

Ending homelessness and strategies for emergency shelters

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Background

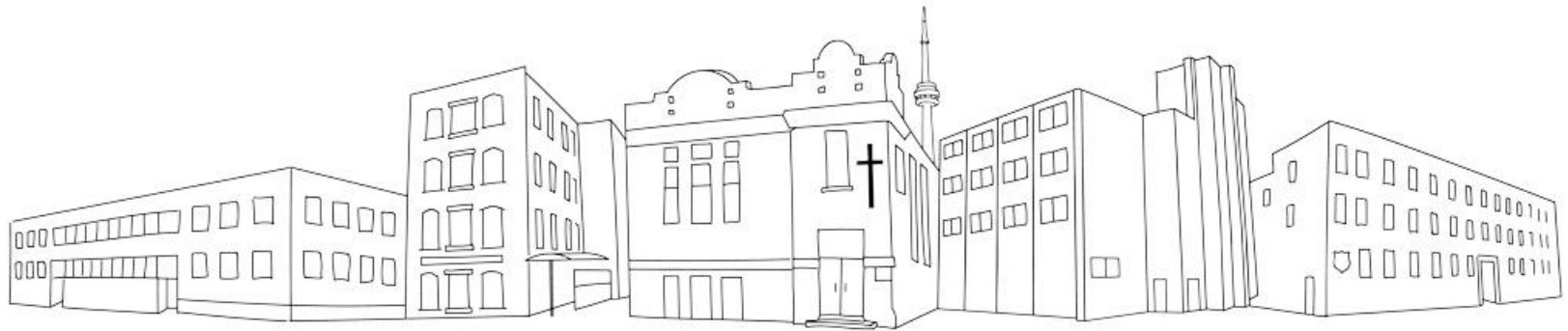
The Province of Ontario made changes to the way that they fund the municipalities. The Provincial program is administered by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, which became the policy lead for homelessness effective January 1, 2013.

City of Toronto Council approved the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) report – November 1, 2012 and as a result, the City will be making changes to the funding model and program expectations for the shelter system.

The shelters will be measured against two outcomes: the extent to which (1) people experiencing homelessness obtain and retain housing, and (2) people at risk of homelessness remain housed.

The City of Toronto Shelter, Support and Housing Administration will be guided by the 2014-2019 Housing Stability Service Planning Framework





HOUSING AND HOMELESS SUPPORTS

the hand of God in the heart of the city



A New Vision for Toronto Shelters

In September 2013, The Salvation Army produced a document that provides a brief summary of **our integrated, Housing First, client-centred, outcomes-focused vision** along with some suggestions for consideration by the City as it analyzed stakeholder feedback and developed its own plan. There are four key components to our model:

- 1. Establish Triage System**

- 2. Track Outcomes**

- 2.1 Set Housing Goals

- 2.2 Track Factors That Influence Housing Stability

- 2.3 Integrate Databases: SMIS, Housing Help, and the Rapid Re-housing Triage and Intervention Program

- 2.4 Aggregate, Analyze, and Share Data

- 3. Follow Up with Clients**

- 4. Re-imagine Shelter Concept and Redevelop Built Form**



Rapid Re-housing Triage and Intervention

Our Rapid Re-housing Triage and Intervention Program (RRTIP) builds on the Rapid Re-Housing program, implemented by the NAEH and in Calgary, Alberta. We have adapted this program to fit the Toronto context, but the basic principles are the same:

- People move directly from homelessness to housing. There are no intermediate programs that delay their move to housing.
- The key to successful re-housing is understanding the individual's barriers to getting and keeping housing – then finding ways to eliminate or compensate for those barriers.
- While the assistance needed for different households will vary in intensity and duration, Rapid Re-Housing is not a permanent support. Individuals who need permanent supports within housing are connected to permanent supportive housing and/or to mobile, long-term, case management supports.
- Services are voluntary. Choices are “consumer” driven.



