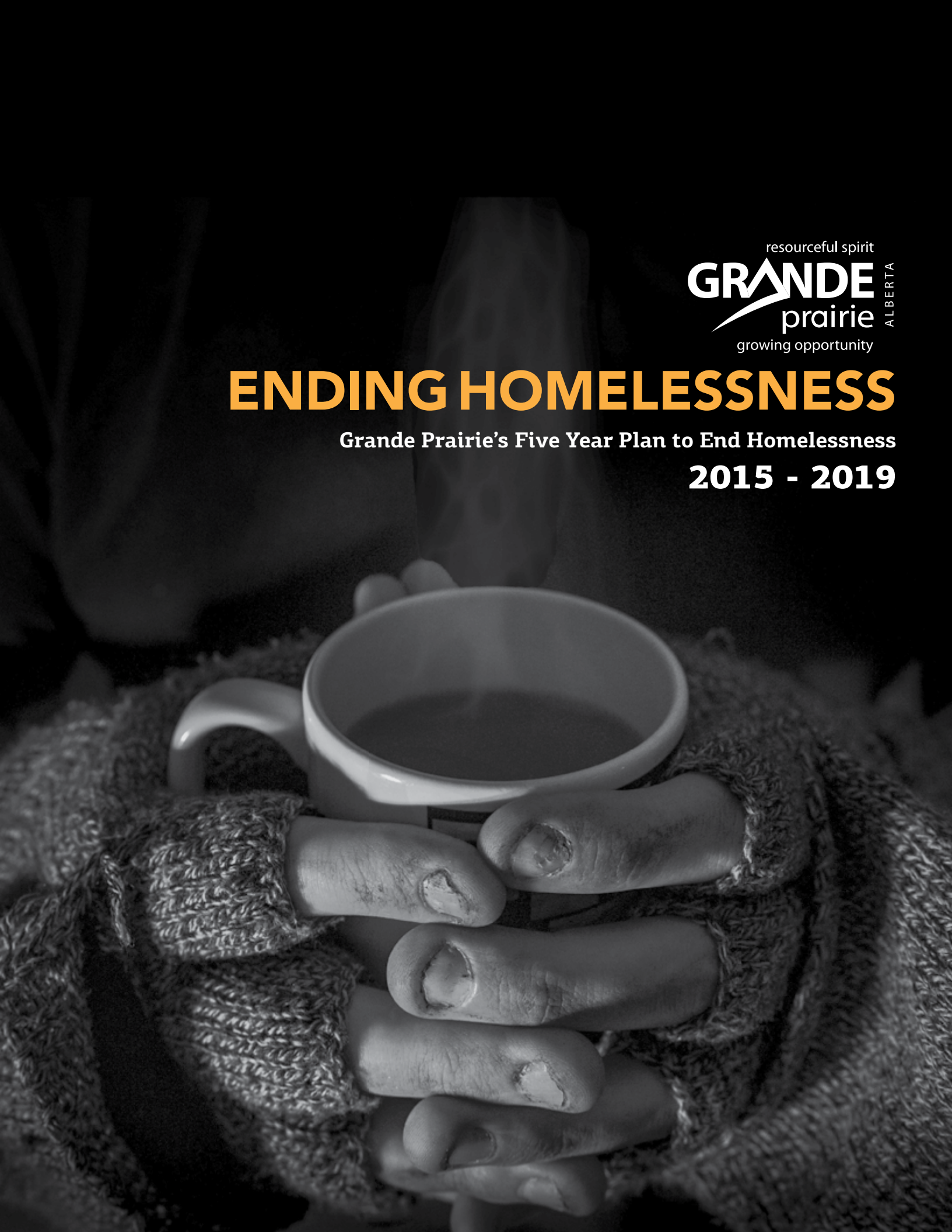




ENDING HOMELESSNESS

Grande Prairie's Five Year Plan to End Homelessness

2015 - 2019



CONTENTS

COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD ON HOMELESSNESS (CABH)	1
VISION AND GUIDING BELIEFS	1
INTRODUCTION.....	2
PURPOSE	2
2009-2014: THE PAST FIVE YEARS IN REVIEW	3
HOMELESSNESS DEFINED.....	7
HOMELESSNESS IN GRANDE PRAIRIE	8
THE PLAN AND ACCOUNTABILITY 2015-2019	9
COMMUNITY PLAN DEVELOPMENT.....	9
ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK: INCREASED INFRASTRUCTURE	10
ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK: STRONG, COHESIVE, INTEGRATED COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS	12
ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK: STRENGTHENED COMMUNITY RESOURCES	14
ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK: AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT.....	15
CABH AND ADVOCACY	16
CONCLUSION	16
APPENDIX 1.....	17
APPENDIX 2.....	19
APPENDIX 3.....	20

COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD ON HOMELESSNESS (CABH)

CABH Role

The current working model involves government funding from both the Government of Canada and the Alberta Government, flowing down to the Municipal City of Grande Prairie. The Community Social Development (CSD) department, acting in the role of the Community Based Organization (CBO), administers the funding. The role of the CABH is to oversee

the funding streams, initiate Requests for Proposals from service providers, review service delivery, evaluate outcomes, and report and make recommendations to City Council for project funding. CABH will provide leadership for the implementation and monitoring of the Plan to End Homelessness, 2015-2019.

VISION AND GUIDING BELIEFS

Vision Statement: "Community with Homes for All"

Guiding Beliefs:

- Inclusive communities
- Everyone's right to safe and secure housing
- Client's right to self determination
- Community responsibility for access to affordable housing
- Empowering individuals

Current representation of the CABH includes individuals from:

- Alberta Health Services
- Property Management
- Aboriginal
- Youth
- Seniors
- Newcomers
- Francophone
- Disabilities
- Interagency Council on Homelessness
- Federal Government
- Provincial Government
- Municipal Government

INTRODUCTION

Grande Prairie enjoys a robust economy, with a youthful demographic. As the largest city in northwestern Alberta, the City services a trading area of over 250,000 people spanning northwestern Alberta, northeastern British Columbia and the Northwest Territories. It is the centre of a diversified regional economy responding to the forestry, agricultural, and oil and gas industries. As a regional service hub, city-based companies provide service to oil and natural gas activities to the City's trading area. In an economy dependent on oil, gas, and forestry, economic cycles of boom and bust are more pronounced in respect to employment and earnings, rental vacancy rates and availability of affordable housing.

