RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

Implementing Coordinated Access in Smaller Communities Across Canada

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Land
Acknowledgment

Who We Are

RDN is a non-profit that supports the **sustainability of rural communities**. We **collaborate** to identify and bring focus to rural issues, **build local capacity**, and develop **innovative, rural-based solutions** to unique issues.
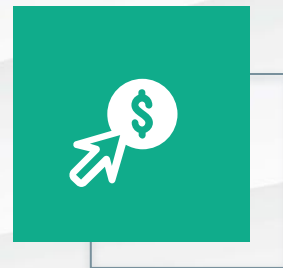
Innovative tools & resources

Expertise & capacity building

Advocacy & amplifying the rural voice

Help with accessing funding

RDN'S Key Services

IMMIGRATION

RURAL REVITALIZATION

HOMELESSNESS

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING

NETWORKS & EVENTS

INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT

HOUSING

Housing & Service Needs Estimations

RURAL AND REMOTE ALBERTA

2023 Alberta Housing and Services Needs Estimation Project

PROVINCIAL REPORT

➔ **7,320** Community Members in Alberta are Experiencing Housing Insecurity

Table 3: Respondents by Housing Situation in the Homelessness Spectrum
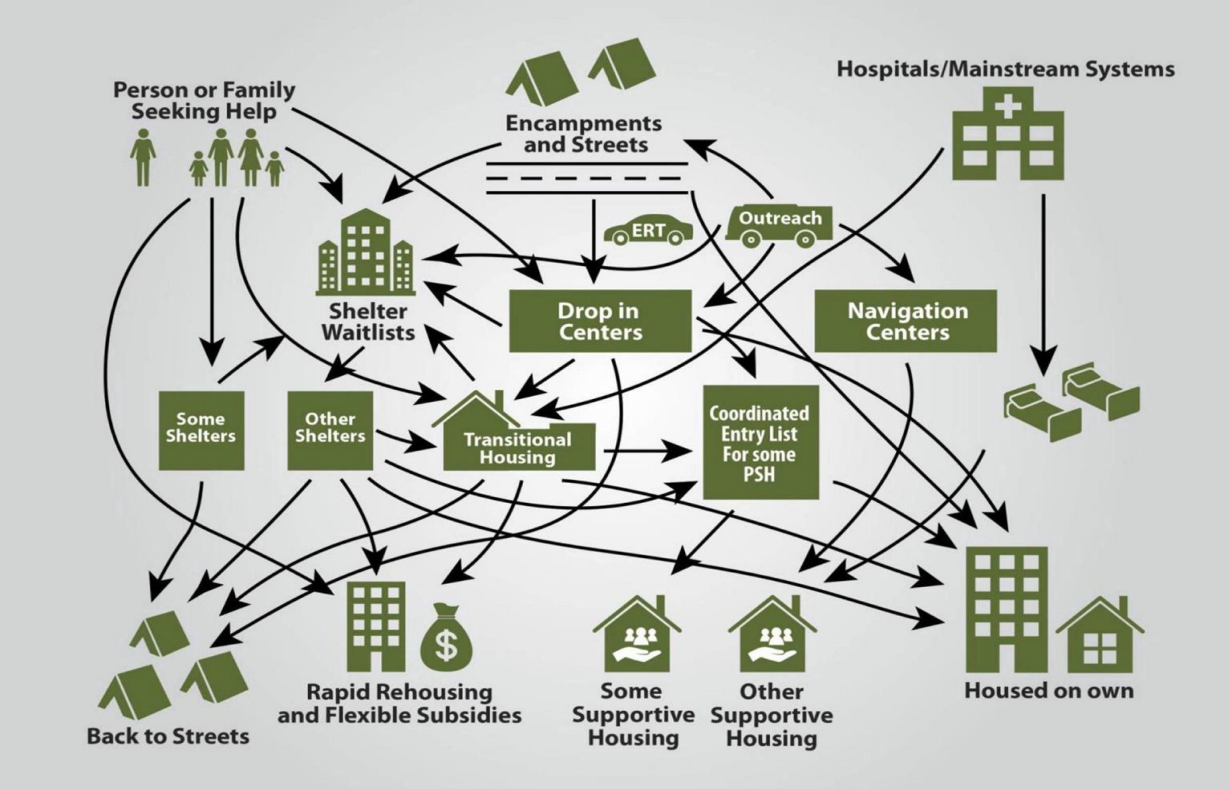
Place on the Homelessness Spectrum	# of Respondents in Each Category
Unsheltered	151
Emergency Sheltered	244
Provisionally Accommodated	1,504
At Risk of Homelessness	2,810

