

Addressing Systemic Barriers through Implementation of Edmonton's Homeless Youth Strategy

CAEH 2016 National Conference

London, ON November 3, 2016



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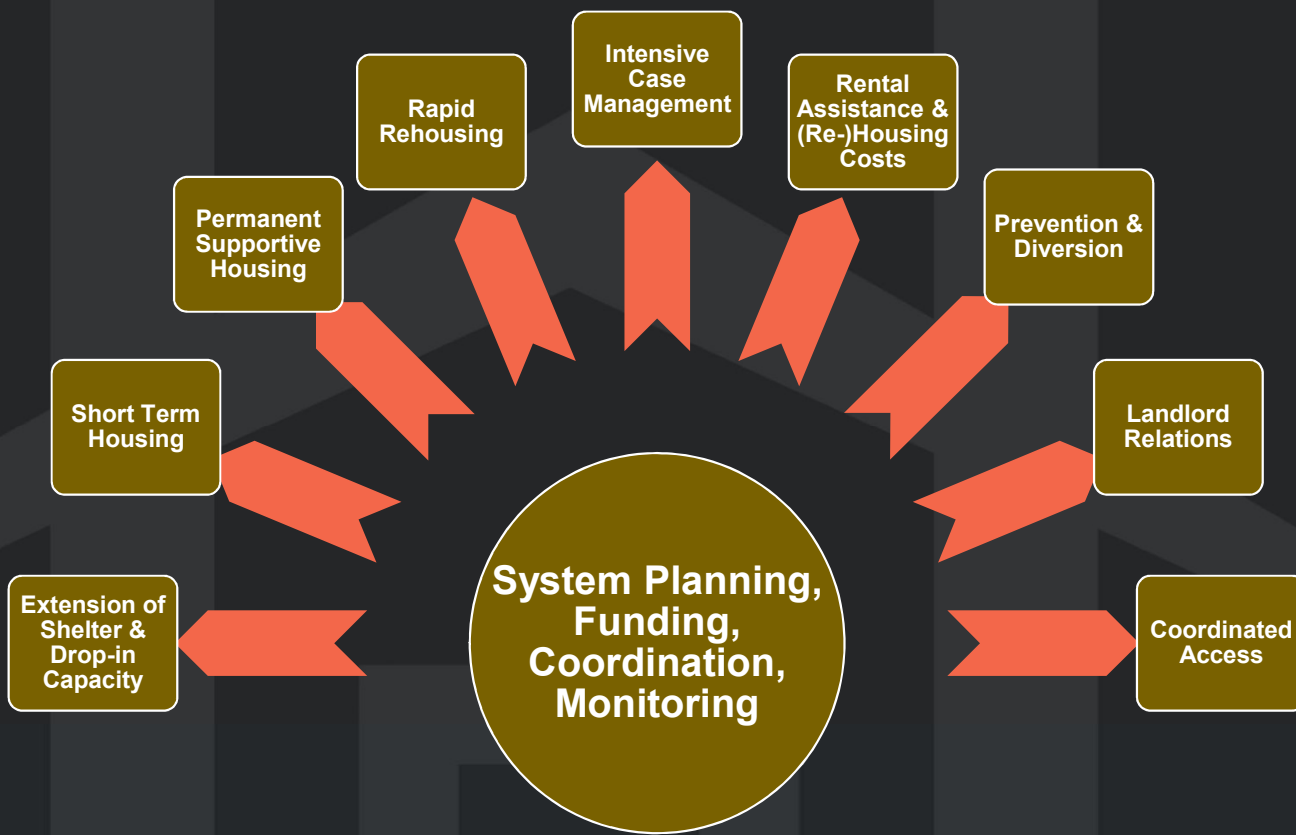
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About Homeward Trust

Homeward Trust is a non-profit organization with a mandate to provide leadership and coordinate responses to ending homelessness in Edmonton.

