



# Report to the community

## Homelessness & affordable housing initiatives

2013 – 2014



RED DEER & DISTRICT  
COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION  
all for community.



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From April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014:

**154** new individuals were housed through the Outreach and Support Services Initiative (OSSI) grant from the Province of Alberta

**331** individuals were housed or received continued support from the previous year in their housing through the OSSI grant

**94** individuals received housing supports through the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) grant from the Government of Canada

**23** youth were assisted and supported in their move from homelessness to more stable housing options through the HPS grant

**443** individuals were housed or received continued support from the previous year in their housing through the OSSI grant and the HPS grant

# Message from the Mayor

## Mayor Tara Veer on ending homelessness

The City of Red Deer is pleased to provide, in partnership with the Red Deer & District Community Foundation, information and results on homelessness and affordable housing objectives achieved in the past year. This report signals a major milestone in the delivery of homelessness and affordable housing supports in Red Deer – we are at the halfway mark of the community's commitment to end homelessness in 10 years, and we are entering a period of exploration with the possibility of new partnerships and delivery structures.

This is my first formal opportunity to address the community on the topic of homelessness and affordable housing as Mayor. I consider this a great privilege as the well-being of *all* Red Deerians is critical to a healthy and vibrant community. The Red Deer & District Community Foundation has been one of those organizations at the centre of our community efforts to end homelessness. As we move forward, the role of the Community Foundation as a key partner in the coordination and planning functions of ending homelessness will change as they maintain their focus on their core mandate. Reflecting this shift, the new five year plan to end homelessness proposes a strategy designed to address the governance and leadership needs of the community to move homelessness and affordable housing needs forward in a way that positions Red Deer for our future.

As we fulfill the goals and objectives in the new five year plan, we will do so with the confidence and knowledge

gained through our past efforts and experiences. Special recognition goes out to the human service organizations in our community who meet with vulnerable individuals and families on our streets and in shelters and support our vulnerable Red Deerians in find appropriate housing and other social supports.



Moving forward, The City of Red Deer is committed to the goal of ending homelessness by 2018. We will be at the table with our senior orders of government, community organizations and local citizens to explore the mechanisms and structures necessary to achieve the objectives set out in the community's new five year plan. As this work progresses, we will draw on the knowledge, experience and results of our past while positioning us for the future Red Deer that we are becoming. I am pleased to present this snapshot of the progress made in homelessness and affordable housing over the past year.

On behalf of City Council and the nearly 100,000 citizens we represent, thank you to the people of Red Deer whose daily efforts are helping us reach our local vision of ending homelessness.



## EveryOne's Home

The EveryOne's Home Leadership Model has been an important part of Red Deer's first five year plan to end homelessness. Over the last year, those involved with the Leadership Model have focused on a few key activities.

The Healthy Relationships and Supports Working Group organized both the Spring and Fall 2013 Tune-Ups. A total of 178 individuals were provided with a meal as well as goods and services at both events, which were held at no cost. There were a variety of supplies and services available during both events, such as footwear, clothing and haircuts, among others. Tune-Ups are held not just to address our homeless population's immediate needs in one location, but also to establish connections and relationships between service providers and clients. It also provides an opportunity for awareness of the services we have in our community.

The Housing Options Working Group conducted a needs assessment study on housing needs and affordability in our community. The group contracted

OrgCode Consulting Inc. to help our community identify what the housing needs are and what demographics would require which specific type of housing. Strategies and recommendations for different levels of government, service providers and developers of market housing were also identified in order to have appropriate and affordable housing options for our community. This Housing Options Framework project was completed with funding from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and The City of Red Deer Housing Solutions Fund.

One of the most important tasks given to the EveryOne's Home Leadership Model was to craft the next Five Year Plan to End Homelessness. A series of community conversations were held in June, October and March to gather information on our community's desired strategic direction.

More information on "Red Deer's Five Year Plan to End Homelessness: 2014-2018" is provided on page 25.

**"I appreciated the opportunity through the EveryOne's Home model to work with a variety of interested partners, whose goal was – and still is – to end homelessness. This diverse partnership is key to supporting the vulnerable population. "**

Brenda Hogan, Cosmos Group of Companies

## Community supports

Individuals may be sleeping in their cars or outside, or they may have a home but are at risk of homelessness.

Across Red Deer, a spectrum of housing supports and services have been built, providing many access points to assist people who are homeless or those who are at risk.

Individuals accessing shelter through Safe Harbour Society via the Shelter Triage worker are connected to the intake worker. Other people may access services through intake workers at the Canadian Mental Health Association office or at the Red Deer Native Friendship Society office. The Central Alberta Women's Emergency Shelter is one of the partners of the Red Deer Housing Team, and an intake worker from Central Alberta Women's Outreach Society liaises with staff at that centre to identify and support families who would benefit from the Housing First program.

There is more than one correct door in the community.



## Shelter visioning

Formally, the concept behind shelter visioning began with the release of “A Plan for Alberta: Ending Homelessness in Ten Years.” Objectives within this plan looked at ways to transform adult shelters from long-term accommodations to a short-term shelter model, connected to local Housing First and related supports.

