discharge planning (from hospital, jail, foster care).
- ✓ Short term case management support.

Peel's Homelessness Prevention Services:

- Region of Peel Housing Stability Program.
- Royal Canadian Legion "Leave the Streets Behind" (Veterans).
- Mississauga Community Legal Clinic.
- Our Place Peel early intervention (Youth).

Diversion

Goal/Objective: Intervene before a household enters an emergency/crisis services by securing a safe alternative.

Target Population:

- Households that are seeking shelter or presenting at the "front door" of a Coordinated Access – Access point.

Measures of success

- ✓ % of people who present for emergency shelter are diverted to safe alternative.
- ✓ % of diverted households who do not enter emergency shelter within one year.

Examples of Intervention Activities:

- ✓ Standard Diversion Script (e.g. [OrgCode Sample Diversion Script](#)).
- ✓ Short-term housing case management support.

- ✓ Conflict mediation (e.g., family/friend/landlord).
- ✓ Housing Search and financial assistance.
- ✓ Flexible funding pot for quick resolutions (e.g., grocery card while staying with friend).
- ✓ Tailored approaches for youth and survivors of gendered based violence.

Peel's Diversion Services

Note: Salvation Army and Our Place Peel shelters are at varying stages of evidence-based diversion implementation.

(National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2011)

By implementing evidence-based diversion practices, communities have been able to reduce shelter demand by up to 50% after implementing the practice through their local Homeless Serving System (White, 2018). The United States has developed several tools and promising practices related to Diversion. Built for Zero Canada requires communities to implement Diversion across all access points as part of a quality coordinated access model (BFZ-C, 2021). Waterloo Region, Ontario introduced a Diversion model as a formalized housing stability practice in 2013 (Region of Waterloo, 2013). Several Ontario communities have tested and implemented Diversion as a key component of their Coordinated Access System (Appendix B).

3c. Increase successful exits through permanent housing with supports

Most households who become homeless today have already lived in independent permanent housing, and they can generally return and remain stably housed with limited assistance. Homelessness itself is associated with a host of negative outcomes that can be minimized by limiting the period people experience it. By helping people return to permanent housing as soon as possible, communities have been able to reduce the length of time people remain in shelters, which opens beds for others who need them. Successful programs have demonstrated that returning people to permanent housing as quickly as possible, has positive outcomes for both people being served and their communities.

Housing Focused Crisis Responses

Effective crisis responses play an important role within local homeless serving systems. They help identify and quickly connect people experiencing homelessness to housing supports while meeting people's immediate needs. A homeless serving system focused on preventing and ending homelessness, coordinates efforts with emergency responses to engage people in the process of becoming housed. Highly effective emergency

responses are designed to help accelerate connections to matching people with the right level and type of housing and supports, based on people's needs and preferences.

Emergency/Crisis Response

Goal/Objective: To identify people experiencing homelessness and connect people with housing quickly while addressing immediate needs (e.g., temporary accommodations).

Target Population:

- People experiencing homelessness with no safe alternative housing options.

Measures of success

- ✓ Average length of time in shelter targets to decrease chronic homelessness.
- ✓ % of shelter guests who self resolve within 14 days (and do not cycle back within 3-6 months).
- ✓ % of successful housing exits (and do not cycle back within 12 months).
- ✓ Number of people who moved from encampment to shelter.
- ✓ Number of people who moved from encampment to permanent housing.
- ✓ % people who became engaged in housing planning.
- ✓ Decreased number of people sleeping rough/not connected to services.

Examples of Intervention Activities:

- ✓ Housing-focused street outreach.
- ✓ Housing-focused sheltering.
- ✓ Transitional housing.

Peel's Emergency /Crisis Response

- Region of Peel/CMHA Street Outreach.
- Regeneration drop-in.
- Regeneration Outreach Community.
- Region of Peel Nelson Street drop-in.
- City of Mississauga Open Hub Window (Mississauga Library).
- Elizabeth Fry Society Ellen House.
- Embrave (Gender Based Violence shelter).

- Region of Peel Brampton Queen Street Youth Shelter (services provided by Salvation Army).
- Our Place Peel Emergency Shelter.
- Region of Peel Family Shelter (services provided by Salvation Army).
- St. Leonard's Place Out of the Cold.
- St. Leonard's New Leaf program.
- St. Leonard's Rotary Resolve House.
- Region of Peel Wilkinson Road Shelter (services provided by Salvation Army).
- Region of Peel Cawthra Road Shelter (services provided by Salvation Army).
- Salvation Army Honeychurch Family Life Resource Centre (Gender Based Violence).
- Indus emergency shelter space (seniors).
- Armagh Transitional Housing (women).
- SHIP crisis support.
- Region of Peel Youth Village (Youth Transitional) (services provided by SHIP).
- SHIP Recovery Residence – Parsons Place.
- SHIP Recovery Residence – Hammond House.
- Genesis Lodge and Oliver House.
- Bonnie McPhee and Peel Transitional House.

Effective street outreach is coordinated with the homeless serving system as an access point to coordinated access. The intervention plays a key role in reducing and ending chronic homelessness, as staff are likely to encounter people experiencing homelessness who are disconnected from services. Street outreach does not require people to enter shelter or a temporary accommodation as part of a “step” to gain access to housing. Evidence shows that housing led, trauma-informed, culturally responsive street outreach programs, demonstrate the greatest housing stability outcomes for people experiencing homelessness sleeping rough (Burt et al., 2004).

As communities shift toward ending homelessness, emergency shelters have been transforming from a traditional, to a housing focused approach. A network of Canadian homeless shelters launched in May 2019 to offer national guidance for shelters to become more housing focused, and to take on community leadership

roles in ending homelessness (Canadian Shelter Transformation Network, 2019). Peel’s emergency shelter system has access to a wide range of free tools and resources, including a housing focused orientation self-assessment tool, to identify areas for further improvements.