It is the aim of the City of Grande Prairie's Community Advisory Board on Homelessness (CABH) to utilize the unique nature of Grande Prairie's economy and its community resources, to end homelessness by 2019.

The City of Grande Prairie is part of a broader 7 Cities Network made up of seven major cities across the province of Alberta who have made a commitment to support the Provincial Plan to End Homelessness.

As part of the commitment to end homelessness—both province-wide and in our cities—a plan unique for each region has been developed.

In 2009, the City created its first Multi-Year Plan to End Homelessness (2009-2014), setting 5 broad goals and preparing the stage for enhanced collaboration and integration of programs and services at the municipal, provincial and federal levels.¹ A strong foundation has been laid to achieve the end goal of ending homelessness in our City and to support the provincial goal of Alberta-wide success.

PURPOSE

End Homelessness in Grande Prairie By 2019

Homelessness is not a simple fix with one solution. Contributing factors such as family violence, childhood trauma, and poverty can be precipitating factors for vulnerable people.

Homelessness is multidimensional and takes the commitment and dedication of the community as a whole and all levels of government to bring it to an end.

Grande Prairie will celebrate success when we have a system of care that provides the following:

- Prevention and Diversion programs to support people at risk of becoming homeless through the provision of short-term emergency supports.
- Appropriate, permanent housing options with needed supports, within a three week period for individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

¹ City of Grande Prairie Multi-year Plan to End Homelessness 2009-2014, Full report at www.cityofgp.com/index.aspx?page=905

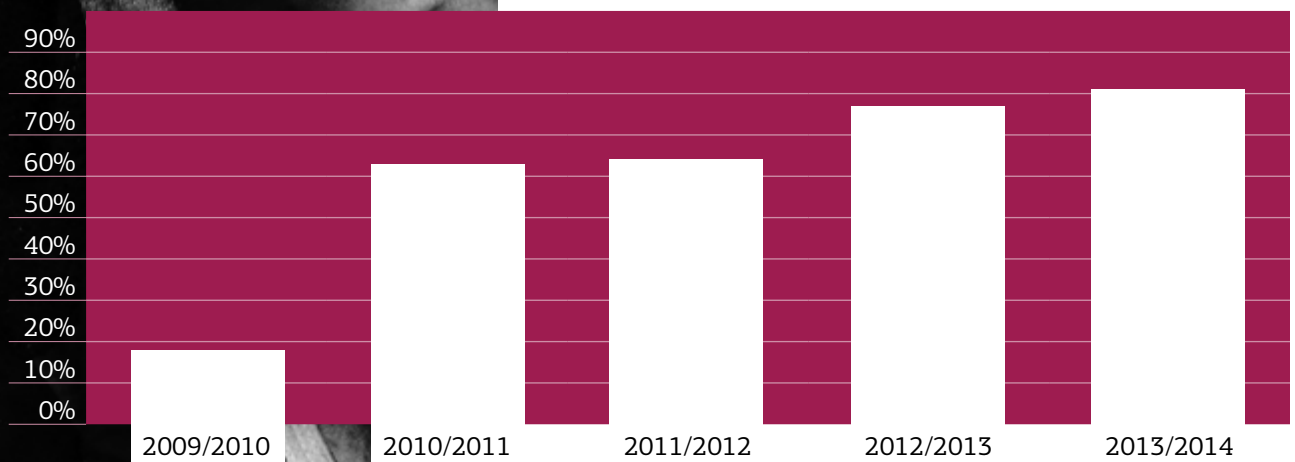


2009-2014: THE PAST FIVE YEARS IN REVIEW

In the “Evaluation of the Grande Prairie Multi-Year Plan to End Homelessness”, Monica Kreiner with Moniyasko Consulting reviewed the plan and concluded that the City of Grande Prairie has made significant progress towards ending homelessness in the City. The following is a summary of Kreiner’s findings as they relate to the 2009-2014 Multi-Year Plan to End Homelessness.²

In 2009, the City of Grande Prairie adopted a “Housing First” approach to support individuals and families to find and maintain permanent housing. According to Kreiner’s evaluation, over 833 people who were experiencing homelessness in Grande Prairie were served via Housing First programs. Over the past five years, the success rate has been steadily increasing. Kreiner cites exit outcomes and success rates, showing that every year Housing First programs have been in place, the success rate has improved, going from 18% in the first year of operation to 81% in the last year of the multi-year plan.

Success Rate



Perhaps of significant note, according to the report, Aboriginal clients are over 20% more successful in the program. This demographic makes up 40% of all Housing First clients in Grande Prairie.

The first-five year plan established five main goal areas. Although general, the goals acted as guiding principles for the activities, projects and programs of the subsequent five years. The main goal areas, strategies and results are documented on the following pages.

² Evaluation of the Multi-Year Plan to End Homelessness.
Full report at www.cityofgp.com/index.aspx?page=905

2009-2014: THE PAST FIVE YEARS IN REVIEW CONTINUED

Goal 1: Facilitate an adequate supply of appropriate permanent housing options

Strategy: Develop 550 units of affordable housing, including 75 units of supportive housing

Results

- i. 275 additional housing units were developed

Goal 2: Provide enhanced and coordinated services for people who are homeless

Strategy: Strengthen coordination and avoid fragmentation of services

Results

- i. City of Grande Prairie was established as the Community Based Organization (CBO), to administer the Provincial Government, Outreach and Support Services Initiative funding
- ii. Began “Centralized Intake and Assessment” as a CBO project in 2009 to streamline one access point for service
- iii. City outsourced Centralized Intake and Assessment services to a community agency in 2012
- iv. Housing Locator position created to assist clients and Case Managers with finding homes

Strategy: Continue to implement, expand and educate on a Grande Prairie based “Housing First” approach

Results

- i. Survey conducted regarding knowledge of Housing First
- ii. 88% had heard of Housing First, 53% knew who was eligible, 62% knew someone who had accessed Housing First and 59% were referred to the program
- iii. Intake Agency holds information sessions with various groups about Housing First eligibility and processes

Strategy: Enhance local Housing Support Fund

Results

- i. Fund has increased from \$126,954 in 2010-2011 to \$373,816 in 2013-2014
- ii. Funds used for first month’s rent, security deposits, rent enhancement, moving and storage costs between housing and expanded to gift certificates for purchasing housing related items

Strategy: Advocate for all levels of government to take a more systemic approach to addressing homelessness