The specific provincial objective statements are:

- Stipulate a maximum length of stay in shelters (21 days);
- Require that case management be provided in shelter (though not necessarily by the shelter itself);
- Expect shelter to move people through to rapid re-housing

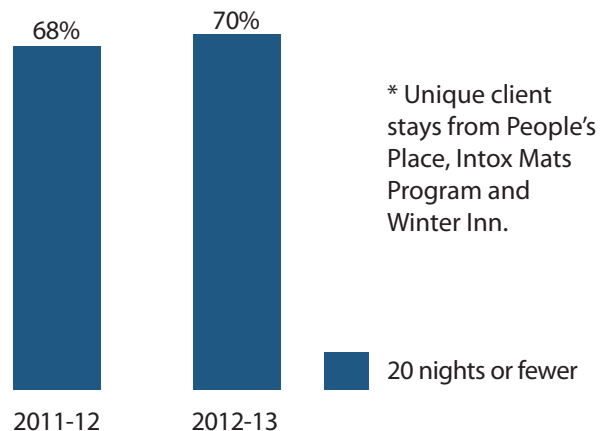
Locally, conversations began between senior representatives from The City of Red Deer, Central Alberta Safe Harbour Society and Alberta Human Services. The goal was to see what could be done in Red Deer to meet the provincial objectives or how these could be adapted to meet local needs.

It became apparent a great base was already in place in Red Deer. People’s Place, operated by the Safe Harbour Society and the only shelter in Red Deer that would be affected by the provincial objectives, was already implementing these elements in its operating protocol.

Historically, People’s Place already had a 30-day limit on clients using the shelter. Staff worked with each client to build a “goal plan,” and they provided referral information to the client.

Statistics from Safe Harbour Society also indicate that clients are typically only utilizing shelters for a short period of time.

### Client stays – Safe Harbour Shelters\*



# Shelter Triage Program

The final meetings between The City, Safe Harbour Society and the Province occurred in the fall of 2013, and the provincial plan's objectives were effectively adapted to meet the local context in Red Deer.

## Local shelter visioning actions

### Length of stay

Safe Harbour Society agrees to a goal of a maximum 28-day stay in People's Place. Clients will be triaged after seven to 10 days. Individuals connected to a worker within the Housing First program or those on a waitlist for other recognized housing will be allowed to remain in the shelter until a housing unit is available for them.

### Case management

The Shelter Triage program will provide the initial assessment and short-term case management.

### Rapid re-housing

The Shelter Triage program will refer people to mainstream or Housing First services.

The Shelter Triage Program is an important component within the continuum of supporting individuals into appropriate housing. The triage workers refer clients to all of the Housing First programs identified on pages eight and nine.

433 unique clients were assisted from April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014.

## Shelter Triage Processes



An initial pre-screen is completed for clients that have stayed in one of the Safe Harbour shelters for 7-10 days.

Triage workers will continue to try and connect with those clients who are "not ready to engage in a Housing First program."

Housing First – eligible clients are connected to this program. Process involves client, triage worker and Housing First intake worker.

Clients identified as not requiring Housing First will be referred to mainstream community supports.

# Intake processes



## Agency intake

No matter what agency door a person may go through to get assistance, the intake process is a critical step to helping them prevent the onset or end the cycle of homelessness. For any client to be successful, he or she needs to be matched with the correct program.

During the intake process, agency staff from across Red Deer use the Service Prioritization Decision Assistant Tool (SPDAT) as one of their primary assessment tools. The tool is designed to help support workers prioritize which clients should:

- receive which type of housing assistance intervention, and
- be next in receiving those services.

SPDAT consists of 15 components that measure a range of factors, such as self-care and daily living skills, mental health and wellness, substance use and history of homelessness and housing. A score of zero on a component indicates a non-issue, while a score of 4 on the same component indicates a more serious issue or situation. Scores for all 15 components are added together to provide the overall SPDAT score for the individual or family.

## Coordinated intake

Once a week, the Red Deer Housing Team\* meets to discuss new intake clients: the SPDAT scores are critical to these discussions. At these weekly meetings, the Housing Team also reviews the case load of the support workers and assigns clients to the appropriate worker. The team discusses which program, Rapid Re-Housing or Intensive Case management, would meet the needs of the client. If there are vacancies within Harbour House and/or The Buffalo (Permanent Supportive Housing), that factor is also taken into consideration. The Permanent Supported Housing model is also discussed, to see if that might be a better match for the client.

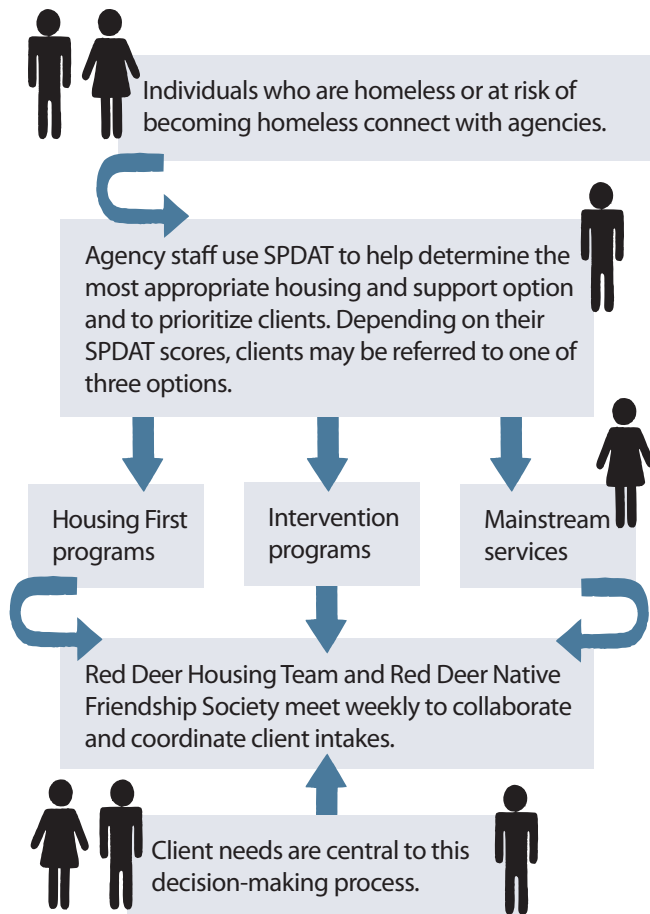
Red Deer Native Friendship Society completes its own intake process and offers two possible programs to match to the client. Red Deer Native Friendship Society also attends the weekly Red Deer Housing Team meetings to discuss transfer of clients from one program to another.