Rapid Re-housing Triage and Intervention

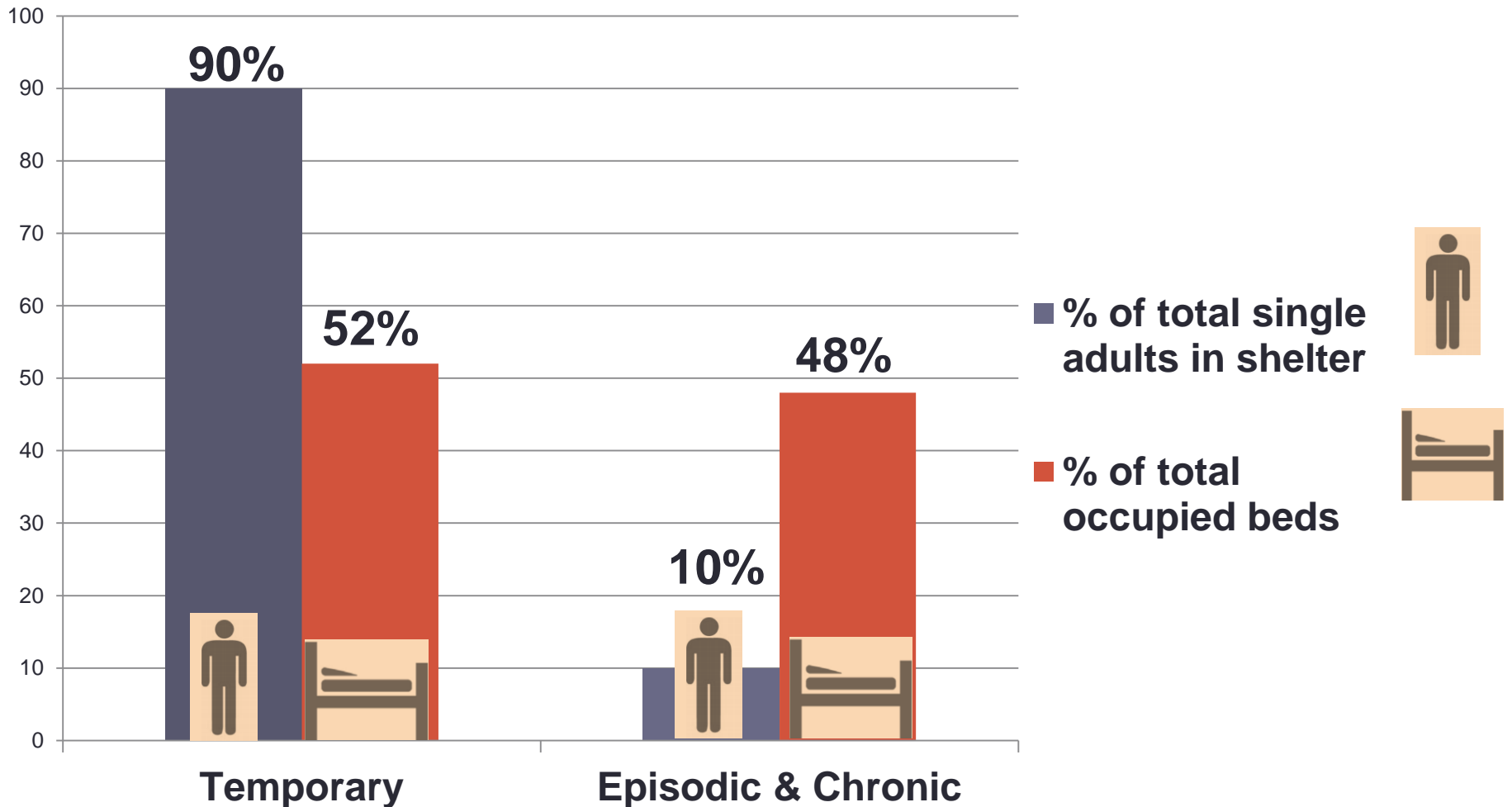
The biggest change with the implementation of our vision is that a **triaged assessment** system is being implemented that will allow us to tailor our interventions, analyze data more effectively, and improve outcomes for the people we serve.

We are also expanding our **community follow-up** processes to **12 months** so that we can more effectively help people to stabilize their housing.

These check-ins will also allow us to collect information on housing **outcomes**, analyze factors affecting housing outcomes, and not only improve our own services but make evidence-informed recommendations for policy and systemic changes.



