### Testing Solutions in Testing Times

How Toronto used challenges to create ongoing housing opportunities for households experiencing homelessness

**CAEH 2023** 

City of Toronto | Jenn St Louis, Yolisa de Jager, Trish Lenz



#### WELCOME: NICE TO MEET YOU :-)







**Jenn St Louis** 

Manager, Housing Stability
Services
Jenn.St.Louis@toronto.ca

**Trish Lenz** 

Manager, Coordinated Access

trish.lenz@toronto.ca

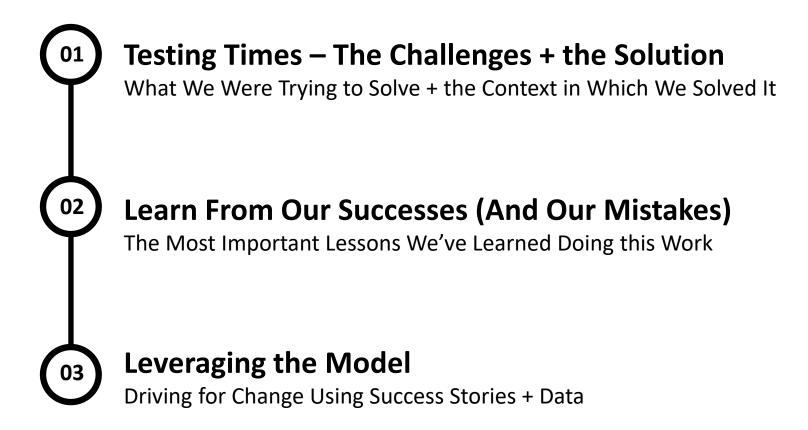
Yolisa de Jager

Manager, Access to Housing

Yolisa.deJager@toronto.ca



#### WHY ARE YOU HERE?





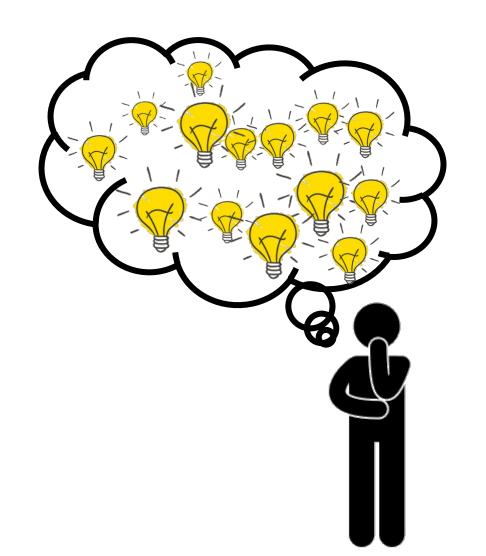


Testing Times – The Challenges + Solutions



#### TESTING TIMES – THE CHALLENGE

How do we leverage our resources to create more housing opportunities for individuals experiencing homelessness?



