

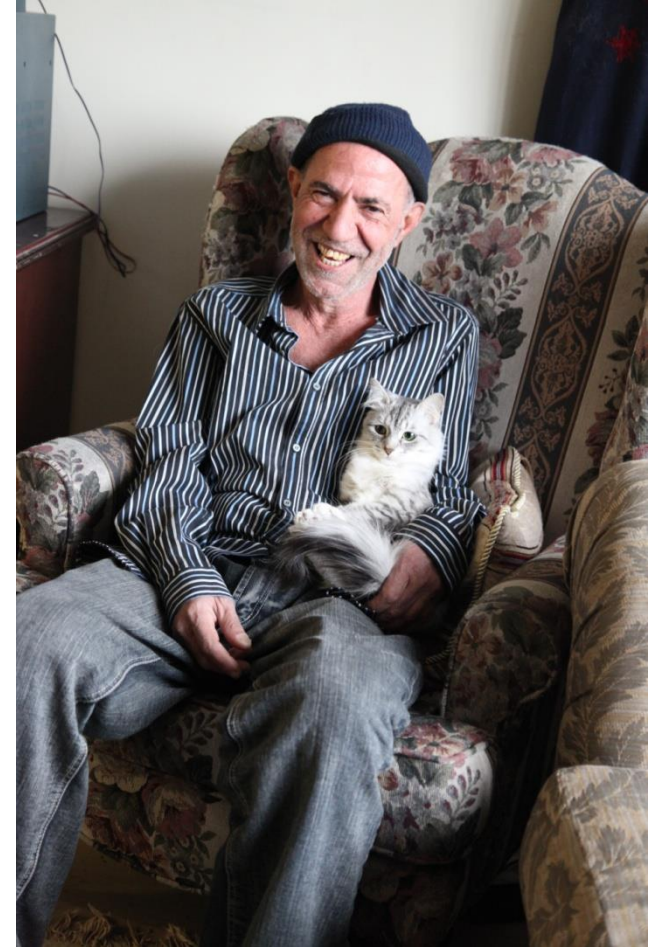
Shelter, Support and Housing Administration Division



Housing First: Policy and Practice: Considerations for Shelters in Toronto

Presentation Overview

1. City of Toronto context
2. Housing Stability Service Plan
3. Housing Opportunities Toronto
4. Shelter Infrastructure and Service Improvement Plan
5. Housing First policy and practice



What is the role of Emergency Shelters in ending homelessness?

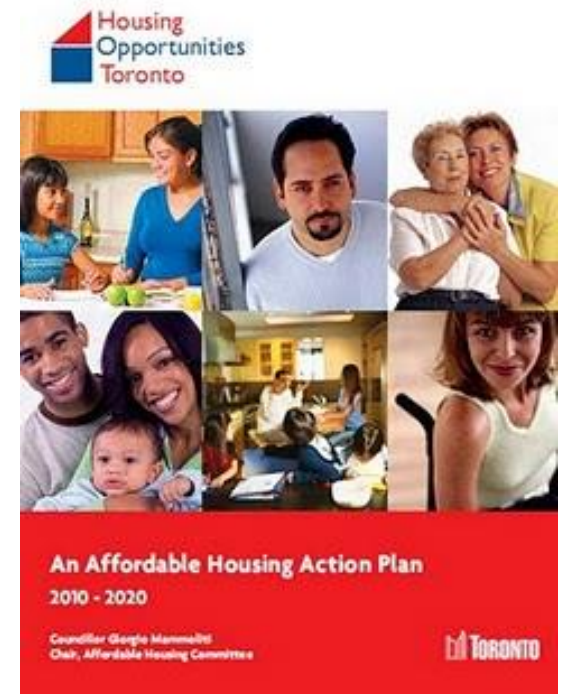
- To provide a safe environment which respects and meets the unique needs of people and families experiencing homelessness.
- An emergency shelter should work to empower and equip people with the tools they need to move back into permanent housing as quickly as possible.
- The shelter will provide directly or facilitate access to supports as necessary to ensure tenancies will be successful.

Snapshot of TO homelessness

- Estimated total # homeless people: 5,253—447 sleeping rough
- 65% are men; higher among those sleeping rough
- 33 % outdoor homeless identify as Aboriginal
- 21 % in youth shelters identify as LGBTQ2S
- Share of seniors has more than doubled in four years
- Use of the City-funded shelter system is on the rise with increased demand and people staying in shelter longer