Results

- i. The CBO engaged with the 7 Cities Network across Alberta to work on challenges related to homelessness—the Network created a forum to address issues of common interest and concern in the implementation of individual community plans
- ii. The 7 Cities Network focused on engagement and education, policy change, sustainable funding, national recognition, and provided expertise

2009-2014: THE PAST FIVE YEARS IN REVIEW CONTINUED

Goal 3: Ensure appropriate emergency accommodation is available as needed, but transition people quickly into permanent housing

Strategy: Improve the capacity of programs to rapidly house and rehouse people

Results

- i. Team Leaders from agencies meet monthly with the CBO to look at strategies to improve success – the group generates solutions including donations of school supplies, renting storage lockers for transitioning clients, creation of Housing Locator position, hiring of a Street Outreach Worker
- ii. Rotary House emergency shelter expanded and opened in 2009 with emergency shelter and some transitional and permanent housing options, accommodates up to 140 clients
- iii. “Shelter Visioning Committee” focuses on moving towards 21 day shelter stays and assisting the Province to meet the goals in the provincial Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness

Strategy: Advocate for adequate and appropriate resources to help agencies address the challenges and pressures they face

Results

- i. Ongoing training of case managers
- ii. Requests for Proposals outlined salary ranges to ensure standardized salaries for staff recruitment and retention

Strategy: Establish Second Stage Housing for women and children fleeing domestic violence

Results

- i. Odyssey House: 15 apartment, supportive housing project in progress– received funding from all levels of government, anticipated opening in Spring 2015

Strategy: Support the youth shelter and agencies that deliver services to homeless youth

Results

- i. Sunrise House is now exclusively a youth emergency shelter, receives \$110,000 grant from the City each year and raises an additional \$250,000 or more to meet the operational budget

The Kreiner Evaluation shows that the City has made significant inroads in its goal of eliminating homelessness. Appropriate housing options are being created and supported, collaboration and integration is being encouraged and fostered, and client services are becoming streamlined and specific. The five year plan, 2015-2019, will build on these foundational successes, creating specific and measurable goals, strategies, tactics and outcomes to accurately guide the next five years.

2009-2014: THE PAST FIVE YEARS IN REVIEW CONTINUED

Goal 4: Prevent people from becoming homeless

Strategy: Continue to take preventative measures when addressing homelessness

Results

- i. The United Way Emergency Fund: assists with accommodation costs, food, medication, transportation, utility arrears
- ii. City of Grande Prairie engaged in a provincial poverty reduction initiative

Goal 5: Establish an implementation process for the Plan that builds on the strengths of the community, develops capacity, promotes collaboration, innovation and cost-effectiveness, and measures progress

Strategy: Committee formed to establish implementation process and action plan

Results

- i. CABH formed a review committee to monitor and review the community plan to end homelessness. Recommendation are put forward to City Council for government funding allocations.

Examples –Acted on need for centralized assessment, met with other levels of government including MLA's, MP and Deputy Minister; suggested the allocation to agencies of professional development dollars to ease the coordination of city-wide training for Housing First staff; funded projects report monthly to CABH on outcomes

Strategy: Implement a data management system

Results

- i. Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) – A software designed for case management and data collection is now being used provincially to track the success of Housing First; case management staff and team leads have received training

Strategy: Development of annual reports and communications to keep community and agencies informed

Results

- i. Yearly reports have been compiled since 2006
- ii. Various community engagement activities have occurred, including Community Engagement Extravaganza, Ground Zero Task Force, Annual Homeless Connect Days, Homeless Initiatives Appreciation Luncheons, Community Consultations, Interagency Council on Homelessness Presentation



HOMELESSNESS DEFINED

In the Canadian Homeless Research Network's 2012 document, entitled "Canadian Definition of Homelessness", homelessness is defined as:

- Describing the situation of an individual or family without stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it. It is the result of systemic or societal barriers, a lack of affordable and appropriate housing, the individual/household's financial, mental, cognitive, behavioral or physical challenges, and/or racism and discrimination; and
- Most people do not choose to be homeless, and the experience is generally negative, unpleasant, stressful and distressing.

Homelessness encompasses a range of housing and shelter circumstances, ranging from being without any shelter to being insecurely housed. There are a range of physical living situations that may be part of "homelessness."

These include:

- Unsheltered, or absolutely homeless and living on the streets or in places not intended for human habitation;
- Emergency Sheltered, including those staying in overnight shelters for people who are experiencing homelessness, as well as shelters for those impacted by family violence;
- Provisionally Accommodated, referring to those whose accommodation is temporary or lacks security of tenure; and
- At Risk of Homelessness, referring to people who are not homeless, but whose current economic and/or housing situation is precarious or does not meet public health and safety standards.

(Canadian Homelessness Research Network (2012)
Canadian Definition of Homelessness. Homeless Hub: www.homelesshub.ca/CHRNhomelessdefinition/)

HOMELESSNESS IN GRANDE PRAIRIE

In Grande Prairie, as in the rest of Canada, the face of homelessness is varied. However, certain sub-populations have been identified as being especially vulnerable to experiencing homelessness or are at risk of becoming homeless, including:

- Aboriginal peoples
- Youth aging out of foster care
- Single parents
- Families living in poverty
- Newcomers to Grande Prairie
- People impacted by family violence
- Seniors
- Active substance users
- Individuals with mental illness and/or chronic physical health conditions

In 2011, 9.7% of the population of the City of Grande Prairie had an Aboriginal identity (Statistics Canada, 2011). Through the evaluation by Moniyasko Consulting it was noted that of those individuals accessing Housing First supports, **40% were Aboriginal**.

Based on the after tax, low income measure, the proportion of the population living in low income in Grande Prairie is 10.3% (Statistics Canada, 2011). In total, 22.6% of households in Grande Prairie spend 30% or more of total income on housing costs.

To determine the number of families needing help with housing costs, Moniyasko Consulting used the CNITs for 2011 and the Statistics Canada, National Household Survey 2011 income levels for Grande Prairie. It is calculated that **1782 families** were needing assistance with housing costs. The Grande Spirit Foundation provides assistance to some of these families as follows:

Families needing help with housing costs	1782
Less: Rent geared to income	41
Less: Affordable housing set up with landlords	275
Less: Rent subsidies for private landlord/tenant agreements	146
Total Families Being Helped	462
Families Still Needing Help with Housing Costs	1320
Average number on Grande Spirit Foundation's waiting list for subsidized housing supports	500

Individuals from all the noted groups may require tailored supports to assist them in making the transition from homelessness to permanently being housed. This may include the provision of emergency beds, safe and secure interim housing, staffed and supported housing with daytime supports, and/or permanent supportive housing with 24 hour supports in place.

