



The Homelessness Partnering Strategy: An Overview

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Overview

- Homelessness in Canada
- Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS)
- National Housing Strategy (NHS) Engagement
- Moving Forward



Homelessness in Canada

- Homelessness affects a diverse cross-section of the population (e.g. individuals, youth, families, women with children, Veterans, seniors).
- In 2014, approximately 136,000 Canadians used an emergency shelter.
- Compared to the housed population, homeless individuals are far more likely to:
 - experience mental health and/or addiction issues;
 - be victims of assault; and,
 - suffer from a variety of physical health ailments, including tuberculosis, HIV, and the effects of inadequately controlled diabetes and hypertension.
- Mortality rates are higher among the homeless population compared even to the poorest, but housed segment of the Canadian population.
- As a result of related public spending on health, social, and judicial services, the economic cost of homelessness is also high—some estimates indicate that it costs Canadians as much as \$4.5 to \$6.0 billion annually.



The Homelessness Partnering Strategy

- On April 1, 2007, the Government of Canada introduced the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS)—a unique community-based approach aimed at preventing and reducing homelessness in Canada. The HPS:
 - supports community-based efforts by making strategic investments in priorities identified by local communities;
 - supports a collaborative approach by encouraging co-operation between governments, agencies, and community-based organizations to find local solutions to homelessness; and,
 - emphasizes longer-term solutions to homelessness.
- The objectives of the HPS are achieved through several funding streams (Annex A). Most HPS funding is delivered to 61 designated communities identified as having a significant problem with homelessness.
 - Calgary, Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Red Deer, Wood Buffalo receive designated community funding under the HPS.
- HPS funding is also delivered to communities through the Aboriginal Homelessness and Rural and Remote Homelessness streams.



Community-Based Approach

- Following a comprehensive community planning process, each HPS designated community determines its own needs/priorities, and develops appropriate projects.
- Each community (outside of Quebec) has a Community Advisory Board (CAB), which develops the community plan, recommends projects for funding, and assists in managing the investments at the community level.
 - A separate Aboriginal CAB exists in some communities to set the direction on Aboriginal Homelessness funding.
 - A Regional Advisory Board (RAB) may be in place to establish homelessness priorities and recommend projects for Rural and Remote Homelessness funding.
- The CAB and/or RAB is composed of a wide range of stakeholders, including the municipality, provincial or territorial government, not-for-profit organizations, and for-profit enterprises.