Rapid Re-Housing

Goal/Objective: To help people exit out of homelessness and stabilize in permanent housing as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Target Population:

- Households experiencing homelessness with moderate acuity and experiences of homelessness for longer than 3 months.

Measures of success

- ✓ Length of time between match and housed.
- ✓ % of people referred who were successfully housed.
- ✓ % of people who remain stably housed within one year after program exit.
- ✓ Reduced recidivism back into homelessness once.

Key Components of a successful program model:

- ✓ Housing identification (market or subsidized housing).
- ✓ Short-term (up to 6 months) case management.
- ✓ Rent and move-in assistance.

Peel’s Rapid Rehousing

Note: While some housing workers exist throughout Peel’s services for people experiencing homelessness, there are none following the evidence-based rapid rehousing model.

Peel’s 2018 Point in Time count and 2020 emergency shelter usage data, point to a significant gap in rapid re-

“They should work on helping people find a place instead of getting kicked out of shelter.”

- Person experiencing homelessness in Peel

housing services. Investing in rapid-rehousing interventions for men, women, families, and youth would help people to resolve their housing instability more quickly.

Several communities in the U.S. have implemented Rapid Re-housing as part of the

permanent housing with support options. As it emerged, there was some confusion about the model being a 'Housing First light' model. There are key distinctions between the Rapid Rehousing program, and a Housing First Program. Mainly, the target populations are different, as the intensity and length of support is different. Some research in the U.S. has also demonstrated that rapid re-housing can also work for people with higher levels of acuity as well, with coordinated mainstream supports. Evidence shows that those who receive rapid re-housing supports, exit out of shelter faster. A study conducted in the U.S. found that families who were assigned to rapid rehousing, exited shelter one month sooner than families receiving usual shelter services (Gubtis et al., 2016).

During the first wave of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, Fort McMurray Alberta was managing two emergency responses: COVID-19 and a massive flood. The full federal Reaching Home COVID-19 enhancement was allocated to Rapid-Rehousing and Diversion rather than emergency sheltering. As a result, the community **reduced chronic homelessness by 58%** from March-July 2020 (CAEH, 2020). As a comparison, Chatham-Kent, Ontario responded to COVID-19 by opening a temporary emergency shelter, which resulted in a 62% increase in chronic homelessness between March-August 2020 (BFZ, 2021). In December 2020, Chatham-Kent re-oriented their COVID-19 response with a focus on Rapid Re-housing. Since that time, they've reduced chronic homelessness by 23% (BFZ, 2021). It is important to note that neither community had an influx of affordable housing during that time.

Permanent Housing with Intensive Supports (scattered site or fixed site)

Goal/Objective: Engaging people in the rehousing process while providing temporary accommodations.

Target Population:

- People experiencing chronic homelessness with higher levels of acuity. A general rule of thumb is, the more severe people's housing and health risks, the greater the intensity of support.
- This intervention should be reserved for the most chronic and highly acute individuals.

Measures of success:

- ✓ Average length of time from match to housed.
- ✓ Reduced returns to homelessness.
- ✓ Percentage of people served who receive rent subsidies.
- ✓ Percentage of successful exits to greater independence.

- ✓ Percentage of people who remain housed within one year of program exit.

Examples of Intervention Activities:

- ✓ Housing may be scattered site or place based.
- ✓ Housing may be market rent or subsidized housing.
- ✓ Intensive Case Management (ICM) supports (up to 24 months) or Assertive Community Treatment (ACT)
- ✓ Balanced caseloads (range of high, mid, low acuity as people stabilize over time)
- ✓ Rental assistance may range from 1-3 years (or no limit in supportive housing).
- ✓ Connection to mainstream supports.
- ✓ Community re-integration.
- ✓ Minimum home visits once per month (decrease over time as housing stabilization increases)
- ✓ Increasing housing stabilization over time.

Peel's Permanent Housing with Intensive supports

- Home for Good (community collaborative: SHIP, OPP, John Howard Society, CMHA, and Salvation Army Reach).
- Our Place Peel Housing First for Youth.
- SHIP supportive housing.
- SHIP Assertive Community Treatment Teams (ACTT).
- CAMH Supported Housing.
- SHIP Community Homes for Opportunity (CHO).
- Angela's Place.

People experiencing homelessness who are quickly connected to housing, have a better chance of remaining stably housed as opposed to the traditional housing continuum model (also known as the staircase model). This model was first developed for people with significant mental health conditions and high acuity. The most empirically studied homelessness intervention, with the most extensive research, is Housing First. When applied to its fidelity, Housing First retention rates coalesce around 80% (Tsemberis, 2010; Aubry et al., 2015).

Housing First is the most empirically researched homelessness intervention in the world. The Mental Health Commission of Canada engaged more than 2,000 participants for two years in five Canadian cities, in the

world's largest study of Housing First: At Home/Chez Soi. Findings from the study found that people experiencing chronic homelessness with high levels of acuity, had higher levels of housing retention over time, than those who received treatment as usual, going through the housing continuum (Goering, P., et al. 2014).

There are many misconceptions about the model; the main being that housing first is housing only. The Housing First model combines permanent housing with intensive person-centered supports using evidence-informed practices and approaches. Additional research has demonstrated the effectiveness of the model for specific population groups in Canada including youth, women, Indigenous and racial/ethnic groups. Fidelity to the housing first model, combined with population specific adaptations, have demonstrated that housing first remains effective across different populations. The Canadian Observatory on homelessness developed a specific framework for youth. For example, in addition to the principles of the adult framework, Housing First for Youth includes an additional element around positive youth development and wellness orientation, and its pathway to housing includes reconnecting with family and returning home when it is safe and feasible to do so (Gaetz, 2017). Hamilton ON has tailored Housing First program models and approaches for youth, women, and the urban Indigenous community (City of Hamilton, 2014).

