



Report to the community

Homelessness & affordable housing initiatives

2012 – 2013

Presented by The City of Red Deer and the
Red Deer & District Community Foundation





Table of contents

| | | | |
|---|----|--|----|
| Message from the Mayor | 1 | Words of thanks | 14 |
| A community vision | 2 | Creating a life of possibilities | 15 |
| EveryOne's Home Working Groups | 4 | Collaboration | 16 |
| Point in Time Count | 6 | Provincial connections | 18 |
| Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool | 7 | National connections | 19 |
| Funded projects | 8 | Definitions | 20 |
| Details of funded projects | 10 | Staying the course | 22 |
| Responsible funding | 12 | A community effort | 23 |
| Achieving goals from the five year plan | 13 | Thank you | 24 |

From April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013:

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

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

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

503 individuals were housed or received continued support in their housing through the OSSI grant and the HPS grant

Message from the Mayor

Mayor Morris Flewwelling on ending homelessness

It's always my pleasure to provide opening remarks for the annual report to the community on ending homelessness – this particular message is special as it will be my last opportunity to do so as Mayor. In saying so, it is timely to reflect back on where we have been and how far we have come in ending homelessness in Red Deer.

First and foremost, we must keep in mind the excellent work that has been done in understanding homelessness and developing programs and services that work. This has been a team effort that includes government, community organizations, frontline staff, and people that have lived experience with homelessness. Individually the strategies might not work for everyone, but collectively we are getting more right than not.

This work of ending homelessness has set us on a new trajectory. The path we are on is the right path and we are making progress. As new people become homeless, it can sometimes seem futile – we end up questioning everything we have learned, everything we have done, and the progress we have made. It's now that we must stay the

course and continue to keep doing what's working; we must keep housing individuals who are homeless. At the same time, we must remain vigilant in maintaining key strategies while seeking out new opportunities – preventing people from becoming homeless is also part of our mission.

As Mayor, there are many initiatives and strategies in which I'm proud to have played a part. Supporting the development of a community plan to end homelessness will forever be a part of me. I recall hearing comments about the sheer lunacy of such an idea – and here we are – we are ending homelessness for many of our community members and reducing the amount of time that people are living this experience. Here, at this mid-point in our plan, we are making it happen and I'm proud to have been part of it!



A community vision

Red Deer is one of the few communities across Canada that has a 10-year plan to end homelessness. *EveryOne's Home: Red Deer's Vision & Framework for Ending Homelessness* by 2018 provides a broad vision and recommendations on how to achieve this goal, with principles that include:

1. Preventing homelessness through systemic changes in policies, procedures, partnerships and processes
2. Reducing the amount of time in homelessness with options for rapid re-housing and required supports
3. Promoting the "Housing First" approach – providing stable housing first, then customizing support services based on individual needs
4. Creating opportunities for individuals experiencing homelessness to develop supportive relationships
5. Ensuring appropriate housing and supports for our most vulnerable community members: Aboriginal people, active substance users, individuals with mental illness and/or chronic physical health conditions, women and children leaving domestic violence, international newcomers and individuals leaving institutional settings
6. Increasing the stock and accessibility of permanent affordable housing
7. Enhancing inter-agency collaboration and case management services

These overarching principles were used to create a shorter term working document that strategically guides tasks in the community. *EveryOne's Home: Red Deer's Five Year Plan Towards Ending Homelessness* focuses on four goals to end homelessness in the community. These include:

Goal #1

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

Goal #2

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

Goal #3

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

Goal #4

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

Housing in Red Deer compared to the provincial statistics

| | 2009 – 2010 | | 2010 – 2011 | | 2011 – 2012 | | 2012 – 2013* | |
|---------------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|
| | Red Deer | Provincial total | Red Deer | Provincial total | Red Deer | Provincial total | Red Deer | Provincial total |
| Clients housed | 116 | 1,779 | 154 | 2,216 | 137 | 1,931 | 63 | 716 |
| % who remain housed | 94 | 81 | 81 | 80 | 80 | 78 | 78 | 75 |