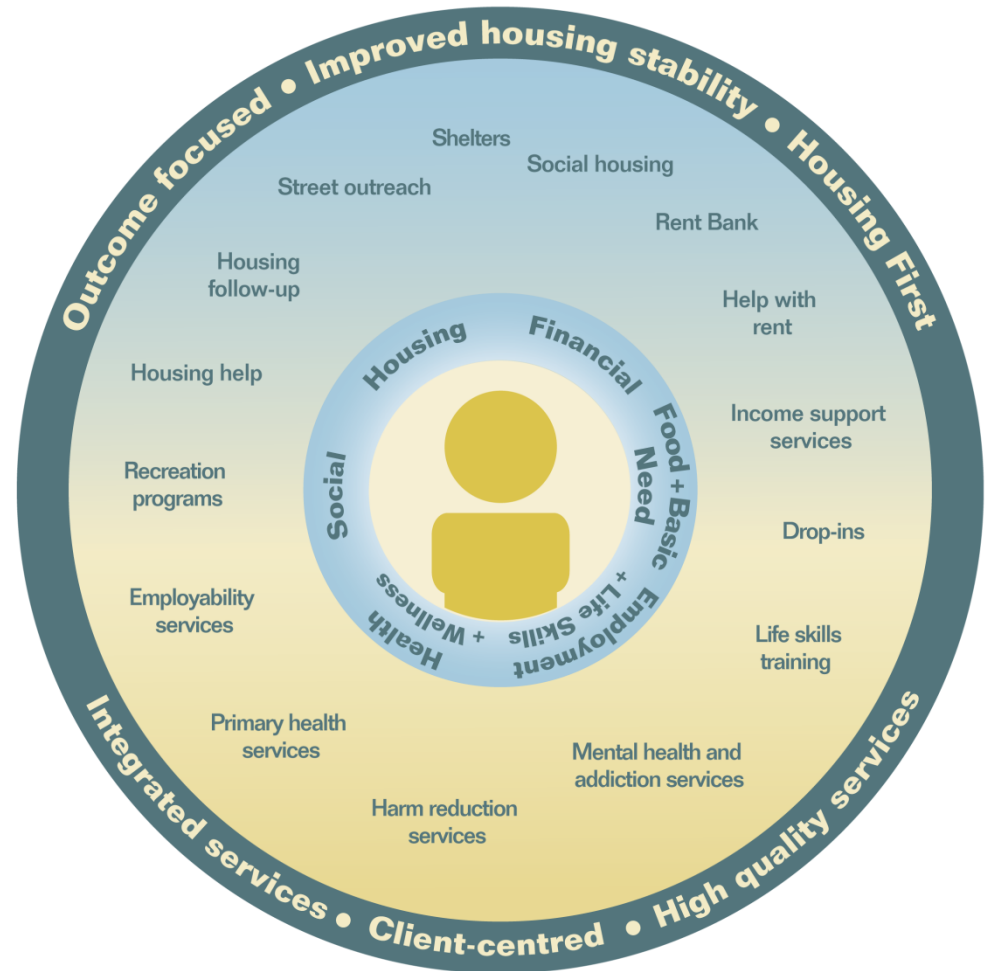
HOT, Housing and Homelessness 10-year Plan

- Council approved Housing Opportunities Toronto 10-year plan, 2009
- Consultation to update report to start before yearend
- Purpose is to sharpen implementation of the existing plan
- Key dates and activities at toronto.ca/affordablehousing



Focus on Housing Stability

- Different approach to services with:
 - better service quality
 - increased access to services
 - strengthened partnerships
 - better coordination



Service Planning Framework, 2014-2019

- Nine strategic directions for service system:
 1. Preventing homelessness
 2. Supporting the transition to housing
 3. Creating housing opportunities
 4. Fostering system stewardship and innovation
 5. Improving access and equity
 6. Delivering high quality service
 7. Strengthening partnerships and coordination
 8. Continue to maintain a strong emergency shelter system
 9. Advocating to other levels of government
- Each direction is linked to a set of key actions that support and strengthen the service delivery system

Infrastructure and Service Improvement Plan for the Emergency Shelter System

- Staff report adopted unanimously by City Council in April 2015
 - List up to 15 properties needed for expansion, relocation of existing shelters for transition needs associated with the redevelopment of Seaton House
- After reviewing the data on who is in the system we found:
 - People are staying longer
 - Some have complex needs which require intensive support
 - Many continue to be denied service of mainstream health care organizations
- After reviewing the system we call the Shelter System:
 - Two distinct systems:
 - Emergency system accessible on a nightly depending on program criteria
 - Transitional system which requires a referral or application and more refined program criteria
 - Some Transitional shelters are operating like housing with rent being paid and tenure of clients established

Action Plan to address occupancy pressures

- Housing First pilot for long term shelter users
- Add new emergency shelter capacity
- Maintain existing shelter capacity
- Improve use of existing resources

Key ingredients to support Housing First outcomes in shelters

- Centralized access to the emergency shelter system
- Immediate work on the development of a housing plan, ie. Identification, income support, applications
- Common assessment of needs to achieve housing stability
- Need to more access to affordable and supportive housing

System changes to support Housing First outcomes in Shelters

- Review and rationalization of funding
- Introduce financial incentive for programs which achieve sustained housing outcomes
- Increased quality assurance review of funded services
- More focus on coordinating and integrating services funded by provincial and federal partners

Our Challenges

- Balance need for emergency service vs. investing in long term solutions
- Scarcity of affordable housing means people are choosing emergency shelter as their best housing option vs. moving to sub standard / unsafe housing
- Finding a role for transitional housing in our system. We continue to fund it in the absence of permanent solutions
- Systemic change in the areas of health, mental health, corrections, child welfare, employment, income support and funding for Aboriginal and First Nations communities lies outside our mandate