The broad needs represented by this diverse group requires the ongoing collaboration of service providers and all levels of government, keeping in mind that action plans specific to the particular sub-populations may need to be developed in further detail to meet unique needs.

April 1, 2013 until March 31, 2014 – City of Grande Prairie Annual Report

- 320 Housing First assessments were completed
- 243 individuals received case management supports to find and maintain permanent housing

³ The Core Need Income Threshold (CNIT) is a calculation to determine the income that a household needs in order to secure adequate private sector accommodation. *City of Grande Prairie Affordable Housing Master Plan*, 10. Full report at www.cityofgp.com/index.aspx?page=905

THE PLAN AND ACCOUNTABILITY

2015-2019

This Multi-Year Plan, covering 2015–2019 provides not only a strategic framework for eliminating homelessness in Grande Prairie but a clear and concise Accountability Model, including 4 Main Goal Areas and corresponding Objectives, Strategies, Tactics and Performance Measurements/Outcomes. At any point in time, the Accountability Model may be used to give a snapshot evaluation of the plan.

The City of Grande Prairie will be successful in ending homelessness by focusing on a multi-pronged approach, zeroing in on four priority goal areas outlined on the following page.

COMMUNITY PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The development of the Grande Prairie Five Year Plan to End Homelessness 2015-2019 was a year-long process that involved the following;

- A series of Community Consultations facilitated by HMS Consulting from February 2014 to April 2014 were attended by 112 individuals representing over 55 organizations. The consultations resulted in successes, gaps and priorities being identified;
- A survey of 44 people without homes was conducted in person and completed in October 2014 by Moniyasko Consulting. The purpose of the survey was to give voice to "Lived Experience" and to align the successes, gaps and priorities for the next five years to the community voices;
- A CABH review committee was actively involved in the Multi-Year Plan development and meetings were held over the 12 month period with HMS Consulting; and
- Grande Prairie City Council moved the adoption of the Plan for the next five years.

FOUR MAIN GOAL AREAS OF THE 2015-2019 PLAN



Accountability Framework (Pages 12-19)

The following Accountability Framework includes broad goal areas, specific objectives, refined strategies and defined tactics. This document is intended for use as a measurement tool, identifying not only the 'What' and 'Who', but the 'How' and 'How Much' of each strategic goal area. This tool will enable CABH and community stakeholders to easily measure and define "success" as it relates to the elimination of homelessness in Grande Prairie.

ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK: INCREASED INFRASTRUCTURE

Objective	Strategy	Tactics	Who	Outcome
Increase Affordable and Social Housing Units	Work with landlords and property managers to increase the number of units for hard-to-house individuals	Meet with landlords and property managers to educate and inform on affordable and social housing needs	CBO Landlords Property managers	Landlords/property managers understand affordable and social housing needs Designated rental units are available for Housing First clients
	Advocate with provincial and federal governments regarding affordable and social housing needs	Meet with local MLAs and MP to advocate for capital dollars to increase affordable housing builds in the City	CABH CBO MLAs MP	Increased affordable housing units by 20%
	Support the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CNAEH) in their advocacy with Federal and Provincial governments for increased affordable housing infrastructure across Canada	Maintain membership in the CNAEH; attend and participate in national conferences and advocacy opportunities relating to affordable housing; house individuals through the national 20,000 Homes Campaign	CANEH Service providers Clients	Clients have access to affordable housing Clients are housed
	Educate City planners and developers on the need for increased rental housing stock, particularly 3 or more bedrooms for families	Meet with City planners and development services to educate and strategize around the need for increased rental properties	City Planning and Development Dept. Property Developers	City planners and developers have an increased understanding of the need for increased rental stock particularly for large families
	Advocate with City Council for policy changes to increase affordable housing units in rental properties in the City	Meet with City Council to advocate for a policy requiring new developments to incorporate a percentage of affordable housing in new builds	CBO City Council	City policy ensures 10% of new rental developments are designated affordable housing

Objective	Strategy	Tactics	Who	Outcome
Increase Aboriginal Housing Options	Support Aboriginal organizations to increase supported housing options with a cultural focus for Aboriginal people	Meet with representatives of Aboriginal organizations to support the completion of a Needs Assessment for Aboriginal housing	CBO CABH Aboriginal Organizations	A Needs Assessment is completed identifying Aboriginal housing needs
		Support the process of accessing capital funding to initiate a supported housing project	CBO CABH Aboriginal Organizations	Aboriginal organizations have accessed funding for a supported housing project
		Request for Proposals through provincial OSSI funding, solicits proposals for a Case Management team to support Aboriginal programs and services in a Supported Housing project	CBO CABH Aboriginal Organizations	A successful proponent is identified to provide case management supports with Aboriginal programs and services in a Supported Housing project

Objective	Strategy	Tactics	Who	Outcome
Provide Interim/ Supported Housing Options for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth leaving care, shelter • Families who are homeless • Women fleeing domestic violence • Discharges from hospital, treatment centers and correctional facilities 	Work with new and existing landlords/property managers and affordable housing managers to secure designated 'interim' housing units	Meet with landlords and property owners to educate and inform of need	CBO Landlords Property Owners Service Providers	Landlords and property owners understand the need for designated interim housing units
		Meet with landlords/property owners to advocate for designated units in existing buildings for interim housing	CBO Landlords Property Owners Service Providers	Interim housing units secured
		Meet with Service Providers to align support services in the interim housing and create agreements with landlords, property owners	CBO Landlords Property Owners Service Providers	Service agreements in place for Interim Housing supports
	Work with the Youth Emergency Shelter acting as Sunrise House, Pregnant and Parenting Teen program and other youth serving agencies to identify housing and support needs along with potential property owners or developers to partner on the housing location	Meet with potential housing partners to discuss and inform on the need for housing options specific to youth	CBO Sunrise House Pregnant and Parenting Teens Youth Service Providers Landlords & Property Mangers	Housing partners are aware of need for housing options specific to youth who are experiencing homelessness
		Provide funding for a youth Needs Assessment through the provincial OSSI funding stream to identify housing and support needs of youth experiencing homelessness	CCBO Sunrise House Pregnant and Parenting Teens Youth Service Providers Landlords & Property Mangers	Needs assessment completed identifying housing and supports specific to youth
		Recruit housing partners and develop partnership agreement	CBO Sunrise House Pregnant and Parenting Teens Youth Service Providers Landlords & Property Mangers	Housing partnerships formed
		Meet with Odyssey House representatives to identify case management support needs	CBO Odyssey House Service Providers	Case management supports in place to support women in the 15-unit Supported Housing project
	Work with Odyssey House to identify case management support needs for women leaving the emergency shelter and going into Odyssey House's 15-unit Supported Housing project			