The goal is always to stream clients into the program that will provide the best opportunity for housing stability.

\*The Red Deer Housing Team is a partnership between Canadian Mental Health Association, Central Alberta Safe Harbour Society, Central Alberta Women's Outreach Society and Central Alberta Women's Emergency Shelter.



## Intake Overview



## Lighthouse Project

With the support of the Provincial government, Safe Harbour Society provides The City of Red Deer an aggregate report every three months on a variety of data points gathered from the intake questions such as:

- Age
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Migrant status
- If new to city, from where?
- What events have led you to require services?

Though not all homeless people use emergency shelters regularly, the utilization patterns currently serve as one of the best available indicators for understanding baseline trends in the size and composition of the homeless population. This data can then be compared with that from Housing First projects in order to identify trends or gaps in services.

# Housing First

Housing First is a client-centred approach based on the belief that, before someone can break the cycle of homelessness, a safe and secure home is necessary, with support services readily available.

The Alberta Housing First approach includes:

1. Moving people into affordable and safe housing directly from streets and shelters, without preconditions of treatment acceptance or compliance
2. Contracting a service provider to make robust support services available to the client
3. Embracing a harm reduction approach to addictions rather than mandating abstinence. At the same time, the provider must be prepared to support client commitments to recovery
4. Ensuring continued tenancy that is dependent on fulfilling a landlord-tenant agreement; clients have protection under the law
5. Establishing the long-range goal of moving clients toward the highest level of self-reliance possible: support services are not intended to continue indefinitely

In a bid to provide choice, some Red Deer programs do focus on sobriety. Clients can choose which program would be the best fit for them, and they are referred and welcome into the most appropriate option.

## Guidelines for Housing First Programs

Within Red Deer's spectrum of support and services, Executive Directors from the funded programs agreed on the following guidelines for Housing First programs.

### Rapid Re-Housing Program

#### Key components that define program:

- Individual or family has an initial SPDAT score between 20 and 39
- Follow-up support workers carry a case load of 20 to 25 clients

### Intensive Case Management

#### Key components that define program:

- Individual or family has an initial SPDAT score typically between 40 and 60
- Follow-up support workers carry a case load of 15 to 20 clients

# Prevention programs

Local Housing First projects assisted 127 chronically homeless and 200 episodically homeless clients from April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014.

## Common components of both programs:

- Individual or family fits the definition of being either chronic or episodically homeless
- Individual or family agrees to visits in their home from a support worker
- Individual or family is agreeable to third party payment of their rent
- Client support funds for security deposits, rental subsidy and client move-in costs are available
- Program connects the individual or family to mainstream services, where appropriate
- Tenancy agreement is in the tenant's name, and the tenant assumes responsibility for maintaining that agreement

Housing First is not the right support for everybody. Agency staff also work with individuals who have only recently become homeless or who may be at risk of homelessness. These individuals are best served by a Prevention program.

Key components of these programs include:

- Clients are individuals or families that are recently homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless
- Individual or family has a positive housing history, with a history of living successfully on their own and no history of being chronic or episodically homeless
- Individual or family does not have significant barriers to retaining their housing
- Short-term intervention would be helpful, and the client accepts support by a case worker for approximately three months
- One-time financial assistance would be sufficient to stabilize this individual or family; however, the client must be able to demonstrate an ability to meet the prospective rental/utility obligations after the assistance has been granted, based on current or anticipated income
- Support workers carry a case load of 25 to 30 clients

## Responsible funding

To ensure the Outreach and Support Services Initiative (OSSI) grant and the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) grant are appropriately allocated, the Community Housing Advisory Board (CHAB) works with the Social Planning department as administration to support the grants and resources being:


1. allocated to the community as per the grant contract
2. used in a coordinated, efficient manner that supports homeless individuals and/or families


CHAB reviews all of the housing proposals and makes recommendations to Red Deer City Council on which projects should be allocated funds. Council reviews these recommendations and, as the fiscal agent for the grants, approves the allocation of the funds to the projects.


Both OSSI and HPS grants support EveryOne's Home Vision and Framework and EveryOne's Home: Red Deer's Five Year Plan Towards Ending Homelessness. The OSSI grant also supports A Plan for Alberta – Ending Homelessness in 10 Years.


The funded projects align with the goals of Red Deer's first five year plan to end homelessness.