Housing First programs in most communities across Canada provide both time limited case management supports (up to 24 months), and time limited rent subsidies, which range from 1-5 years. Caseload ratios also range from 1:25 for Intensive Case Management models, to 1:8 for Assertive Community Treatment models. Youth caseload ratios for Housing first is recommended at a 1:11 ratio (Gaetz, 2017).

When communities in Alberta adopted the Housing First Model in Canada, it resulted in significant decreases in homelessness. For example, Edmonton's homeless population decreased by 29.4 per cent; Lethbridge decreased by 58.7%; and Wood Buffalo decreased by 43.7 per cent. In addition, people also experienced significant reductions in public system usage. Emergency room visits decreased by 39%, and the number of days incarcerated decreased by 80% (Alberta 7 Cities, 2019).

In addition to improving housing and health outcomes for people experiencing homelessness, permanent housing with supports has also been shown to be more cost effective. A recent Canadian study found that investing in Housing First is the most cost-effective way of spending limited public dollars, in helping people experiencing homelessness attain housing stability (Latimer et al., 2020).

A scattered-site independent housing” honours clients’ preferences, such as choosing apartments in neighbourhoods with which they are familiar” (Tsemberis, 2010). Scattered-site housing is largely owned by private sector landlords. In the At Home/Chez Soi study, for example, over 260 landlords and property management companies participated with over 1,200 housing units (MHCC, 2014). Individualized supports are provided to the person, according to their needs in the scattered-site housing unit. Scattered-site housing units can be in many areas across a community, depending on availability and affordability. Place based Supportive Housing (PSH) is aimed at individuals and families with chronic illnesses, disabilities, mental health issues or substance use disorders who have experienced long-term or repeated homelessness. It provides long-term rental assistance and support services. There are a range of permanent housing models with support services, that should be included in local homelessness serving systems. Each model is designed to meet different population needs (acuity), from Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) to Intensive Case Management (ICM).

Service demand modeling was conducted and found a deficit of **567** permanent housing with supports resources to serve everyone currently experiencing chronic homelessness. It is recommended that the community adopt time limited case management supports and housing subsidies, for people who are chronically homeless and on the lower range of high acuity levels. Adjusting Intensive Case Management caseload ratios to 1:20 and aiming to move people toward greater independence by 18 months, would allow housing with support programs to **serve an additional 72 people per year**. Further program modeling including, caseload ratios and turnover projections compared to local data, should be examined regularly to ensure that Peel continues to adapt resource investments based on outcome targets.

Housing First is the most cost-effective way of spending limited public funds to help people experience homelessness find and maintain housing.

While no perfect homelessness serving system exists, there are foundational building blocks that contribute to homelessness reductions (Homeless Hub, 2020). For example, a community that has more emergency shelter capacity relative to permanent housing with supports, will likely be less effective in helping people experiencing homelessness find and sustain permanent housing. Each of the program components contributes to a particular function within the homelessness serving system. The key to operating as a system is the relationship between the interventions, articulated at a systems level to optimize reductions in homelessness. It is recommended that Peel undertake a system planning exercise to articulate the local homelessness-serving system components and their relationship to one another, and how they function as a system. This would be

required to fully map out Peel's current homelessness- serving system, the tools highlighted below serve as a starting point.

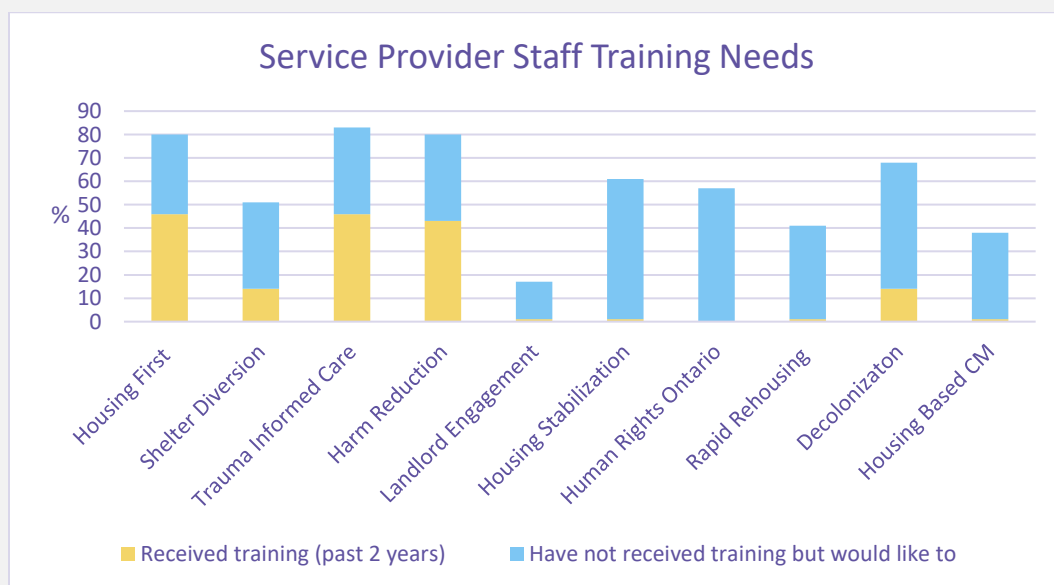
3d. Build System Capacity through Training and Technical Assistance

Front line staff are the lynchpin to any community's success in ending homelessness. Front line staff are responsible for doing the heavy lifting and thus, require support. Without proper training, supports and resources, staff working in the homeless serving sector are at risk of burnout, vicarious trauma, and compassion fatigue. The organization can also be impacted by high staff turnover, low morale, and risks related to meeting funder expectations (Wright and Cropanzano, 1998).

