

Staying put: Reimagining our response to preventing homelessness in **mid-size** cities

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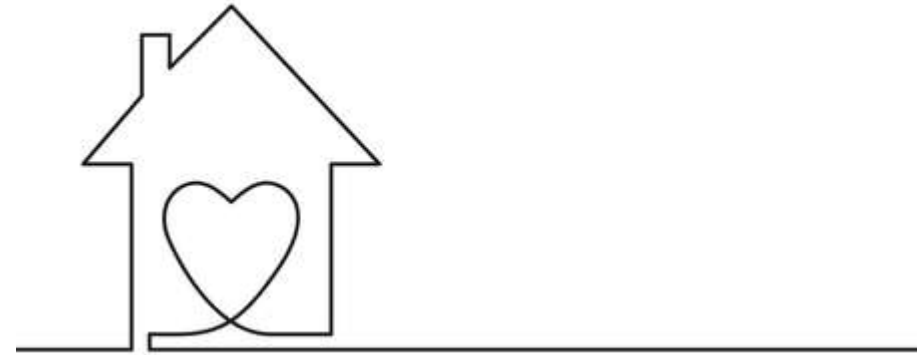
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Project design



Objectives

- Understand perceptions and misperceptions of homelessness in mid-size cities
- Support partner communities to address homelessness from a human rights perspective
- Build empathy and community resilience in partner communities

Phases

1. Media analysis & environmental scan
2. Interviews with key stakeholders
3. Brokered dialogue



Interviews

	People experiencing homelessness	Service providers	Community members	First responders
Total = 86	29	10	24	23

Regulating public space, regulating people

Unfortunately, it's just a cycle. It's just a 'I'll move you from here. I'll see you next week here. Move you from there. See you next week, the next spot.' ...there's really no long-term solution.

- By-law officer

"My stuff's getting stolen, all the time. Being able to keep the little bit of stuff I do have. I called the city just today. They took everything of mine [participant cries]. It's not the first time they did that. So, I learn I don't get attached to things, really. But right now, it's just hard because it's cold out. They just took all my blankets. What I used to keep warm at night."

- Person experiencing homelessness for 2 years

Criminalizing homelessness

They get a call and they're just out there doing their job. But some of them [law enforcement] they come and harass you.

So let's say you're homeless and you're outside and someone gets a call "hey, I don't want this person here." They're like "what's your name?" "I don't have to give you that" "Yes you do or you're going to get arrested" "you don't have that authority, I'm not doing anything wrong."

Some of them [law enforcement] get so fed up with this happening every day they start changing as well. That's what I don't like. They're getting paid to help the people, not put them in worse situations. But other than that, they're not social workers, they're not psychologists, they're police officers. So they stick to their job, if someone's doing a crime and doing something bad okay but if they're not then leave them alone.

- Person experiencing homelessness for 10 years



Revising community

Well, I think some people just want their small town back. They want their utopia, they want their picture of what a small town should be, and what a community should be, it should be very black and white and pristine. And maybe it wasn't that.

- Service Provider

Supporting mid-size cities



Changing the narrative

Developing targeted communications strategies



Mutual aid

Create and fund outreach and peer support



Leverage legal tools

Drive response through a human rights approach



Community building

Prioritize social inclusion and homelessness prevention