## Goals of the five year plan:

- 

Red Deer has sufficient housing options to meet the diverse and changing needs of our community members.
- 

Individuals and families in Red Deer have access to support services whose primary focus is on maintaining housing or finding permanent housing.
- 

Through awareness, healthy relationships, increased capacity and good communications, Red Deer will end homelessness.
- 

Red Deer has effective and reliable data systems for knowledge development on homelessness to support evidence-based decision making.

**From April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014, The City of Red Deer allocated:**

**\$2,750,000 through the OSSI grant from the Province of Alberta.**

**\$534,050 through the HPS fund from the Government of Canada.**

## Achieving goals from the five year plan

Canadian Mental Health Association –  
Buffalo “Housing First”

\$690,588 – OSSI

Goal  
#1

Central Alberta Safe Harbour Society –  
Harbour House, Supported Housing and  
Shelter Triage Program

\$672,896 – OSSI

Goal  
#1

Goal  
#2

Central Alberta Safe Harbour Society –  
Winter Inn

\$1,906 – OSSI

Goal  
#2

Goal  
#3

Central Alberta Safe Harbour Society –  
Bunk Beds

\$20,598 – OSSI

Central Alberta Women’s Outreach Society –  
Red Deer Housing Team (Housing First  
and Prevention Programs)

\$1,158,110 – OSSI/ \$264,001 – HPS

Goal  
#1

Goal  
#2

Red Deer & District Community Foundation –  
EveryOne’s Home Leadership Model

\$93,202 – HPS

Goal  
#1

Goal  
#2

Goal  
#3

Goal  
#4

Red Deer Native Friendship Society –  
New Beginnings Aboriginal Housing Project  
and Aboriginal Housing Outreach Project

\$151,240 – OSSI/ \$130,601 – HPS

Goal  
#2

Red Deer Youth and Volunteer Centre –  
Youth Winter Inn

\$46,246 – HPS

Goal  
#2



## Details of funded projects

### Prevention Programs

#### **Red Deer Native Friendship Society – Aboriginal Housing Outreach Project**

- This program supports individuals who wish to engage in a sober lifestyle
- The support worker provides culturally relevant awareness and education and with the client develops an appropriate housing plan
- 65 adults received supports and either maintained their housing or moved into new housing from April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014\*

#### **Red Deer Housing Team – Prevention Program**

- Partnership between Canadian Mental Health Association, Safe Harbour Society, Central Alberta Women's Outreach Society and Central Alberta Women's Emergency Shelter
- 29 adults received supports and either maintained their housing or moved into new housing from April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014\*

### Rapid Re-Housing and Intensive Case Management Programs

#### **Red Deer Native Friendship Society – New Beginnings Aboriginal Housing Project**

- Rapid re-housing model
- An Elder, along with the support worker, supports the client who wishes to live a sober lifestyle in attaining their goals
- 44 adults received supports and either maintained their housing or moved into new housing from April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014\*

#### **Red Deer Housing Team**

- Rapid re-housing and Intensive case management model
- 177 adults received supports and either maintained their housing or moved into new housing from April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014\*



## Permanent Supportive Housing

Intensive Case Management – staff work in the housing to provide support 24 hours per day, seven days a week

### Canadian Mental Health Association – Buffalo “Housing First”

- 39-unit apartment building
- 49 adults received supports and either maintained their housing or moved into new housing from April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014

### Safe Harbour Society – Harbour House

- 8-unit housing complex; tenants share common areas and a kitchen
- 15 adults received supports and either maintained their housing or moved into new housing from April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014

## Permanent Supported Housing

Staff provide support and come into the housing unit on a regular basis but are not on site 24/7

### Safe Harbour Society – Supported Housing

- Five housing units with space for 20 individuals
- Tenants have to agree to the goal of living a sober lifestyle

- Tenants who have moved into the community can continue to receive support through the program
- 58 adults received supports and either maintained their housing or moved into new housing from April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014

## Youth Program

### Red Deer Youth & Volunteer Centre – Youth Community Worker

- Program for recently homeless youth or those who are at risk of homelessness
- Focus on reconnecting youth with their families; if not possible, youth are linked to mainstream services and assisted with planning for housing stability
- 23 youth received supports and either maintained their housing or moved into new housing from April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014

\* The above statistics do not include the number of children supported in the programs, as only their parents have been counted.

# What does the data tell us?

## Comparing the 2012 Point in Time Count data with Housing First outcomes

In October of 2012, Red Deer's first Point in Time count was conducted, providing an excellent snapshot of who was experiencing homelessness in the community on that particular evening.