Source: Government of Alberta

*Data available until September 30, 2012

Small steps to creating a home

Safe Harbour Society began a new Triage program in September of 2012. One day, a triage staff member met with a young man at the Day Support program. The young man was shy and quiet, and he only gave one word answers. The second time they met, he said just a little bit about his life, how long he'd been in Red Deer, and why he came. At the third meeting, he disclosed a bit more. By the fourth meeting, he smiled and even made some eye contact. He talked about being diagnosed with mental

illness at a very young age, being hospitalized, being homeless, and struggling with alcohol addiction.

After having the opportunity to gain the young man's trust, the triage worker was able to complete the evaluation for the Red Deer Housing Team, connecting him with that program. He now has a support worker through a Housing First program and is working on building a home for himself, the very first home of his own.

EveryOne's Home Working Groups



The six EveryOne's Home Working Groups are composed of representatives from organizations across the community, all sharing their expertise and developing solutions to tackle the many facets of homelessness in Red Deer.

Early Intervention Working Group

Over the past year, this group connected with Family School Wellness workers and Settlement in Schools counselors to determine the feasibility of working with at risk families in the school system. They reviewed resources for identifying those at risk with the hope of developing a tool for the school system and local doctor's offices. The group has halted its work at this time, as they are waiting for a broad-based facilitated community event to better guide and inform them.

Systems Prevention Working Group

This group looks at best practice research and programming from a variety of provincial, federal, and international resources to help identify strategies for addressing policy and legislative issues that emerge from operational practices. They are also looking at ways to streamline processes for clients, strengthen organizational capacity, and align service delivery priorities to better meet client needs. This may include a broader collection and sharing of data and information, as well as implementing common intake processes.

Emergency Assistance Working Group

The group has completed a mapping project to learn more about the path from shelter to housing, and they are striving to align the local and provincial goals of: 1) trying to divert individuals from shelter stays and 2) working toward keeping shelter stays to a maximum of 21 days. They are looking at ways to establish a more streamlined community response to meet the immediate emergency needs of people experiencing homelessness. The group is also looking at developing an emergency response triage model.

Support Working Group

This group is building on the strong partnerships already in place between agencies to foster creative opportunities to support the quality of life for all citizens of Red Deer. They are planning an agency information event for up to 80 community agencies in the fall of 2013. Each agency will share information on their programs and services, providing valuable connections and resources. In addition to inter-agency connections, this working group includes citizens with lived homeless experience, entrepreneurs, and various levels of government who are all working to strengthen the community.

**51 people from across the community
are involved in the working groups.**

Healthy Relationships Working Group

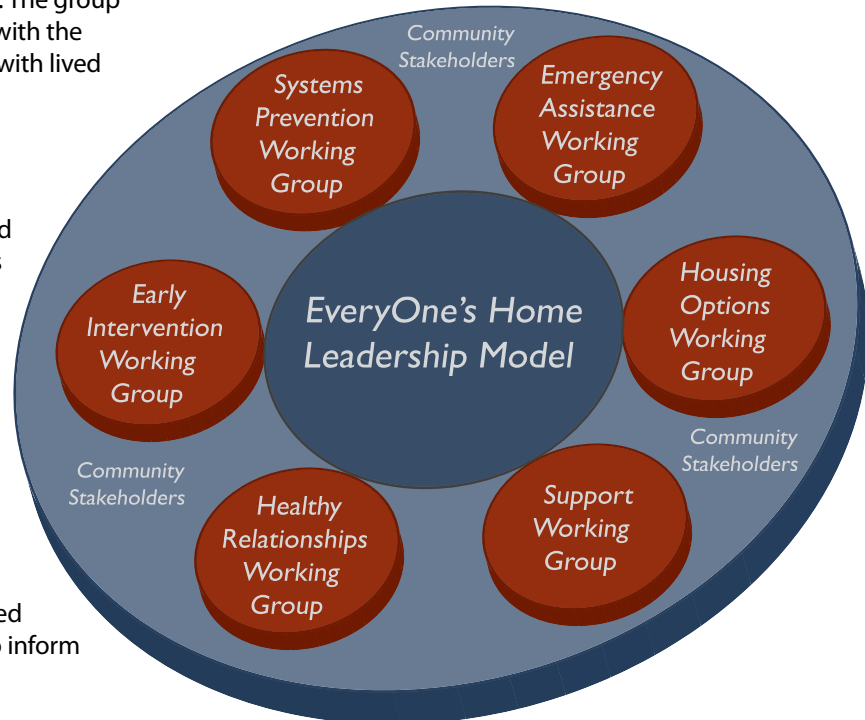
This group has looked at relationships and connections in both public and private sectors and with clientele. The group has reached out to the homeless and formally homeless communities to help them access local resources, such as the Tune UP event in the fall of 2012. They have worked to help the general population learn more about housing and homelessness through local media, website development and social media. The group conducted an EveryOne's Home logo contest, with the successfully submission coming from an artist with lived experience about homelessness.

