

# Mapping For Functional Zero



## **A Systems Approach Review of Kelowna's Homeless Serving Sector**

March 2021

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## THE JOURNEY BEGINS

In 2019, Journey Home's system planner undertook a process mapping exploration of the services and systems that exist to serve people at risk and/or experiencing homelessness. Our work was focused around the City of Kelowna which resides on the unceded, traditional and ancestral territory of the sqilxw/ syilx (Okanagan) People. This project engaged with local non-profits and service providers, the City of Kelowna, BC Housing, Interior Health, Community Living BC, Ministry of Children and Family Development, Service Canada, the Lived Experience Circle on Homelessness (LECoH), and A Way Home – Kelowna (AWH-K). We are grateful for the contributions of many voices and insights that informed this report and their continued efforts to end homelessness through systems change.

To develop effective and sustainable solutions, it is vital to understand the intersecting systems of care that many at risk of, and people experiencing homelessness in Kelowna and West Kelowna connect with. The spectrum of services and supports that were reviewed and analyzed included shelters, outreach services, supportive housing, subsidized and affordable housing, rent supplements, and transitional housing. We also reviewed the intersectionality of these services with existing substance use treatment and disability supports programming.

There are many overlapping and intersecting points of service delivery and many partners that support the important work that is carried out in our community to manage the impact of homelessness on the people we serve. While there is a core community of service providers and operators that make up the homeless serving sector, there are also key stakeholders who are informally engaged in providing supports including our faith community. There are also many complex interdependencies within systems and levels of government, and a static landscape of new operators working in this space.

## HOUSING AFFORDABILITY AND HOMELESSNESS

We know that the need continues to rise in our community and core housing need rates locally are concerningly high and increasing. **Core housing need** is when a household spends more than 30 percent of its income on housing. **Extreme core housing need** is when a household spends more than 50% of its income on housing. Roughly 9,200 (47%) of Kelowna's 19,600 rental households are in core housing need in 2021. Of these, 4,150 (21%) are in extreme core housing need.

In 2021 it was determined that \$48,040 is the annual income threshold for core housing need in Kelowna; and \$28,824 is the

annual income threshold for extreme core housing need. According to the same research, \$14,412 is currently the average annual rent in Kelowna.

As rental property becomes more expensive, we can expect demand for affordable housing and housing with supports to rise. Pressure on one end of the housing spectrum translates to pressure on all aspects of housing affordability and accessibility.

## HOUSING POVERTY IN KELOWNA

In March 2020, the Central Okanagan Foundation completed its biennial Point-in-Time count, calculating that at least 297 people, sheltered and unsheltered, were experiencing homelessness in Kelowna. This constitutes a 4% increase since 2018, with Indigenous people remaining over-represented, at 21%. Kelowna experiences considerably high rates of chronic homelessness with 72% of those surveyed experiencing homelessness for 6 months or more within the past year. It was also identified that the majority of those experiencing homelessness reported substance use issues, including 79% of those identified as experiencing absolute homelessness and 84% of those in temporary housing. This is often concurrent with mental health needs, with 61% of those surveyed identifying both substance and mental health needs, rising to 70% among those in temporary housing.

There was a similarly high level of a self-reported need for both addiction and mental health services (56% of survey respondents). This was highest among those in temporary housing (69%). There were also high levels of self-reporting for mental health needs, learning disabilities or cognitive limitations, illnesses and medical conditions, and physical disabilities. Very few people that were surveyed identified no present health challenges (~7%), and 37% of both those experiencing absolute homelessness and those in temporary housing identified having an acquired brain injury (ABI). It is noteworthy that Kelowna's homelessness population also experiences significant seasonal fluctuations, with an influx of unsheltered individuals over the summer, seeking employment on farms and orchards throughout the valley. Many people leave the area seasonally due to off season affordability and the inability to camp outdoors. Due to their connection to employment, many people in this demographic of homeless people do not typically interface with local homeless serving agencies. Further research is needed to quantify this summer influx, its impact on service capacity over the summer, and its impact on year-on-year inflows into the community's homeless and at-risk population.

## DATA FOR DECISION-MAKING

It is critical to have a clear month-by-month picture of the number of people who are experiencing homelessness to measure our community's progress towards the goal of addressing and ending homelessness. This data is needed to forecast housing needs as well as emergency shelter and support needs. This ensures that the speed at which people are permanently housed exceeds the speed at which people are becoming homeless. Data integration needs to occur at all points of inflow into and outflow out of homelessness, overall and by sub-population. This is the only way we will begin to reduce and end homelessness, and develop upstream prevention.

Between March and May 2020, the Journey Home Society compiled a real-time, by name list of people experiencing homelessness. This included both sheltered and unsheltered people, and those who were recently housed in Kelowna, West Kelowna and Lake Country. This work is progressing our community towards a quality By Name List, following a Built for Zero-Canada model.

Built for Zero-Canada is an ambitious national change effort helping a core group of leading communities, including Kelowna, end chronic and veteran homelessness. Built for Zero-Canada offers regular coaching and guides Built for Zero-Canada communities through a change and improvement process grounded in scorecards for both Coordinated Access and By Name List requirements and best practices. Six aggregate data points are compiled to track data on the inflows and outflows of people experiencing homelessness. Kelowna is one of only two BC communities who are part of the national Built for Zero-Canada movement. Built for Zero best practices align with new Federal Reaching Home directives for a community's by name list.

In May 2020, Journey Home provided a proof point for data coordination by establishing a preliminary baseline for our community's By Name List. (Figure 1)

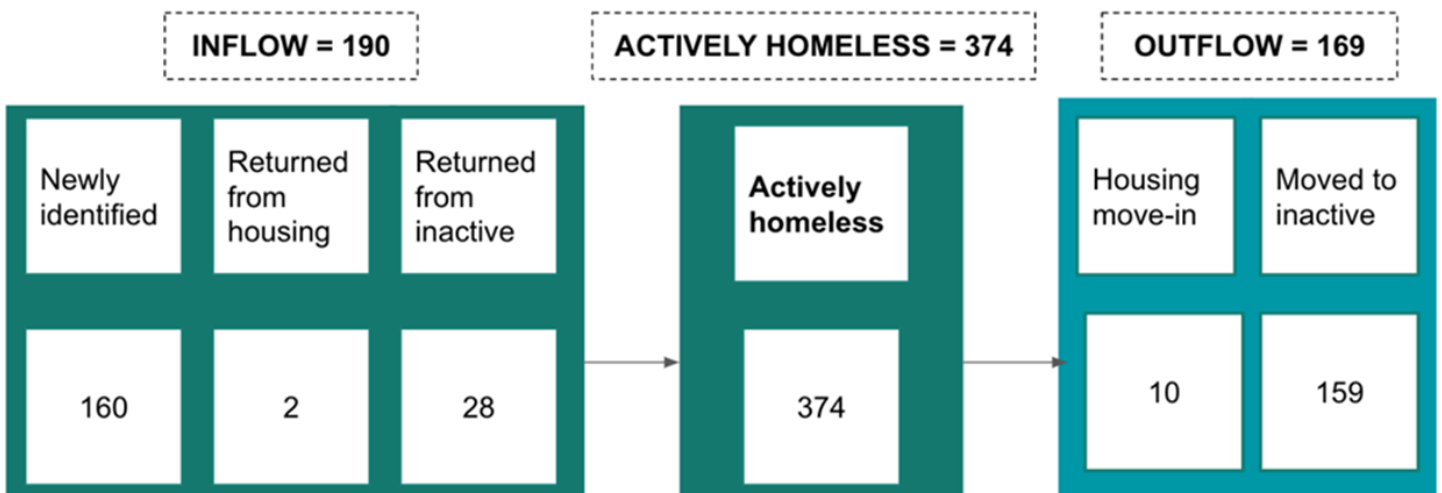
In this 3-month cumulative data, reflected for May 2020, the inflow into homelessness is 190 people, including 160 who were newly identified, 2 who returned to homelessness from housing, and 28 returning to homelessness from being inactive. A person is defined as inactive when they have had no interaction with any support or systems within the last 3 months.

In May there were 374 people who were actively homeless, including the 190 inflowing people. The outflow from homelessness was 169 people, including 10 move-ins to housing and 159 people moving to inactive.

The monthly net change is calculated by the difference between the total inflow and the total outflow. In this example, there were 21 extra people flowing into homelessness than there were flowing out of homelessness, a net increase of 21 people experiencing homelessness in the community.

Once three months of quality data are produced, a baseline is set from which all progress is measured. The data can be disaggregated by gender, age, indigenous status, veteran status and other demographic descriptors, as needed, which allows for the measuring and monitoring of the specifics of these groups' needs and experiences as well as the development of equitable interventions and responses. The six data points are then tracked and updated on an ongoing month-by-month basis. The effectiveness of interventions to improve discharge planning from hospital, treatment, or incarceration, as well as homelessness prevention measures and shelter diversion can also be measured using these data points, as can the effectiveness of housing initiatives in keeping people housed. Forecasting based on the trend data collected is another very useful tool.

Monthly data on the inflows and outflows of homelessness, on a community level, will indicate if our trajectory to end homelessness is on target; and will provide a clear picture of our impact. This will be possible once Journey Home has been successful in establishing community wide data integration.



## GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT

This is a critical time for us to be increasing our efforts to reduce and end homelessness; with a priority on ending veteran and chronic homelessness in our community. With significant government investment and interest at municipal, provincial and federal level, there has never been a more aligned opportunity to meet our goal.

Federally, throughout 2020, Journey Home has advocated with national partners, in collaboration with Parliamentary Secretary Adam Vaughan, which has resulted in increased investment for designated Reaching Home communities including Kelowna. This has brought funding through Reaching Home to support COVID-19 response services and supports and additional base year funding for homelessness efforts beginning in April 2021. Additionally, there is a Rapid Housing Initiative which has seen \$1 billion in initial investments; with additional investments anticipated in future.

Provincially, the Attorney General's Ministry is taking a leadership role with government efforts to address homelessness, with the Ministries of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, Housing, Health, Mental Health and Addictions and the Children and Family Development all committing to support these endeavors.

The new Homelessness Policy and Partnership Branch of the Ministry of the Attorney General is also working across government jurisdictions and with community partners to deliver a coordinated response to homelessness; focusing on prevention, an immediate response, stability and coordinated actions.

The opportunity to maximize government commitment and resources to move the needle to sustainable and fiscally responsible impact has never been stronger.

## KEY DISCOVERIES

Several key themes emerged from our exploration in the systems and services that exist in our homeless serving sector. The overarching themes inform current and future planning of the necessary supports and housing; and considerations and findings related to the system functionality.

### Investments

New investments in permanent housing and rent supplements, with and without case management supports are required to fill current gaps and address existing bottlenecks, particularly for people who represent marginalized populations of people experiencing homelessness and those who have complex needs. These new investments should include a variety of transitional and permanent housing, with and without case management supports, that focus on meeting the varied and changing needs of people, and where they are at in their

journey. It is also imperative that we bridge the gaps for people exiting hospital or waiting to enter or exit substance use treatment, for youth ageing out of care and for people involved in the Justice system. Discharges from facilities into homelessness needs to be addressed from a coordinated systems approach.

A balance must also be struck between harm reduction focused and recovery orientated shelters and between supportive, affordable and subsidized housing; to continue to offer choice and meet individualized needs.

Targeted investments in programming are also required, across the spectrum of homelessness prevention, diversion, outreach case management, substance use and mental health treatment, physical health supports, indigenous culture, counselling, caregiver respite and staff training.

### Structural and Policy Changes

Structural and policy changes need to be advocated for to ensure impactful and long-lasting interventions and programming, in line with best practices. The use of an equitable housing prioritization process must continue to develop.

Advocacy at the highest provincial level must happen to ensure the establishment of an effective inter-agency case management system containing up to date client information, with aggregate data capabilities to inform local decision-making.

Additionally, engagement in wage increase and competency initiatives must take place to professionalize the workforce and address current and future workforce labour shortage pressures. Journey Home will be prioritizing this work beginning in 2021.

The exploration of a Landlord Roundtable is critical to minimize evictions and enhance community capacity to support scattered site housing. We believe in the value of enhancing blended models in partnership with landlords and property stakeholders.

### Service Integration Within the Homelessness-Serving System of Care

The homelessness-serving system of care is defined as services offering shelter diversion, shelter and outreach, Coordinated Access and supportive housing. Improvements in service integration include bringing more diverse housing and case management resources online as well as engaging more people experiencing homelessness in the Coordinated Access process for adults and youth.

Opportunities should be maximized to integrate shelter, supportive housing and outreach case management through inter-agency data sharing agreements; identifying and

promoting clear access points for housing-focused services and standardizing professional practice.

### Integration of The Homelessness-Serving System of Care with Other Intersecting Systems of Support

Other key intersecting systems of support include the Ministries of Health, Justice, Social Development and Poverty Reduction, Community Living and Children and Families. To radically address homelessness, including prevention, it is key to build relationships and partnerships with these systems. This enables us to design the future integration and coordination of resource allocation and program development.