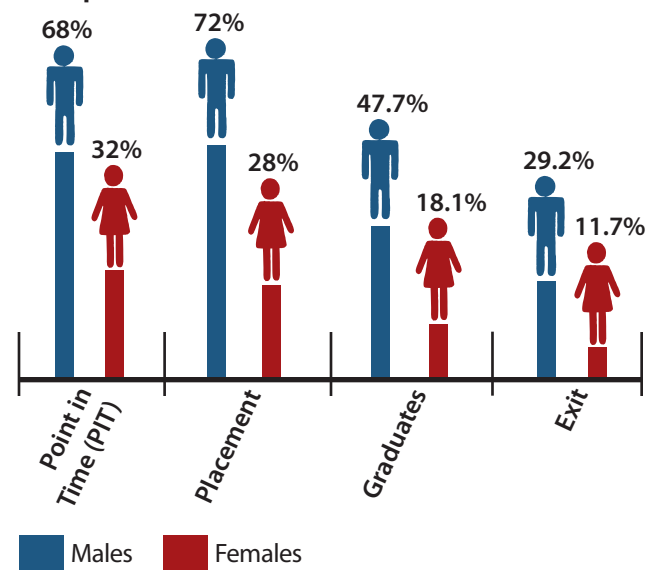
This section provides a comparative contextual analysis, drawing on evidence from Point in Time data and the aggregate results from community-wide Housing First programs. The rationale is to show progress towards ending homelessness in Red Deer. The evidence will be vital for revisiting certain program approaches and determining if program elements will need to be tweaked, if necessary, to improve client outcomes.

For each of the following comparisons, four main categories of data will be compared:

1. **Point in Time** – data from October 16, 2012
2. **Placement** – clients housed through Housing First
3. **Graduates** – clients who can now live successfully on their own, as determined by client and worker
4. **Exit** – clients who left before completing the Housing First program

All data comes from the Point in Time Count (2012) and aggregate Housing First program results (2012 and 2013).

### Comparison 1: Gender



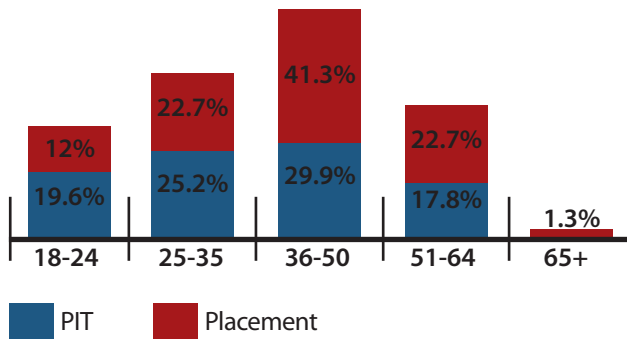
In the 2011 Federal Census, females made up 50.5% of Red Deer's population; however, both the Point in Time and Housing First data indicate an over-representation of males in our community's homeless population.

By contrast, the graduation and exit data shows us that local Housing First programs were more successful with graduation rates in the male population.





### Comparison 2a: Age Point in Time versus Housing First Placement



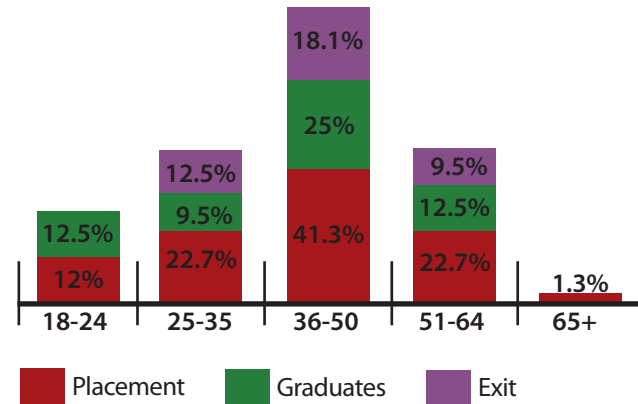
Demographic differences are evident when comparing the PIT and placement data. The 18 to 24 age group makes up 11.1% of Red Deer's population, yet it was more prevalent during the PIT count.

25 to 35 year-olds make up 18.7% of the total population, and the comparison shows a similar proportion of these individuals in both the PIT and placement data.

The 36 to 50 group constitutes 20.9% of Red Deer's total population, but they have higher percentages in PIT and placement than any other group.

Finally, seniors comprise 10.4% of Red Deer's population, but the comparison shows a much lower percentage in placement and no seniors recorded from the PIT data.

### Comparison 2b: Age Housing First Placement, Graduates and Exits



Taking a step beyond the PIT and placement comparison, the age data can also be used to compare Housing First outcomes. First, the 18 to 24 age group had better outcomes than any other group, with higher graduation and lower exit rates.

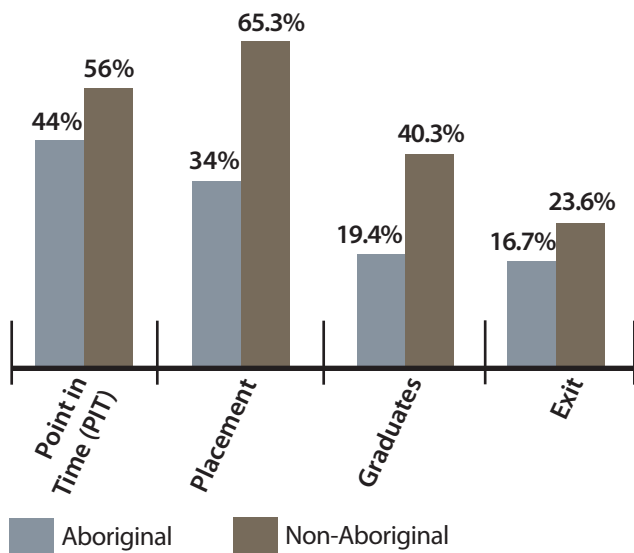
The 25 to 35 age group shows higher placement, but a lower success rate in terms of graduation. Similarly, the 36 to 50 group has lower graduation than placement rates; this group also has higher exit numbers than any other group. 51 to 64 year-olds have proportionally comparable data to the previous group, with approximately half the percentages in each category.

