

END HOMELESSNESS

ST. JOHN'S **#WECANENDIT**

Financial Footholds in Changing Landscapes:
Evolution of the Supported Referrals Program in St. John's, NL

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We respectfully acknowledge the land on which we gather as the ancestral homelands of the Beothuk, whose culture has been lost forever and can never be recovered. We also acknowledge the island of Ktaqmkuk (Newfoundland) as the unceded, traditional territory of the Beothuk and the Mi'kmaq. And we acknowledge Labrador as the traditional and ancestral homelands of the Innu of Nitassinan, the Inuit of Nunatsiavut, and the Inuit of NunatuKavut. We recognize all First Peoples who were here before us, those who live with us now, and the seven generations to come. As First Peoples have done since time immemorial, we strive to be responsible stewards of the land and to respect the cultures, ceremonies, and traditions of all who call it home. As we open our hearts and minds to the past, we commit ourselves to working in a spirit of truth and reconciliation to make a better future for all.

At EHSJ, we work toward a vision in which every resident of St. John's has

A PLACE TO CALL HOME



The idea of ending homelessness seems daunting at times, but we appreciate a challenge. We chose the tagline #wecanendit because we believe we can. We love the idea of systems change to ensure better outcomes for all our neighbours.



#WECANENDIT



EHSJ'S ROLE

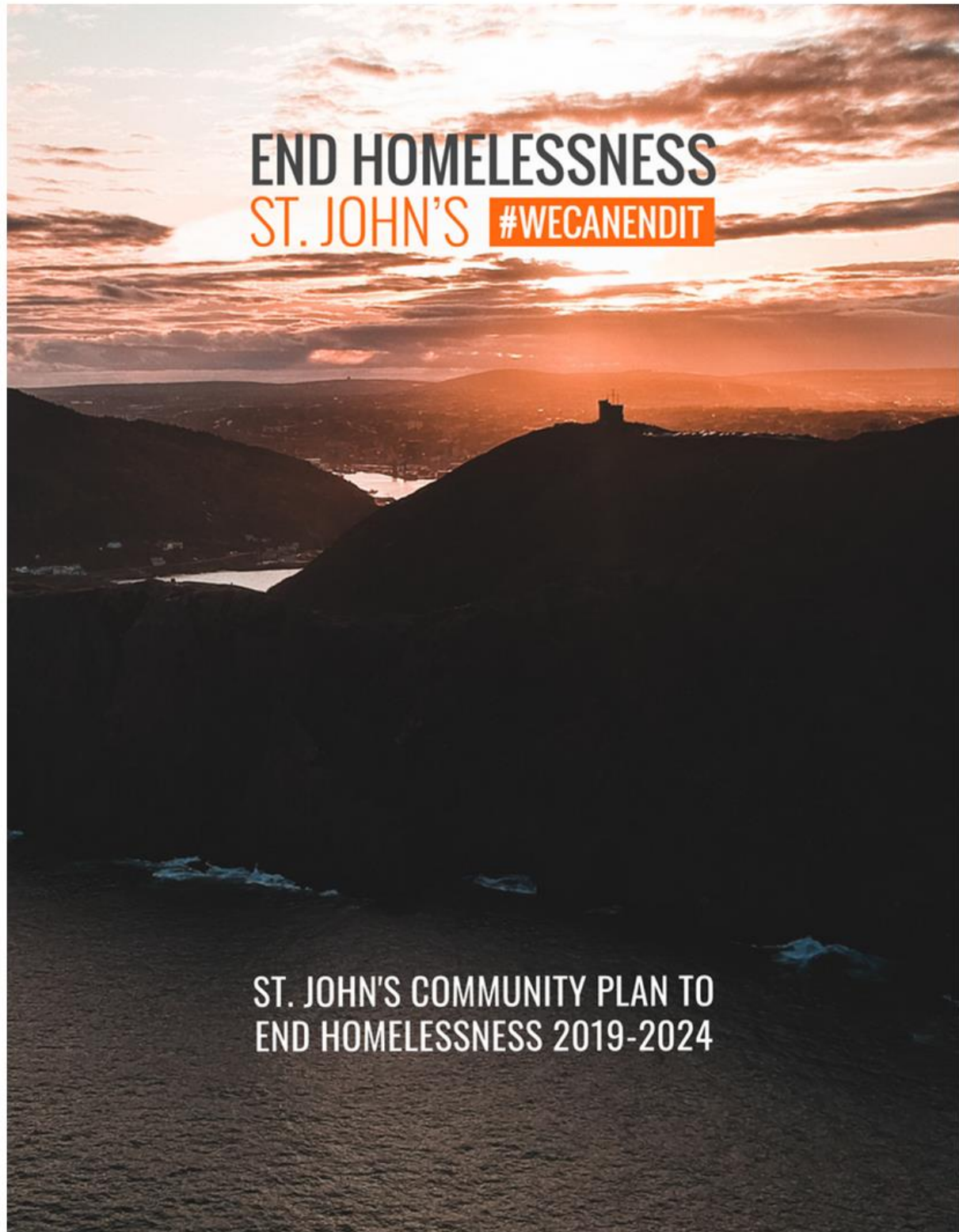
St. John's is one of 60+ Designated Communities across Canada funded through Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy

EHSJ is the Community Entity for St. John's

Reaching Home requires all Designated Communities to implement a coordinated access system – Coordinated Access to Homes (CAH) in St. John's

We're working to ensure that homelessness in our community, when it exists, is
rare, brief, and non-recurring

PRIORITY AREAS



LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY

SYSTEMS
COORDINATION

KNOWLEDGE
MOBILIZATION

COMMUNITY
INVESTMENT

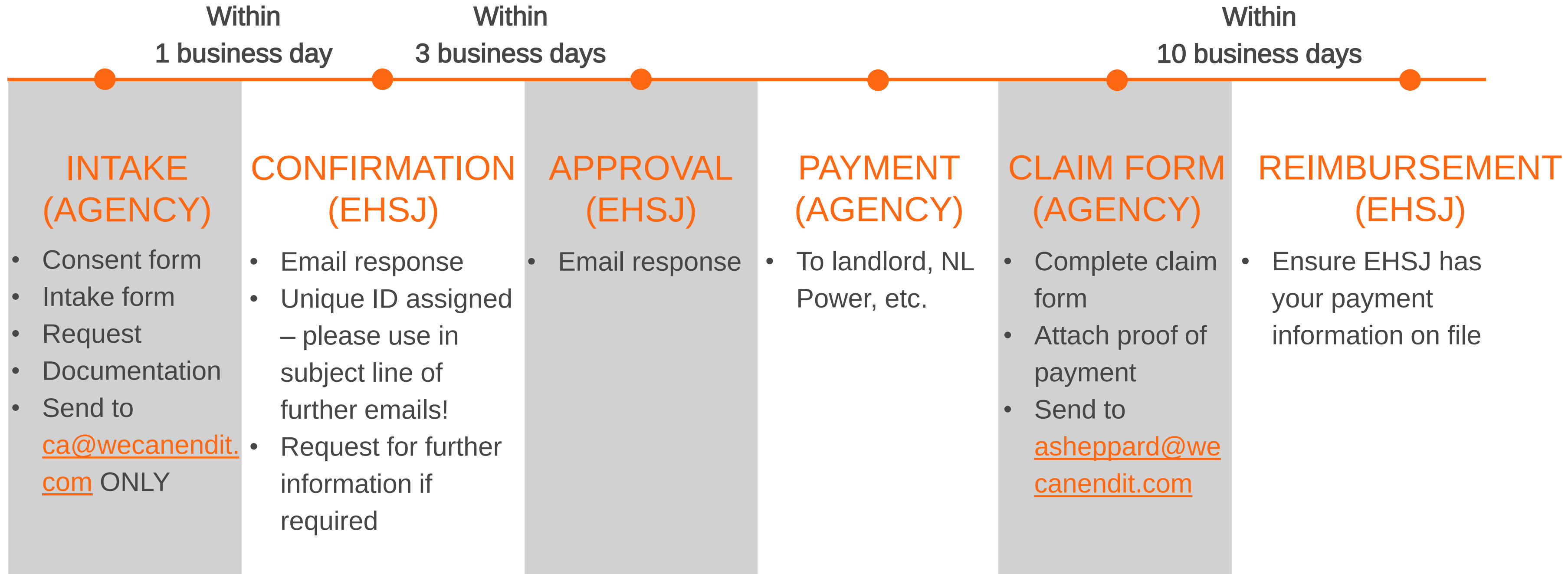
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