What the Research Tells Us about Patterns of Shelter Use



Establish Triage System

Studies have shown that shelter users fall into three general clusters:

- **Temporary** shelter users, who stay for a short period of time and often do not return. In Toronto, this group represents 87.5% of single adult shelter users and occupies 40.59% of the available bed nights.
- **Episodic** shelter users, who stay for a short period of time, but come back frequently. In Toronto, this group represents 8.5% of single adult shelter users and occupies 20.82% of the bed nights.
- **Long-stay / Chronic** shelter users, who stay for a long period of time, and tend not to leave. In Toronto, this group represents only 4% of single adult shelter users, but occupies 38.59% of the bed nights.



Track Outcomes

Set Housing Goals

Housing success rates should be **relative to each triage group** and include both housing access and housing stability.

Track Factors That Influence Housing Stability

Research on housing stability among individuals with mental health challenges, substance use challenges, concurrent disorders, and other life challenges calls for particular attention to be paid to **housing type, household composition, and client choice**.

Aggregate, Analyze, and Share Data

It is not enough to collect data; we also need to have the capacity to aggregate and analyze that data if it is to inform our practice and result in better outcomes for clients.



Follow Up with Clients

The City of Toronto has long recognized that individualized, community-based wraparound supports are an essential part of the Housing First model.

Newly housed individuals experience a range of follow-up support needs. Some may feel socially isolated and be interested in friendly and informal connections; we often refer these individuals to the Causeway Initiative and other community supports.

We see shelter-based housing workers' follow-up role as a limited but crucial one. Our role is not to provide informal social supports or to provide long-term, intensive case management services. However, shelter-based housing workers are uniquely positioned to offer “**emergency prevention**” services.



Reimagine the Concept and Redevelop the Built Form

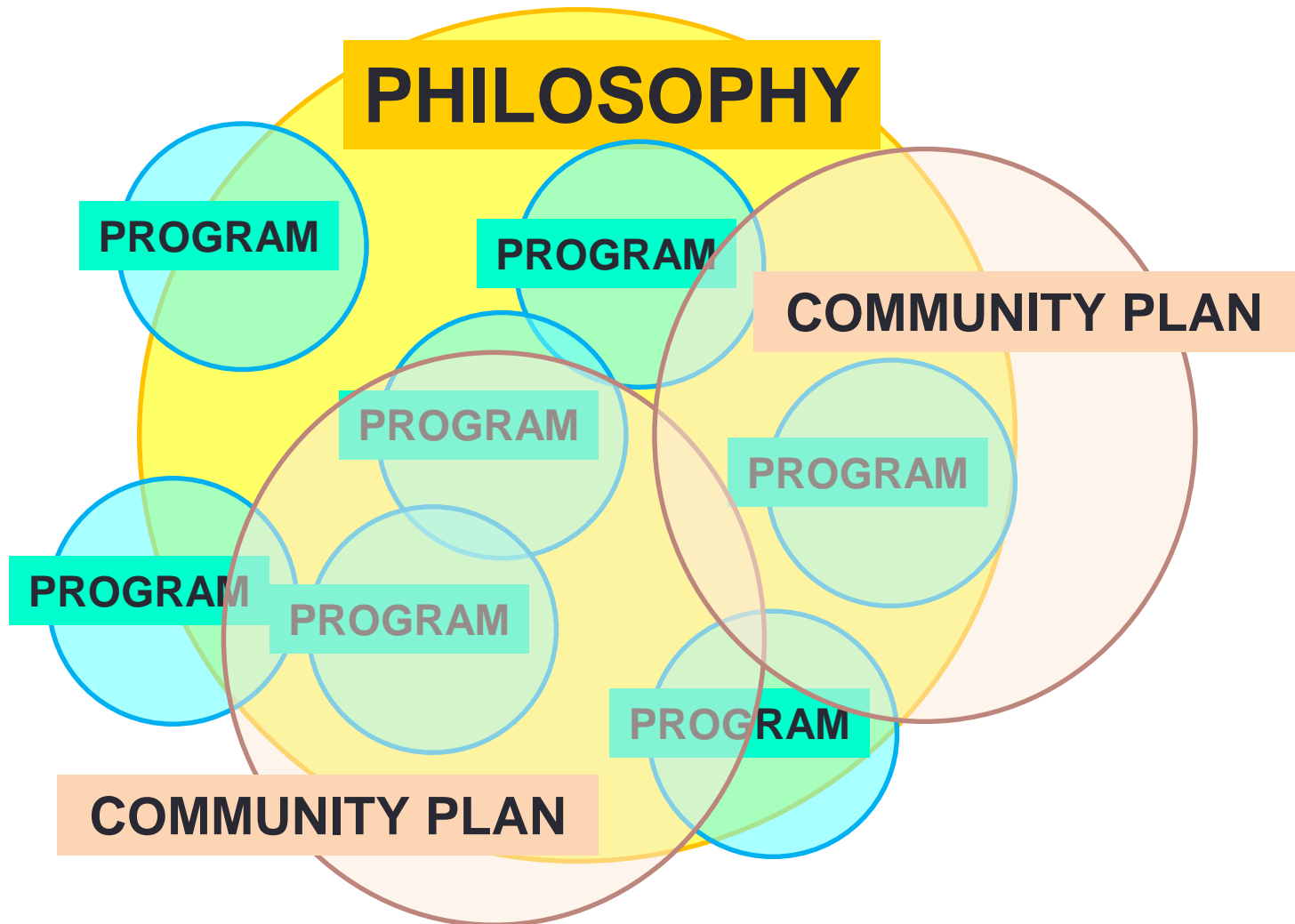
Shelters have two major functions within the system of homelessness services:

