



PEOPLE FIRST, COMMUNITY ALWAYS

Preventing Homelessness: Home Stay
Prevention and the Calgary Prevention
Collaboration

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Collaboration is Key

- “While the language of homelessness prevention is sometimes used in policy circles in Canada, it is rarely well conceptualized and in practice has not been a financial or strategic priority in most jurisdictions.”¹

Preventing Homelessness

Primary Prevention: Risk Avoidance
System level (affordable housing,
accessible income, poverty reduction)



AFFORDABLE HOUSING



**Secondary Prevention: Risk
Reduction**

Broad in scope – from addressing
imminent risk to transition planning from
institutions and rapid rehousing

Tertiary Prevention: Preventing Recurrence

Stabilization and supports once individuals become
homeless, in order to re-house and prevent future
homelessness (many Housing First programs operate
within this tier)



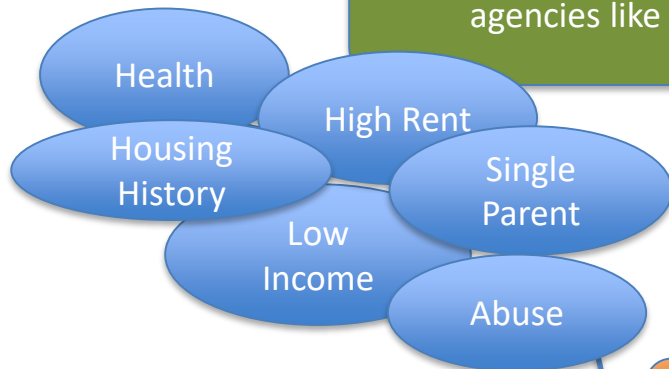
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<http://homelesshub.ca/solutions/prevention>



Income, housing regulation, and other structural/policy prevention

Targeted, non-direct interventions to reduce risk (including programming from agencies like Aspen and CUPS)



Home Stay and Partners

If housing is lost: Shelter and Post-Exit Supports

The Cost of Eviction: Why Secondary Prevention is Key

- Cost of Shelter:
 - Approximately **\$3600** per family per month;
 - Approximately \$1000 per single per month¹
- Financial and emotional cost:
 - Replacing physical goods that are lost
- Social and emotional cost:
 - Lost connections and investing in a new community
- Developmental and/or Educational cost:
 - High stress and relocating to a new school or care provider
- Families stay in shelter two times longer than singles²

Typical Home Stay Financial Investment: **\$1000/family**

¹Pomeroy (2005) The Cost of Homelessness:
Analysis of Alternate Responses in Four Canadian Cities

²Gaetz, Dej, Richter, & Redman (2016): The State of Homelessness
in Canada 2016. Toronto: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press

How Home Stay Works

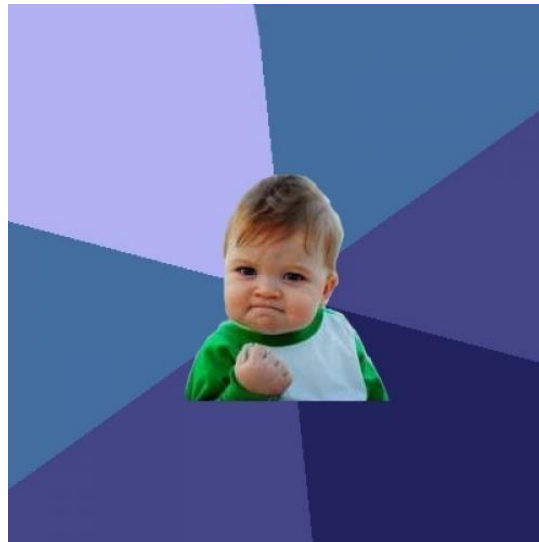
- **Home Stay works to keep families in safe homes or move them from unsafe or unsustainable homes to sustainable ones.**
- Fills a gap
 - Within Calgary's homeless system of care, high-acuity families are prioritized once homeless
 - Home Stay provides case management for low- and mid- acuity families before they become homeless
- Low barrier:
 - Screening and triage via phone or e-mail
 - Mobile team meets in the home for intake and service
- **The Intervention:**
 - One-time financial investment with tiered supports

Tiered Supports

- Phase 1:
Screening and triage, with resourcing, referrals, strategies and connection support for those **not** accepted into program
- Phase 2:
Single financial investment and one month of light-touch resourcing, referrals, connection, and information
- Phase 3:
Single financial investment and 3 months of case management – supporting goals around advocacy, skill development, and connection to community and services
- Phase 4:
3 months of case management to support relocation. Phase 4 families may receive a higher single investment amount.