WHAT IS SUPPORTED REFERRALS?

- A program to provide flexible and customized financial resources to enable individuals and families experiencing or at imminent risk of homelessness to achieve housing stability
- Launched by EHSJ in June 2018
- Modeled on a similar program operated by Homeward Trust in Edmonton, Alberta
- All participants come through Coordinated Access to Homes and Supported Referrals are administered through community partner agencies

TIMELINE



MEETS NEEDS FOR TWO GROUPS:

1. CURRENTLY EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS - INDIVIDUALS WHO REQUIRE SUPPORT TO EXIT HOMELESSNESS

2. AT IMMINENT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS - INDIVIDUALS WHO REQUIRE SUPPORT TO REMAIN HOUSED

IMMINENT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS

(WITHIN 2 MONTHS)

EVICTION

Demonstrated by:

- Eviction notice
- Utilities disconnect notice
- Sudden reduction in income causing inability to pay rent

RELATIONSHIP BREAKDOWN

- Relationship breakdown between family members or romantic partners has resulted in an unsafe or inappropriate housing situation

VIOLENCE OR ABUSE

- Violence or abuse by family members, romantic partners, roommates, landlords, guests, etc. has led to an unsafe housing situation

UNSAFE OR INAPPROPRIATE

Not meeting one of the following:

- Essential services (ex. heat)
- Security (ex. locking doors)
- Personal safety (ex. threats)
- Rent payment in cash
- Timely response to issues

CHANGE IN SUITABILITY

Due to circumstances such as:

- Changes in family size (ex. birth of child)
- Loss of mobility/need for accessible housing
- Need for proximity to services

ELIGIBILITY FOR PARTNER AGENCIES

1. MUST SIGN CAH MOU WITH EHSJ
2. MUST BE NON-PROFIT/COMMUNITY
3. MUST BE ABLE TO PAY DIRECTLY AND BE REIMBURSED
4. MUST EXHAUST ALL MAINSTREAM RESOURCES AND OTHER SUPPORTS (DIVERSION)
5. INDIVIDUAL MUST BE RESIDING IN ST. JOHN'S METRO REGION

MOST COMMON REASONS FOR DELAY OR NON-APPROVAL

1. INCOMPLETE INFORMATION OR DOCUMENTATION
2. NO, OR UNCLEAR, SUSTAINABILITY PLAN
3. HAVE NOT EXHAUSTED OTHER RESOURCES
4. CLIENT IS NOT EXPERIENCING OR AT IMMINENT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS (OR TOO EARLY)

SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

- How do we ensure this issue does not reoccur?
- If we intervene, is the situation affordable moving forward? (Ex., utility or rental arrears)
- How is the support expected to continue from the referral agency?