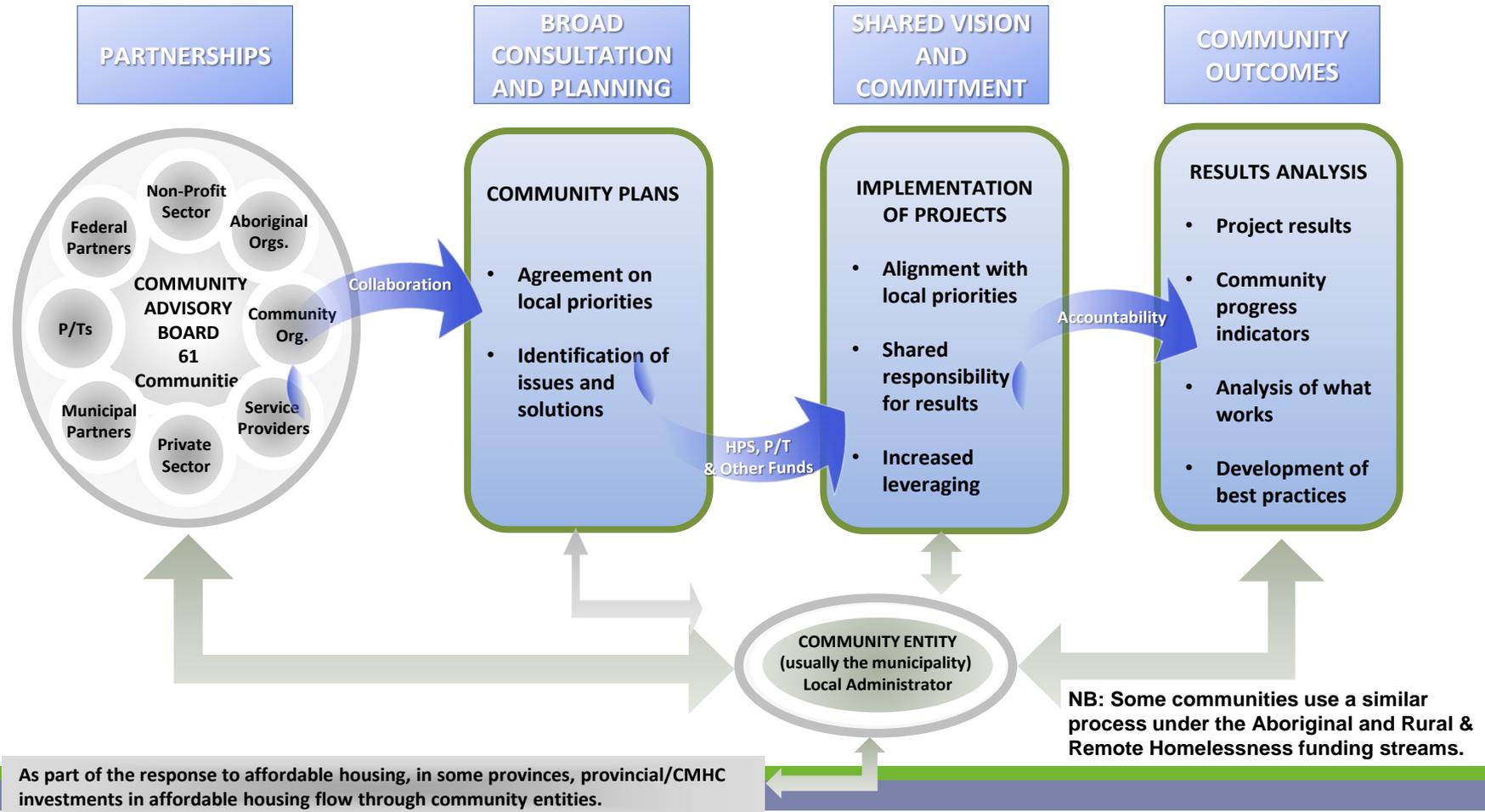


Community Entity Delivery Model

- Funding is directed to designated communities through the Community Entity (CE) model.
 - The CE, normally an incorporated organization (i.e. community's municipal government), is responsible for the implementation of the community plan.
 - Funding is provided through a single contribution agreement between the Government of Canada and the CE.
 - The CE disperses funds based on the community plan, developed by the CAB, and is responsible for the selection, approval and management of HPS projects in the local area.
- The CE model has proven to be an efficient and effective model for the delivery of homelessness funds:
 - Creates synergies that allow communities to coordinate funds strategically.
 - Creates economies of scale and reduces the administration and reporting burden.