Our Services

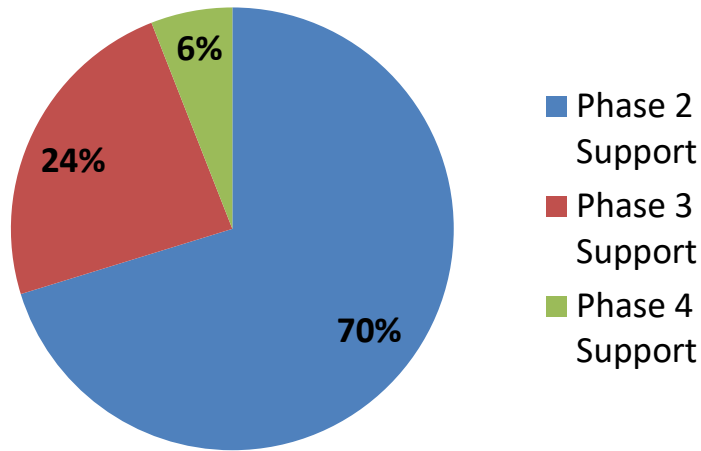
- **168** families served in 2015/2016
- **95%** were housed at exit
- **98%** were diverted from shelter
- **100%** were connected to further resources



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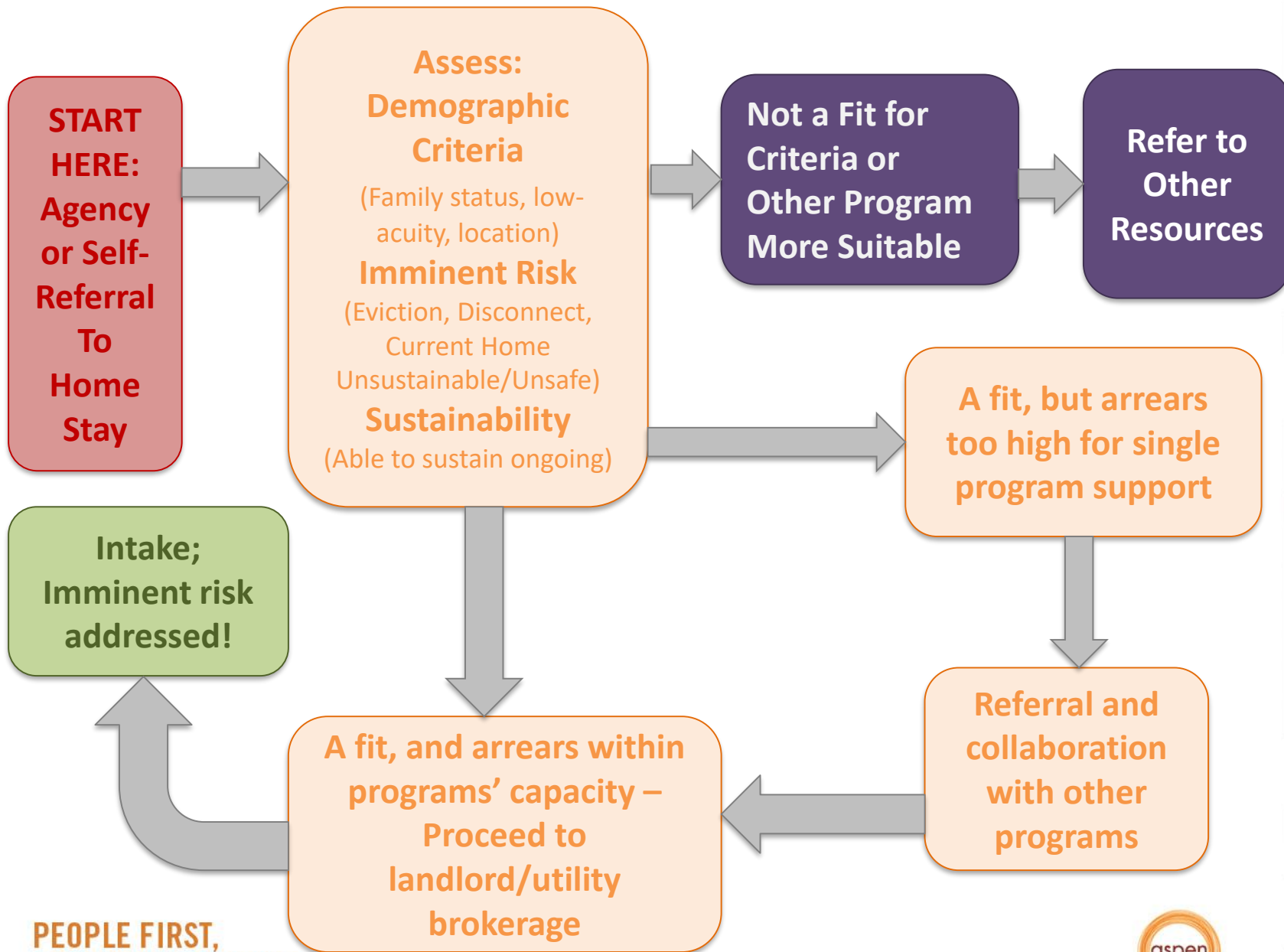
Our Services



In 2015/2016, **48 families received Phase 1 support** and were directed to other strategies and resources

In 2015/2016, **30% of 168 families intaked chose a higher level of involvement** - 3-month case management to work on skills and building connections.