Finally, seniors have a small percentage for placement, with no graduate and exit data.

# What does the data tell us?

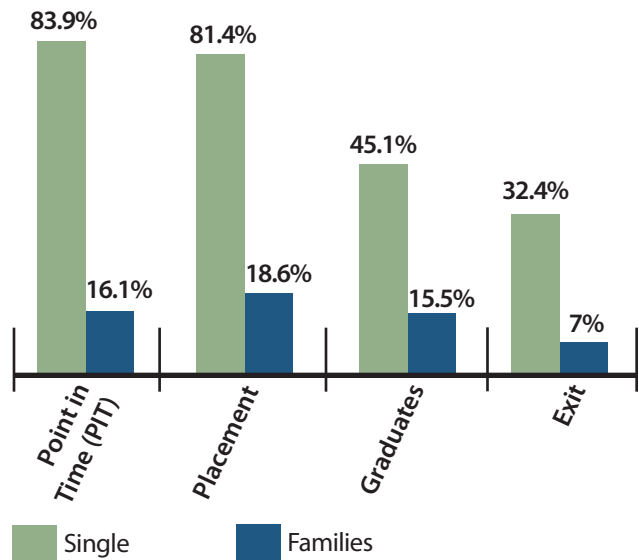
## Comparing the 2012 Point in Time Count data with Housing First outcomes (cont'd)

### Comparison 3: Ethnicity



The PIT count indicated Aboriginal people make up 44% of Red Deer's homeless population, despite representing only 5.2% of the total population. The housing outcomes data shows this group is under-represented in program coverage, with 34% placements. The PIT and placement data is more closely matched for the non-Aboriginal population. The data indicates Aboriginal clients have lower graduation rates and higher client exits compared to non-Aboriginal clients.

### Comparison 4: Family status



Overwhelmingly, four out of five PIT respondents were alone at the time of the survey. Only 8.5% reported being with a spouse, and 7.6% were with children during the Point in Time count. Similarly, the profile of recent homeless clients in Red Deer shows more single individuals than families. Individuals also demonstrate better graduation rates and less exit numbers, when compared to families.



## Time for positive change

Four years ago, Peter\* arrived at the Buffalo – for the first time. He was angry. Staff had challenges engaging with him. He wasn't accustomed to many things that were part of living at the Buffalo: keeping a clean home, having positive daily activities and being supported. Peter chose to keep to himself, refusing to engage in case management. He required a great deal of direction and support to keep his home clean and to manage his guests.

He left, choosing to live in the community and – for a brief time – back in homelessness.

Then, in the summer of 2013, Peter identified that he needed the assistance provided at the Buffalo; he wanted to make positive changes in his life.

Since returning to his home at the Buffalo, Peter has openly embraced the daily meaningful activities and the social and leadership opportunities available to

him. He has become actively involved in the Buffalo Tenant Association, Wellness Group and Meal Program. Peter also enrolled himself in a financial management program offered through Central Alberta Women's Outreach. He has successfully completed the program and now is able to budget on his own, saving enough to make it through the month with money for meals and wellness activities.

Peter has become a leader in the Buffalo community and is a strong advocate for his fellow tenants and for himself. He has also chosen to make positive changes to his lifestyle and has significantly reduced his substance use, moving from his crack cocaine addiction to marijuana use.

Peter would like to move on, at some point, and try living more independently in the community. But for now, he is content to call the Buffalo his home.

\*Name changed.

# Red Deer Youth Homelessness Strategy Group

Youth homelessness continues to be a focus area in the community. This past year, the Red Deer Youth Homelessness Strategy Group formed to focus on youth aged 16 to 24 who will need housing and housing supports in the community.

The group was initially made up of stakeholders from Alberta Health Services, Youth & Volunteer Centre, Parkland Youth Homes, the Province of Alberta, Child and Family Services, Red Deer Native Friendship Society and The City of Red Deer.

This group, along with members from the Community Housing Advisory Board, have developed the framework for a Housing First youth project. This framework is based upon a review of a successful youth program in Calgary, and a request for proposals based on the framework will be issued in the summer of 2014.

**Youth homelessness will be addressed in Red Deer through advocacy, prevention, early intervention, education and housing with supports.**

## Activities held by the strategy group



### Research project

“Assessing Youth Homelessness in Red Deer, Alberta.” This project is led by Dr. Yale Belanger, Associate Professor with the University of Lethbridge. The project involved interviews with youth who were experiencing homelessness and with stakeholders and community agencies that work with youth.



### Educational Event

“Ending Youth Homelessness in Red Deer” was held on January 29, 2014. The speakers included Dr. Stephen Gaetz from York University and Dr. Yale Belanger from the University of Lethbridge. 90 people attended.



## Stories from Red Deer's homeless youth

### Homeless and alone

Austin\* is only 17 years old, but he has already had 23 admissions to the Youth Winter Inn. Twenty three times, he didn't have anywhere else to go, and for 23 nights he slept on a mat in the youth shelter. He was there on Christmas Day, too.

During his intake to the Community Support Program, it became clear that Austin needed immediate assistance with housing, clothing, employment and life skills. These things wouldn't be easy to maintain, though, because of his addiction and mental health issues.