Evidence shows that one of the ways to improve staff's wellbeing and overall satisfaction, is by connecting people to the mission. One of the main strategies is to socialize staff to performance improvement and system impact. The recommendations below were developed through both evidence-based practices in the homeless serving sector, and findings through local staff consultations.

Staff from across Peel's housing and homelessness sector were surveyed and asked about what training they have received, and what training they would like to receive. Figure 13 provides an overview of the findings.

Figure 13: Peel's Homeless Serving System Training Needs



The results indicate a strong training focus on individual risk factors attributed to homelessness, and less of a focus on two key areas: rights-based training and housing focused training. Skills in these areas are essential to Peel's homeless serving system's goal of preventing and reducing homelessness. It also identified as a gap in ensuring that Peel's homeless serving system workforce is supported and expected to put equity into practice on the job.

Create a Peel Homeless Serving System Curriculum for Front Line staff.

All staff across Peel's homeless serving system would benefit from receiving a standardized orientation. One cost effective approach would be to develop an online platform with online materials which could be updated as needed. This would also make sense in the current climate of Covid 19 and its safety protocols. At minimum it is recommended that curriculum and/or materials include:

- An Overview of Peel's Homeless Serving System (vision, governance and coordinated access).
- Intermediate Diversity training (knowledge and applying skills).
- Decolonization training.
- Housing First.
- Housing as a Human Right.
- Housing stabilization.
- Housing Focused case management (e.g., motivational interviewing, critical time intervention).
- Prevention and Diversion.

The Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness also offers free webinars on various topics related to the above. Additional training may be required as Peel's Homeless Serving System continues to evolve. It is recommended that staff and lived/living experience be engaged throughout the planning and delivery of training.

Engage staff in System Improvement Efforts

Community solutions runs Built for Zero in the United States and found that front line staff gained a sense of connectedness to the system improvement work when participating in Built for Zero improvement projects. (Community Solutions, 2021).

It is recommended that Peel consider inviting front line staff to help Peel's Built for Zero local team to participate in improvement work, as it pertains to their role.

PRIORITY 4: Improve Data and Outcome Measures

Item	Recommended Actions	Key Activities
4a.	Implement a system-wide Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Adopt the key components for an effective Coordinated Access Model. ➤ Invest in human resources to support the functionality of Coordinated Access and Change Management. ➤ Review and update Peel’s Intervention map at least 2 times per year.
4b.	Develop a performance measurement framework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consult stakeholders on the development of a performance measurement framework. ➤ Develop system wide measures aligned with the vision and goals in Peel’s 10-year Plan, and outcome-based funding expectations by federal and provincial homelessness funding programs. ➤ Develop a series of intervention type metrics to evaluate program performance and impacts to the overall system goals. ➤ Create communication tools to share progress toward the goal of preventing and reducing homelessness. ➤ Develop advocacy tools to highlight system gaps quantify needs.

4a. Implement a system-wide Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS)

Implementing an effective means of collecting homelessness data in Peel and reporting on the performance of a local homelessness serving system, is essential to support system level planning and community coordination.

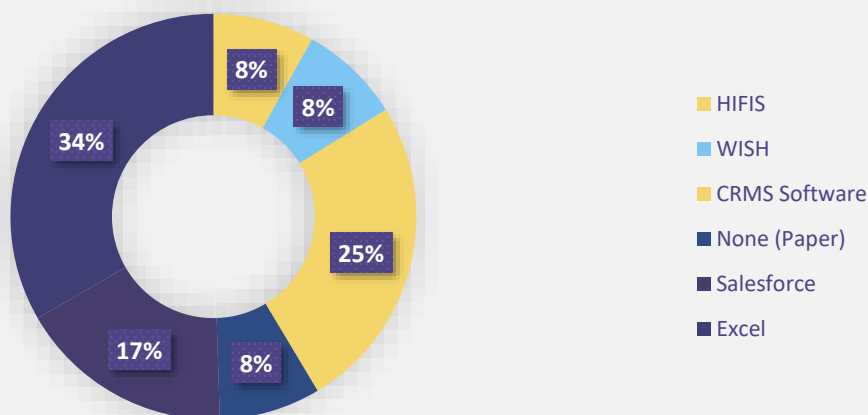
A Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is a locally administered, electronic data collection system that helps to knit together a local homelessness serving system. The HMIS systems are web-based software applications that record and store person-level information on the service needs and preferences of individuals and families at risk of or experiencing homelessness. The real time person-level information is used to maintain a local By-Name List, which is central to Coordinated Access. By gathering consistent information, homelessness serving agencies can apply common intake and assessments to appropriately match a person with services and coordinate, and monitor outcomes. Different agencies with appropriate access permissions, can see what services are being provided to each person, to what effect, and how the client's needs may change over time. In addition to supporting coordination efforts across services, it also helps communities use real time data to strategically plan, invest in, and evaluate the homelessness serving systems progress in achieving system level outcomes, such as reducing chronic homelessness.

While it was identified throughout community consultation that work was underway at the Region of Peel to develop an Integrated Management Information System for housing and homelessness services within and across the region, community members expressed a desire to be more engaged in its development, particularly if the intention were to implement the technology across the sector.

Peel homelessness and housing support service providers were asked which Homelessness Management Information (HMIS) was being used to collect data. Only 17% are using the Region's designated HMIS platform. There are a wide range of technologies being used, most of which were not integrated with other programs and services across Peel's homelessness serving system. Figure 14 provides a breakdown of the varying technologies used to collect and maintain person-level, and the percentage of the homelessness serving system using each. None of the technologies identified had data sharing across multiple homeless service providers.