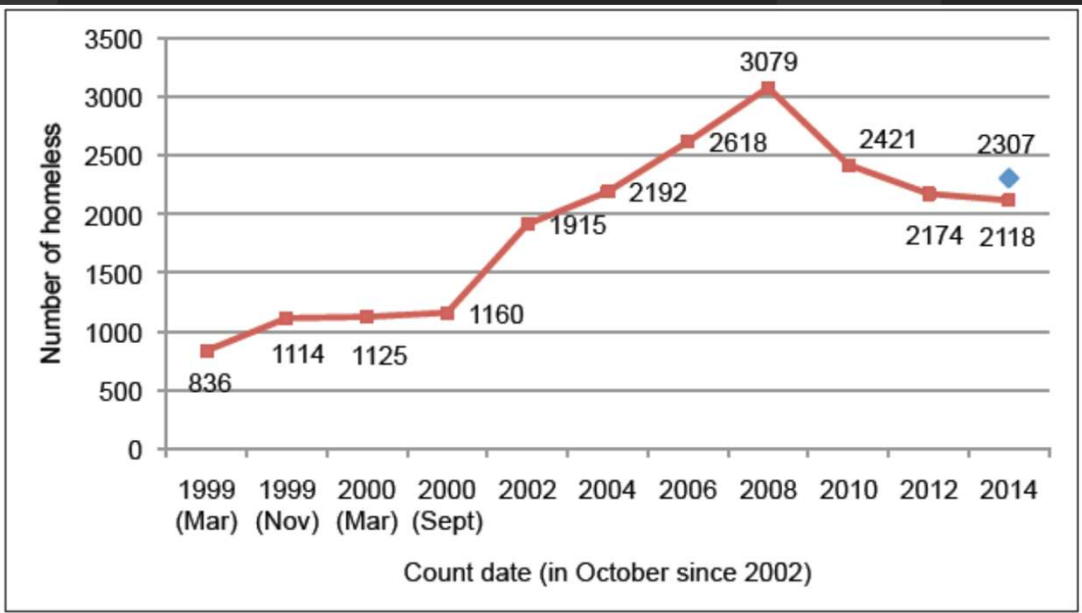
- Administers approximately \$35 million on behalf of federal, provincial, and municipal governments
- Serves as the Community Advisory Board and Community Entity for the Homelessness Partnering Strategy, and Community Based Organization responsible for implementing *A Plan for Alberta: Ending Homelessness in 10 Years* for Edmonton
- Has 4 of 9 Board members nominated by its Indigenous Nominating Committee; all funding proposals are reviewed by its Indigenous Advisory Council





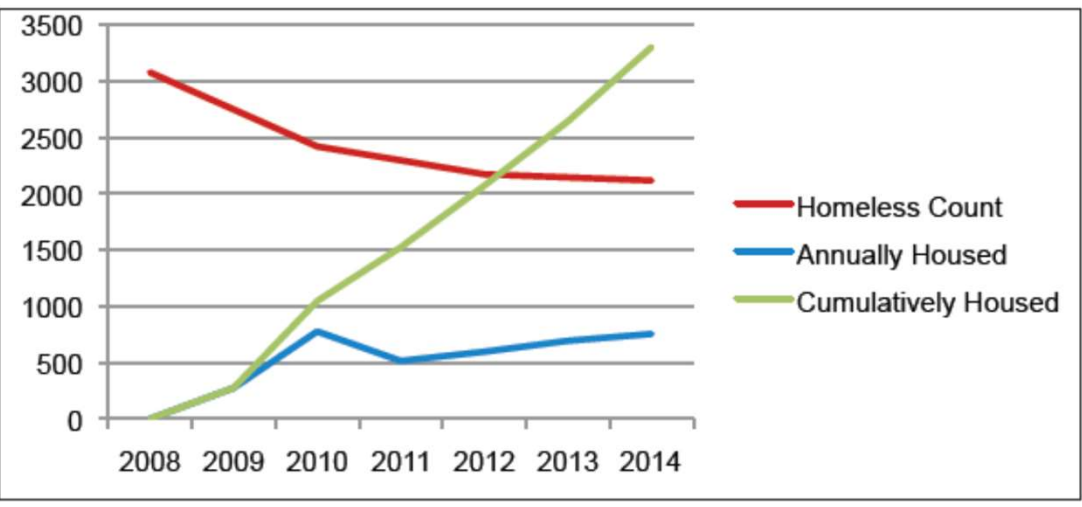
The provincial (2008) and municipal (2009) Ten Year Plans proposed ending homelessness through a coordinated homeless-serving system and strong partnerships between community & government.

Homeward Trust is the “backbone” organization for Edmonton’s plans to end homelessness.