Objective	Strategy	Tactics	Who	Outcome
Create Congregate Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Options 24 hours per day support for high-needs individuals, with access to mental health & addictions services	Support community service providers and property owners to partner and create a congregat PSH 24 hr/day housing project	Work with interested stakeholders to complete a Needs Assessment to identify number of units needed	CBO Service Providers Property Owners	Needs Assessment Completed
		Support service provider in location of site and development of PSH model	CBO Service Providers Property Owners	City of Grande Prairie has a congregat permanent supportive housing project for high needs clients with 24 hour/day supports

ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK: STRONG, COHESIVE, INTEGRATED COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Objective	Strategy	Tactics	Who	Outcome
Formalize Partnerships Between Agencies, Community and All Levels of Government	Provide opportunities for City Council and/or Mayor involvement in championing the Homeless Initiatives and housing options	Meet with and present opportunity for involvement to Council	CABH City Council	City Councillor or Mayor, champions the Homeless Initiatives for the City of Grande Prairie
	Develop an integrated team of professionals to support clients with complex and co-occurring issues	Meet with Alberta Health Services and other community partners to develop an integrated team of professionals to meet regularly to support clients with complex and co-occurring issues, through consultation and integrated case planning	CBO Alberta Health Services Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD) Psychiatry Medical services RCMP Justice	Integrated team of professionals meets monthly to consult and provide integrated case planning support for clients with complex and co-occurring issues
	Provide integrated supports for clients navigating through mental health, addictions and justice programs	Meet with AHS and Justice representatives to educate and inform on link between homelessness and mental health, addictions and criminal activities	CBO Alberta Justice Alberta Health Services (i.e. Diversion worker) Housing First Agencies	AB Health Services and Justice representatives understand the link between homelessness and mental health, addictions and criminal activities
		Meet with AHS and Justice to develop a standardized process to provide integrated supports for clients navigating through mental health, addictions and justice programs	CBO Alberta Justice Alberta Health Services (i.e. Diversion worker) Housing First Agencies	A standardized process is in place to provide integrated supports for clients navigating through mental health, addictions and justice programs
	Increase collaborative opportunities for Housing First agencies and RCMP to work together with a common goal of providing support for Housing First clients	Meet with RCMP and Housing First agencies to educate and inform on collaborative opportunities available to support clients	CBO RCMP Outreach Workers Housing First Case Managers	RCMP and Housing First agencies are aware of opportunities to work together with a common goal of supporting Housing First clients
	Increase collaboration between RCMP and Housing First agencies in the evenings to support clients in crisis	Put out Request for Proposals Requests to include evening support for clients in crisis	CBO RCMP Outreach Workers Housing First Case Managers	Agencies and RCMP work together in the evenings supporting Housing First clients
	Provide housing supports for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth leaving care, shelters Discharges from hospital, treatment centers and correctional facilities Discharges from shelter 	Create a discharge planning team to develop a housing placement strategy through discharge planning team	CBO Alberta Justice Alberta Health Services Child and Family Services	Discharge planning team in place A housing placement strategy is put in place for all discharges
		Discharge planning team will connect clients to Housing First supports	CBO Alberta Justice Alberta Health Services Child and Family Services Housing First Agencies	Clients connected to housing first supports

Objective	Strategy	Tactics	Who	Outcome
Increase Aboriginal Involvement in Service Provision	Target recruitment of Aboriginal staff members to Housing First teams	Meet with Housing First Executive Directors to develop a recruitment plan and practice for hiring, training and retaining Aboriginal staff	CABH CBO Housing First Agencies	A recruitment plan is in place for hiring Aboriginal staff to Housing First teams All Housing First agencies have a minimum of one Aboriginal staff person on their team
	Partner with Aboriginal organizations to provide cultural teachings for Housing First agencies, CBO and CABH	Meet with Aboriginal organizations to develop cultural teachings for Housing First agencies, CBO and CABH	CBO CABH Aboriginal Organizations Housing First Agencies	Housing First agencies, CBO and CABH have an increased understanding of Aboriginal culture



ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK: STRENGTHENED COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Objective	Strategy	Tactics	Who	Outcome
Build Agency Capacity to Support Housing First Individuals and Families	Identify support needs of agency and staff	Conduct an assessment of agency needs	CBO Agency Board/Leaders, Administration, Agency Staff	Completed assessment identifies areas of support needs for Housing First clients and staff
		Develop a strategy for strengthening agency capacity to support individuals and families	CBO Agency Board/Leaders	Strategy in place to strengthen housing agency and staff capacity to support Housing First individuals/families Agencies have the capacity to support individuals and families Agencies are healthy and thriving

Objective	Strategy	Tactics	Who	Outcome
Increase Access to Housing First Supports	Connect individuals who are homeless and using the Intox/Mat program at Rotary House to Housing First supports	Put out a Request for Proposals to include funding for evening and weekend Outreach Support at Rotary House Intox/Mat Program	CABH CBO Rotary House Service Providers	Clients in the Intox/Mat program are connected to Housing First supports
		Put out a Request for Proposals to include evening support for clients	CABH CBO Rotary House Service Providers	Evening support is available for clients through Housing First programs
	Set up a community-based, self-sustaining Rent Bank dedicated to providing interest free or low percentage rate loans to citizens at risk of becoming homeless	Meet with interested stakeholders to develop a rent bank model and process	CABH CBO Community Organizations Private Investors	Rent bank model and process developed
		Meet with community based organizations to inform and educate on the model and financial administrator role for the Rent Bank	CABH CBO Community Organizations Private Investors	Identified Community organizations are educated on the model and administrator role for a Community Rent Bank
		Meet with interested organizations to select administrator for the Rent Bank	CABH CBO Community Organizations Private Investors	An organization is in place to administrator the Rent Bank
		Advocate with business and funders for seed money to start rent bank	CABH CBO Community Organizations Private Investors	Seed money in place to start rent bank
		Advertise the Rent Bank to the Community	CBO Community Agency Citizens of Grande Prairie	Citizens access the Rent Bank

ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK: AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT

Objective	Strategy	Tactics	Who	Outcome
Increase Awareness of Homelessness and Housing First Programs and Initiatives	Engage media and citizens of Grande Prairie to bring awareness to homelessness as a social issue	Post stories and articles through social media avenues like the City's Community	CABH CBO Media	Media is being used to bring awareness to homelessness as a social issue
		Utilize a Social Development Facebook page and Twitter account	Citizens of Grande Prairie	Citizens of Grande Prairie are engaged in conversations through social media
		Prepare and send out regular press releases	Citizens of Grande Prairie	The community is informed about homelessness

Objective	Strategy	Tactics	Who	Outcome
Engage the Community in Ending Homelessness	Provide opportunities for engagement	Host an annual event to showcase the Homeless Initiatives Annual Report, programs and voices of "lived experience" Invite community members, clients and media to participate	CBO 7 Cities Network Citizens of Grande Prairie Media	Community is engaged in ending homelessness
		Conduct a Point in Time Count (PIT) every second year in partnership with 7 Cities Network and release results through media event and report Engage the community in volunteering for the PIT	CBO Community volunteers Media	Point in Time Count engages community volunteers
		Host a Conference in Grande Prairie to engage the community and clients in being part of the solution to end homelessness	CABH CBO Community members Clients	Conference is held in Grande Prairie with community participation
		Distribute a Homeless Initiatives Newsletter through email to City agencies and post for Grande Prairie citizens on CSD Facebook page Provide opportunities for citizens clients and stakeholders to become involved	CABH CBO Community members Clients	Monthly newsletter distributed with citizens and stakeholders responding with requests to be involved in ending Homelessness

Objective	Strategy	Tactics	Who	Outcome
Engage and Involve Individuals and Families (Clients) Who Have Been, or Are Currently, Experiencing Homelessness	Have a person with lived experience of being homeless, sit on the Community Advisory Board on Homelessness	Recruit a person with lived experience, to the Community Advisory Board on Homelessness	CABH CBO Individual with "lived experience"	Person with lived experience of being homeless member of the CABH
	Provide an opportunity for clients to provide feedback on Housing First supports and services	Administer an annual client feedback survey	CBO Clients	Annual client feedback survey completed

CABH AND ADVOCACY

Results of the recent Community Consultations, coupled with the experience of the past five years' and surveys of clients suggested CABH could continue its Advocacy efforts in a number of capacities. None of these areas are directly related to the role of CABH but were significant enough to be captured in the community consultations by stakeholders and clients as work still needing attention from other areas.

These included but were are not limited to:

- Housing costs
- Rent increases with no Caps
- High Utility costs
- Daycare costs and availability
- Standards of building maintenance
- Working with childcare providers to increase affordable daycare spots
- Expanded bussing system and broader service areas
- Working with CFS and other stakeholders to strengthen the foster care system – improve, review and support the foster care system, looking at family reunification models, kinship care, utilizing family supported housing as a foundation

As these areas are outside the advocacy role of CABH they were not actioned out in the five year plan. These concerns give rise to opportunities for CABH and the CBO however, to network with poverty reduction strategies locally, provincially, and nationally to ensure the voices from the consultations are captured and heard.

CONCLUSION

The aforementioned plan and Accountability Framework sets the stage for eliminating homelessness in Grande Prairie by 2019. Collaboration between the City of Grande Prairie, Community Social Development Department, the Community Advisory Board on Homelessness, government funders, service providers, citizens of Grande Prairie and clients is essential in ensuring the various strategies and tactics are not only operationalized but the outcomes recognized and achieved. By 2019, it is CABH's goal to eliminate the need for reactive programming and focus on more proactive and integrated programming that addresses homelessness at it root through integrated systems that properly connect clients to the housing options best suited for them.

APPENDIX 1

City of Grande Prairie Homeless Initiative – 2014–2019 Community Consultations Report provided by Holly Sorgen, HMS Consulting.¹

Executive Summary

Holly Sorgen, with HMS Consulting, was contracted to prepare, facilitate and write a report on four community consultations held over the course of three months: February, March and April 2014. The Community Consultations focused on four main populations: Funded Agencies, Aboriginals and Aboriginal Service Providers, Youth and Youth Service Providers and the General Public/Private Sector.

In total 112 individuals representing over 55 organizations and/or businesses attending the consultations. The Process was kept simple, with the Homeless Initiatives Supervisor, Community Social Development providing background to the consultations, giving a quick overview of the last 5 year plan and the City's endeavor to prepare a new year 5 year plan spanning 2014-2019.

The facilitator then commenced group discussion in four main areas: Successes to Date, Gaps Recognized, Priorities for 2014-2019 and What Success Looks Like. Each 2-3 hour session was intended to promote sharing and discussion in small groups along with future visioning, to set priority areas for the City of Grande Prairie Homelessness Initiative and define what success would look like in 2019.

Much robust conversation was had and the groups were truly engaged in the process. Every attendee was given equal voice to share their ideas via table discussion, idea recording and reporting at the larger group level.

Several themes became apparent. Top noted successes realized over the past 5 years include Centralized Intake and Assessment, Infrastructure Development, and Service Provider Partnerships. Gaps identified included Lack of Supported and Transitional Housing, Lack of Access to Medical, Mental Health and Addictions Assistance and Programming, lack

of transportation, lack of awareness regarding homelessness and the need for increased organizational collaboration.

Common Priorities for the next five years include the ***need for family housing options, to create long term, supported housing, more transitional housing opportunities, to regulate rents and utility costs, provide long term organizational funding, and to continue prevention strategies and programming.***

The City of Grande Prairie will use the results of the Community Consultations combined with surveys of the homeless population and past assisted clients as well as the report on the past 5 year plan to prepare the 2014-2019 City of Grande Prairie plan to end homelessness.

The following is a synopsis of the Community Consultations along with all raw data as drawn from each meeting. The synopsis includes findings in four key areas: Infrastructure, Programming, Partnerships and Resources during each consultation, setting the stage for an effective, action oriented, performance based plan to end homelessness.

It is recommended that the Key Findings mentioned below be combined with individual surveys and interviews conducted via Survey Monkey and in person client interaction to create a comprehensive Strategic Direction for the City of Grande Prairie Homelessness Initiative 5 Year Plan.