Since Austin did not have a contact number, staff found it very difficult to stay in touch with him. He disappeared for a period of time and then he resurfaced at the Youth Winter Inn – with a broken jaw due to a physical attack in the community. The time had come for a more serious change, and Austin identified that he was willing to get help to get back on track.

Now, Austin is receiving support, and he is currently housed. He's also accessing additional community supports to deal with his mental health, and with his addictions. On a day-by-day basis, Austin is getting back on track.

\*All names have been changed.

### Young parents, tragic losses

When Holly\* was 18 years old, she found out she was pregnant. She was also homeless at the time, and her boyfriend, Garrett\*, was living in a suite. He had no running water and no stove, plus his place was ridden with bed bugs, and they were constantly fumigating.

The young couple needed a new home. They went to Central Alberta Women's Outreach, where they connected with a worker who helped them to find a two-bedroom apartment and sign a one-year lease. For the next few months, they worked hard to maintain their tenancy and to attain their individual goals, while also preparing for their baby to arrive.

Then, only two weeks before the due date, they lost the baby when the umbilical cord wrapped around his neck. This tragic loss was a huge blow to both of them, with Holly, in particular, relapsing and heading down a path of self-destruction.

With a great deal of hard work and determination, Holly and Garrett stayed together. It has been over a year since they last worked with their case worker, yet they are still living together in their same apartment, with their new five-month-old baby.



## Highlights

### Graduated Rental Assistance Program

This program provides a rental subsidy for individuals who have graduated from one of the Housing First programs. In order to be a successful graduate and eligible for this subsidy, the client needs to exhibit good tenancy skills, which includes stability in his or her housing for a period of time. Piper Creek Foundation has overseen the administration of the funds.

If the client's income source(s) cannot adequately cover rental expenses, then he or she might fall back into homelessness without the rent subsidy.

The maximum amount of subsidy\* available is:

- Bachelor & 1 Bedroom – \$300**
- 2 Bedroom – \$350**
- 3 Bedroom – \$350 maximum**

\* Subsidies are based on Alberta Urban Affairs Eligibility Regulations.

This one-time grant became operational in the community in December of 2012; the funds will most likely be exhausted by September, 2014.

From December 1, 2012 to March 31, 2014, 29 unique individuals received a rent supplement.

### Winter emergency response/ Year-round shelter beds

Historically, Red Deer's winter emergency response program has been to offer a "Winter Inn" with 30 shelter beds throughout the cold months. In 2013, a significant shift occurred and changes were made – resulting in 29 additional shelter beds being available from November 15, 2013 to March 31, 2014, and 18 additional shelter beds being available year-round.

The following descriptions highlight the changes:

1. The Community Housing Advisory Board provided a one-time grant for bunk beds to Safe Harbour Society, People's Place. This allowed People's Place shelter to increase their capacity from 23 to 35.
2. Safe Harbour Society received approval from The City of Red Deer to increase the capacity of its "mats" shelter (for individuals under the influence of a substance) from 20 spaces to 26 spaces.
3. The City of Red Deer provided funds for the time period of November 15, 2013 to March 31, 2014 for extra staff at People's Place. This allowed the program to shelter an additional 11 individuals per night for this time period.

# EFFORTS

CASE MANAGEMENT Programs CYCLE  
 service support TO assessment IMPROVEMENT  
 CLIENT *create* database GROWTH *positive* OF Progress  
 Worker support OUTCOMES stage CHANGE  
 BASELINE

## Efforts to Outcomes database

All of the funded programs are required to use the Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) database. This database provides a system of collecting defined data points from all the programs. In essence, the aggregate data provides a city-wide picture of the successes of the programs and areas where improvements are needed.

This past year, focus was placed on strengthening the case management section of the database. As the name of the database indicates, "efforts" are put in by the client, with assistance from the front-line support workers. Clients then create movement to a positive outcome.

A baseline assessment of each client's particular situation is created to measure and report on outcomes and progress over time and also to help guide case planning. The basis to measure this movement rests on the Transtheoretical Theory of Change Model, developed by Prochaska and DiClemente.

Every support worker creates a service delivery plan in partnership with the client. This plan contains elements that the client wants to focus on. For example, the client may want to reconnect with family members or work on creating a budget system for themselves.

As the client moves through the cycle of change, the stages are weighted by the database. The support worker notes in the database that the client has moved from the contemplation stage of connecting with their family members to the preparation stage: the client is developing a plan of how to connect with those family members.

At a program level, supervisors and support staff can pull charts to review the growth of clients. Areas of success can be celebrated and areas for improvement can be highlighted, with the ultimate goal of providing the right support and service to the client.

ETO is a tool for case management – Housing First is always based on case management.



# Evaluation and training

## Evaluation and Monitoring

Continuous monitoring and evaluation took place in 2013 and 2014. All of the funded projects were monitored by Social Planning staff and, in the case of the OSSI funded projects, Provincial staff were also involved in the process.

### Monitoring is essential

Both the Provincial and Federal funding sources have the expectation that monitoring will be completed. This process allows for continuous learning and improvement, and it also paints a clearer picture of the results that are being achieved. Agencies welcome this monitoring process, as the ultimate goal is to support homeless individuals in the most effective and efficient way.

Beyond the regular monitoring, the Red Deer Youth and Volunteer Centre also hired OrgCode Consulting Inc. to complete an evaluation on their Youth Winter Inn and Community Worker program.