Edmonton's 2014 Homeless Count found 2,307 homeless people:

- 47% Aboriginal
- 240 independent youth
- 309 dependent children (in families)



Since 2009, over 5700 people (including over 1700 dependents) were housed and supported through Housing First.



Development of the Youth Strategy

Edmonton Homeless Count 2014

549

homeless youth and children

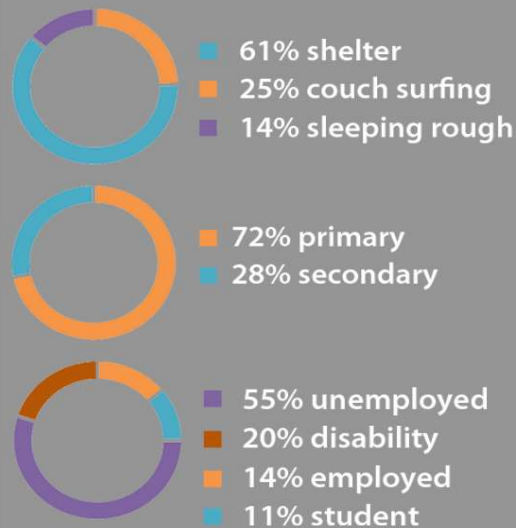
45%

Aboriginal

57%

Male

Homeless Connect 2014



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Homeward Trust released its ***Community Strategy to End Youth Homelessness in Edmonton*** in June 2015 after a year of research, consultation, and engagement.



Community Strategy to End Youth Homelessness in Edmonton

This strategy serves as a guide towards developing a clear agenda for government and community stakeholders to enhance coordination and integration amongst systems and community partners, prioritize prevention and sustainability, and identify clear strategies around housing and supports for youth based on Housing First.



Edmonton's Homeless Youth Strategy

VISION



An Edmonton where all youth have a safe, supportive and nurturing home.

MISSION



To reduce the number of youth experiencing homelessness and prevent further youth from becoming homeless by ensuring youth and their families have the services and supports they need.

PRINCIPLES



- >> Housing First approach
- >> Stakeholder Engagement
- >> Positive Youth Development
- >> Individualized & Youth Centered Supports

OUTCOMES



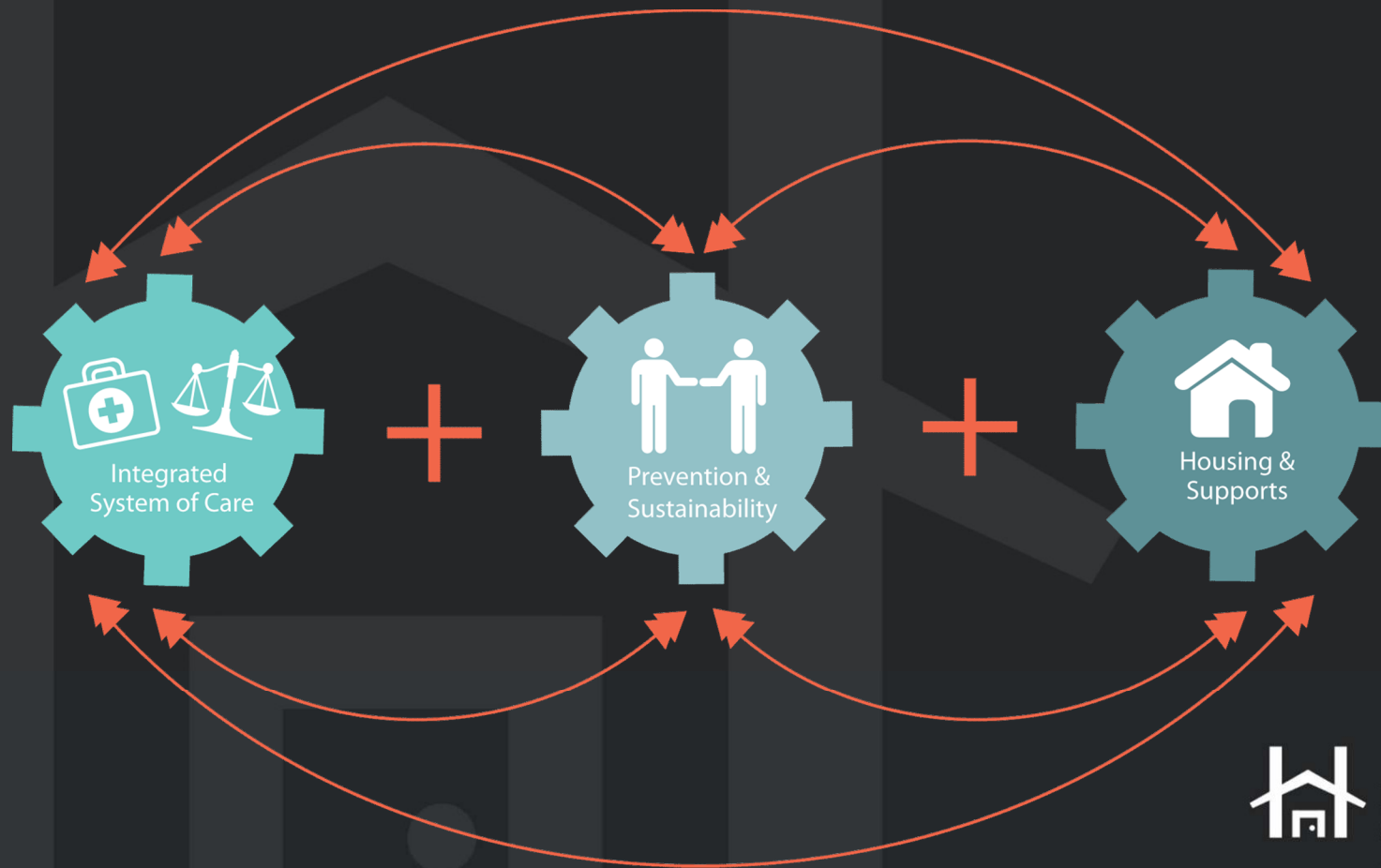
- >> Safe, Secure, Stable Housing
- >> Long Term Connections to Supports
- >> Improved Wellbeing
- >> Education
- >> Employment