### New and Existing Partnerships

To move the needle on homelessness, it is vital to build new partnerships and nurture existing ones. Journey Home is proud to lead and convene many critical conversations with key stakeholders. Through these collaborations we have evidenced our collective impact as a community. We will continue to explore and solidify partnerships in our journey to ending homelessness. We look forward to deepening our work with the Kelowna Homelessness Research Collective and the upcoming Faith Collective and remain committed to continuously expanding Lived Experience leadership in these efforts.

## SETTING OUR COMPASS

The process of understanding the inflow and outflow of homelessness in a local context has been invaluable to guiding our next steps in line with the community strategy to end homelessness. The lived and living experience lens that is foundational to Journey Home, is reflected throughout the report in key recommendations and project efforts. This is reflective of the integral part these voices play in informing and shaping the decisions that are made, and our commitment to ensuring the solutions we create to housing and supports are person-centred, with the Lived Experience principles of choice, healing, connection and safety always guiding our work.

Through this report, we are honored to share the incredible work that is occurring throughout our community, and to highlight the successes, opportunities and challenges we have experienced in moving the needle towards functional zero. We have a focused direction, and unprecedented momentum as a community. Our collective compass has never been clearer, and we are moving towards new horizons.

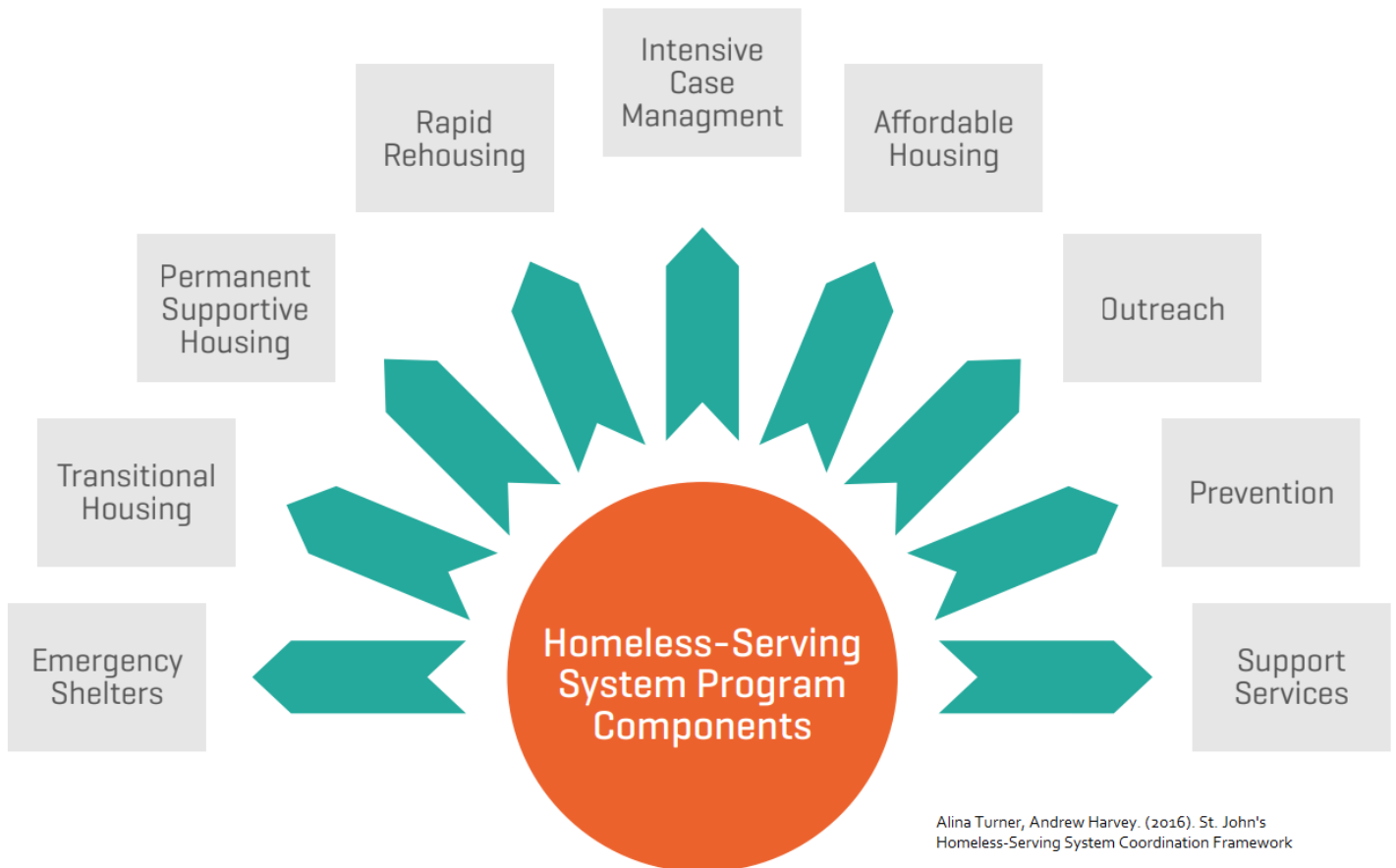


Figure 2 - The varied program components of the homeless-serving system, covering prevention and diversion, outreach and emergency shelters, the different types of housing (affordable housing, rapid rehousing, supportive housing and transitional housing) and supports (intensive case management and support services). Understanding the homelessness serving sector through this lens is critical to system planning.

Traditionally, the delivery of services that touches homelessness has been provided through multiple provincial ministries and local agencies, resulting in a complex web of disjointed policies, mandates, priorities and service operations that has been difficult for individuals, their families, and support workers to navigate. During the Journey Home Strategy's consultations, the message was clear: we have strong organizations, but they are disconnected. Individuals and their families with Lived Experience shared their stories of how difficult their journeys have been, and how lost and disheartened they have felt, trying to understand the systems of care and navigate themselves or their loved ones towards the services they need. The Journey Home Strategy, in response to the consultations and community discussions, shifted the dialogue and the practice of delivering services locally by adopting a Systems Planning approach, with a focus on coordination, collaboration and service integration, across programs, organizations, and government agencies, with every door being the right door to accessing support. The Journey Home Strategy's implementation plan and the Journey Home Society have both been designed to support a coordinated systems approach, with all policies and practices in alignment and with the overall integration of planning, funding and services, with all stakeholders reaching for the same goal, to address and end homelessness.

Figure 2 illustrates a Systems Planning approach, focusing on coordination, collaboration and service integration and pulls together all the services within the homelessness-serving system in Kelowna that support people in their journey towards exiting homelessness and accessing permanent housing. This diagram also includes all the services in place that avoid people from experiencing homelessness in the first place.

In this visual representation, the narrow, right-hand lane coming off the Highway leads to prevention-focused services, that prevent people from falling into homelessness. These services include eviction prevention programs, early intervention initiatives for people at risk of homelessness, enhancing access to all types of public systems' support, improving access to housing following a transition out of hospital, treatment, a correctional institution or upon ageing out of care, as well as legislation, policy and investments that build assets and increase social inclusion and equity.

The narrow, left-hand lane coming off the Highway leads to diversion services, diverting people who are on the verge of accessing core homelessness services in order to prevent them from experiencing homelessness as well as divert them from



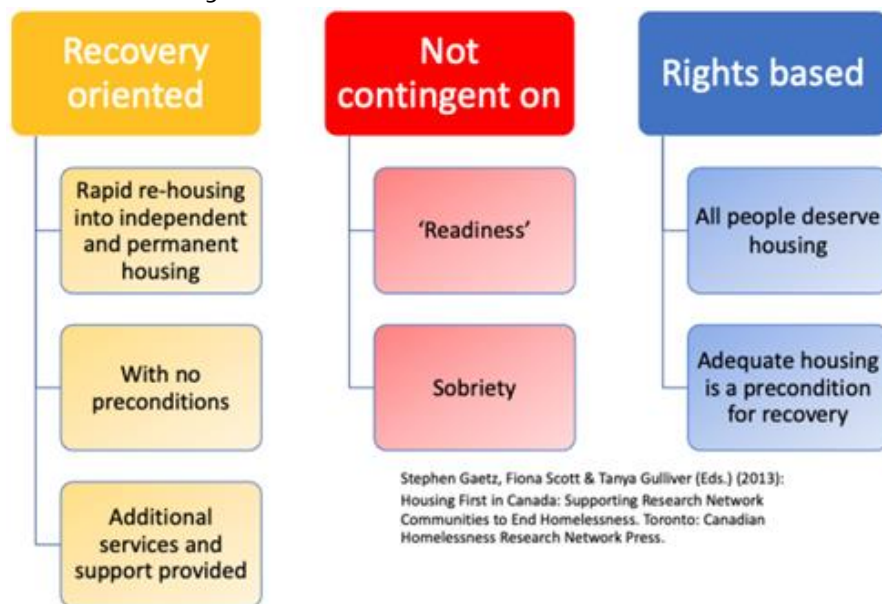
requiring emergency resources that can be utilized in the support of other people experiencing homelessness, who do not have other options. Diversion workers often work at emergency shelters where they problem solve together with the client and exhaust all possible housing options and resources, helping the client connect with his friends, family and natural supports, assisting with conflict mediation with landlords, and offering targeted emergency rent supplement supports to help the client overcome their sudden housing crisis.

The wide multi-lane Highway in the centre of the diagram represents those experiencing homelessness, who may find themselves in a cycle, moving between being unsheltered on the streets, being in emergency shelters, or living in precarious and temporary housing. This group of people, who have fallen into homelessness from a variety of entry points and whose individual experiences are varied, include individuals, couples and families; young, middle aged and older people as well as people who identify as indigenous or who are veterans. Once a person experiencing homelessness consents to receiving case management support, Coordinated Access processes and simplified service navigation steps, grounded within a systems planning lens, come to the fore and the client is offered the opportunity to complete an assessment, to help match them to the most appropriate housing services. Housing options vary and the matching process is key to ensuring that a person secures and maintains their newly acquired permanent housing. Each lane in the multi-lane Highway represents a different type of housing. In Kelowna, the options are permanent subsidized or affordable housing, with no case management supports; congregate or scattered permanent supportive housing, the latter following a Housing First fidelity model; transitional or temporary housing for youth at risk, substance use treatment housing, and Justice system release housing.

Rent supplements for a variety of population groups, are also used to make private market rental accommodation affordable. Some of these housing options include rapid re-housing, some come with intensive case management, some include essential health service supports.

One of the keys to this conceptual diagram is the temporary and small role played by emergency shelters, represented here on the Highway to housing as a basic and simple bus stop shelter. This emphasizes the notion that emergency shelters are not intended to be a destination, nor a place to reside in the medium to long term. Instead, they are a pit stop, an often necessary short-term service and solution to be used as an emergency and as a conduit through which people experiencing homelessness can connect with workers and resources to facilitate their prompt access to housing.

The homelessness-serving system is grounded upon a robust Homelessness Management Information System, where client information is shared between services, government agencies, and parts of the homelessness-system of care, to allow for a seamless service, with no effort duplication or overlap; to minimize the need for people to share their personal story multiple times to service providers; and to provide the local community with aggregate data on the progress being made as a collective towards addressing and ending homelessness. Peer mentoring, indigenous cultural supports and community supports also constitute an integral critical part of the homeless-serving system, ensuring better housing outcomes through improved relationships, better connections and more inclusive neighborhoods.





Within this homelessness-serving system, following a Systems Planning approach leads to an important shift. Rather than considering individuals and families as clients of an organization, or participants in a program, the focus pivots to them being considered clients of an overall system, where services within the system are delivered collectively, in a coordinated, integrated and standardized manner, with strategic services working towards the common goal.

At the center of our community’s strategic response to ending homelessness, and at the base of our Systems Planning approach, we must all be grounded in Housing First principles and practices.

Housing First, as seen in Figure 3, is a recovery oriented philosophy and a best practice intervention, that upholds rapid re-housing into independent permanent housing, with no preconditions to access, with additional services and supports provided as needed. Housing First declares practices that housing is a human right and should never be contingent on any ‘readiness’ for housing nor does this approach require sobriety as a pre-requisite for housing. Instead, Housing First adopts a rights-based lens to housing, vehemently upholding that all people deserve housing and radically implementing the principle that adequate housing is a precondition for recovery.