The results identified here shall be shared with the CABH at which point an itemized Action Plan and timelines pursuant to the key Priority Areas will be articulated in a Multi-Year Plan document to be reviewed, approved and adopted by the City of Grande Prairie Council in Fall 2014.

¹ Holly Sorgen, *City of Grande Prairie Community Consultations Report*, 3-5. Full report at <http://www.cityofgp.com/index.aspx?page=905>

Key Findings

It is obvious that many Successes have been realized in the last 5 years of the City's Homelessness Initiative. All of the Community Consultations indicated that there are several things that are working very well and need to continue. Conversely, there are a large number of Gaps that were identified but the groups balanced that Gap Analysis by identifying a number of succinct and balanced priorities for the next five years.

The facilitator noted several Key Priority Areas for the City's 5 year plan.

Infrastructure

- Centralized Intake – Triage Approach
- Expanded mat program
- Family housing – with pets
- Transitional housing
- Supportive housing with 24/7 supports in place
 - o Outreach
 - o Social Workers
 - o Psychiatrists/Mental Health workers
 - o Nurse Practitioners
- Drop in service centre
 - o Supports as above
 - o Shower facilities
 - o Laundry facilities
- Regulated Rent & Utility Costs
- Affordable Childcare
- Timely access to:
 - o Medical support and treatment
 - o Mental Health support and treatment
 - o Addictions support and treatment

Programming

- Life skills
- Employment skills
- Landlord education
- Aboriginal involvement in delivery of services
- Training and supports for front line workers
 - o Prevent burnout and turnover
 - o Train front line workers better
- Culturally sensitive programming

Partnerships

- Create mechanisms for formalized partnerships and collaborations between agencies and service providers
- Mayor or councilor on CABH
- More formal collaboration between agencies – multi level case work
- Involve Alberta Health and Alberta Justice
- Continue work with Alberta Human Services
- Involve Economic Developers/Developers on CABH

Resources

- Rent Bank: \$500,000
- Landlord incentives to include affordable housing in their mix
- Developer incentives to include affordable housing in their developments
- Streamline AISH and Income Support processes
- Long Term (5 year) funding agreements with proven agencies

APPENDIX 2

“Evaluation of the Grande Prairie Multi-Year Plan to End Homelessness – Five Years In” Overview of Multiyear Plan (excerpt taken from page 8 & 9).

The Multiyear plan to end homelessness has five main goals. They were written in ways that make their evaluation more generalized than specific and measurable. Each goal area is

evaluated here with specific emphasis on the strategies related to the goal as outlined in the plan. The table below shows all of the goals and strategies and rates their level of completion.

Recommendations are made where appropriate. The first recommendation is that the plan be revised to use S.M.A.R.T. Goals (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely).

Goals	Strategies	Progress
1. Facilitate an adequate supply of appropriate permanent housing option for those experiencing homelessness	S1 Develop 550 units of affordable housing, including 75 units of supportive housing.	★☆☆☆
	S1 Strengthen coordination and avoid fragmentation of services.	★★☆☆
2. Provide enhanced and coordinated services for people who are experiencing homelessness.	S2 Continue to implement, expand and educate on a Grande Prairie based “Housing First” approach.	★★☆☆
	S3 Enhance the local Housing Support Fund.	★★★☆☆
	S4 Advocate for all levels of government to take a more systemic approach to addressing homelessness.	★★★★☆
	S1 Improve the capacity of programs to rapidly house and re-house people	★★★★☆
3. Ensure appropriate emergency accommodation is available as needed, but transition people quickly into permanent housing.	S2 Advocate for adequate and appropriate resources to help agencies address the challenges and pressures they face.	★★★★☆
	S3 Establish Second Stage Housing for women and children fleeing domestic violence.	★★★★☆
	S4 Support the youth shelter and agencies that deliver services to youth experiencing homelessness	★☆☆☆
	S1 Continue to take preventative measures when addressing homelessness.	★★☆☆
4. Prevent people from becoming homeless.	S1 Committee formed to establish implementation process and action plan for the Plan.	★★★★
	S2 Implement a data management system	★★★★☆
	S3 Development of annual reports and communications to keep community and agencies informed.	★★★★
5. Establish an implementation process for the Plan that builds on the strengths of the community; develops capacity; promotes collaboration, innovation and cost-effectiveness and measures progress.	S1 Committee formed to establish implementation process and action plan for the Plan.	★★★★
	S2 Implement a data management system	★★★★☆
	S3 Development of annual reports and communications to keep community and agencies informed.	★★★★

★☆☆☆ = Start | ★★★★★ = Complete

APPENDIX 3

Interviews with People Without Homes – Monica Kreiner, Moniyasko Consulting.¹

Results

When asked what works, people said that having a **Housing First worker as an advocate** was a great help and they really appreciated this assistance. This was particularly true in having to deal with Alberta Works. Some talked about hitting walls with agencies until they had a Housing First worker. Though someone also mentioned that one housing related agency had not been willing to have the Housing First worker advocate for this individual in terms of appealing a decision. The consensus was that the Housing First workers were very helpful as advocates.

The biggest obstacle people found was simply **finding affordable housing**. Several people talked about looking for housing most commonly with Kijiji but also by “going around.” An older gentleman even talked about having a brother in another city doing the internet work for him because he wasn’t computer literate. They talked about how having a bad credit rating was an obstacle when they applied for housing. There was some frustration about answering ads in Kijiji and then finding out there wasn’t really an opportunity there. Young people were frustrated by their inability to legally sign a lease because of their age. Some said that the only affordable places were in a “seedy” part of town and they felt unsafe there.

People expressed lots of frustration over the **cost of housing** in Grande Prairie. A few talked about the need for rent controls. Some talked about the need for subsidies. Those who had applied for subsidies talked about the long waiting list there to get help.

People need **help with finding housing they can afford**. That is what was most frequently mentioned as a need.

The other need was the initial **cost of damage deposit and first month’s rent**. The working poor talked about how once they had this initial help they were well on their way if they

could just overcome this initial hurdle. Finding something affordable for them and getting this initial help was all that they wanted or needed. However working sometimes precluded them from getting the help they needed. Some were even willing to pay back any initial help they got.

With the lack of affordable housing, people were puzzled why the **low income houses on 108th Avenue** were closed. Those who were familiar with them say they were in better shape than some of the places they have seen to rent.