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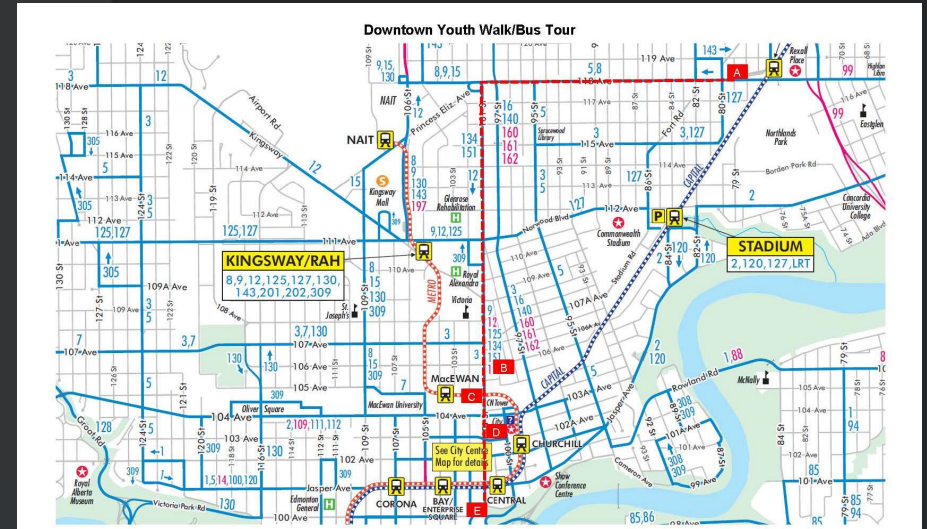
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Edmonton's Homeless Youth Strategy



Implementing the Homeless Youth Strategy

We started by looking at the system from the perspectives of youth.



Implementing the Homeless Youth Strategy

Some of the key principles that came out of the Design Forum:

- Embed government services within community organizations that already serve youth, especially access to income and benefits
- Prevent entrenchment in homeless lifestyle by connecting homeless youth to housing *within two weeks*
- Hold systems accountable for providing supports to youth
- Create avenues for engagement, input, and mutual support for youth with lived experience

Implementing the Homeless Youth Strategy

Under the Provincial Youth Plan, funds have been contributed annually by Alberta Human Services since 2014-15 towards ending youth homelessness.