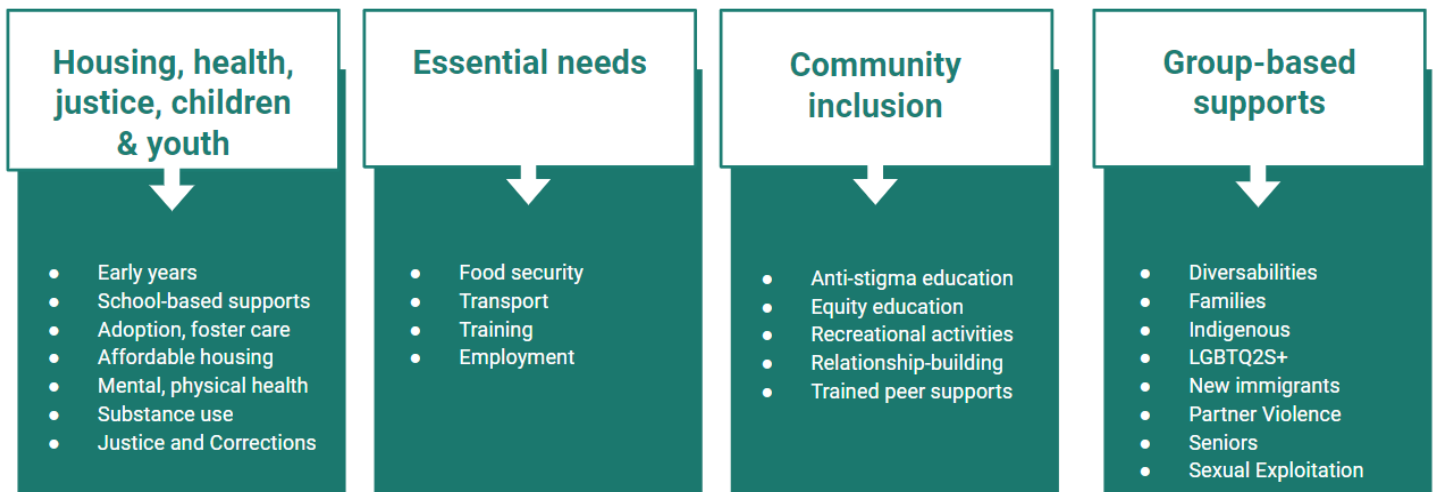
Another foundational component to our community’s strategic response to ending homelessness, and a critical part of a Systems Planning approach, is recognizing that the solutions to homelessness are to be found in the complex interplay of multiple social safety nets of care and support, outlined in the diagram above.

Knitting together and then leveraging the entirety of these supports, across non-profit agencies and government departments, is what will help our community address and end homelessness. The intersecting systems of housing, health, justice and children and youth supports need to work collaboratively, in a coordinated and integrated manner. Essential needs must be met, communities must be passionate and committed to social inclusion and relationship building for everyone and group-based supports must collaborate and coordinate their efforts.

The Journey Home Strategy also highlighted the need for a backbone organization to provide the leadership needed to support the Strategy implementation and collective movement across stakeholders. The Central Okanagan Journey Home Society is leading on this front now:

- Facilitating collaboration and engagement and increased linkages across agencies/systems.
- Working with stakeholders to ensure alignment and participation in systems redesign, planning and implementation.
- Building capacity that ensures that lived experience voices and expertise are foundational to system redesign.
- Developing effective performance management processes that aim to improve services impact through continuous improvement.

The Journey Home Strategy prioritizes the development of a Systems Planning approach grounded in Housing First with diverse services organized and delivered in a coordinated manner to advance common community priorities. The purposeful design and management of Kelowna’s homeless-serving system is critical to meeting the community’s objective of ending homelessness.



## MILESTONES/KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Journey Home Strategy was designed with a detailed and measurable implementation plan with a set of milestone measures designed to provide targets and gauge progress. The implementation plan contains 35 targeted, realistic, and measurable actions over the 5-year span of the Strategy which will contribute to meeting the milestones. The Strategy recognized the dynamic and changing nature of homelessness and anticipated continued evolution as new learning, information, and challenges emerged.

Milestone		Status
Eliminated Chronic, Episodic and Veteran Homelessness	<p><i>By 2021</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100% connected to housing and supports</li> </ul> <p><i>By 2022</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>End veteran homelessness</li> </ul> <p><i>By 2024</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100%, or 350 chronically homelessness housed</li> <li>1700 housed with supports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved housing access through enhanced coordination</li> <li>453 housing unit capacity added</li> <li>599 Housing units currently coordinated across system</li> </ul>
Move Upstream to Prevent Homelessness	<p><i>By 2020</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement system wide coordinated access</li> <li>400 people to be diverted from homelessness</li> </ul> <p><i>By 2021</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discharge from public system data reported</li> </ul> <p><i>By 2023</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Zero discharge into homelessness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>System wide coordinated access in place</li> <li>160 youth diverted from homelessness since 2017</li> <li>Currently exploring integration of data systems</li> <li>New Interior Health- COVID Vulnerable Populations Coordinator has improved hospital discharges and health system navigation</li> </ul>
Implement a Coordinated Systems Approach to Homelessness	<p><i>By 2019</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create an independent Backbone Organization to lead strategy implementation</li> </ul> <p><i>By 2020</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete Homelessness Funding Framework</li> </ul> <p><i>By 2020</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full participation in Coordinated Access process and Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS) in place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Central Okanagan Journey Home Society operational starting 2019</li> <li>Funding Landscape changed due to various factors; business plan presented to City</li> <li>Sector wide participation in Coordinated Access process in place, additional housing providers to be added. HMIS system development exploration underway.</li> <li>Built For Zero-Canada Community since 2019 working towards improving Coordinated Access processes and creating a data dashboard</li> </ul>

## FUNDING IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The Journey Home Strategy includes a detailed funding implementation strategy, as outlined below with the current status for each. Journey Home is a living strategy that requires ongoing refinement as system planning work continues. As more insight into the local system gaps, barriers, bottlenecks, and strengths is gained, the deliverables and costs are continually updated.











Focus	Deliverable Details	Status to date
Housing	300 units of housing with supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>269 purpose-built units added</li> <li>49 purpose-built units in development</li> </ul>
Health Supports Estimated \$26M	500 program spaces added over 5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Team (24/7 community-based supports for people living with severe mental health challenges)</li> <li>BC Gov't commitment:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 youth treatment beds</li> <li>4 new adult supported recovery beds</li> </ul> </li> <li>Health supports in Housing (Ellis Street and McCurdy)</li> <li>117 Housing First Units, including 5 Housing First for Youth Units (HF4Y) with case management and 3 HF4Y clients with case management only.</li> </ul>
Backbone Organization and Coordination	COJHS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporated 2018</li> <li>Operational 2019</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City contribution of \$150K annually for 5 years (2023)</li> <li>Surpassed \$1M in donations</li> <li>System Planning and Coordination progressing (full report March 2021)</li> </ul>

# TOP TEN STRATEGY ACTIONS STATUS

Within the implementation action framework, the Strategy proposes 35 specific actions to be implemented over the five-year span of the Strategy. Within these actions, the Top 10 emerged early on demonstrating the community's commitment to change.

These 10 priority actions are paramount and appear in the Journey Home Strategy's Implementation Plan as immediate, high-leverage activities of the highest priority. Below is a status update for each of the Top Ten Actions.

Significant Progress  Moderate Progress  No Progress 

Top 10 Actions	Status	Key Initiatives
Rollout a Backbone Organization solely dedicated to implementing Journey Home Strategy by building community capacity and engaging in systems planning.		MOU with the City agreed and matches strategy timeline. Built for Zero-Canada community. Partnered with City to develop a data integration roadmap.
Support the addition of 300 units of long-term supportive housing in purpose-built buildings targeted to support people experiencing chronic and episodic homelessness with higher needs Veteran?		Exceeded this target in March 2021 with 318 units of supportive housing being developed since the inception of the Journey Home strategy; 274 units in the past two years
Support people in the rental market through 500 new program spaces grounded in the Housing First model and the right to housing.		Increase in rent supplements and scattered site rentals; youth housing first launched in 2019.
Continue the Lived Experience Circle and Youth Advocates for Housing and formalize relationships with the Backbone Organization governance.		LECoH on JH board and work across the sector to ensure lived and living expertise voices are engaged; youth advocate group being reactivated
Recognize accountability for the Truth & Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action in that Indigenous Homelessness is an ongoing form of colonialism.		This is a key area to continue evolving. Focus has been on working to engage authentic relationships with our indigenous partners to develop housing and supports for indigenous people, by indigenous people; indigenous engagement in complex needs housing and launch of indigenous CAB-H entity in Spring 2021.
Launch the Upstream for Youth Kelowna pilot in partnership with the School District to identify and support youth at risk of becoming homeless.		Upstream Kelowna is launching in two middle schools in Spring and Fall of 2021
Support efforts to increase treatment beds, especially for young people in Kelowna.		10 bed, Phase 1 of Youth Recovery House operated by the Bridge Youth and Family Services to open soon
Support innovative solutions to address the criminalization of homelessness, such as a Community Court		Community Court approved, awaiting implementation details
Ensure a population focus is embedded in Strategy implementation; this includes youth, Indigenous, women, families, newcomers, LGBTQ2S+, seniors, and men.		Youth Upstream Kelowna prevention program launched, indigenous engagement in complex needs housing and launch of indigenous CAB-H entity in Spring 2021. Draft Community Shelter Plan and Complex Needs Advocacy project have population focus embedded
Launch a Homelessness Innovation Lab to partner with technology sector to develop solutions for information management and access, and data analysis.		Partnered with the City to explore and develop a data integration roadmap. Currently assessing next steps.

Process mapping was undertaken to discover user experience in navigating the homeless serving system. The following is an overview of the services and systems that exist across what is collectively referred to as the homeless serving sector.

The process mapping section covers services, from first point of contact with a person at risk of, or experiencing homelessness, all the way through to attaining housing. The journey towards a permanent home is non-linear and may involve several cycles through various support services.

Healthcare and Substance Use Treatment services are included as they are closely intertwined with homelessness and housing supports. Focus on people with a disability is incorporated due to this population's extreme vulnerability. Non-profit and government agency operational information provides context to understand service delivery capacity and challenges.

## DIVERSION SERVICES

Diversion services are provided by 3 agencies. The Boys and Girls Club of the Okanagan pioneers this approach, championing diversion for youth aged 13-24 who visit a shelter or experience housing instability. Shelter diversion uses a family and natural supports approach, working with connections to bring the youth back home or into another safe alternative prior to exploring shelter entry. Shelter is used as a last resort given that youth who stay in the shelter are at an increased risk for mental health issues, addictions, and street entrenchment.

Further, longer shelter stays can result in increased distance between youth and their families/natural supports. In situations of housing instability, short-term support is provided to the family, offering mediation and meeting basic needs whilst making referrals to more intensive and longer-term community programs. As conflict at home is one of the main causes cited for youth experiencing homelessness, the focus is on supporting the whole family in maintaining housing for their young people. The Boys and Girls Club of the Okanagan conducts periodic check-ins with youth who have stayed in the shelter.

## OUTREACH SERVICES

Lack of housing supports to meet demand contributes to a non-linear progression for individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness to obtaining permanent housing. Clients often access shelters temporarily, cycling in and out of unsheltered homelessness, and those that do obtain housing can experience evictions that lead them back to the street. Outreach services are therefore critical in connecting individuals throughout this process, necessitating coordination and communication across and between agencies and programs.

Outreach is provided by 13 agencies in Kelowna and West Kelowna. The scope of each agency varies greatly, highlighting the need for clarity around defining outreach, both in role and in its activities. Services offered include providing food, hygiene, harm reduction supports, camping equipment, case management, rent supplements, and other financial assistance. The majority of the outreach teams are focused on providing essential needs leading to a significant lack of housing-focused case management, which is a key best practice of impactful street outreach. Recognizing the importance of both types of support, it is important to strike a balance between essential needs-focused outreach and housing-focused outreach case management as we evolve these supports through a systems lens.

## SHELTER SERVICES

Currently, there are nine shelters across Kelowna and West Kelowna that offer beds with case management to 345 people per night. Three agencies also offer shelter diversion. Six shelters offer overdose prevention services, with three offering recovery-friendly environments. Whilst the intake process is predominantly first come, first served, two shelters use a blended **Coordinated Access** and first come, first served model.

In addition, since the Fall of 2019, a designated outdoor sheltering site has been opened for people sheltering outside.

### 345 SHELTER BEDS WITH CASE MANAGEMENT IN KELOWNA AND WEST KELOWNA

- 54% are permanent
- 78% are for any gender
- 93% are for people aged 19+
- 75% offer overdose prevention and harm reduction



## HOUSING SERVICES


Congregate and scattered site housing programs offer 577 units of permanent supportive housing with case management in Kelowna. Vacancies are filled through BC Housing and A Way Home Kelowna’s Coordinated Access Tables for adults and youth.

There are also 1,681 units of permanent subsidized and affordable housing in Kelowna and West Kelowna. BC Housing rent supplements amounted to \$4,635,254.09 for 2018-2019 in Kelowna. In addition, there is transitional housing for youth, people on parole, women escaping intimate partner violence and indigenous families.