TYPES OF EXPENSES



ONE-TIME RENTAL
ASSISTANCE



RENTAL
ARREARS



UTILITY
ARREARS



SECURITY
DEPOSIT



MOVING
EXPENSES



HOUSING
SETUP COSTS



PROPERTY
MAINTENANCE/REPAIRS



STORAGE



RENTAL ARREARS

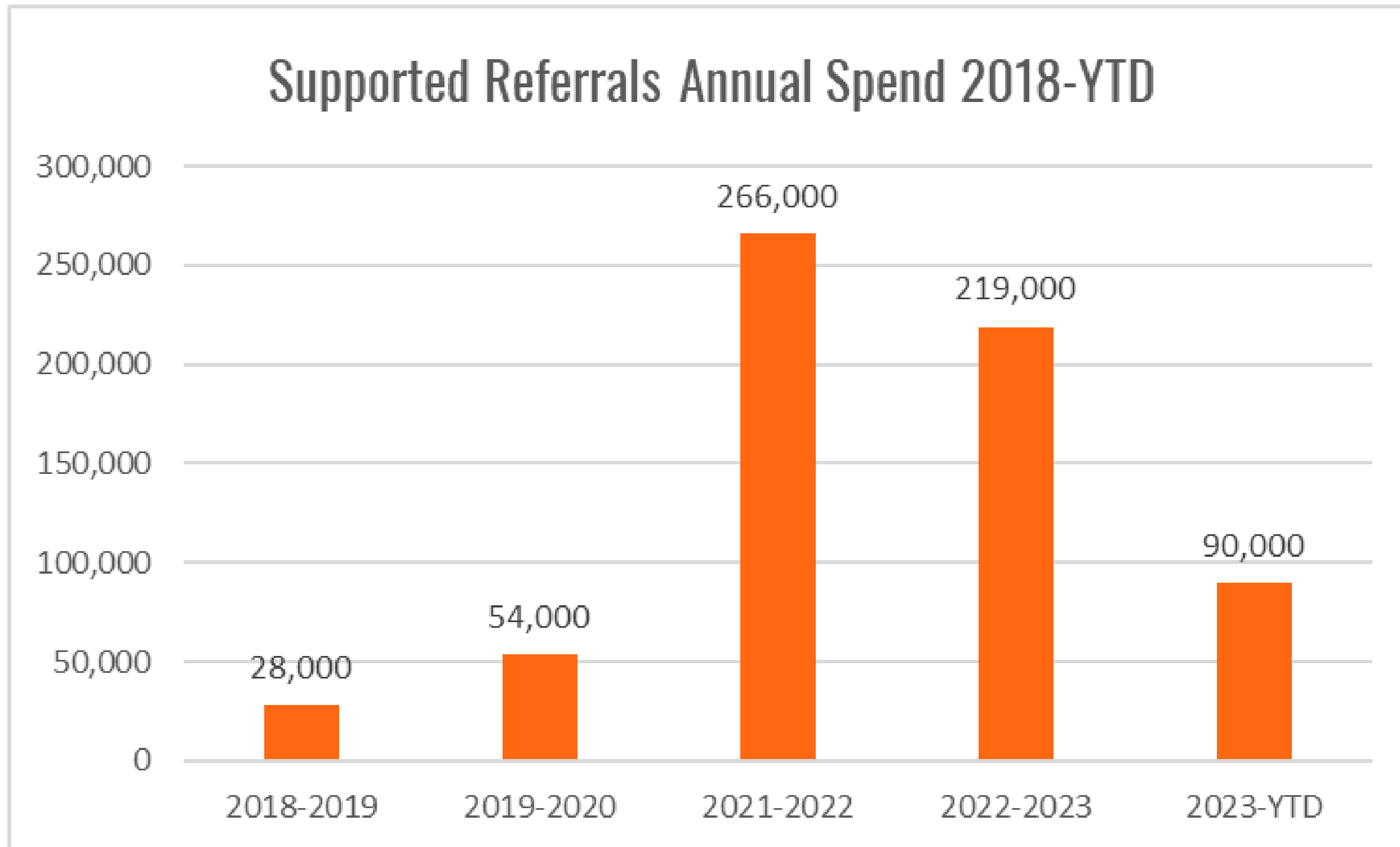
Item	Description
Client profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At imminent risk only (i.e., prevention)
Rationale/ sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Confirmation that will remain in current housing, i.e., NOT eligible in situations where client/landlord will not maintain current housing• Plan to ensure rent payment moving forward
Time limit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Once in 12 months (unless housing status change)
Documentation prior to approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Signed lease, if applicable• Proof of imminent risk (i.e., eviction notice)• Amount of arrears• Sustainability plan
Documentation with claim form	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proof of payment to landlord