- Approximately \$1.9 million set aside for implementation of the Homeless Youth Strategy
- March 2015 – March 2016
- Two main priorities:
 - Establish Integrated Youth Hubs
 - Establish Cross-System Support Model for Youth Housing First Delivery

Integrated Youth Hubs

Community and government systems provide youth-oriented services that are co-located in centralized access points (“Hubs”).

- RFPs released in late 2015 for two Hubs, one on the south side and one on the north side of the river
- YESS Armoury Resource Centre and iHuman Youth Society selected as first Integrated Youth Hubs
 - Both are already identified by homeless youth as safe places where they can access resources
 - Both already acted as “hubs” due to existing relationships with service providers

Integrated Youth Hubs

There are four tiers of system integration in Hubs:

- Tier 1: Full-time co-location of workers within Hubs.
- Tier 2: Scheduled co-location of workers within Hubs.
- Tier 3: Appointments at Hubs.
- Tier 4: Facilitated access/referrals to external service sites.



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Integrated Youth Hubs

Examples of systems and types of integration (proposed):

- Child & Family Services
 - Tier 1: Co-location of High-Risk Youth Unit staff.
- Alberta Health Services – Addiction & Mental Health (ACCESS)
 - Tier 2: Two half-days with Addictions Counselor or Mental Health Therapist to assess/triage/refer.
- Justice:
 - Tier 3: Probation officers meet clients at Hubs.
- Alberta Works:
 - Tier 4: Dedicated staff in City Centre site for youth.



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Cross-System Youth Housing First Model

Key principle:

It is the responsibility of government systems to break through barriers to support vulnerable youth,

not the other way around.



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Cross-System Youth Housing First Model

Combines a cross-system support model with Housing First and youth-centred approaches.

- Housing workers focus on housing/tenancy management (don't do any case management), being an ally/advocate for youth, and escalating issues/disconnects early
- An Integrated Service Plan is developed that defines how case management and other supports are to be provided by relevant *mainstream systems*
- A “reverse” Critical Time Intervention model is applied to build and test/fix connections with planned disengagement



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Cross-System Youth Housing First Model

Youth Housing First Teams

- 1 Project Manager (Clinical Supervisor)
 - Supervise team; problem-solve with CCCs and system contacts; escalate issues to system partners
- 2 Complex Case Coordinators (CCCs)
 - Regular case conferencing with systems; follow up with caseworkers; escalate issues raised by HSWs
- 4 Housing Support Workers (HSWs)
 - Focused on maintaining housing stability and tenancy management; identify and escalate issues to CCCs.
- 2 Housing Locators
 - Secure housing e.g. roommates, master leases, host homes, independent living, congregate housing, etc.



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Pre-CTI
Engagement & Initial Assessment
Learn youth's current connection to supports Rapport is developed
Youth is engaging

PM receives Referral Form & NST

Referrals reviewed by PM & CCCs

Youth meets CCC and is introduced to CTI
CCC completes YAP and Goals Cheat Sheet with youth

CCC introduces Youth to HSW & HL
Youth identifies supports

HSW: Completes YSPDAT
HL: Housing process started

HL: Connects with youth min 1X week

CTI Phase I
(2 months)
Transition
Youth Housed
Youth connecting with community resources
Youth involved & accountable through phase planning

CCC arranges Support network meetings

HSW: Completes YSPDAT & Prov. Assessment at housing
-Works with youth on phase goals
Connects youth to supports & fills gaps where needed
Meets youth alone min 3X
Meets youth & supports 2X

CTI Phase II
(2 months)
Try-out Phase
HSW helps youth strengthen community connections
HSW steps back & monitors community support network