Social Planning, as the administration of the grants, was monitored by the Province of Alberta and the Government of Canada.

## Training

Coordinated, collaborative and continuous training occurs across Red Deer for staff working with homeless clients. The executive directors and senior management from the funded agencies work together to offer inter-agency training for all staff.

### Training offered in 2013-2014

Motivational interviewing

Suicide prevention

Family SPDAT training

First Aid

Aboriginal Awareness

Outcome Star Training

Hoarding

Harmful Cultural Practices

Consent and Record Keeping

Vicarious Trauma Training

SPDAT Training and Refresher Course

Housing First Training

Family Violence 101



# Provincial and national connections

Housing representatives from Red Deer are active on the following provincial and national organizations:

## 7 Cities on Housing and Homelessness

This organization is made up of the seven largest communities from across Alberta; all have agreed to conduct similar Point in Time Counts in October of 2014. This group is developing an online learning system for Housing First front line workers.

## Canadian Alliance on Ending Homelessness

The inaugural conference organized by this alliance was held in Ottawa in October of 2013. Representatives from local programs attended, through funding provided by The City of Red Deer.

## Alberta Interagency Council on Homelessness

The council delivered 11 policy recommendations to the Government of Alberta that will drive government approaches to funding and investment, and will champion the integration of service delivery by both community partners and government.

Additional highlights:

- Initiated "Integrated Housing and Supports Framework" to guide planning, investment and delivery across Alberta
- Initiated a "Canada-wide Framework for Homeless Prevention" in partnership with the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness

**"After attending the Canadian Alliance on Ending Homelessness conference, it confirmed to me how forward-thinking Red Deer has been on ending homelessness and that our Housing First programs are doing great work in the community."**

Stacey Carmichael, Safe Harbour Society

## Looking to the future

### Homelessness Partnering Strategy renewal process

The Federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) grant was renewed for the time period of April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2019, with a focus on Housing First.

A subcommittee of the Community Housing Advisory Board (CHAB) met with representatives from the EveryOne's Home Leadership Group and the Urban Aboriginal Voices Society to identify priorities for the HPS Community Plan. Through this collaborative approach, the two priorities (depicted on the right) were recommended to CHAB and approved. Funding for future programs in the community will be allocated based on these recommendations.

The HPS Community Plan can be viewed online at [www.reddeer.ca](http://www.reddeer.ca).

#### Housing First approach

**Target group:** Individuals that have been homeless for three to six months within the past year.

Designated funding  
% of HPS funding:  
**60%**

Aboriginal homelessness funding  
% of HPS funding:  
**20%**

#### Individualized services

**Target group:** Individuals that are at imminent risk of homelessness. This means that their current housing situations will end in the near future – within one or two months.

Designated funding  
% of HPS funding:  
**40%**

Aboriginal homelessness funding  
% of HPS funding:  
**80%**

## A new five year plan

Over the last year, members of the EveryOne's Home Leadership Model Working Groups, Working Group Leads and Process Team have been collaborating to write the next installment of Red Deer's Plan Towards Ending Homelessness.

"EveryOne's Home: Red Deer's Five Year Plan to End Homelessness 2014 to 2018" is the result, and there are a few changes identified in the new plan. One change is the framework, which employs "prevention" at the heart of all the goals. Prevention has always been at the centre of all our efforts since we started this work. In the new plan, we have clarified and identified different levels of prevention that would provide assistance to all segments of our community.

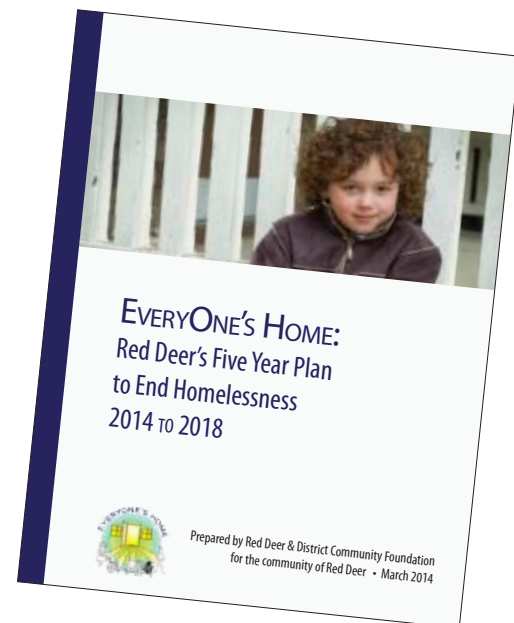
The other significant change is identifying "governance and leadership" as a goal. This single entity will be accountable and responsible for the implementation of the plan, on all fronts – be it funding, community development, housing development and management, and service provision.

The new plan has four main goals:

1. Governance and leadership
2. Primary prevention
3. Secondary prevention
4. Tertiary prevention

The document was presented to Red Deer City Council on May 12, 2014 for alignment to the Province of Alberta's 10 Year Plan To End Homelessness. The document was endorsed and adopted by Council as Red Deer's Strategic Direction to end homelessness over the next five years.

The new five year plan can be viewed online at [www.reddeer.ca/everyoneshome](http://www.reddeer.ca/everyoneshome).



For more information on The City of Red Deer housing and homelessness initiatives, visit [www.reddeer.ca/socialplanning](http://www.reddeer.ca/socialplanning).

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