#### THE TESTING TIMES

HIGH VACANCY
FOR BACHELOR
SOCIAL HOUSING
UNITS

UNAFFORDABLE RENTS \$\$\$









NEW TECHNOLOGY ROLLOUT

TOXIC DRUG SUPPLY

#### TESTING TIMES - A CHALLENGE + SOLUTIONS



#### Off Ramp #2

of Homeless Applicants in Choice Base





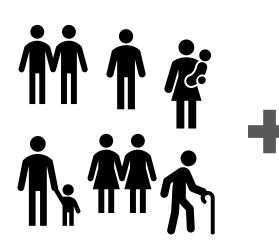
#### Off Ramp #1

Priority and chronological applications

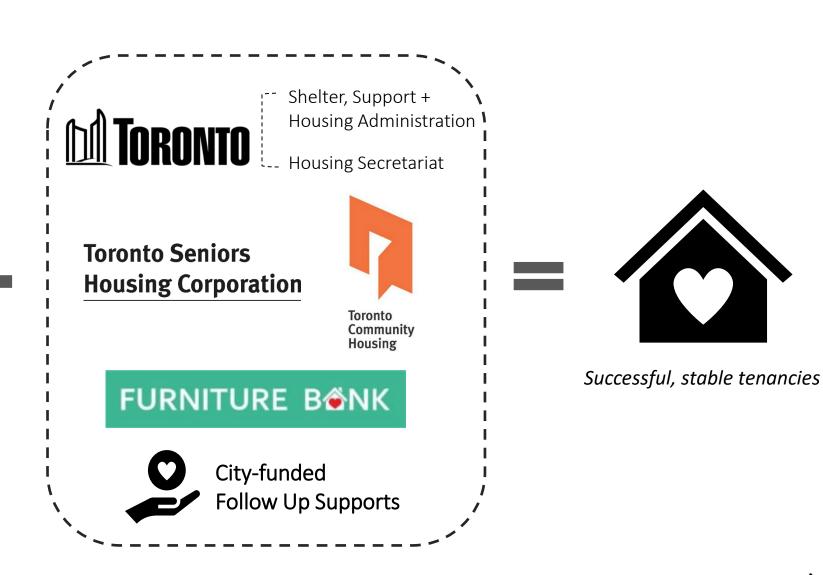




#### SOLUTIONS - RAPID REHOUSING — TORONTO

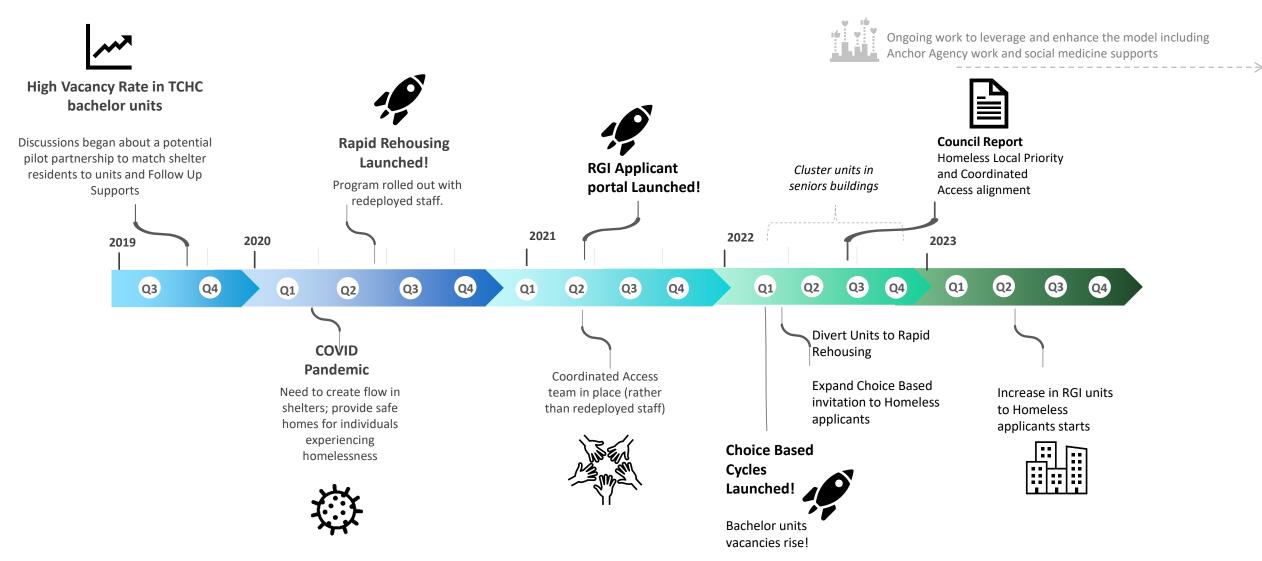


Individuals or Families
Experiencing Sheltered or
Unsheltered Homelessness





#### HOW WE GOT HERE







Learn From Our Successes



(And Our Mistakes)

LESSON ONE

### RELATIONSHIPS MATTER.

FOCUS ON THE PEOPLE.