HSW: Reviews phase goals with youth

Outings with youth reduced throughout phase

Meeting with youth and supports as needed

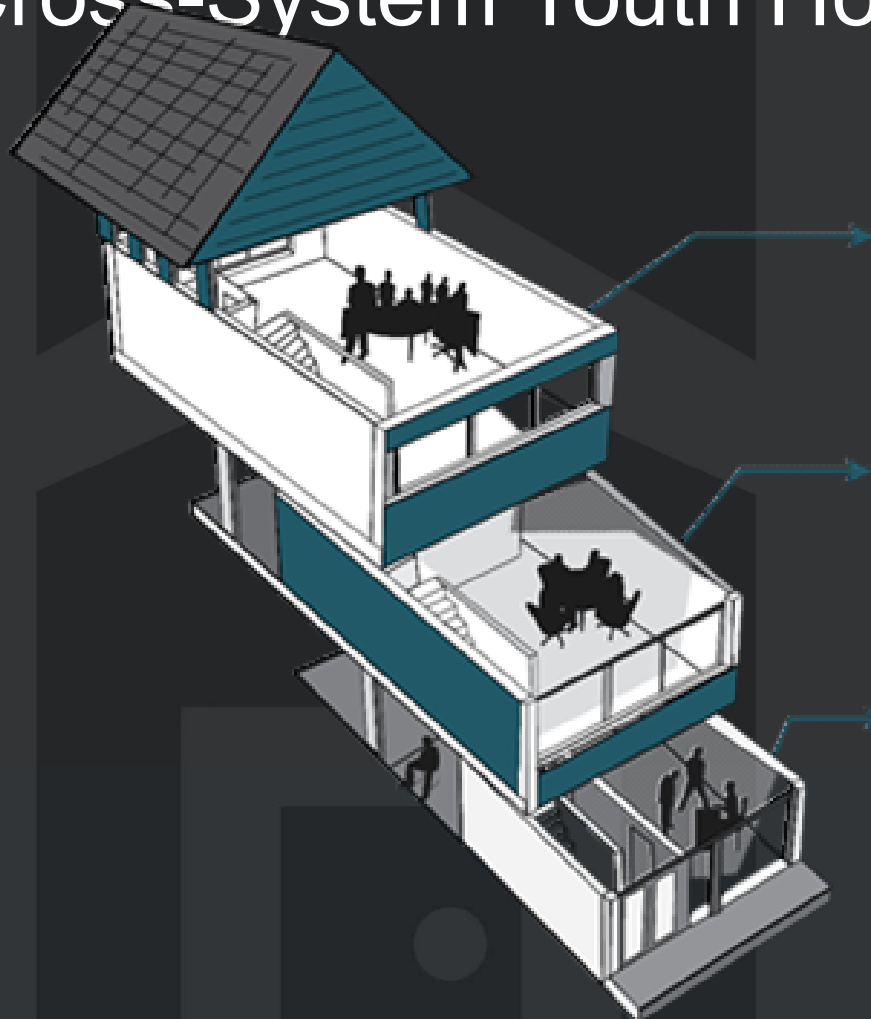
CTI Phase III
(2 months)
Transfer of Care
HSW prepares youth & support network for life after CTI
Celebrate successes at graduation

HSW: Reviews phase goals with youth
Complete YSPDAT & Prov. Assessment at housing at 6 months

Final meeting with supports and youth

Final meeting with youth alone
Graduation

Cross-System Youth Housing First Model



Youth Systems Committee

OPERATIONS

- Bi-monthly meetings
- 2 hours

FUNCTIONS

- Systemic Barriers – policy and legislative level

Cross-Systems Support Team

OPERATIONS

- Monthly meetings
- 1 hour

FUNCTIONS

- Prioritization
- Escalation
- Authority
- representatives have influence within systems

Frontline Caseworkers

OPERATIONS

- Weekly teleconference with caseworkers (CFS, AHS, etc.) around each youth
- Complex Case Coord. to facilitate

FUNCTIONS

- Integrated Service Planning and Delivery – develop plan, monitor progress
- Troubleshooting – escalation of any barriers to CSST

Cross-System Youth Housing First Model

Youth Systems Committee

- 30+ government, health, and community stakeholders
- Oversee the refinement, implementation and monitoring of the Youth Strategy
- Identify and address systems challenges and opportunities for Edmonton's youth sector
 - e.g. (policy): Income support for 16-17 year olds without CFS files
 - e.g. (practice): Intoxicated youth denied rape kit at emergency department

- Alberta Health Services – Young Adults and Cross Level Services
- Alberta Health Services – Addiction & Mental Health
- Bent Arrow
- Boyle McCauley Health Centre
- Boyle Street Community Services
- City of Edmonton, Community Services
- City of Edmonton, Sustainable Development
- E4C
- Edmonton Catholic School District
- Edmonton John Howard Society
- Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers
- Edmonton Police Service
- Edmonton Public Library
- Edmonton Public School Board
- Homeward Trust
- Hope Mission
- Human Services – Alberta Works
- Human Services – Edmonton Region Child and Family Services
- Human Services – Family Violence Prevention and Homeless Supports Division
- Human Services – Disability Services
- iHuman Youth Society
- The Neighbour Centre
- Old Strathcona Youth Society
- RCMP Kare Unit
- REACH Edmonton
- United Way of the Alberta Capital Region
- YOUCAN
- Youth Criminal Defence Office
- Youth Empowerment and Support Services