1. they help people meet their basic needs (food and bed), and
2. they provide a centralized location for access to services that can help people work towards other goals (e.g. finding housing, overcoming addictions, addressing physical or mental health issues, getting out of debt).

In the past, housing services, case management, and referrals have been seen as secondary to the shelter's primary function of providing a roof, a bed, and a meal. We are proposing a new understanding of shelters as **service hubs that link people with a continuum of supports** that are designed to lead to housing stability.



“Housing First” can take one of three forms:



PHILOSOPHY

- Focus on individuals experiencing **chronic and episodic homelessness**
- **Immediate access** to permanent housing with no “readiness” requirements
- **Consumer choice** and self-determination
- **Individualized**, recovery-oriented, and client-driven supports
- **Harm reduction**
- Social and **community integration**

“HOUSING FIRST” PHILOSOPHY

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GENERAL BEST PRACTICES IN THE HOMELESSNESS SECTOR

Focus on individuals experiencing chronic and episodic homelessness

Immediate access to permanent housing with no “readiness” requirements

Consumer choice and self-determination

Individualized, recovery-oriented, and client-driven supports

Harm reduction

Social and community integration

Implementation Plan September 2014

The goal of the implementation plan is to:

- Create a clear understanding of program goals
- Outline desired program outcomes
- Provide an overview of desired program flow for long term planning
- Outline program targets
- Explore primary data collection needs
- Outlines roles and responsibilities of Salvation Army staff
- Provide a short term implementation plan and action steps to support the transition process.



Program Goals

Toronto Housing and Homeless Supports goals:

- Provide every individual who enters Toronto Housing and Homeless Support shelters an individualized service plan to move from shelter to appropriate housing as quickly as possible based on their level of need.
- Decrease use of emergency shelter services by chronically homeless individuals by providing rapid rehousing as quickly as appropriate and community follow-up support.



Program Goals

Focusing on chronically homeless individuals, community follow-up support will aim to:

- Decrease shelter recidivism by providing housing support and community follow-up support
- Support clients to increase their income to support housing stability
- Support clients to increase their social inclusion and increase community linkages to support housing stability



Program Goals

Preliminary benchmarks

- Gather a snapshot of current clients at all 5 shelters and determine number of clients who fall into categories of transitional, episodic and chronic homelessness. Based on clusters the first 12 months of program implementation will strive to:
 - Reduce number of chronic shelter users staying in TSA Shelters in Toronto from baseline established in September 2014
 - House 75% of clients who have accessed services with us for over a 1 year period timeframe



If we are to better the future
we must disturb the present.

Catherine Booth



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