Illustration of the Community-Based Process



Housing First

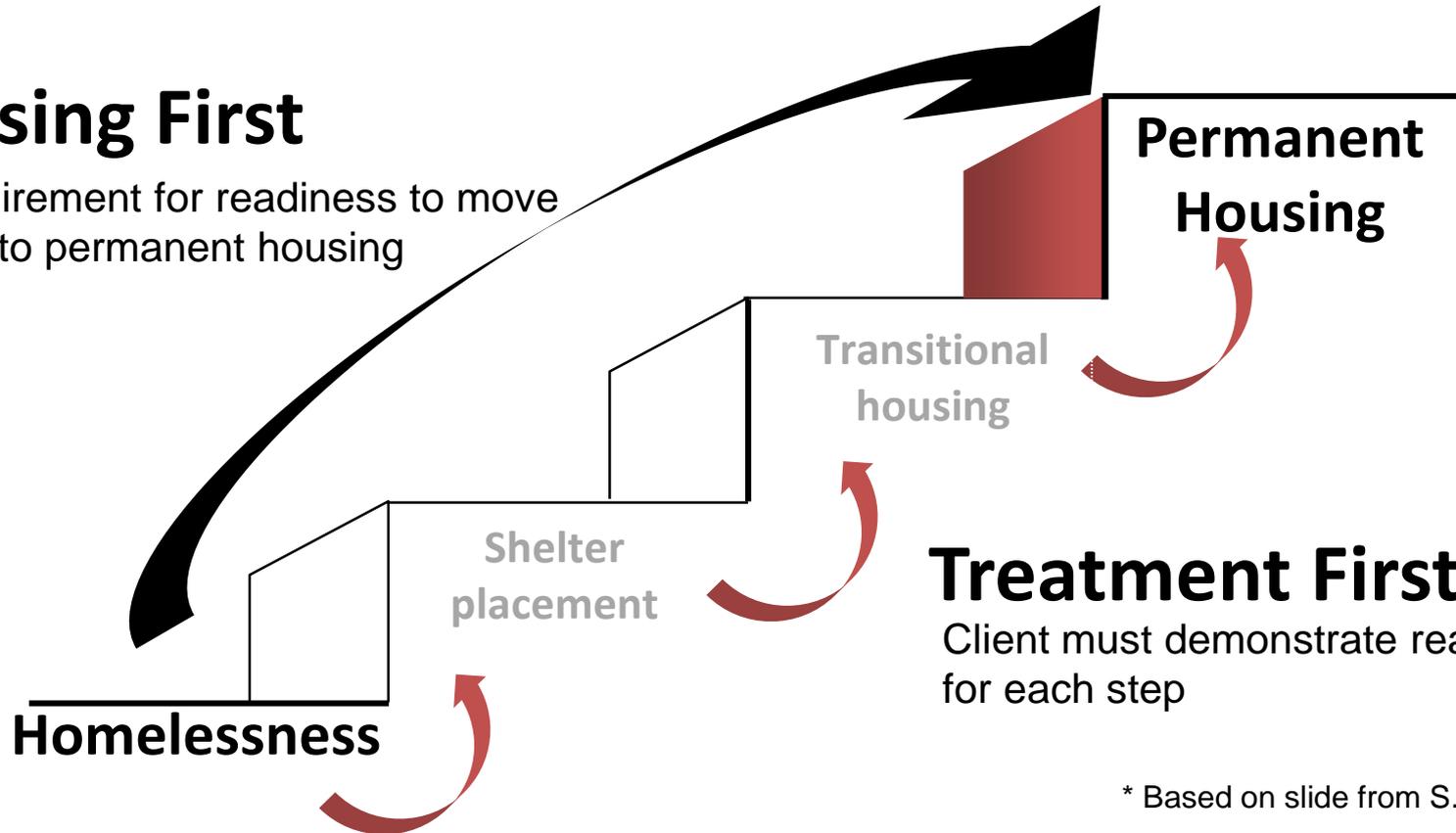
- In April 2014, the HPS was renewed at nearly \$600M over five years (2014-2019), with a focus on Housing First.
- The Housing First approach under the HPS involves moving individuals, focusing on those who are **chronically or episodically homeless**, from the streets or homeless shelters directly into permanent housing. Permanent housing is complemented by the provision of services to assist clients to sustain their housing and work towards recovery and reintegration into the community.
- This approach builds on the outcomes of the Mental Health Commission of Canada's *At Home/Chez Soi* demonstration research project, and outcomes in several other Canadian communities.
 - These outcomes provided strong evidence that Housing First is an effective way to reduce homelessness.



Housing First versus Treatment First

Housing First

No requirement for readiness to move directly to permanent housing



Treatment First

Client must demonstrate readiness for each step

* Based on slide from S. Tsemberis



Shifting Communities to Housing First

- The implementation of HF represented a significant shift for communities and was phased in over two years, with funding targets, taking into account their varying capacity and resources.
 - Largest communities – invest at least 65% of HPS funding in HF activities since April 1, 2015;
 - Smaller and Aboriginal communities with allocations > \$200K/year - invest at least 40% in HF activities, as of April 1, 2016;
 - Smallest communities (allocations < \$200K/year) - are encouraged to implement HF but not required to meet set targets.
- HF investments focus on activities that support the chronically and episodically homeless to retain their housing and improve self-sufficiency, such as: client assessment; case management; addiction counselling; and, housing and mental health referral.
- Communities maintain the flexibility to address local priorities by allocating non-HF funding towards: support services; capital investments; ensuring coordination of resources; and, improving data collection.



Measuring Progress

- In continuing to gather data on homelessness to ensure decisions are evidence-based, the Government of Canada (GoC) has:
 - provided the HPS' **Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) software**, free of charge, to homelessness serving agencies across Canada as a case management tool and to gather information on the use of shelters. A new version, launched in 2013, is used by over 500 service providers.
 - conducted two long-term **National Shelter Studies** (2013 and 2016) and, in 2016, led Canada's first-ever coordinated **homelessness Point-in-Time count**, with the participation of 31 communities; highlights from the second shelter study have recently been released, and a summary of broader findings for both initiatives is slated for release fall of 2016.
 - began implementing a **partnership strategy between Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) and ESDC** in 2013-2014, that focused on improving the coordination of existing initiatives and services provided by both departments to better identify and support homeless Veterans.