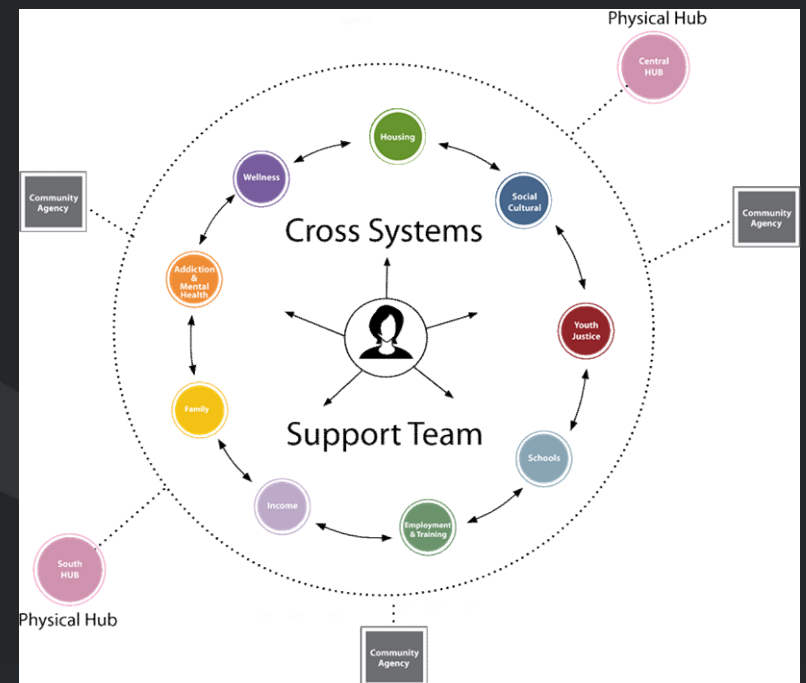
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Cross-System Youth Housing First Model

The Cross-System Support Team

- Members have an influential role in their respective systems to resolve escalations
- Collectively propose, prioritize, and select clients for intake
- Case conferencing on complex cases that are not going as planned
- Venue for discussion of youth feedback



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Youth Housing First – Results and Lessons

The Youth Housing First teams began operations under the Clinical Supervisor in late June/early July 2016.

- 97 referrals received
 - Primarily from systems, e.g. CFS, AHS, corrections, police
 - 24 youth self-referrals through Youth Hub walk-ins
- **46 youth clients have been housed since July**
- Housing Types:
 - Independent 1- or 2-bedroom units
 - Three shared accommodation houses (roommates):
 - 4-bedroom men's house
 - 4-bedroom women's house
 - 3-bedroom LGBTQ2S+ house

Youth Housing First – Results and Lessons

The Youth Housing First team has demonstrated its value through early successes working with youth with complex needs.

- 18 year old couple
 - High-risk pregnancy. Referral received three months before due date. Couple was housed in rental unit prior to baby's birth.
- 16 year old male
 - Referred by Probation Officer. Traumatic history, involvement with CFS, addictions since age of 13, in and out of corrections. Roommate housing with other two youth as positive role models.
- 20 year old female
 - Referred by Disability Services as a complex case. Prior gang affiliation, service bans. Addictions, mental health – multiple systems involvement. Housed in one-bedroom apartment.



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Youth Housing First – Results and Lessons

The work of the Youth Housing First teams and the Youth Hubs has highlighted significant systemic barriers.

- Housing First or Income First?
 - Complicated and convoluted processes for accessing income, which are compliance- or appointment-based.
- The 16-17 Year Old Benefit Chasm
 - Must be 18 years old to access Alberta Works non-learner benefits. As a student, takes 4 months for Learner's Benefit. If no CFS involvement, no access to any other income.
- Child Protection?
 - CFS requires child protection investigation (parent interview) before file can be opened. If CFS opens file, first try family reunification, then kinship, then CFS housing, and then other (e.g. Housing First).



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Thank You!

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