From July 2015-June 2016, Intake Coordination staff provided information, resources, and strategies to **1018 callers who did not meet pre-screen criteria.**



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Frontline Perspective: Before the Collaboration Meetings

- *“I basically would google Red Cross and CUPS... look up what their requirements are... and then [clients] would go there, and sometimes later they would find out that actually, no... everything you told them might have changed.”*
- *“When I first started I was not confident at all to say, ‘this is what you need to do.’”*

The Collaboration

- Driven by frontline concerns, meetings began in summer of 2015
- Quarterly meetings coalesced around a standing agenda:
 - Share criteria, program updates
 - Discuss recent trends
 - Share mutual challenges and solutions

Complex Needs

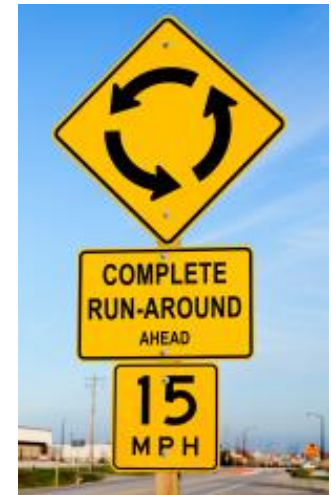
- Elaine wanted to move, but hadn't been able to find an affordable home. Her roommate had skipped out without paying rent, leaving her with an eviction notice. Her income was limited, and she was nervous about finding a new roommate because she had just had a baby. She wanted to look for a better job, but felt she needed to move first – if she found a good job in her current place, she might not be able to keep it when she relocated.
- She accessed us just as we were starting our discussions about how to work better together.

Elaine's perspective: Before collaboration

- *“Oh it was very difficult. I went maybe to one agency, and they couldn't help me out so I went to Red Cross. I went to Red Cross like three, four times, and then... they introduce you guys to me. And maybe after a week, Aspen called me.”*
- *“My income was thirteen... hundred a month. So it was so difficult to pay rent and the first month together.”*

Collaboration: Key Benefits

- Reduced system navigation time for clients
 - Right-fits faster and warmer, more successful referrals
- Improved use of system resources
 - Managing demand by ensuring clients use resources uniquely available to them first, or that uniquely meet their needs
 - Programs are able to best meet their mandates
- Expanding our reach to help more people
 - Leveraging relationships to expand the scope of program criteria
 - Pooling resources for higher amounts



Frontline Perspective: Collaboration

- *“There’s been a lot more communication with CUPS and Red Cross about what it is that they need, what should I tell families about going there.”*
- **Benefit:** Reduced system navigation time.
Clients aren’t wrongly directed and are as prepared as possible.

Frontline Perspective: Collaboration

- *“We’re able to help a different group of people that have those higher arrears that would get looked at by one agency, and they would be like ‘No, there’s no way. That’s way too much money.’”*

Benefit: Support more people.

Able to support those who are sustainable, but have unmanageable arrears – who previously would have been asked to abandon their home along with their debt and move somewhere new.



Arrears Too High

- A large family had more than four thousand dollars in arrears – they were living with a high rent, John's partner was in school, and John was laid off and on EI. But they had a concrete and workable plan to pay off a portion of the arrears, and if the rest was cleared, the landlord agreed in writing to drop the rent.

- Here's what they had to say...

John's Perspective

- *“We went to Red Cross. Then Jemma through the Red Cross talked to you guys at Aspen and CUPS and I think there was one other one that she sent it to.... It was all explained.”*
- *“Everything was quick and direct. There was no maybes.”*

Frontline Perspective on Collaboration

- *“You’re able to pool the different agencies that are able to do this work, I think it takes a lot of burden off of families, but also agencies.”*
- *“You’re not feeling like you have to carry it all on your own.”*
- **Benefit:** The mutual support afforded by collaboration allows us more flexibility to meet our mandates, which means we have to turn fewer people away.

Challenges

- Referrals
 - Different requirements; FOIPP
- Bridging perspectives
 - Thinking beyond shelter diversion and our “sector”
- Data collection
 - Tracking our collaboration (FOIPP)
 - Learning from our partners
 - Pursuing trends

Did Families Keep their Homes?

Clients exiting with positive reasons for leaving, by quarter, 2015/2016:

- 96%
- 95%
- 100%
- 96%



In March 2015, of **331** families served to date...

3 had entered a shelter after their Home Stay involvement.

*“It was a good help for me. I am still living
in the house up until now.”*



Collaboration: Sharing our Strengths

- A collaboration driven by frontline prioritizes client experience and service delivery
- Relationships between agencies ensure clients and staff are better supported and enables flexibility
- Sharing perspectives expands how we think about our work and enables flexibility

Collaboration: Building Strategy

- **We will always need shelters** so that those who experience catastrophic housing crisis can maintain safety and get needed support
- **Changes at a policy level** are needed to ensure that those at risk of homelessness due mainly to economic factors will be less vulnerable to shocks
- **Between risk and shelter** there is an opportunity to prevent housing loss, so that clients can stabilize in place – a Housing First approach
- **By deepening and expanding our relationships,** we can work better together at all levels to develop a truly coordinated prevention strategy.