Figure 14: Peel's Homelessness Management Technology Across the Homeless Serving System

Information Management Technologies Used Across Peel's Homeless Serving System



The Region of Peel's Home for All 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan (2018-2028), highlights the importance of technology to support service coordination to prevent homelessness whenever possible, divert people from shelter to safe alternatives and match people who end up homeless with the right type and level of services that results in successful exits into permanent housing (Region of Peel, 2018).

Both the federal and provincial government have required local municipalities/regions to collect real time person specific data across their local homeless serving system. The requirements include detailed information about the needs and preferences of household receiving services, to tailor and coordinate access to permanent housing and housing related supports.

Though Reaching Home, Employment and Social Development Canada has outlined a set of minimum requirements for a local HMIS requirements by March 31.2022, which include:

- Setting up a governance structure to oversee decisions related to implementing and maintaining HMIS and data collection. The governance structure should include service providers.
- Allowing service providers to participate in the coordinated access system using HMIS.
- The ability to support communities to undertake the intake, prioritization based on pre-established criteria and triaging/matching of people experiencing homelessness to housing and housing related supports.

- The capacity to export anonymized data fields for federal reporting.
- A set of local agreements to manage privacy, data sharing, and client consent to comply with municipal, provincial, and federal laws.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing requires all Ontario Services Managers to complete enumeration and have a real-time By Name List by December 15, 2021.

Several local communities in Ontario have implemented or are in the process of implementing an HMIS system across their homelessness serving system. London, Ontario has fully implemented its HMIS in a shared environment with all homeless and housing with supports providers starting in 2017. The City of London, in a presentation delivered at the 2018 Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness conference, emphasized the importance of change management, stakeholder engagement, process mapping and removing roadblocks in data sharing (London Homeless Prevention Network, November 2018).

One of the key strategies in Windsor-Essex 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan (2019-2028), is to expand the use of their HMIS across the entire homelessness serving system by 2022. Currently the HMIS system is being implemented across all emergency shelters and Housing First programs with the next phase to include all homeless service partners and permanent housing with support programs.

Other Ontario communities that have implemented an integrated and shared HMIS across all homelessness and housing support service providers, include Chatham-Kent, Dufferin County, Durham Region, Guelph-Wellington, Hamilton, Kingston, Niagara Region, Ottawa, Peterborough, Simcoe County and Waterloo Region. Along with the Peel Region, these communities are participating in Canada's Built for Zero movement and can offer support by sharing policies, guides, governance models, data sharing/confidentiality agreements and other lessons learned to support Peel in its implementation of HMIS (Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness website, 2021).

4b. Develop a performance measurement Framework

Performance measures ensure a common understanding by all stakeholders on the intent and goals of a local homeless serving system. Performance measures usually include individual program measures, which are outputs in a system context as well as the overall results for people experiencing homelessness served in the community, which are system outcomes.

While the federal government does not have sole jurisdiction over homelessness, it plays a key leadership role in setting national policy objectives and encouraging a collaborative approach to ending homelessness. In support of the National Housing Strategy, Reaching Home's objective is to end chronic homelessness by 2027-28. The federal government has entered into a service agreement with the Region of Peel to oversee a community-based approach in achieving the following four outcome areas:

1. Chronic homelessness in the community is reduced.
2. Indigenous homelessness in the community is reduced.
3. New inflows into homelessness are reduced; and
4. Returns to homelessness are reduced.

The Province of Ontario has also set a goal to end chronic homelessness by 2025 and has outlined a series of outcome requirements in its homelessness funding agreements.

*PERFORMANCE
MEASUREMENT IS A
PROCESS TO
SYSTEMATICALLY
EVALUATE WHETHER
YOUR EFFORTS ARE
MAKING AN IMPACT*

Peel's 10-year plan signals a change to housing providers, as it sets out to build capacity for the development and shift from a rules-based, to an outcomes-focused, modern system. The 10-year plan outcome measures include: Individuals that were formerly experiencing chronic homelessness remain housed for 3 months; Home for Good Program and Reaching Home sub projects outputs and the number of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness that are housed.

Peel has earmarked federal Community Capacity and Innovation (CCI) funding for the coordination of resources and data collection (Region of Peel, 2019-2024). Actions related to this shift should include the development of system-level metrics that can be monitored at least quarterly to review the health of the local homeless serving system overall; aligning funding with performance targets; adding capacity to emergency shelters to aid in diverting people when appropriate and to accelerate connections to permanent housing and supports through Coordinated Access; investing in system wide training on evidence-informed practices; converting transitional housing to permanent housing and reviewing coordinated entry and exit protocols to maximize effectiveness and efficiency.

Performance management and quality assurance help optimize outcomes for people at risk of, or who are experiencing homelessness, while also enabling communities to understand their current system's

effectiveness. Local By Name Lists are used to create tools to analyze system level data and make projections that help inform system planning and improvement efforts.

As federal and provincial governments move toward outcome-based funding expectations, local communities across Canada have begun to outline both system and program level performance indicators. Calgary, Alberta developed a Homeless Planning Framework which evaluates outputs at a program level, such as number of people housed, length of time from entry to housing which contribute to system outcome measures which include overall reductions in chronic homelessness and low recidivism (Calgary Homeless Foundation, 2017). In 2019, the City of Hamilton, released a system planning framework which outlines system outcomes including an end to chronic homelessness by 2025, reduction targets in recidivism rates and preventing homelessness. In addition, a series of key performance indicators and targets have been outlined for each intervention type including average length of stay, % of housing resources allocated through Coordinated Access and successful exits (City of Hamilton, 2019). The City of London has outlined a series of system level outcomes in its Homelessness Strategy 2019-2023, which includes similar system level outcomes to Calgary and Hamilton.