## HEALTHCARE SERVICES AND SUBSTANCE USE TREATMENT

There has been an increase in the breadth of the substance use treatment spectrum of services locally. This includes harm reduction at the supervised injection site, in-patient treatment beds, opioid agonist treatment (OAT), 1-1 counselling, group therapy and life skills development.

Other services for people experiencing homelessness include two primary health care centers; one Health and Wellness clinic; the Foundry (12-24 year olds); a practitioner team specializing in serving people with complex medical, psychiatric and social care needs, with serious and complex mental illness and substance use; and a mobile crisis intervention team. In addition, five non-profit agencies offer 10 in-patient withdrawal management beds, and 165 treatment and post-treatment abstinence-based transitional beds and housing units, with case management supports and aftercare.



**577 UNITS OF PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING WITH CASE MANAGEMENT IN KELOWNA FOR YOUTH AND ADULTS**

- 20 % Scattered Sites
- 80% Congregate Sites
- 99% are for any gender
- 44% have an overdose prevention site

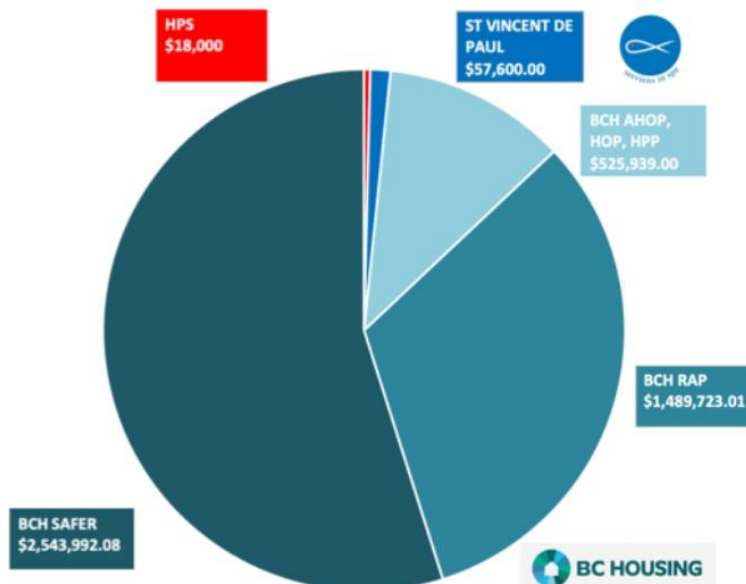


Figure 5 - Rent Supplements in Kelowna (April 2018-March 2019)  
\$4 635 254.09

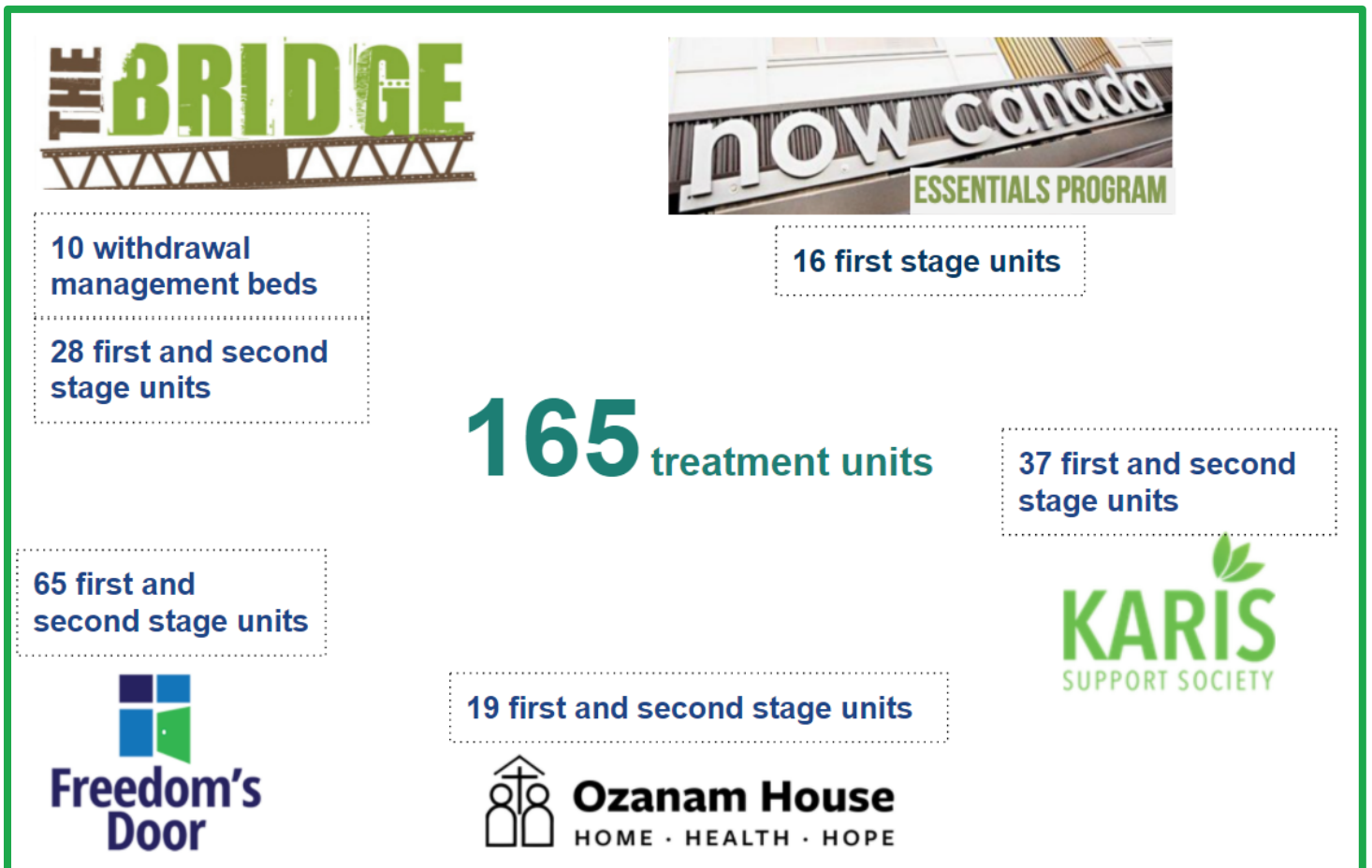
## SPECIAL FOCUS: PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

With often higher support needs and vulnerabilities, people with a disability are at a significant disadvantage when experiencing homelessness. Whilst there are several services funded by Interior Health and Community Living BC, many people’s needs remain unmet in the area of specialized housing with supports, in particular for people coming out of acute hospital services. It is imperative to expand disability services, following a rights-based approach. This includes adapting programs to fit the person’s needs, providing 24/7 support and reducing program access paperwork. Awareness raising campaigns around invisible and undiagnosed disabilities are equally important. There is also a dire need to expand pre-19 support services for children and youth, as well as for caregivers. Free or subsidized 19+ disability designation for youth in transition should also be provided to enable people to qualify for Community Living BC support. Long-term committed advocacy to enhance accessible service navigation is also essential.

## NON-PROFIT AND GOVERNMENT AGENCY OPERATIONS

Despite phenomenal collaboration and coordination, significant improvement requirements remain, in the area of inter-agency client information systems and data sharing. These are essential for the purpose of integrated case management and aggregated performance data.

In addition, a significant gap remains between the depth and breadth of the needs of people experiencing homelessness and the qualifications and work experience expectations for frontline support workers. Staff retention continues to be a concerning issue and burnout is common. This, coupled with low wages in the sector, vastly contributes to the continuous labour market and skills shortage our region faces.



The sector within our community is one of resourcefulness, resilience, and dedication. As we share the learnings from this mapping project, we know the landscape of our work has already evolved significantly. The path to functional zero homelessness has a strong foundation through the intentional approaches our local sector has taken over the past two years.

Journey Home continues to be committed to working with our stakeholders and partners to ensure we meet the goal of ending homelessness; through embedding person-centred approaches to housing and supports.

The onset of COVID-19 in our community deepened the collective drive to work in a more systematic way to ensure our resources and capacity could support all those in need, and to pilot integrated service delivery. Our community has taken many steps forward in our journey to evolve to a one -system approach throughout COVID-19. In many ways the pandemic has served as a catalyst for collaborating in new ways.

The section outlines some of our key priority areas of focus for our systems evolution efforts as a community. It also provides an overview of some current and upcoming projects, systems disruption efforts; and highlights where our community is moving the needle on ending homelessness.



## LIVED EXPERIENCE LEADERSHIP

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The Lived Experience Circle on Homelessness (LECoH) brings the voice of people with Lived Experience into leadership decision-making, addresses stigma and helps embed peer capacity into programming.

PEOPLE Employment Society also trains peer navigators to work across community, which is an opportunity that has emerged separate to, yet originating from, LECoH.

Additionally, Lived Experience for youth initiatives include a peer program at the Benvoulin Housing Initiative and the incubation of a Lived Experience youth group, in partnership with the Boys and Girls Club of Okanagan.

### Why This Matters

Elevating the voices of people with Lived and Living Experience of homelessness and including them in leadership reflects this group's valuable expertise in policy and decision-making. Lived Experience Leadership is key to ending and preventing homelessness. In keeping with the credo 'Nothing about us without us', it is also vital that the people impacted by policies, strategies and programming are given the opportunity to be involved in shaping them. It is equally vital that the labour force providing services incorporate peers and people with Lived Experience to shape service delivery and ensure everyone finds a home and a place of belonging in the community.

### Current Situation

LECoH captures the voices of people with Lived and Living Experience of homelessness at key locations through intentional outreach. LECoH then shares these voices and this lens at local leadership tables, informing and directing the

actions of decision-makers as well as ensuring that this expertise is embedded into policy and programming.

LECoH has also designed guiding principles that inform community partners and Journey Home, when considering new policy and programming initiatives. These are Choice, Connection, Safety and Healing. Their role also involves furthering effective communication and relationship-building between service recipients and service operators.

LECoH has also created a partnership project with the Kelowna Homelessness Research Consortium to explore the experiences of people who are homeless in our community during COVID-19. This has been critical in ensuring that planning and service changes are evolving in response to the changing needs of the people we serve.

Additionally, there is a three-year project in partnership with Urban Matters, the City of Kelowna and PEOPLE Lived Experience Society to increase Peer Navigators across community agencies and facilities. This program will train peers and provide employment placement, as well as offering capacity building support to organization who want to include Peer Navigators in their agencies.

### Next Steps

LECoH continue to enhance their circle of people with lived and living experience and to seek new opportunities to embed the voices of people we serve across the systems of services in Kelowna. They intend to increase their representation at key decision-making tables and continue to work with many partners to guide the creation of programs for people experiencing homelessness.

## INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP

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As we develop solutions, services, and housing to address homelessness, we must consider the land on which we have settled, the land we build on, and the land that belongs to the Syilx Okanagan peoples. Reconciliation must come from action, particularly as we continue to break ground; such actions must evidence a humility to learn and be guided by our Indigenous partners.

### Why This Matters

It is an essential part of our community work to recognize the impact of colonialism on our community, and those experiencing homelessness; and the legacy that remains through institutional racism and discrimination. Our work to

end homelessness in Kelowna is founded on the belief and commitment to understanding the world view of homelessness through an indigenous lens.

Our systems mapping work has identified many barriers faced by Indigenous people experiencing homelessness, and has highlighted the misalignment between systems, services, and the indigenous worldview of homelessness. Our commitment to address this and support reconciliation through action, evolves with guidance from our Indigenous partners.



## Current Situation

Overall, there has been a lack of ongoing engagement with our local Indigenous neighbors and stakeholders with respect to service and housing development to address homelessness, although this is evolving. There is currently a newly developed learning opportunity being offered by staff from Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society, who provide indigenous learnings to sector staff and BC Housing, at the Coordinated Access Table. This will be hugely beneficial to the sector and aims to support the drive to better understand the needs and lens of indigenous people accessing services.

Additionally, Journey Home currently works collectively with many local governments in the region on our complex needs advocacy work, including Westbank First Nation and Okanagan Indian Band. This aims to support the development of housing solutions that are informed by indigenous people, for indigenous people.

## Key Recommendations

There is still much engagement that needs to occur to continue to deepen our community understanding of the correlation between colonialism and homelessness; and to act on our community learnings. At a systemic level, we are working at a coordinated access level to identify perceived and actual barriers to accessing services from the lens of indigenous people experiencing homelessness. We are also working with indigenous organizations to be informed as to how services need to change to deliver culturally informed services.

It is also recommended that future services and housing options are designed encompassing indigenous guidance and that

infrastructure is planned with this guidance at the forefront. There is also much work to take place in understanding and embedding the appropriate protocols and ceremonies in housing/land development and service delivery.