#### RELATIONSHIPS MATTER. PEOPLE MATTER.

#### **BUILDING THE PROGRAM**

REDEPLOYED STAFF SENSE OF URGENCY, **MEANT** -**WILLINGNESS TO** FRESH EYES, TRY NEW THINGS. **NEW IDEAS + PULLING OUT ALL OPPORTUNITIES** THE STOPS. FOR CHANGE. Policy folks as **Collective problem Research** Analyst as **Housing Workers** solving + curiosity Asset + Inventory building Control momentum Iterative design, **Project Manager** as

**Furniture Bank** 

Dispatch + Logistical

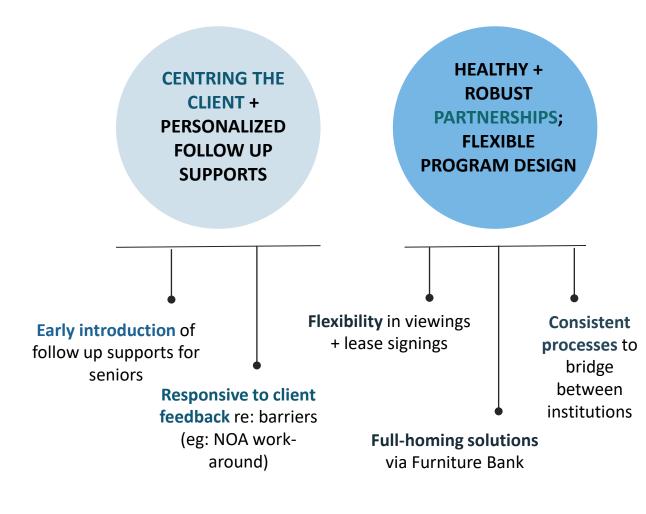
Coordinator

building on

feedback from

the frontlines

#### **DELIVERING THE PROGRAM**



GOOD COMMMUNICATION DOESN'T MEAN YOU ARE ALWAYS THE ONE SPEAKING.



LESSON TWO

#### ACTIVE LISTENING + COMMITING TO COMMUNICATING

# **ACTIVE LISTENING**

BEING FULLY PRESENT TO ACTUALLY *HEAR* WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING





LESSON THREE

# UTILIZE BUREAUCRATIC TOOLS TO MAKE THE CHANGE(S) STICK

#### EMBEDDING CHANGE WITHIN THE BUREAUCRACY



#### REPORT FOR ACTION

#### Local Priority Rules for Rent-Geared-to-Income Housing and Centralizing Access for Affordable Rental Housing

Date: June 20, 2022

To: Planning and Housing Committee

From: Executive Director, Housing Secretariat; and Chief Planner & Executive Director,

Wards: All

#### SUMMARY

The <u>HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan</u> ("HousingTO Plan") provides a blueprint for actions and investments across the full housing spectrum to enhance access to safe, secure and affordable homes for Toronto residents. As part of the HousingTO Plan, the City adopted a new Housing Charler, *Opportunity for All*, with a key principle that "all residents have a right to housing that is accessible and takes into account the specific needs of historically disadvantaged and marginalized groups." In adopting the HousingTO Plan and Charter, the City also committed to taking a human rights-based approach to the development and implementation of all housing policies, programs, initiatives and investments over the next ten vears.

One key step in advancing a rights-based approach to housing is to improve access to affordable homes for Toronto residents. This report makes a number of recommendations for City Council's consideration that would enhance the City's social housing program, known as Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) housing, and the Affordable Rental Housing program to improve access. The proposed changes would also help improve fairness, transparency and equity in how affordable homes, including deeply affordable RGI homes, are allocated.

In line with the Auditor General's recommendations, through the report, Opening Doors to Stable Housing: An Effective Waiting List and Reduced Vacancy Rates Will Help More People Access Housing, which was adopted by City Council in July 2019, this report seeks City Council authority to amend the existing RGI local priority rules, which were adopted by City Council in 2002, to support the selection of households based on an applicant's level of need.