Conclusion

With reference to the body of evidence cited in this report, the following priorities are identified for Peel's community sector agencies delivering housing and homelessness services. These priorities have been formulated after developing an understanding of the region's community sector agencies delivering housing and homelessness services, identifying their current priorities, and identifying service gaps. The recommendations highlighted in this report have been adopted by communities who have made significant progress in their efforts to prevent, reduce, and end homelessness. Implementing these recommendations and key activities will help clear the path, enabling Peel to reach the goals of preventing homelessness and ending chronic homelessness.

APPENDIX A

The research methods undertaken to formulate the recommendations include:

A comprehensive **Service Map** of the housing and homelessness agencies and services in Peel was compared to evidence-informed services and interventions. Service mapping also included a focus on Indigenous peoples, youth, newcomers, women, families, and men.

A **systematic literature review** provided national, provincial, and local context. International research supplemented any research gaps missing in a Canadian context. Housing and Homelessness definitions, research and reports on reconciliation and equity were also reviewed.

National and Local data on homelessness was analyzed to identify evidence-informed improvements to Peel's homelessness serving system.

A range of **key informants** were interviewed to gain perspective on the experiences, aspirations, service demands, and opportunities from stakeholders working to end homelessness in Peel.

Stakeholder surveys were completed by staff working with people experiencing homelessness in Peel to gain insights into the realities of direct service delivery and ensure that the recommendations resonated within an operational context. Surveys were also completed with people currently experiencing homelessness in Peel to ensure any recommendations were supported by those directly impacted.

Benchmarking across other communities in Ontario and across Canada identified emerging practices, trends, and other communities are responding to ending homelessness in similar contexts.

The priorities in this report align with Peel's 10-year Housing and Homelessness (Plan 2018-2028) and key findings from other local reports such as the Peel Housing Strategy (2018), Peel's Reaching Home Community Plan (2019-2024), and the Peel Poverty Reduction Strategy 2018-2028.

APPENDIX B

Example of Ontario Community Diversion Interventions (as of December 2020)			
City	Target Population(s)	Framework	Funding
Hamilton	Families, youth, single women, single men	Diversion Script Pre-Screening tool at shelter front door. Diversion/housing worker staff Flex funding	\$100,000
London	All populations seeking shelter and hospital discharge	Diversion script and pre-screening tool conducted at centralized intake for shelter bookings	\$134,000
Niagara	Youth	Shelter Diversion included as part of intake	\$60,000 +
Peterborough	Youth and families	Shelter Diversion script and pre-screening tool conducted at centralized intake for shelter bookings	Unknown
Waterloo	Youth and Family shelter	Shelter Diversion script and pre-screening tool	\$246,000

City of Brantford Council Report December 2, 2020 (<https://pub-brantford.escrimemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=6525>)

Glossary of terms

TERM	DEFINITION
<i>Absolute Zero</i>	A true end to homelessness where everyone has access to supports and appropriate housing so that no one becomes homeless or at risk in the first place. This is an aspirational goal compared to functional zero which is the systematic and measurable response to ensure homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.
<i>Acuity</i>	An assessment of the level of complexity of a person's experience. Acuity is used to determine the appropriate level, intensity, duration, and frequency of case managed supports to sustainably end a person's or family's homelessness. Acuity can be used for balancing the time commitment and caseload of an organization overall.
<i>Affordable Housing</i>	A housing unit that is owned or rented by a household with shelter costs (rent, utilities etc.) that are less than 30% of its gross income. In the context of ending homelessness affordable housing becomes a key destination point through coordinated access matching and referral.
<i>Assertive Community Treatment (ACT)</i>	Often referred to as (ACT) is an integrated team-based approach designed to provide comprehensive community-based supports to help people remain stably housed. The team may consist of case managers, physicians, social workers, peer support workers and other health care providers. This model fits within the Permanent Housing with Supports intervention type and is designed for people experiencing homelessness with the most acute needs. Generally, the supports are not time limited.
<i>Assessment</i>	The evaluation or estimate of the nature, quality, or ability of someone or something.
<i>At-Risk of Homelessness</i>	A person or family that is not experiencing homelessness but whose current economic and/or housing situation is precarious and there is no alternative for obtaining subsequent housing. Circumstances may include eviction, loss of income, discharge from public institutions with subsequent housing in place, fleeing from intimate partner/family violence, or irreparable damage to the residence.
<i>By-Name List</i>	A process and tool that collects person level information that helps connect people experiencing homelessness to housing and supports.

<i>Capacity</i>	According to the OECD, capacity refers to the ability of people, organizations and society to manage their affairs successfully.
<i>Case Management</i>	A process of service coordination and delivery on behalf of people experiencing homelessness which includes assessment of the full range of services tailored to individual needs. The Case manager supports coordination of referrals and services as well as support toward self-sufficiency and working toward an exit plan from programs/services.
<i>Chronic Homelessness</i>	Individuals who are currently experiencing homelessness and have a cumulative total of 6 months (180 days) without housing over the last year OR have had recurrent experiences of homelessness over the past 3 years with a cumulative duration of 18 months (546 days). This definition has been adopted by the Canada's National Housing Strategy through the federal homelessness program, Reaching Home.
<i>Collaboration</i>	A term to describe loosely affiliated networks or more formal partnerships between people working across departments, organizations, or sectors. Unlike integration, collaboration does not require formal infrastructure to merge work processes across organizational sites.
<i>Community Advisory Board</i>	Usually referred to as the CAB, it is a local organizing committee responsible for coordinating efforts to end homelessness in a community. Key activities of a local CAB include helping to guide the development of a community plan to end homelessness, assess and recommend projects for funding to the CE, is representative of the community, supports CE in planning and implementation of coordinated access and approves the community homelessness report.
<i>Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI)</i>	A provincial program which aims to improve the coordination and integration of local service delivery systems that is people centred, outcome focussed, and reflects a Housing First Approach to prevent, reduce, and address homelessness in communities across Ontario.
<i>Community Entity</i>	A Community Entity (CE) is an incorporated organization, most often a municipal/regional government that enters into a funding agreement with Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) for Reaching Home. The CE is required to adopt an outcomes-based approach to support the national goal to reduce chronic homelessness by 50% by fiscal year 2027/2028.
<i>Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM)</i>	In Ontario, social services like income support, housing and homelessness, childcare and early years are planned, managed and co-funded by municipalities.
<i>Coordinated Access</i>	A single place or process for people experiencing homelessness to access permanent housing and supports. It is a system-wide approach designed to help people gain access to housing supports based on their individualized needs faster and more efficiently. Coordinated Access reduces new entries to