## Next Steps

There is an evolving and locally embedded systems approach to ensure an indigenous funding framework for the federal homelessness investments embedded locally. There is an Indigenous Community Advisory Board on Homelessness being set up in Kelowna and there will be an Indigenous Community Entity in April 2021. This provides a mechanism for indigenous community agencies and partners to determine community priorities and investments that focus on ending homelessness for indigenous people.

While the Journey Home Strategy speaks to the critical importance of having strong indigenous influence in our systems planning work, we recognize our place as a non-indigenous organization is to learn as an ally and advocate; and to ensure our communities' indigenous voices are represented and heard. We will continue to walk alongside our indigenous partners in their autonomous efforts to develop indigenous solutions for indigenous people.

## How We Will Measure Success

- Establishment of the Indigenous CAB-H table
- Development of an Indigenous Housing Plan
- Integration of the Indigenous worldview of homelessness into operator services

## HOMELESSNESS YOUTH PREVENTION: UPSTREAM KELOWNA

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A locally adapted universal screening tool called the Student Needs Assessment (SNA) identifies students who display overt signs of risk to both homelessness and school disengagement. It is a confidential assessment. The Canadian Observatory of Homelessness (COH) analyzes the results and provides schools with a report on student's strengths and risks. Students who have been identified with risk factors then have the option to meet with an Upstream Kelowna Case Manager, and to be connected to a coordinated system of supports based on their needs.

## Why This Matters

Young people at risk of homelessness in our community often have challenges in their personal lives, at school and at home, that can go unaddressed or "fly under the radar". Consequently, they do not access the necessary supports they need to maintain safe, stable housing and school engagement.

Upstream Canada's model is a response to this challenge. Adapted locally as Upstream Kelowna to fit the local context, this Early Intervention initiative takes a preventative approach with an equity lens to offer help to young people and their families before they are without a home. It is based off a pilot project in Geelong, Australia which succeeded to reduce youth homelessness in their community by 40%, reduce drop-out rates by 20% and identify 50% more youth at risk than they were previously aware of.

Coordinating care for young people across sectors and including the education system is critical to the model. In the *Without A Home: The National Youth Homelessness Survey* (Gaetz et al., 2016), 40% of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness reported they were first without a home before the age 16. In another pan-Canadian study of over 110 youth with lived experience, it was overwhelmingly reported that school-

community partnerships, and early intervention while in school would have made a significant impact in the trajectory of their experiences and would likely have prevented homelessness from occurring (Schwann et al., 2018).

Upstream Kelowna has the potential to shift our community's homelessness response from a crisis-driven intervention to one focused on prevention. The assessment results will highlight trends and needs in our community allowing for evidenced-based advocacy of necessary resolutions. Taking a coordinated approach to addressing challenges in the lives of young people before they find themselves at the doorsteps of a shelter or sleeping rough, will have ripple effects within our community. Upstream Kelowna aims to reduce the social burden of care on educators, decrease the struggle of systems-navigation for families, and improve resiliency and overall wellbeing in our young people.

### Current Situation

Upstream Kelowna was identified by Journey Home in early 2018 as one of the top ten actions in our community's strategy to end homelessness. The Boys and Girls Clubs of the Okanagan (BGCO) was chosen at a local design lab as the community-based lead for the project. BGCO onboarded Arc Programs, The Bridge Youth and Family Services, Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society, and The Foundry to support the project. School District 23 has agreed to run the pilot in 2 schools beginning in 2021.

We believe that of the 600-800 students surveyed, approximately 100 students will be connected to necessary supports following both assessments. The project will begin surveys in Spring 2021 and will conduct them sequentially with a second survey in Fall 2021. The current stakeholder capacity, to provide 1 to 1 support for young people identified through Upstream Kelowna, is a maximum of 50 young people.

### Recommendations

- Adequate financial resources are required to ensure both the quality and the sustainability of the project and the capacity of community partners to engage in it
- Communities should coordinate and collaborate to ensure their system is fulsome enough to meet the needs of the young people who live there. Local partners have identified that local mental health services are operating at capacity whilst there continues to be young people with unmet mental health needs.

### Next Steps

- Implement the assessment at our schools; KLO in April 2021 and Spring Valley Middle in September of 2021
- Identify needs and trends coming out of the survey and collaboratively address those needs
- Advocate for evidence-based systems changes where outcomes for youth homelessness prevention can be achieved
- Continue to hold meetings and engage stakeholders to maintain support required to succeed
- Develop and provide community training

### PROJECT OUTCOMES

- Number of youth accessing the youth shelter decreases. Upstream Kelowna target group is Grade 8.
- School-based outcomes at participating schools:
  - Drop out rates decrease
  - Number of suspensions and expulsions decrease
  - Social burden of care on educators decreases
  - Noticeable change in school environment
  - Noticeable change in student behaviour
- As a result of the Upstream Kelowna Survey, identify existing system-wide community service strengths, needs and gaps
- Students and their families feel more connected to school and community
- Increased student resiliency and safety in the home
- Number of students reporting leaving Upstream Kelowna supports due to having acquired skills and resilience to integrate with their family and achieve stability both at home and at school.
- Noticeable system and community wide level shift towards a prevention-focused lens and prevention-focused work
- Greater awareness amongst the community, schools, neighborhoods, families and young people around the reality of youth homelessness, to enable the early identification of potential issues and the prevention of further complications

## COORDINATED OUTREACH

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Community outreach supports offer a blend of services to people who are unsheltered and not connected to supports. Services offered include food, hygiene supplies, camping equipment, health and wellness check-ins, harm reduction supports and COVID-19 screening.

Traditionally outreach services have been delivered by several organizations, working separately in delivering their services. Through the work to integrate services and maximize impact and system capacity during COVID-19, our community outreach teams have begun working in synchronicity to deliver coordinated services and blend staff outreach teams.

### Why This Matters

Outreach services provide an important access point into the homeless service delivery system for individuals that cycle in and out of shelters, choose to not use shelters, or cannot use shelters because they are barred, or have legal restrictions impacting their access. As a result, for some individuals, outreach may be the only access point to housing.

Currently case management is attached to the services provided, not the person accessing services. When people are cycling in and out of sheltered and unsheltered homelessness, there is no formal client information data sharing between outreach teams and shelters. So it is vital to remain aware of the intersectionality of outreach and shelter case management, as well as the loss and fragmentation of case management supports upon a person's departure and/or loss of shelter. People who are unsheltered may have been connected to support the day before, whilst they were in shelter, but then find themselves without support the day after, if unsheltered.

The key is to ensure effective coordination of outreach services and approaches across agencies providing this service. Coordination and collaboration with enforcement agencies is just as important for responding to complex social situations with the goal of connecting individuals to shelter and/or services. Equally important for coordination across outreach teams, is the integration of outreach services with the rest of the homeless service delivery system.

During the COVID pandemic, the importance of coordination of outreach services became even more evident as the shelters were forced to reduce their capacity to accommodate physical distancing requirements and more people were left to shelter outside.

### Current Situation

COVID19 galvanized collaboration and communication within outreach, leading to a more coordinated and impactful structure. Outreach schedules outlining geographic target areas are now documented and updated. The location of encampments was mapped out using ArcGIS, an application-based tool, enabling the rapid mobilization of efforts as well as reducing overlap and service-engagement fatigue. Unfortunately, client information sharing barriers limited the use of this technology and continue to impede our ability to enhance further data integration at present.

In Summer 2020, Journey Home hosted an OrgCode webinar on Impactful Outreach. This resulted in local inspiration by attendees to share the learning opportunity with other service providers. In October 2020, Journey Home and the Canadian Mental Health Association - Kelowna convened 40 staff from 24 organizations, to view the webinar and to discuss the evolution of outreach. This process resulted in the creation of a working group, which evolved into the Coordinated Outreach Table (COT). There is a weekly meeting where outreach stakeholders coordinate, collaborate and promote accountability. At the webinar breakout sessions, the attendees defined Approach 1 of successful outreach as a clear and simple process, combining large amounts of superficial connections to provide basic needs and harm reduction supports. Targeted and deeper connections to offer housing-focused case management interventions was defined as Approach 2.

Journey Home and CMHA's Senior Homelessness Outreach Navigator are preparing a summary to present to the Community Advisory Board on Homelessness (CAB-H) on Coordinated Outreach efforts to date and the related recommendations presented in this report.

### Next Steps

- Establish a formal means of communication and client information sharing between all outreach stakeholders and providers.
- Secure agreement for periphery partners to make referrals to dedicated outreach staff or access points, ensuring warm referrals.
- Coordinate and integrate outreach and shelter case management, to maximize the use of limited resources and avoid duplication. This provides a seamless service during a person's transitions from sheltering inside to outside and vice versa, to maximize progress made during case management opportunities in shelter, and

to minimize risk when a person shelters outside without supports.

- Follow a Housing First approach across all outreach teams, shelters and supportive housing, whereby case management support follows the person, in a system-wide integrated manner, rather than following the service they receive. This will avoid occurrences where the loss of supportive housing or the loss of shelter is accompanied by the loss of a person's caseworker and case management supports.
- Establish formal coordination between the three coordinated tables: Coordinated Outreach, Coordinated Shelter, and Coordinated Access, to provide cohesive service coverage throughout an individual's progression from unsheltered homelessness to housing.
- Progress service integration and coordination between outreach services with a housing, health and justice focus through discharge planning.

#### How We Will Measure Success

- % of people who have consented to receiving housing-focused case management who are connected to a case manager
- % of people who are connected to outreach upon eviction from supportive housing
- % of people who are connected to outreach prior to accessing or when leaving shelter



# COMMUNITY EMERGENCY SHELTER PLAN

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While focusing on housing is crucial, just as important in the efforts to address homelessness is the need to ensure that the local shelter system is functioning effectively. In fact, evidence demonstrates that emergency shelters have a vital role to play in applying Housing First and best practices approaches to addressing homelessness.

## Why This Matters

There is a critical need to provide emergency accommodation and support to individuals, youth and families when they are experiencing, or at risk of homelessness. The local shelter system was created through several permanent and temporary congregate shelters being developed year on year, in response to emerging needs.

Historically, NIMBYism has played a role in preventing partners from being able to start new shelter services and shelters operate primarily with large numbers in congregate spaces. At the time the system mapping was conducted in 2019, the shelter system was under significant pressure and we had over 100 people sleeping outdoors in Kelowna.

## Current Situation

Locally, shelters often run at or near capacity with additional people sheltering outdoors. Shelter capacity has also been a more critical challenge as COVID-19 has reduced shelter capacity with operators forced to reduce the number of beds.

There are currently six permanent shelters in Kelowna; with an additional three temporary shelters in 2020-21. This equates to 265 shelter beds and acknowledges the first time our community has ever met the capacity need of people who are unsheltered and homeless in Kelowna.

Whilst we have met our shelter capacity needs for people in our community, we envision evolving to new approaches in delivering housing focused shelter services as we journey towards functional zero.

The City of Kelowna and Journey Home have been working with stakeholders to design a Community Emergency Shelter Plan that encompasses previous learnings from the Shelter Design Lab held in June 2019 and the current work to develop planning solutions through our Shelter Selection Consideration project.

## Key Recommendations

- Pilot a model of diversion across all shelters and at-risk touchpoints.
- Standardize and integrate shelter operations and shelter-based case management into one system of support, embedding the work of outreach teams.
- System wide approach for the delivery of emergency shelters
  - Concept of moving towards a 'Navigation Site' emerged focused on choice-centred, housing-focused approaches
  - Coordinated shelter system delivery with smaller, dispersed shelters, accommodating a range of populations and needs
- Model that enables continuity of care
  - Coordination, collaboration, and operation standards
  - Range of health and wellness services
  - Accommodating people with complex needs
- Person-centred, housing-focused approach
  - Lived Experience principles and leadership embedded
  - Indigenous Led - Culturally Appropriate approaches
- Equity and inclusion plan encompassing operation standards, physical design and staff training.

## Next Steps

Whilst acknowledging that outreach services will always be needed, as people cycle in and out of shelters, conversations have been ongoing to recognize that year-round shelters are critical where housing options are not available for people in the interim.

Journey Home continues to advocate for appropriate shelter capacity and integrated health services in shelter settings. We also believe that the time is right to continue to evolve our shelter services to more housing and transitional focused navigation models of emergency accommodation.

It is anticipated that having a clearly articulated community vision and plan will well position Kelowna to advocate for provincial support for a new innovative best practice approach to emergency shelter delivery in our community.

The Community Emergency Shelter Plan will provide the blueprint for the next steps of our evolution and will be completed by mid-2021.

## How We Will Measure Success

- Completion and endorsement of the plan by key stakeholders
- Develop and mobilize key recommendations of the plan

- Develop a road map for beginning shelter transformation across community
- Advocate for senior government investment in the transformation of the shelter system

## COORDINATED ACCESS FOR ADULTS

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Coordinated Access is an integrated and data-driven process that equitably streamlines access to housing resources. The vision is for all service providers and orders of government to work together towards the common goals of ending veteran and chronic homelessness, reducing homelessness for all priority populations.

