

ARCH: Building **strong partnerships** with **Indigenous leaders** through **collaboration** and **co-development**

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Context

- ARCH is a community-wide initiative meaning projects were expected to work across Reaching Home funding streams (i.e., Community Entities) and Indigenous partners where no IH stream is present, from earliest stages of the project.
- Recognizing the overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples experiencing homelessness and feedback received from our Indigenous partners, it was important we took this opportunity to explore different ways of working with partners.
- The site selection and co-development processes were designed in a way to honour the knowledge and leverage the strengths of Indigenous partners.
 - It is important to note, we continuously learned from our partners which meant we had to update, adapt and/or adjust our processes as the initiative progressed to reflect these learnings.

Collaboration and co-development attributes



Site Selection

- A site selection process was developed to ensure that ARCH sites were selected according to **objective criteria that align with research aims** including if communities had existing **partnership with Indigenous partners/organizations**, and the strength of those partnerships.
- To ensure ARCH communities had strong potential for Indigenous/non-Indigenous collaboration we engaged:
 - **Key stakeholders** (i.e., Community Entities and Indigenous partners) for their local knowledge and expertise, identifying any substantial issues to be considered when engaging communities;
 - **All partners** from shortlisted communities were engaged separately to assess community priorities, challenges, and collaborative potential;
- Considerations on the **strength of existing relationships** between Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners were taken into consideration during the assessment of communities.

Action Research Initiative Learnings and Adjustments

- Collaboration **with** Indigenous partners is essential and needs to be done from the initial stages and development of the action research initiative
 - This could have expanded criteria used in the site selection process.
 - It may have informed processes for engaging with communities, timelines, respect for capacity and cultural knowledge/approaches, Indigenous knowledge principles built into other aspects of the ARCH project.
 - Earlier engagement with the National Indigenous Homelessness Council (NIHC) would have provided additional insights and perspectives on the initiative as a whole and site selection criteria.
- Moving forward, the NIHC coordinator is regularly engaged in the development phase of various aspects of the initiative (e.g., Learning Plan, Community of Practice, Advisory Tables).

Initial Meetings and co-development workshops

- **Initial meetings** were held with the IH/DC CEs of selected sites with the option of having the meeting together or separate.
 - Initial meetings provided space for each the DC and IH CE's to discuss the nature of the project and the capacity/interest and how each would like to be involved.
- **Co-development workshops** were virtual half day sessions bringing together key project partners and potential advisory table members.
 - Elders from each community were invited to open and close each of the co-development workshops.
- The goal with both was to create a space where all participants felt safe to share their perspectives and collaboratively build their projects.

Action Research Initiative Learnings and Adjustments

- **Provide a Safe and Constructive Environment** by engage honestly, with humility and empathy to allow for plans to be more inclusive and representative of voices at the table
- Allow for **flexibility** to properly engage with partners including Indigenous partners.
 - Flexible timelines were key to ensure communities agreed to participate in the ARCH initiative.
 - Not prescribing project topics but balancing the need for clear overall vision and priorities with the need for flexibility to have real community driven projects.
- **Transparency** is critical to building strong relationships and trust with communities. Clear communication around timelines and expectations including being honest about what **limits of flexibility** are.
- **Tailoring the co-development** workshop content to where the community was in the project's development process.
- **Collaboration** with Modern Treaty Holders is essential and needed to be done from the initial stages of project development.
- There need to be **clear and defined process** for inviting an Elder to meetings
 - This includes streamlining process to ensure proper protocols are in place to invite and provide honourariums to Elders.

Outcomes and Impacts

- ARCH projects **driven by the community** from the initial decision to participate in ARCH, to project topics, to application development.
- All partners were **committed to the co-development process** which resulted in a shared ownership of the projects.
- **Improved internal learning and ways of working** between the federal government with Indigenous communities. The collaborative nature of ARCH has shown a different way is possible to develop projects moving forward.
- The collaborative and co-development process has **built relationships** with the ARCH communities based on trust and transparency.

“IF WE PRIORITIZE **INDIGENOUS HOMELESS,
WE WON'T HAVE ENOUGH RESOURCES FOR
ANYONE ELSE”**

ACTION RESEARCH ON CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS – HAMILTON, ON

Vanessa Parlette, City of Hamilton

Victoria Bomberry, Coalition of Hamilton Indigenous Leadership

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INDIGENOUS HOMELESSNESS IS A COLONIAL LEGACY



HOW WE GOT HERE

The history of our
relationship and
commitment

INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY ENTITY

Limited capacity and resources

DESIGNATED COMMUNITY ENTITY

Resources and responsibilities
of a municipality

SHARED ACCOUNTABILITY

to end homelessness in Hamilton



ACTION RESEARCH ON CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS IN HAMILTON

Strengthening our
system-wide response
to Indigenous
homelessness



CHIL

Project Lead

CITY

System Lead

INFC

National Lead

WHAT MAKES ARCH POSSIBLE IN HAMILTON

Important considerations for other municipalities

FUNDING

The “20% Rule” – federal funding since 2004

Homelessness global funding

Additional resources

LEADERSHIP

Co-leadership and co-design of coordinated access

Shared decision-making

Ongoing collaboration

DATA

Recognizing and supporting Indigenous leadership

Policies, protocols, and practices

Ongoing collaboration

WHY ARCH?

Persistent issues in preventing and addressing Indigenous homelessness in Hamilton



RACISM and DISCRIMINATION

Within the homeless-serving system and community

TRUST and CAPACITY

Reluctance to access services and/or self-identify

MIS/UNDERSTANDING INDIGENOUS HOMELESSNESS

Community, service, and system impacts

ARCH PROJECT FOCUS

Accelerating existing work

INDIGENOUS CULTURAL CAPACITY & ACCOUNTABILITY

System-wide review to develop a framework to support cultural responsiveness of non-Indigenous homeless-serving agencies

INDIGENOUS COMMON ASSESSMENT

Designing a wholistic approach to understand needs and strengths as well as identify services and supports

INDIGENOUS DATA GOVERNANCE & STEWARDSHIP

Gathering, analyzing, and sharing data in a good way to support improved service outcomes and system insights

PROJECT OUTCOMES & IMPACTS

What we hope to see
in our system and
share with Reaching
Home

Improved service experiences of Indigenous Peoples

All homeless-serving agency staff
are knowledgeable and capable

Improved understanding of Indigenous experiences of homelessness

System planning and investments
reflect community need

Indigenous Peoples are housed

Appropriate supports are
available and accessible



**NIA:WEN
MIIGWETCH
THANK YOU**