Some people talked about **Fletcher House** and would like to see something similar again.

Lots of people talked about either themselves or people they knew **being banned from Rotary House for life**. When asked why individuals were banned, those who were banned were mostly unable to clearly articulate a reasonable reason. The one who did talk about efforts to become reinstated having failed. Those who weren’t banned were also puzzled by why some people were banned. The latter felt that everyone should have a place to go and when Rotary House turns people away there is nowhere for them to go. It isn’t truly a homeless shelter and more a hostel for those who can pay the nightly fee (unless they are accessing the mats program).

Someone expressed gratitude for the **free meals** available at various agencies because after the rent was paid there was nothing left over for food. Someone said that they really appreciated the bagged lunches that the Salvation Army used to provide for those who couldn’t make it to their meals for various reasons but they have been discontinued. Someone mentioned that food vouchers would be a help. Likewise, help with transportation was always appreciated as that was another cost that was hard to meet. For those sleeping rough, blankets would be welcomed.

¹ Monica Kreiner, *Interview with People without Homes 2014*, 3-6. Full report at <http://www.cityofgp.com/index.aspx?page=905>.

Several people talked about how they felt that **if their circumstances were different they would get better help**. In one case it was someone who had a boyfriend saying if she was single with her child she feels she might be eligible for more help. Another fellow talked about having had a common-law spouse before he moved here and somehow that prevented him from being looked at favourably for a program that might have helped him otherwise. Another person talked about the need to say you have addictions or mental health issues in order to access programs for housing, somehow being the working poor was not enough. Someone mentioned that this tension between your reality and having to appear a certain way to be eligible for a program chipped away at their self-respect. This theme suggests that the greatest amount of flexibility is required in programming as individuals come with a variety of issues.

Flexibility in the length of Housing First programming was also very important to people. Sometimes people need help for a short period and other times for a period much longer than a year.

Various people talked about the help they got from family and friends. Originally, many of them had stayed with other people but their welcome always wore out suddenly when it was no longer working for one or the other of the parties. That's when the crisis happened for them, suddenly and without any warning they may have been asked to leave or the family needed the space for someone else or the friends were moving on or other circumstances changed. Then, when they were in crisis, they turned to help but found **waiting lists**. They said that the waiting lists are a big problem. Some people heard about the waitlists with Housing First so they didn't even go there. Others applied and were frustrated waiting. They wanted more action in a more timely way.

Making and keeping **appointments** was a difficulty some people expressed. For those working, being able to meet with people about

housing at times other than the business day presented a challenge. Because of the housing situation, landlords have the upper hand in setting meetings times. Getting to appointments with landlords was also a challenge given work hours, transportation issues and child care. A suggestion for improvement for Housing First would be to have hours on evenings and weekends.

A theme that came up was people wanting front line **workers to have a good attitude**. They wanted workers who had the time and interest to listen and be responsive to their situation. They wanted workers who understood what it was like to live on the streets. They wanted them well trained and happy. They talked about better screening, incentive programs and good enough pay to attract good people. Sometimes they found workers not having enough time to be attentive. Other times they found workers very good but they complained about those higher up restricting access or creating road blocks. They wanted the workers to be "civil and humane." They recognized that the programs they were running couldn't bend so far that people took advantage of them. They would have appreciated an acknowledgment of the efforts they were making. The working poor, in particular, wanted to be acknowledged for their efforts but how they still faced barriers.

A couple of **people who had been helped by Housing First some time ago** talked about the good service they had but they found themselves in a bad situation again. When asked what could have been done differently the first time, they weren't really sure. A conversation exploring what went wrong in all three cases involved the social aspect. All of them talked about how they were very kind and generous and not very good at discerning who to share with and who not to. So they found themselves in situations where other people took advantage of their new, more stable housing situation. Not being able to say "no" they welcomed these dysfunctional people

into their lives and ended up paying the price. One mentioned that better monitoring early on might have helped. Another talked about the need to learn some different social skills to be able to be more assertive but in a good way although he admitted that he wouldn't have been open to this suggestion at the time.

Those wanting to work mentioned that it was readily available here but they had a bit of a **merry-go-round getting tickets** to help them be work ready. They needed an employer ready to hire them to get help getting the needed training but nobody was interested in hiring them without the training. Though this is not specifically a housing issue, it affected their ability to get the jobs they needed to find and keep housing. Beyond this immediate concern was the ability to get the training they needed to get the better paying jobs to be able to afford the high rents. Help with writing the apprenticeship entrance exam was mentioned in particular. Being an apprentice would solve the housing issue permanently.

The **advocacy role** in a larger sense than Housing First was talked about. Having someone on your side help when there's a problem accessing a program was very valuable to people. Housing First seems to meet that need but there is only so much they can advocate for and if you don't have a worker yet what do you do when you need advocacy?

Some people who I encountered did not know what I meant when I asked about their experiences with Housing First. They were looking for help but didn't know there was a service that might be able to help them. **They hadn't heard of Housing First.** Most of them talked about their search in Kijiji and some might not have been eligible for Housing First. However it might be worthwhile to occasionally place an ad in Kijiji about the Housing First program.

Help dealing with addictions was a common theme. The time period was a big issue. Several people said when they felt ready to deal with their issue there were long waitlists or they were told that in a couple of months they might get into a rehabilitation centre. That kind of response was discouraging. One Aboriginal couple said that they didn't understand why rehab had to be individual and why couples couldn't go together to support one another. I mention that they are Aboriginal because of the cultural importance of relationships being a factor in this desire for mutual support versus the more independent, individualist approach more common in the larger population.

Young people wanted **help with landlords** understanding their particular situation in terms of not having a rental history and not being able to sign a lease.

One person mentioned that the **emergency fund** at the city could only be accessed once a year and that simply wasn't enough for people in some cases.

Help with setting up a **trustee** situation was mentioned by one person, particularly when they had a large influx of cash from a certain settlement.

An innovative idea that someone mentioned for those experiencing chronic homelessness was a **booth** like the smoking booth outside the casino that has a button people can press to get heat for a period of time. Another expressed physical need was **public washrooms** with a shower somewhere or a port-a-potty where people sleep rough.

There is a need for **more month-to-month rentals** instead of only yearlong leases. Some also talked about the need for a hostel with more privacy.



HOMELESSNESS IS NOT WHO YOU ARE; IT'S WHERE YOU ARE.

For more information, please contact

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