Recognizing the need to enhance and further streamline the administration of affordable rental housing as the supply of new affordable homes increases, the HousingTO Plan includes a recommendation to design and implement a centralized access system to

Local Priority Rules for Rent-Geared-to-Income Housing and Centralizing Access for Affordable Rental Housing

Page 1 of 22

### INCREASED ALLOCATION TO INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

• From 1 in 7 to 1 in 5

### COUNCIL DIRECTION TO ALIGN WITH COORDINATED ACCESS PRIORITIES

Flexibility by design

### DATA CROSS REFERENCING TO SUPPORT APPLICATIONS TO CENTRALIZED WAIT LIST

 29% of individuals on the By Name List have applied to be on the CWL



LESSON FOUR

## COMMIT TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

#### PILOTING NEW WAYS OF SERVICE DELIVERY



#### **92 Peter Street Pilot**

- Flexible Housing Worker hours
- Clinics on site to promote documentation readiness
- Virtual appointments



### Early Introduction of Follow Up Supports

- Seniors clustered units
- Early introduction of follow up support workers (at lease signing)
- In 2023 now expanding across entire RRH program



Iterating for Future Success

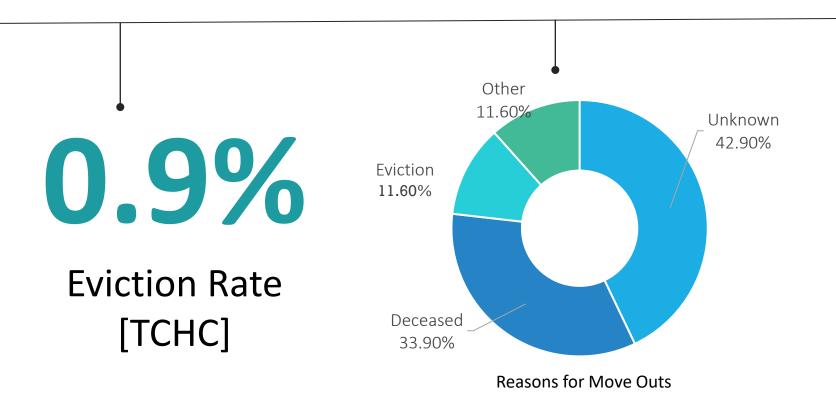
#### SUCCESSES – RAPID REHOUSING

2, 428

Individuals Housed

1, 725

Units



#### SUCCESSES – RAPID REHOUSING

626

HOMELESS HOUSEHOLDS
HOUSED VIA PRIORITY
CODE
(HIGHEST RGI OUTCOMES

TO DATE)

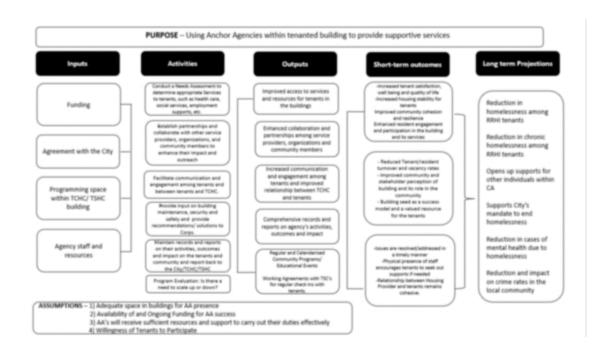


35% 辽

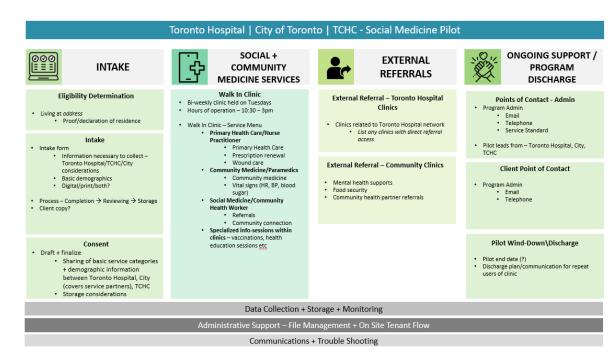
INCREASE IN SHELTER
CLIENTS WITH CWL
APPLICATIONS

#### LEVERAGING THE MODEL

### ANCHOR AGENCIES IN SOCIAL HOUSING – DEVELOPING A MODEL



### IN SOCIAL HOUSING



#### QUESTIONS/REFLECTIONS/MUSINGS



jenn.st.louis@toronto.ca yolisa.dejager@toronto.ca trish.lenz@toronto.ca