There is also a focus on reducing new inflows into homelessness and reducing returns to homelessness. When comprehensive local data is available through Coordinated Access, baselines are established to measure progress and monitor local trends, to share successes and to determine focus areas for change.

### Why This Matters

Coordinated Access facilitates a systems-based approach to addressing homelessness, supporting service integration and ensuring that providers work together to reach shared outcomes using a person-centered viewpoint. Streamlining the steps to access community resources clarifies the path from homelessness to stable housing and helps reduce effort duplication. Using common triage and assessment practices, service providers work together to match clients with available resources in a consistent and transparent manner.

Whilst there is a Veteran question in the VAT, VAT assessors have not been trained to ask this question in our community and therefore this question is not currently being asked during the VAT process with clients.

Coordinated Access is also a powerful planning tool, providing real-time, quantifiable data about the type and amount of housing resources that are needed to prevent and reduce homelessness in a community. Public and private funders and the community can use this information to increase and target investments in the system.

### Current Situation

In 2016, BC Housing introduced Coordinated Access for BC Housing-funded supportive housing and housing first scattered sites program. Initial triage occurs at local access points, followed by an assessment if a person is eligible.

Since 2019, Journey Home has supported continuous improvement in this area. Prioritization criteria, matching and referral processes with client choice are being updated and

documented by a BC Housing-led Working Group, with participation from Journey Home. The Coordinated Access governance structure is complex, combining different Provincial and Federal priorities. Currently, the client information systems necessary to use Coordinated Access as a planning tool are not sufficient to produce local aggregate data for planning. The BC Housing Coordinated Access Table is in the early stages of tracking homelessness chronicity for people on the VAT list. The diagram below, illustrating the connectivity and interdependence between outreach, shelter and supportive housing coordination, is a structure that emerged during COVID19.

### Key Recommendations

- In partnership with BC Housing and local stakeholders, continue to support improvement processes, explore opportunities to bring more housing-focused resources, including case management, to further integrate and coordinate resource allocation and bring in more people experiencing homelessness to increase equity in the client prioritization process.
- Investigate opportunities with Veteran Affairs and BC Housing to collect Veteran data.
- Provide a detailed roadmap of the steps involved in integrating inter-agency case management and client information sharing between outreach, shelters, and supportive housing to enhance the coordination within and between these intersecting areas of service provision, to improve client outcomes and reduce effort duplication.
- Continue to work on aligning and integrating Coordinated Access into housing for adults and young people with Coordinated Outreach and Coordinated Shelter efforts, with shelter diversion, by further integrating and linking the work of the Coordinated Access Table, the Coordinated Outreach Table and the Coordinated Shelter Table.
- Facilitate a Stakeholder Forum with regional, Provincial and Federal stakeholders laying out strategic imperatives, the achievements and strengths, the gaps and barriers between the Federal and Provincial mandate. This includes all intersecting interests, as a step towards developing collaborative and coordinated shared opportunities around the

value of improving sector-wide inter-agency case management and using Coordinated Access aggregated data as a local planning tool and as leverage for additional local housing-focused investments.

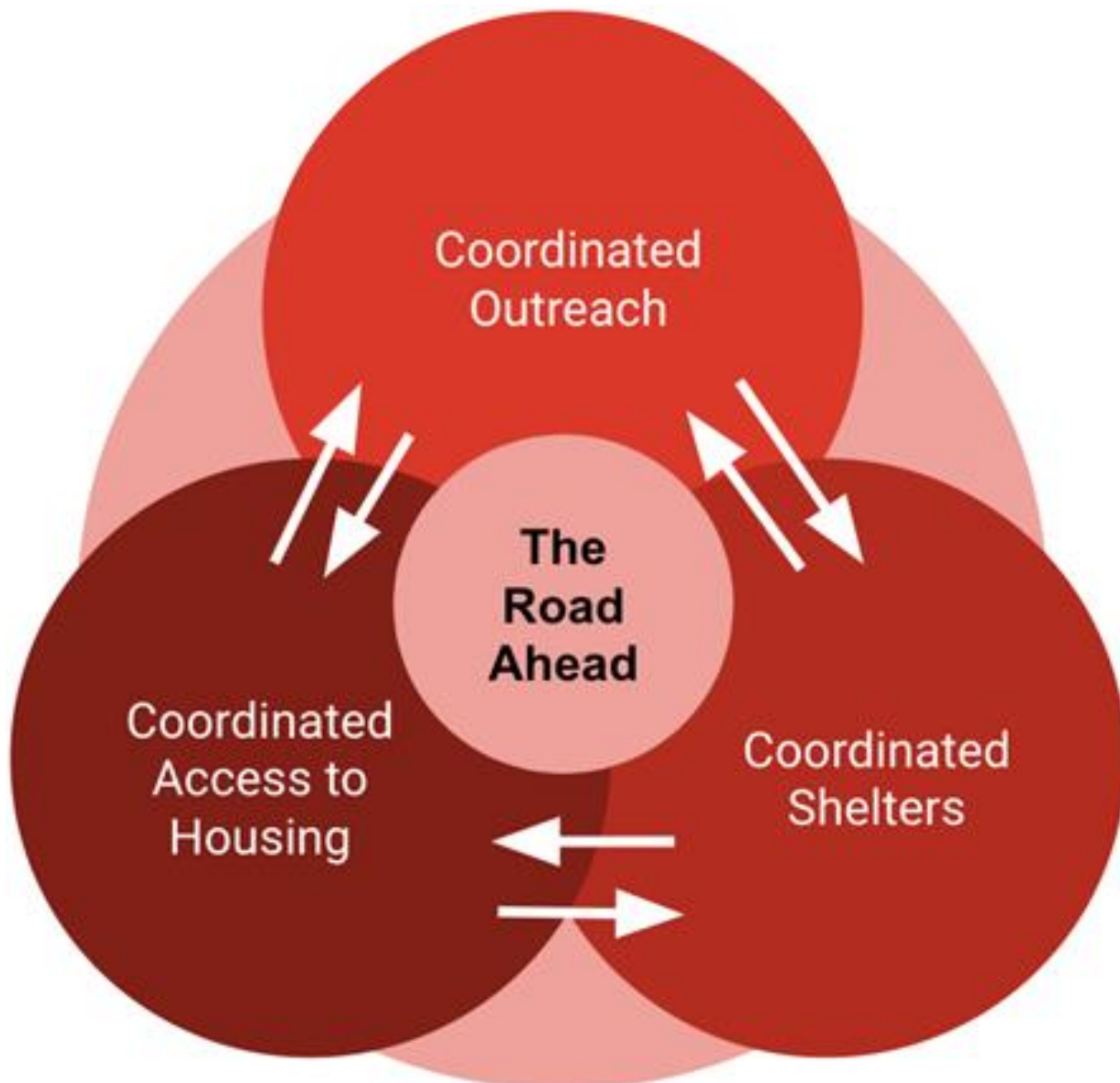
### Next Steps

The BC Housing Working Group will seek feedback from the Coordinated Access Table and LECOH regarding its recent work. Journey Home, with Built for Zero-Canada input, will support and monitor progress towards meeting Coordinated Access and By Name List requirements. The BC Housing Coordinated Access Table will continue to refine its tracking of homelessness chronicity for those who are on the VAT list. Journey Home, in partnership with BC Housing and Veteran Affairs, will continue to investigate opportunities to collect Veteran data.

Journey Home will seek funding to produce a road map for the improvements needed regarding client information systems and data sharing. Journey Home will continue to build Regional, Provincial and Federal partnerships, in preparation for the Stakeholder Forum.

### How We Will Measure Success

- Built for Zero-Canada's six chronic homelessness data points, with breakdowns by veteran and indigenous status, 50+, Indicated Mortality Rate (IMR)
- Number of people moved into supportive housing per month, as a percentage of the total number of people on the VAT list
- Ratio of transfers to new move-ins per month
- Housing maintenance: Average days spent housed per housing placement
- Housing maintenance target: Set at no more than 10% returns from housing to homelessness per month
- Process variables: Days between time of first contact to VAT completion, days between VAT completion and housing move-in
- Measure connectivity between CA and Y-CAT
- Measure comprehensiveness of VAT list in reaching target of including all people experiencing homelessness who are eligible to receive a VAT.



## COORDINATED ACCESS TABLE FOR YOUTH

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The Youth Coordinated Access Table (Y-CAT) ensures that youth aged 16 to 24 are a priority and that the assessment and referral process is designed to meet this group's specific needs. In partnership with BC Housing's Coordinated Access Table, the Y-CAT prioritizes, matches and refers youth to permanent supportive housing with supports. The Y-CAT also works towards avoiding evictions through the use of community resources and identifies housing for those wishing to move on from supportive housing.

### Why This Matters

The Y-CAT is important because it ensures that the most vulnerable young people in our community are connected to and prioritized for housing services. The Y-CAT also plays a key role in monitoring the effectiveness of existing youth-based housing programs whilst building future collaborative youth housing partnerships.

In order to access the Y-CAT, each young person must complete the Youth Assessment Prioritization (YAP) tool or the YAP pre-screener. These are tools to measure the skills and vulnerabilities of a youth to ensure they are prioritized for services that meet their needs.

### Current Situation

The Y-CAT launched in August 2019, offering Housing First for Youth (HF4Y) programming. HF4Y is designed to meet the unique needs of young people aged 16-24, providing age-appropriate housing and supports that focus on health, wellbeing, and life-skills as well as engagement in education, employment and social inclusion. HF4Y has 8 participants, 5 of which are housed.

In December 2020, the Benvoulin Youth Housing Initiative, led by private sector investment, was added to the Y-CAT's housing inventory. This initiative is for young people aged 17-24 and offers 18 micro suites that combine a safe and supportive environment with independence. The key focus is on education enhancement and career building, accompanied by the development of life skills and natural supports.

In March 2021, the youth floor of McCurdy supportive housing, offering 17 units, will be added to the Y-CAT's housing inventory. This housing will be for 19-24 year olds, with no drug use permitted on site.

### Key Recommendations

- Increased investment in youth housing with substance use supports on site
- Increase partnerships and collaborations with the private sector on diverse housing options.
- Continue to work on YAP/YAP pre-screener and VAT assessment tool equivalence and integration
- Continue to align Y-CAT approach and activities with Built for Zero-Canada standards and Reaching Home requirements.
- Expand Y-CAT list and/or integrate with other existing lists to include more youth currently experiencing homelessness. Best practice would evidence an inclusive "community list" approach.
- Continue to partner at national and provincial tables to advocate for the need for a Provincial Youth Plan to address ageing out of care transitions in the context of preventing homelessness.
- Review pathways for youth-specific systems mapping.
- Continue to build out three-year research project on the effectiveness of a fidelity HF4Y program that integrates mental health and substance use supports, for youth aged 16-24 experiencing homelessness. This research will connect with Foundry, which provides integrated mental health supports for young people.

### How We Will Measure Success

- Built for Zero-Canada's six chronic homelessness data points, by youth, indigenous status
- Number of youth moved into supportive housing per month, as a percentage of the total number of people on the Y-CAT list
- Number of youth in education/employment within 1 year, and 3 years
- Housing maintenance: Average days spent housed per housing placement. Housing maintenance target is set at no more than 10% returns from housing to homelessness per month.
- # of Days between time of first contact to YAP/pre-YAP completion
- # of Days between YAP/pre-YAP completion and housing move-in



## HOUSING SYSTEM

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The Journey Home Strategy reflects a collective vision grounded in the belief that all people have the right to safe and dignified housing as well as the supports required to sustain it. We know that providing homes, establishing a foundation for realizing peoples' potential, and enabling their participation in our community in a meaningful way (both socially and economically) are key to reducing the risk of homelessness in Kelowna.

The demand for housing in Kelowna has been increasing steadily year after year. Kelowna is a dynamic community that attracts migration, which is ultimately driving the demand for housing. The population growth is reflected in the increase in the number of individuals experiencing homelessness, which emphasizes the need for housing diversity and choice.

The Journey Home Strategy recognizes the need for an increase of supply of both supportive and affordable housing, with a greater focus on prevention, and increased accessibility to the right health supports at the right time. The Strategy also called for a capital investment focused on an increase of 300 units of long-term purpose-built housing with supports to address the needs of people experiencing veteran and chronic homelessness.

The Strategy embraces a Housing First person-centred approach rooted in the belief that all people deserve housing, and that everyone can move directly from the experience of homelessness into housing when they have access to appropriate level of supports. The Strategy called for 400 new community support program spaces, and an additional 100 program support spaces to be included in purpose-built supportive housing.

### Why This Matters

Housing is recognized as one of the most fundamental social determinants of health and well-being. Health and housing are directly connected through a complex web of factors, but at its core, housing is necessary for preventing ill health and it is a contributing key factor in how socio-economic factors shape health. From an all-cause health comparative, homelessness mortality rates are at 50% in Canada. The average age of mortality amongst Canadians experiencing homelessness is between 37-42 years old. There is continued advocacy from the Canadian Medical Association to recognize poverty and homelessness as causes of death in Canada.