Key Findings

Funded in part by the Government of Canada's Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy

Building Shared Understanding: Coordinated Access

Challenges Faced by Rural Communities

- Limited and inconsistent funding

- Lack of emergency shelter, affordable, transitional and permanent supportive housing

- Transportation barriers

- Lack of mental health and addictions supports

- Developing culturally appropriate responses to Indigenous Homelessness

- Community engagement and education

- NIMBYISM

- Capacity to implement coordinated community responses

- Data gaps

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- Collaboration (interagency meetings, coalitions, taskforce)
- Strong community leadership and innovative solutions
- Personalized and informal approaches to coordinated service delivery
- Service providers value client-centred approaches and relationship building
- Opportunities for regionalized approaches

Strengths and Opportunities

National Coordinated Access Project

Outcome:

- To create a guide for rural, remote and Indigenous communities to develop and implement Coordinated Access

Canada

Literature Review

Completed a 200+ page literature review on key topics in CA

Jul. - Sept. 2022

Feb. – Jul. 2023

Engagement Sessions

Host(ed) focus groups with service providers and people with lived expertise of homelessness

Toolkit

Draft toolkit, including training materials, for review by service providers and stakeholders

Aug. - Jan. 2023

Jan. – Mar. 2024

Pilot Communities

Bring back toolkit to communities for testing

Project Timeline

Community Engagement

- Visited 3 communities
  - ➔ Alberta (1)
  - ➔ Ontario (2)

- Hosted **10** virtual sessions

- Engaged with
  - ➔ **105** Service Providers
  - ➔ **80** persons with lived experience

Learnings from Service Providers

✓ **Prejudice** and **discrimination**, **issues of anonymity**
✓ **Communication** and **access to technology** (i.e, limited access to phones, computers, broadband)
✓ **Burnout** and **staff turnover**
✓ **Training** and **capacity building**
  ○ *Cultural competency, substance use & mental health sensitivity, Lived Experience engagement, strategic planning, systems and processes (case management, referrals, client management tools, data collection), service mapping, mental health support for frontline workers, team building between agencies, NIMBYism*

Learnings from Those with Lived Experience

✓ **Barriers** and **limited access to services**
- ○ *Basic needs, technology, income assistance*
- ○ *Healthcare and mental health supports*
- ○ *Financial penalties for missed appointments*
- ○ *Public transportation*
- ○ *Housing*

✓ Desire for increased **employment opportunities**

✓ Need for **more staff** (social workers)

✓ Folks accessing supports are experiencing the **disconnect between services** and confusion surrounding where to seek specific support

✓ **Forced migration** to new communities

✓ **Feelings of shame and being judged** in the community because of the public perception of homelessness.
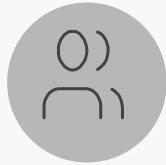
Alternatives to assessments
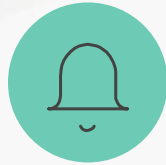
Information and resource sharing between large geographic regions, potentially across Canada
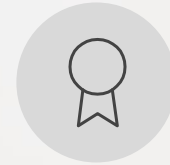
Increased training for service providers and community members

Housing and resource expansion

Mainstream services buy-in and collaboration; reduce silos

Prevent client re-traumatization and duplication of stories

Service Providers: Desired Outcomes

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Priority Areas and Next Steps

Thank you!

Any questions?

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