	homelessness and improves data collection and service coordination to effectively serve people experiencing homelessness.
<i>Coordinated Intake and Assessment</i>	A standardized approach used across a local homelessness serving system that assesses a person's needs, preferences and level of acuity to help match to permanent housing and the right type of level of supports.
<i>Core Housing Need</i>	When a household spends more than 30% of their gross (pre-tax) income on housing costs.
<i>COVID-19</i>	Coronavirus is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. In 2020 the world experienced a global pandemic as COVID-19 spread around the world.
<i>Discharge Planning</i>	Preparing someone to move from an institutional setting (e.g., hospital, criminal just system, child welfare system) into a non-institutional setting either independently or with supports in place.
<i>Diversion</i>	A preventative approach to prevent people from becoming homeless before they access a shelter (or within 48hrs). The intervention usually begins with a series of questions (diversion script) to help people identify immediate alternative housing arrangements and connecting them with services and financial assistance to help them maintain or return to permanent housing.
<i>Emergency Response</i>	Crisis supports such as shelter and basic needs to people experiencing homelessness.
<i>Emergency Shelter</i>	A facility providing temporary, short-term accommodation for people experiencing homelessness. In the context of ending homelessness emergency shelters serve as an access point to coordinated access to a range of housing options with/without supports.
<i>Equity Lens</i>	A tool that can help ensure an organization's policies and programs are equitable for all members. It strives for the equitable treatment of members from diverse communities when planning and developing policies, programs and services of the organization.
<i>Eviction Prevention</i>	A strategy or program, usually geared at renters that is designed to keep people from losing their housing and becoming homeless.
<i>Evidence-Based/Informed</i>	First developed in medicine, the term in the context of social programs the term refers to the use of high-quality evidence (e.g., research methodologies) to develop, test, and modify programs and services so that they are achieving intended outcomes.
<i>Functional Zero</i>	It means communities have a systemic, measurable response in place to ensure homelessness is prevented when possible or otherwise rare, brief, and non-recurring. The Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness acknowledges that a community has functionally ended chronic homelessness when there

	are 3 or less people experiencing chronic homelessness in your homelessness response system.
<i>Gender Based Violence</i>	A term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will, and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between males and females.
<i>Home for Good</i>	A Provincial funding program aimed at assisting people who are experiencing homelessness to secure and maintain housing with appropriate supports. The term is also used in Peel to describe a local Housing First collaborative model.
<i>Homelessness</i>	The situation of an individual/family that does not have a permanent address or residence or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it. It is caused by systemic and societal barriers, including the lack of affordable housing, access to adequate health supports, racism, and discrimination.
<i>Homelessness Management Information System</i>	A local information technology system used to collect person-level data and data on the provision of housing and services to people experiencing homelessness and risk of homelessness. This data may also be extracted and aggregated to inform system performance and progress toward community outcomes such as reducing chronic homelessness.
<i>Homelessness Response System /Homelessness Serving System</i>	Is comprised of a range of local or regional service delivery components serving those experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of becoming homeless.
<i>Housing First</i>	A recovery-oriented approach to ending homelessness that centres on quickly moving people from experiencing homelessness into permanent housing, followed by the provision of tailored supports based on the person's needs and preferences. Recently approaches have been adapted to meet the needs of people who identify as Indigenous, young people and women.
<i>Housing Workers</i>	Individuals employed, usually by non-profit community agencies or government, who are able to assist people in finding housing and supporting them with related services that are part of the housing process.
<i>Indigenous Homelessness</i>	A definition of homelessness that takes into account Canada's legacy of marginalization and displacement of Indigenous Peoples, created through settler colonialism. It requires an understanding of "All My Relations" as the Indigenous concept of home goes beyond one's physical structure of habitation. The term Indigenous Peoples is used to capture the diversity of nations and communities across Canada.
<i>Integrative Case Management (ICM)</i>	Refers to a team approach taken to co-ordinate various services for a specific household through a cohesive tailored housing plan. The team includes all service providers who have a role in implementing the housing plan and the person being served.