It is also evident that the health issues and struggles of individuals experiencing homelessness, whether sheltered or unsheltered, or in precarious housing impacts not only their individual health circumstances, but also our community wellness and equity determinants.

### Current Situation

In 2020, an additional 139 units of purpose-built housing with supports were added locally to the existing supportive housing developed since the start of the Journey Home Strategy. Combined with the current 117 units of Housing First Scattered Sites operated by the Canadian Mental Health Association, the inventory of housing with supports being coordinated across the community totals 599 units.

A total of 269 of these units of housing with supports have been completed since the onset of the Journey Home Strategy in 2018. The number of housing units continue to be the strongest concrete evidence of the successes Kelowna has experienced through the implementation of the Journey Home Strategy.

Having a clearly articulated plan in place has effectively positioned Kelowna for the unprecedented senior government investment in housing with supports over the past several years. From a systems and coordination lens, significant progress has been made in the structure, operation, and coordination of the delivery of housing with supports programs.

COJHS continues to work towards achieving an integrated system-wide data platform to improve the understanding of the overall housing need and inform planning for this need. However, achieving the level of data integration needed is proving to be a significant undertaking. As efforts continue on this front, there is an ongoing need to rely on the bi-annual Point-in-Time Counts conducted locally to measure progress in addressing homelessness. The last counts were conducted in 2016, 2018 and 2020. Between 2016 and 2018 a 23% increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness in Kelowna was reported. Between 2018 and 2020 the pace of increase slowed significantly, rising only by 4%. While it appeared that Kelowna was trending towards a significant decrease, the impact of the pandemic has been significant. In the absence of real-time data, the number of winter emergency shelter beds is an indicator that, despite the significant number of people that have been housed, the same number of shelter beds were required this winter as in 2020.

### How We Will Measure Success

- Increase supportive, subsidized and affordable housing stock, and provide more rent supplements. Support City efforts to increase and incentivize contributions to the Municipal housing fund.
  - Ensure that individualized housing needs and supports are met by offering choice through a variety of housing models, that include multidisciplinary teams, health supports, indigenous-specific housing and housing for immigrant families.
  - Continue to work with partners to advocate for housing that is designed for people experiencing homelessness who have complex needs.
- Reduce new inflows into homelessness and returns to homelessness through additional support services and caregiver respite
  - Develop incentives and eviction prevention supports for landlords and the creation of a socially responsible Landlord Roundtable
  - Address transitions from hospital, corrections and treatment centres to reduce new inflows into homelessness, relying on innovating, by implementing new programming and developing discharge planning supports
  - Develop opportunities to enhance the Rent Bank program that is launching in April 2021

## COMMUNITY INCLUSION TEAM

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The purpose of this interagency group led by the City and Journey Home is to enhance the community acceptance of supportive housing and other services through authentic engagement. The committee aims to work with neighborhoods on solutions to the optimal integration of programs across our city and to reduce stigma faced by people experiencing homelessness.

### Why This Matters

Our community has experienced past challenges in the understanding and acceptance of various supports and housing designed to address and end homelessness. Many supportive housing projects have been met with criticism and some with opposition. It is important that these concerns and challenges be acknowledged and that good neighborhood relations are developed through our collaborative efforts and dialogue to ensure the right to housing for people experiencing homelessness remains a priority.

### Current Situation

The team has spent its first year focusing on housing specific neighborhoods and has established several Community Advisory Committees (CAC) to work with several neighborhoods to enhance dialogue, engagement and relationships.

They have also ensured continuous engagement with the media and other stakeholders in the planning and integration of new services including housing, shelters and the Hygiene Centre.

### Next Steps

The committee structure will now evolve in April 2021 to its broader mandate around community engagement. The team will be focusing on anti-stigma opportunities and methods to enhance our community messaging and education around homelessness. They intend to develop several public-facing tools and events to increase engagement in this vital conversation and enhance awareness.

### How We Will Measure Success

- Develop media and public engagement campaigns focused on anti-stigma and education
- Increase overall community engagement around understanding and empathy
- Continue to support housing development engagement and oversee the CAC's
- Additional indicators to be adopted through the Community Inclusion Team updates to Terms of Reference

## COMPLEX NEEDS ADVOCACY

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There is a pronounced need to develop services and housing options to support people experiencing complex needs in the region. With this comes an opportunity to take a regional approach to identifying the volume and spectrum of housing with supports required to meet the needs of over 200 people with complex needs in our community.

A Complex Needs Advocacy project has been underway since mid-2020; led by the City of Kelowna in partnership with Journey Home, and our consultants Urban Matters. This work aims to identify the key gaps in this area of services and to identify housing solutions to meet the needs of people experiencing complex needs. Whilst we recognize this term holds many variations of meaning, for the purposes of this assessment, people with 'complex needs' are individuals experiencing overlapping mental health and substance use needs, who are experiencing homelessness, and are frequent users of crisis and emergency services.

### Why This Matters

There are currently no wraparound services in place across homeless serving programs to support people with complex needs. This coupled with the increasing length of time people are homeless, measured through a lens of chronicity, increases the prevalence of ongoing and unaddressed mental health deterioration; and substance use that places people at risk. For us to achieve an end to homelessness, emergency services and intensive supports in housing must be developed and embedded in our community offerings.

We know that locally, people with complex needs represent at least 50% of people accessing social services, and that most do not have housing options to move towards.

### Current Situation

There is one housing project that is piloting a small integration of health-based supports in their large housing framework; and a second project aims to do the same in March 2021 when McCurdy opens. While we recognize the value that is evidenced in the supports that are being enhanced in these two models, the vision for complex needs housing delves much deeper in providing an integrated staffing model than these projects are currently offering.

Health based services are still primarily delivered in community settings and this often holds many physical and psychological barriers for people with complex needs to access; so many often fall away from their health care plans. Homeless service

operators are not funded to deliver health-based supports and staff do not have the required skills to deliver this level of support in most shelter and housing settings. Services also operate typically at maximum capacity and with minimum funding for front line positions, so health-based supports are not readily available, or viable within current procurement models.

There is no current procurement and contracting of services for people with complex needs and there is still much fragmentation in envisioning the integration of major funders for future projects. This has been one of the key focus pieces of the advocacy paper to date.

The Journey Home Society brings significant expertise in this area from other jurisdictions and is committed to ensuring the evolution of this work encompasses the most effective and user-centric models of support.

### Key Recommendations

Our key recommendations from the advocacy work to date includes the need for a variety of low to medium density housing. People experiencing homelessness who have complex needs, have as much right to diverse housing options as anyone else. For our community efforts to be successful, we must recognize the critical importance that choice plays in developing housing solutions. Smaller homes, that mirror many neighborhood dwellings, are often more effective housing solutions for people with complex needs, as well as smaller shared and/or community housing models.

Another key recommendation is in the development of integrated staff teams that encompass Peer Supports and Clinical staff alongside support workers. There is a deepened need to recognize that health and peer supports for this population must be a part of the in-house service delivery model. This model can work in tandem with community-based treatment and supports including Intensive Case Management (ICM) and Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) teams. Additionally, these models are best delivered where there is also in-house opportunities to develop and enhance personal life skills and wellbeing, along a spectrum of social determinants of health.

Areas of procurement and data sharing are also key aspects of alignment that must be considered as this work progresses. Our community would benefit strongly from a procurement

framework for complex needs services that embeds core standards of practice and training; and one that is contracted through more transparent and inclusive processes. This will aim to ensure that services are awarded where they are best equipped to deliver high standards of practice, and encourage more providers to operate in our community.

It is also evident that the lack of coordinated data and data sharing around common clients continues to present barriers to effective service delivery, and in ensuring that needs are being met for people who are being served. This is a broader area of focus in our community systems planning efforts; and is even more critical as it relates to supporting people with complex needs who require integrated health and housing supports.

### Next Steps

The work of the advocacy paper will be completed this spring; with several engagements taking place with government leaders and stakeholders. Following this, our local municipal

government will utilize these findings, and report, to inform their advocacy to provincial government to invest in complex needs housing in our community and region.

Alongside this work, Journey Home will also be launching some workforce capacity building projects in the coming months to explore workforce competency and compensation frameworks with a view to informing future sector standards.

### How We Will Measure Success

- Successful advocacy will result in complex needs housing development; and commitment to future developments as needs determine
- Successful adoption of procurement considerations and recommendations by funding stakeholders to ensure quality of service delivery
- Successful completion of the competency analysis project will be used to inform future workforce development efforts
- Successful completion of compensation analysis will inform future sector wage enhancement work

## HOUSING, HEALTH AND JUSTICE COORDINATION

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The integration of efforts between justice and health facilities, and housing partners, is a critical area to evolve within our systems approach. Preventing and mitigating homelessness through avoiding unplanned discharges from health and justice facilities will serve to create a systems approach to homelessness prevention through discharge planning.

### Why This Matters

Integrating and coordinating housing, health and justice services and strengthening cross-ministerial partnerships, including allocating greater resources to hospital, treatment and justice transitions and discharge planning, is a key building block to ending homelessness. People experiencing homelessness are disproportionately represented in the justice system and are disproportionately affected by mental and physical health issues, substance use disorders and disabilities. This is often due to the criminalization of homelessness and survival-based behaviors. People released from incarceration are also at a greater disadvantage when experiencing homelessness, and often face barriers to accessing services and supports.

### Current Situation

The housing, health and justice systems are increasingly integrating and coordinating their services through intentional evolution. Ellis Place (October 2020) and McCurdy (March 2021)

supportive housing are two recent initiatives resulting from partnerships between BC Housing, and Interior Health.

The Community Supports Initiative is also an existing partnership between BC Housing and Correctional Services, providing outreach workers with rent supplement resources for people incarcerated at Provincial centers who are due to be released.

Another significant collaborative effort involves the Community Connections Release Planning Committee at OCC (January 2021), bringing together regional organizations to foster partnerships and collective planning for community releases.

### Key Recommendations

- Increase recovery-friendly transitional housing and shelter spaces for people waiting for in-patient treatment
- Increase in-patient withdrawal management services, first stage housing, and abstinence-based permanent housing to assist with discharge planning
- Expand mental health and substance use supports in supportive housing
- Provide medical respite transitional housing for people discharged from hospital
- Offer supportive housing for individuals who have high physical health needs as well as mental health and substance use issues

- Provide bail beds to prevent people from losing their jobs and their housing
- Increase probation outreach for people with mental health and/or substance use issues
- Provide re-integration beds and permanent housing for people discharged from corrections

#### How We Will Measure Success

- Decreased discharges into homelessness from hospital, treatment and correctional facilities through a coordinated approach
- Track days between identified as in need of housing upon discharge and connection to support

## CLIENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

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Journey Home plans to end chronic homelessness by March 31st, 2024 and veteran homelessness by March 31st, 2022. The Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS) improvement project for Coordinated Access focuses on enhancing inter-agency case management systems, including the improvement of data sharing processes, and generating real-time local aggregate data on the state of homelessness.

#### Why This Matters

There is currently no effective shared client information system across outreach teams, shelters, Coordinated Access and supportive housing. The result of this lack of integration is incomplete, fragmented and time-consuming communication between workers, particularly regarding transitions. This impacts service quality, leads to effort duplication by workers and re-traumatizes an already vulnerable population as they are compelled to repeat their story multiple times to access services.

The HMIS improvement project for Coordinated Access helps ensure seamless service provision, accelerating the progress of people experiencing homelessness in their journey towards permanent housing and wellness. It will also enable the HMIS and Coordinated Access to be used as a planning tool, to focus future investments on targeted interventions using an evidence-based data-driven approach. The success of this project will help with the realization of everyone's right to permanent safe and sustainable housing.

#### Current Situation

The visioning phase of the HMIS improvement project is complete, the goal being to co-create, with all stakeholders, a client-centered, sector wide, highly usable, functionally broad

and locally tailored information system. Our vision is to move those experiencing homelessness from "Access" to "Housed" safely, fairly and efficiently. Local stakeholders agree on the value of bringing this vision into reality.

We continue to work to address government information sharing challenges and to explore the parameters of data collection, management and data ethics. If the status quo persists, clients' journeys towards securing a permanent home will continue to be long and arduous, service duplication and overlap will persist, and people experiencing homelessness will continue to be re-traumatized as they are required to repeatedly share their personal story in order to access fragmented services.

#### Next Steps

- Complete the data roadmap and framework development to ensure viability and scalability
- Continue to build Regional and Provincial partnerships regarding HMIS improvements, situated within Coordinated Access processes.
- Present a policy change paper to the Office of the Minister of Housing and Health on the value of integrating inter-agency case management systems and using Coordinated Access aggregated data as a local planning tool.
- Provide a detailed roadmap of the steps involved in integrating inter-agency case management systems, with data sharing capabilities following privacy legislation.
- Create Key Performance Indicators, based on both operations and client information system data, to measure agency and system-wide achievements, as steps towards reaching shared goals.