Surplus Federal Real Property

- Through the HPS, the **Surplus Federal Real Property for Homelessness Initiative** (SFRPHI) funding stream makes surplus federal real properties available for \$1 to community organizations, the not-for-profit sector and other orders of government for projects that contribute to the prevention and reduction of homelessness.
- SFRPHI is a supply driven initiative subject to availability of surplus federal properties.
- The annual \$2M funding pays federal departments, agencies and Crown Corporations the market value for surplus properties.
- Eligible activities include permanent supportive housing, transitional housing, and emergency shelters.
- SFRPHI is managed in partnership with Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC).



Partnerships Approach

- Many of the critical components necessary for addressing homelessness fall under areas of provincial/territorial (P/T) responsibility.
 - The majority of P/T governments have welcomed the HPS shift to an HF approach.
 - HPS officials continue to engage provinces, such as AB, to ensure program complementarity and increase the impact of respective efforts.
- The HPS maintains productive working relationships with communities and stakeholders, including the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association (CHRA), and the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH).
- A number of stakeholders, such as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), CHRA and CAEH, have expressed strong support for the HPS HF approach.



Budget 2016

- To further support communities in their efforts to help homeless Canadians find stable housing, Budget 2016 announced an additional \$111.8 million in funding to the HPS over two years, beginning in 2016-17. This substantial new investment represents an increase of approximately 50% and is the first increase since the inception of federal homelessness programming in 1999.
- This new investment provides increased project funding for communities, and will ensure that more communities across Canada have access to HPS funding by creating more flexibility under the Rural and Remote Homelessness stream.
 - Priority is no longer given to communities with populations of less than 25,000 under the Rural and Remote stream, offering opportunities for more communities to apply for funding.
- It will also support the development and testing of innovative approaches to prevent and reduce homelessness – particularly among specific homeless populations – with increased funding invested towards the Innovative Solutions to Homelessness stream.
- The Budget also announced the Government's intention to consult with provinces and territories, Indigenous and other communities, and key stakeholders to develop a **National Housing Strategy (NHS)**.



National Housing Strategy Engagement

- In June, the GoC launched the NHS consultation process, lead by CMHC and with support from ESDC officials, to help determine priorities in the areas of housing and homelessness for the NHS.
- This process is providing an opportunity to engage broadly with the Canadian public and relevant stakeholders and hear their perspectives on homelessness, and in particular, how homelessness should fit within a NHS.
- A multi-pronged approach that includes online feedback, bilateral meetings with each province/territory, expert roundtables and stakeholder input, is in place.



What We've Heard So Far From Stakeholders And Experts

- Emerging themes gathered from the expert roundtable on homelessness have identified the following key components as essential for a robust NHS:
 - A **dedicated focus on homelessness**, that includes a focus towards **prevention**.
 - A federal leadership role would include:
 - establishing an **Interagency Council on Homelessness** that is legislated and reports to the Prime Minister – this council would coordinate the relevant areas of the Government that play a role in homelessness;
 - establishing a **rights-based national homelessness prevention framework**;
 - leading work towards establishing **well thought-out strategies focused on preventing and ending homelessness**, at every order of government – this includes looking at service integration and actively reducing the numbers of those experiencing homelessness.



Moving Forward

- This input will be integrated with other feedback gathered through consultations, to support and validate the design, development and priorities in the areas of housing and homelessness for the NHS.
- This feedback will also broadly inform the renewal of federal homelessness programming post-2019, and may be used to focus future discussions on specific gaps, issues or solutions that were identified.



Annex A: Federal Funding Support for Homelessness

- **Designated Communities:** Funds projects in 61 designated communities, primarily major urban centres.
- **Aboriginal Homelessness:** Targets Aboriginal service providers to address the needs of off-reserve homeless Aboriginal people.
- **Rural and Remote Homelessness:** Funds projects to help prevent and reduce homelessness in rural and remote areas. The number of communities that receive funding is based on Calls for Proposals and projects recommended by the Regional Advisory Board.
- **Surplus Federal Real Property for Homelessness Initiative:** Makes surplus federal property available to community organizations, not-for-profits, and other governments for projects and services to help prevent and reduce homelessness.
- **National Homelessness Information System:** Supports communities to collect, share, and analyze emergency shelter data.
- **Innovative Solutions to Homelessness:** Funds projects that support the development of innovative approaches to reducing homelessness.