<i>Intersectionality</i>	The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination and/or disadvantage.
<i>Length of Stay (In Homelessness)</i>	The number of days in a homeless episode or across multiple episodes within a time frame.
<i>LGBTQ2S+</i>	The acronym stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transexual, queer, questioning and Two-Spirited people. The “+” represents the tremendous diversity of other gender identities and sexual orientations not specifically represented in the acronym.
<i>Lived/Living Experience</i>	The wisdom and expertise gained through direct, first-hand exposure in everyday situations, interactions, and impacts resulting from personally experiencing homelessness.
<i>Market Rent</i>	The amount a unit could be rented for on a monthly basis in the private market, based on appraisal.
<i>Permanent Supportive/Supported Housing</i>	<p>Combines rental or housing assistance with individualized, flexible and voluntary support services for limiting health conditions such as developmental disabilities, physical/mental health and substance use. The goal is to maximize the person’s independence, privacy, and dignity. This model fits within the Permanent Housing with Supports intervention type and is designed for people experiencing chronic homelessness with more acute needs. Generally, the supports are not time limited. There are 2 types:</p> <p><i>Place-Based Permanent Supportive Housing</i> – Congregate or independent supportive housing units situated in one building or location.</p> <p><i>Scattered-Site Permanent Supportive Housing</i> – The provision of permanent supportive housing services in the community, delivered through home visits or community-based agencies.</p>
<i>Point-in-Time</i>	An enumeration activity that provides a “snapshot” of the number of people experiencing homelessness during a specific period of time (usually within 24hrs) in a community.
<i>Portable Housing Benefit</i>	Provides direct financial assistance to households that qualify for assistance with their housing expenses. The benefit is tied to the individual/family and not a housing unit.
<i>Prevention</i>	<p>Refers to the policies, practices, and interventions that reduce the likelihood that someone will experiencing homelessness. There are 3 types of prevention:</p> <p><i>Primary Prevention</i> – Activities that seek to reduce the risk of homelessness for the general population who are currently housed to prevent new cases of</p>

homelessness. Measures involving structural issues such as housing supply, livable wage, or social assistance rates. This work is broader than prevention intervention work within the homeless serving sector.

Secondary Prevention – Interventions to identify and address conditions that for those at imminent risk of becoming homeless (within 60 days). Examples include discharge planning, eviction prevention, and rental/utility arrear funding. It reduces the total number of people affected at any one time though it does not reduce the number of new cases of homelessness.

Tertiary Prevention – Interventions attempts to prevent recidivism back into homelessness. Initiatives focus on people who have been homeless for some time to ensure housing stabilization once housing has been achieved. An example includes case management through interventions such as housing first, rapid rehousing or supportive housing.

<i>Promising Practices</i>	An intervention for which there is sufficient evidence to claim that the practice is proven effective at achieving a specific aim or outcome consistent with the goal and objectives of the activity or program.
<i>Rapid-Rehousing</i>	Targeted time limited (3-12 months) financial assistance, system navigation, and support services to people experiencing homelessness in order to facilitate a quick exit from shelter and obtain housing. The target group typically focuses on individuals who have been homelessness for more than one month but less than 6 months.
<i>Recidivism</i>	The rate in which a person receives a positive housing outcome and returns to shelter or rough sleeping.
<i>Rent Geared to Income (RGI)</i>	A rental structure where the person pays a rental rate that represents 30% of their income. The government typically issues a subsidy to offset the remaining rental rate. Rent Geared to Income may be in the form of a portable housing subsidy or subsidized housing buildings/locations.
<i>Rent Supports/Subsidies</i>	Rental supports help offset the cost of rent. There are multiple rent support structures: some are paid directly to the landlord; others are paid to the tenant; some follow a rent-geared to income structure; some are “top ups” to offset the amount payable by the tenant to the market rate; and others are a monthly fixed amount.
<i>Reaching Home</i>	A federal program aimed at preventing and reducing homelessness by providing direct support and funding to local communities across Canada.
<i>Scattered site housing</i>	Permanent housing, usually in the private market that is provided at individual locations throughout the community. As an intervention type scattered site housing is usually accompanied by a program model such as Intensive Case Management or Assertive Community Treatment.

<i>Social Housing</i>	A form of housing provided to very low-income households. Ongoing subsidies (either publicly owned operators or community based non-profit housing corporations, or to private landlords) enable rent to be paid using a “rent geared to income” calculation (usually 30% of gross household income). Social Housing may also be referred to as community housing, public housing or subsidized housing.
<i>Social Inclusion</i>	The process of improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of those disadvantaged based on their identity to an extent that that is satisfactory to them. This includes actively working to reduce barriers that restrict the resources and opportunities of disadvantaged groups.
<i>Street Outreach</i>	Mobile services that engage people experiencing homelessness who may be disconnected and alienated from mainstream and/or services for people experiencing homelessness. In the context of ending homelessness, street outreach serves as an engagement process to reconnect people to services and as an access point to coordinated access to a range of housing options with/without supports. It is important to note that people experiencing homelessness do not need to access shelter or transitional services before being considered for housing.
<i>System Planning</i>	The analysis, planning and design of an integrated system and defined service-delivery components that work together toward a common end; in this case to prevent, reduce and end homelessness. It requires identifying the basic components of a system and understanding how these relate to one another. Alignment across the system is integral to ensure the components of the system work together for optimal impact.
<i>Transitional Housing</i>	Refers to supportive, yet temporary type of accommodation that is meant to bridge the gap from homelessness to permanent housing by offering structure, supervision, support, housing planning etc. The distinction is that the housing offered is temporary and programmatic in nature, meaning the individual does not have a right to the housing and must leave once the program ends, which it typically 1 year but can be upwards of 4 years in Ontario.
<i>Veterans Homelessness</i>	A veteran is a former member of the Canadian Armed Forces, Allied Forces, RCMP, Reservists, veteran civilians, and Canadian Rangers. A veteran experiences homelessness when they do not have stable, permanent, appropriate housing or the immediate prospect, means or ability of acquiring it.
<i>Violence Against Women Shelters</i>	Facilities providing temporary shelter to women with or without accompanying children fleeing abuse from an intimate partner. They may function as either a crisis capacity or as a transitional/second-stage capacity. It is important to note that transitional housing for this population group is

distinct from transitional housing specifically for people experiencing homelessness.

Vulnerable Groups

Groups that are in a disadvantaged position or marginalized due to systemic oppressions and other barriers in historical and contemporary society. In the context of homelessness vulnerable groups may include people who identify as Indigenous, People of Colour, young adults, newcomers, women, seniors, people with a limiting health condition, LGBTQ2S+, veterans. It is important to note that the experience of homelessness on its own creates systemic and societal barriers.

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