UTILITY ARREARS

Item	Description
Client profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Typically, clients are at imminent risk• “Old” arrears will be considered if they prevent client from accessing housing
Rationale/ sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Must explore other payment options, including Income Support redirect, NL Power payment plan and Equal Payment Plan (EPP)• Plan to ensure utilities payment moving forward
Time limit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Once in 12 months (without housing status change)
Documentation prior to approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disconnect notice• Most recent NL Power bill or email from NL Power• Sustainability plan
Documentation with claim form	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proof of payment to NL Power

ANNUAL SPENDING AND BUDGET



EHSJ budgeted

\$180,000 in
2021-22

budgeted

\$237,000 in
2022-23

And budgeted

\$255,500 in
2023-24

2022-23

**REQUESTED: 555
REFERRALS, \$367,946**

**APPROVED: 464
REFERRALS, \$273,464**

**UTILITY ARREARS
(125 REFERRALS)**

\$103,098

**RENTAL ARREARS
(73 REFERRALS)**

\$56,567.

**SECURITY DEPOSIT
(126 REFERRALS)**

\$43,487

**OTRA
(62 REFERRALS)**

\$40,952

2023-24 YTD

**REQUESTED: 255
REFERRALS, \$149,084**

**APPROVED: 218
REFERRALS,
\$120,966**

**UTILITY ARREARS
(49 REFERRALS)**

\$37,868

**RENTAL ARREARS
(26 REFERRALS)**

\$30,476

**SECURITY DEPOSIT
(47 REFERRALS)**

\$17,895

**OTRA
(18 REFERRALS)**

\$14,346

CHALLENGES

- Increase in homelessness; poverty vs. homelessness
- Rental market challenges and emergence of non-market rental rates
- Messaging around purpose of program (clients and supports)
- Stagnation of Income Support rates, delays in receiving subsidies
- Coordination of provincial funding streams
- Recording and reporting long term successes

CHANGES IN 2022-23

Prioritization according to homelessness status/chronicity

- Due to increased demand (increased cost of living, poverty)

Priority given to the following in order:

- Currently homeless + chronic
- Currently homeless + non-chronic
- Imminent risk + chronic
- Imminent risk + non-chronic
- Imminent risk + zero history of homelessness

BENEFITS

- Client-centred approach
- More efficient exits from homelessness
- Maintaining housing for individuals where it otherwise works for them
- Better information, better buy-in, centralized data collection in small community context
- Overall savings for systems
- Strengthens the Coordinated Access process

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- Implications of rising costs of living and impact on housing stability – influx of requests from individuals who have never experienced homelessness
- Situational changes including eliminating security deposit top-ups for non-market rate rental amounts (i.e., \$1500 and up)
- Addressing population-specific challenges (ex., seniors entering homelessness)
- Options with Income Support, NL Housing, and NL Health Services for security deposits, top-up alignment, rental assistance timelines for exiting homelessness – ensuring program does not provide funds due to delays in inspections, approval, payment disbursement, etc.

OPPORTUNITIES & NEXT STEPS

- Long-term data collection to better reflect outcomes and ensuring that individuals stay housed
- Integration with provincial resources
- Meaningful engagement with Lived/Living Expertise
- Flexibility and responsiveness for changing trends and needs in the community

THANK YOU!



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