## AGENCY CAPACITY BUILDING

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One of the key challenges our sector faces is the overall lack of workforce capacity across the community. Historically there has been a shortfall of available staff, particularly in front line positions, and the turnover rates are significant. Many organizations are also dealing with ongoing vicarious trauma faced in the complexities of their work and burnout is a common reality.

This coupled with low wages, impedes the sector's ability to ensure a continuous inflow of people entering the workforce, and promotes a continued cycle of agencies existing on the verge of a staffing shortage.

COVID-19 has added to the complexities of this issue, and our need to create additional services and housing, including complex needs housing, adds to the urgency to address this critical aspect of our planning.

### Why This Matters

The need for supports and services for people experiencing homelessness continues to grow and we know that our need to develop housing with supports and complex needs housing will continue to increase. It is imperative that the sector has enough trained and competent staff to meet the future current and future demand for services; and that the competencies and skills required to work in this sector be recognized and compensated accordingly. Failure to establish competencies, career laddering and market comparative compensation in this sector will inevitably rupture the viability of the sector and widen the labour shortage gap.

### Current Situation

In response to severe staff shortages, and in light of potential staff absences due to COVID19, Journey Home formed the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) in December 2020. Students from a variety of related post-secondary disciplines were approached to join. Once on the CERT list, students received overdose prevention and anti-stigma training

thanks to a partnership with Living Positive. CERT members were then able to choose their preferred non-profit, with Journey Home matching and referring the students to the respective HR departments. 11 CERT list members have been employed by sector agencies and 11 additional CERT list members are currently undergoing agencies' recruitment processes.

CERT is a pilot project that meets an immediate and acute staff shortage need during COVID19. It also highlights the need for greater operator capacity, the value of awareness-raising regarding this need amongst networks of students and the importance of promoting experiential learning through working with vulnerable populations.

Journey Home is also launching a multi-year project focused on competency and compensation analysis; credentialing and standards of practice framework, and other workforce enhancement projects. This area of focus aims to address current and long-term workforce sustainability needs.

### Next Steps

- Provide CERT as an ongoing resource for operators and a vehicle of system change through experiential learning and exposure to the needs of vulnerable populations.
- CERT will continue to match and refer the remaining students to the nonprofits. In April 2021, CERT will seek project evaluation feedback from participating non-profits and students to improve this service in the future.
- Journey Home will commence a competency and compensation analysis project and will convene stakeholders to begin further workforce capacity building planning

## FAITH COMMUNITIES AND THE FAITH COLLECTIVE

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Faith Communities first became involved with Journey Home in Spring 2018 during their participation in the Faith Design Lab where they designed a roadmap for working together to form an interfaith collective to support the Strategy implementation. In Summer 2018, an interfaith service mapping exercise took place in partnership with Metro Community. In December 2019, Journey Home convened an interfaith roundtable, with awareness raising activities, Lived Experience stories and

sharing of expertise. There was also a fundraiser held for a critical rent supplement program run by CMHA. Some members of the collective raised \$25,000 for this important cause.

### Why This Matters

Building a Faith Collective is key to our efforts to prevent and end homelessness as faith communities often mobilize around common good initiatives in our community. Faith communities

are compassionate and committed to community-building, creating and sustaining relationships with others to ensure belonging, and in fiscally supporting many homeless serving programs. Faith communities can also be impactful on a large scale, through the convening of awareness raising anti-stigma campaigns and through the sharing of people's stories which showcases the resilience and strength in the people we serve. Our local faith partners have a vital interest and role in developing sustainable solutions.

### Current Situation

A series of workshops are underway to build a Faith Collective, using appreciative inquiry; as well as the co-development of a shared vision, guiding principles and focus areas. The first workshop, attended by 40+ participants, set the stage, providing opportunities for connection, awareness raising activities, an update on Journey Home's achievements so far, a report on faith communities' involvement to date, a review of

needs and recommendations to end homelessness, and Lived Experience sharing of their expertise and experiences. The workshop finished with an exercise in imagining what the Faith Collective could be to ensure that everyone has a place to call home. This engagement process is honored to include Baha'i, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Unitarian faith communities.

We will continue to nurture the existing connections and networks built during the Faith Collective workshop process to ensure inclusive participation and evolve the collective as the roadmap is completed.

### Next Steps

- Complete the Faith Collective workshops and develop the roadmap for action
- Establish a structure that enables action and promotes collaborative engagement

## KELOWNA HOMELESSNESS RESEARCH COLLABORATIVE

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Following a Research-Focused Journey Home Design Lab, a team of interdisciplinary researchers from UBC-O, Okanagan College, and Interior Health came together to form the Kelowna Homelessness Research Collaborative (KHRC), in 2019. This team worked with partners, pursuing innovations in technology, organizational change, and the community impact of stigma. The mission is to understand and support the provision of services to, and the perspectives of, individuals with Lived Experience of homelessness or at risk.

### Why This Matters

Ending homelessness is a complex problem that requires interdisciplinary solutions. KHRC is therefore uniquely placed to advocate for collaborative inquiry and innovation. In the context of finite resources for services as well as the ever-increasing array of possible actions, KHRC is also well-positioned to extract and synthesize available evidence to shape community planning and practice.

As an actor outside the sector, KHRC is able to perform inquiry and knowledge mobilization activities without the competing time demands required for service delivery. Likewise, as a neutral actor, KHRC is well-positioned for the storage, collection, and dissemination of confidential opinions and information, be that anonymized data or confidential interviews to develop a broad account of emerging trends, challenges, and opportunities.

### Current Situation

Over the past year, KHRC has engaged in [a number of projects](#), including a summary report on the early stages of the COVID-19 response, the hosting of group discussions and the production of reports on the vulnerabilities associated with homelessness and potential solutions, available on the [Resource page](#), literature reviews submitted for academic publication as well as general audience summaries related to pandemic planning associated with vulnerable groups, comparisons of homelessness plans, and the intersection of technology and homelessness services.

KHRC is working with partners on a multi-year evaluation of programs and experiences of youth accessing housing and supports, particularly in the context of COVID-19 and Housing First for Youth initiatives. KHRC is involved in the dissemination of a Traumatic Brain Injury screener for frontline use, as well as associated training. KHRC is also exploring options for moving ahead with a research symposium event to further circulate knowledge produced and to grow partnerships. KHRC remains in open dialogue with a number of individuals, organizations, and jurisdictions with an interest in how research can advance community needs and outcomes.

### Key Recommendations

- KHRC to continue to mobilize the collective expertise across disciplines, institutions, and the broader community to expand and streamline data collection, data analysis and instrument development, to expand knowledge production and mobilization.

- KHRC to continue to collaborate with a diverse partner network, including policymakers, funders, sector management, frontline workers, Lived Experience groups, the population of those experiencing or at risk of homelessness and the broader community.
- KHRC to continue to leverage the collective academic networks to both identify and import emerging practices and knowledge as well as disseminate local learnings to the broader academic audience, with the specific goal of being cumulative and collaborative.
- Journey Home to maintain regularly occurring connections with KHRC to ensure alignment and involvement with the range of community objectives and priorities.

- Pursue long term financing, with a medium-term goal of establishing a physical space for research, knowledge exchange, and community engagement.
- KHRC undertaking discussions with partner organizations on potential projects as well as supporting their capacity to conduct and disseminate their own internal inquiries. KHRC looks forward to deeper engagement with those experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

### Next Steps

- Provide academic input for those associated with the support sector including policy makers, planners, and providers and users of services.

### How We Will Measure Success

- Number of academic publications (and citations) per year, funding per year.
- Number of projects with community partners per year
- Lived Experience engagement per year
- Number of service users involved per year
- Number of service providers involved per year

## COVID 19 RESPONSE

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Upon the onset of COVID-19 in our communities, Journey Home, in partnership with the City, BC Housing, and Interior Health, took the lead in coordinating the community COVID-19 Homelessness Response Plan. This plan encompasses the communities of Kelowna, West Kelowna and the District of Lake Country.

Our work began in early 2020 and continues to evolve as the impact of the pandemic ebbs and flows in the homeless serving sector.

### Why This Matters

It was critical to mitigate the risk to life and health for people that we serve across agencies, the teams that serve them, and to ensure the sustainability of the sector during this period.

The need to explore service integration and interagency partnerships has become prevalent in our community of operators and has resulted in unprecedented collaboration between stakeholders.

### Current Situation

To enable our community to sustain the unique coordinated approach adopted by government agencies and non-profits since the onset of the pandemic, Journey Home has continued to lead the COVID19 homelessness response over the past year. As a sector we have implemented many short, and long-term solutions that have helped us through this crisis but also built the foundation for future innovations in service delivery.

Journey Home also convenes all operators and stakeholders every three weeks, to share key updates on the COVID19 Five Stream Homelessness Response Strategy. The strategy takes a sub-population focus and develops wraparound services for each stream; based on health factors, risk and support needs.

- Stream 1 serves people in shelters
- Stream 2 serves people at risk of COVID19 who are homeless and immunocompromised.
- Stream 3 serves people who have had contact with COVID19 and/or are starting to get symptoms and need to self-isolate
- Stream 4 serves people who test positive for COVID19 who do not require hospitalization but require self-isolation
- Stream 5 serves people sheltering outside.

The Youth Coordinated Access Table also adapted its function in response to COVID19, convening a space for service providers to share updates, develop solutions and coordinate their responses to newly identified young people. This pivot led to a research opportunity and a partnership between Making the Shift, A Way Home Kelowna and the Kelowna Homelessness Research Consortium (KHRC), with a project focusing on the impacts of COVID19 on young people experiencing homelessness.

The Lived Experience Circle on Homelessness (LECoH) has also partnered with KHRC to conduct outreach with people



experiencing homelessness through COVID to understand their experiences of access services and housing during the pandemic and to distill research learnings from the interviews and outreach conducted.

To support the staffing capacity needs of the sector, Journey Home established a Community Emergency Response Team, creating a pool of additional staff comprised of people from across related post-secondary programs. This is detailed further in the Agency Capacity Building section.

As we continue to work locally to ensure continued operations and evolution, Journey Home has also worked with national partners on broader solutions to homelessness. This ongoing national effort and advocacy has resulted in significant additional fiscal investments being distributed for emergency response activities and a Federal Rapid Housing Initiative.

### Next Steps

- To continue to monitor COVID-19 risk and response activities as part of a tri-community approach
- Distill the learnings from our response to inform future planning and to continue integrated service model enhancements
- Embed the LECOH/KHRC research findings into the COVID-19 recovery plan and systems planning efforts
- Youth research report to be published later 2021. Share the youth research report findings in order to highlight the strengths and gaps of service in the youth sector.

### How We Will Measure Success

- Minimal exposure and/or risk of exposure to COVID-19 across service provider partners
- Staffing capacity through the Community Emergency Response Team is effective in meeting staffing needs and builds sector capacity
- System capacity in shelters, motels and outreach meets or exceeds community demand for services.
- Emergency outbreak protocols remain in place throughout the pandemic and are effective in mitigating spread and exposure

## MOVING FORWARD TO FUNCTIONAL ZERO



The findings, recommendations, and key performance indicators articulated within this report all culminate to create a broader evolution in systems integration. The key to systems integration is in delivering services in a way that puts the client at the center of the design. Without embedding a person-centred approach, we will continue to design services and supports that fail to support people through their journey in a holistic way.

Our collective learnings as a sector have derived many person-centred systems change requirements, and we have seen progress in aspects of this work since the inception of the Journey Home strategy. It is critical that we continue to deepen our focus on sustainable solutions and that where required, we boldly challenge the status quo and aspects of the sector that no longer serves the needs of people experiencing homelessness through a systems approach lens.

Journey Home will continue its scope beyond the areas highlighted in this report, as our role encompasses all facets of the system, and our key partnerships on the periphery. We believe much work still needs to occur to create a common vision for a one system approach however we are committed

to continuing our work as a convener, collaborator, consultant and systems disruptor.

We are fearless in our endeavors to reach functional zero homelessness by 2024 and in designing community level prevention measures to ensure our end to homelessness is sustainable. Through future planning and collaboration, we will develop and pilot innovate solutions and service models, as we continue to design an integrated system for our community and region.

Our journey to end homelessness has been one of deep learnings in the first two years since the inception of the Strategy, and we have celebrated so many key initiatives coming into fruition that benefit the lives of the people we serve. Our work going forward is guided by a clear vision, and we will continue to root that vision in our community planning and ensure the expertise and insights of a lived experience lens is at the forefront of our collective efforts.

The road to functional zero can often feel long, but the journey to reach our goal is where we have manifested the best of our collective work as a sector. Together, we will continue to map forward for functional zero.