Housing Options Working Group

This group is advocating for permanent appropriate housing options for individuals and families in order to address housing challenges within Red Deer. The group will contract a research consultant to complete a Non-Market Housing Framework and Strategy. This will assess our community's existing, less expensive non-market housing stock alongside socioeconomic and demographic trends to present a housing profile for our community, as well as recommendations to increase the supply of good quality affordable housing. Ultimately, the strategy is expected to supplement The City of Red Deer's anticipated broad-spectrum housing strategy, and will also inform the next five year plan to end homelessness.

“Everyone has a story; they do not choose to be homeless. Take the time to listen to the stories.”

Kathy Cave, Working Group Lead





Point in Time Count



A Point in Time (PIT) count is a snapshot of homelessness that captures numbers and basic demographic information of persons experiencing homelessness at a single point in time. Enumerators count people staying in emergency shelters, jails and remand facilities, detox programs, and those staying outdoors in parks, on the streets and in other public areas. PIT counts are unable to measure persons experiencing “hidden homelessness” – those who may be couch surfing, sleeping in a public washroom or living in a hotel room.

The City of Red Deer and Red Deer & District Community Foundation (RDDCF) engaged OrgCode Consulting Inc. to conduct Red Deer’s first PIT count, which took place on the night of October 16, 2012.

Ninety-eight volunteers canvassed 49 outdoor areas, covering as much of the city limits as possible. Prior to the count, these volunteers attended 90-minute training sessions where they were instructed to survey everyone they encountered, allowing the questions on the survey to determine whether or not the person encountered was homeless. In addition to the work of volunteers, 10 special teams of professional homeless service workers enumerated high density and forested areas. In preparation for the count, RCMP officers assisted these professional workers with mapping the remote and forested areas of the city where there may be rough sleepers. The officers also provided support during the event, through bicycle patrols and direct contact with PIT organizers.

The results from October 16, 2012:



Learn more about the key findings of the Point in Time Count by reading the [full report](#).

Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (SPDAT)

The SPDAT tool is designed to help support workers prioritize which clients should:

- receive which type of housing assistance intervention, such as housing first or rapid re-housing, and
- be next in receiving those services.

SPDAT also helps agency staff and clients to create service delivery plans. The assessment questions provide a starting place for staff and clients to have conversations about each individual's specific areas of need. From these discussions, clients can choose which areas they would like to focus on in their service plans.

There are 15 components of SPDAT, and these 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.

At the intake phase of the process, housing staff work through the SPDAT tool with clients and score them on each component – a score of zero indicates a non-issue, while level four indicates a more serious issue or situation.

The scoring system has a total of 60 points, which provides the reference for connecting clients with the most appropriate services in a timely manner. An individual with a SPDAT score of 54 points, for example, would be taken into a program before someone with a score of 45. Individuals with lower scores, such as under 20 points, would not be admitted into the programs, as they should be able to move themselves out of homelessness with the help of mainstream services.

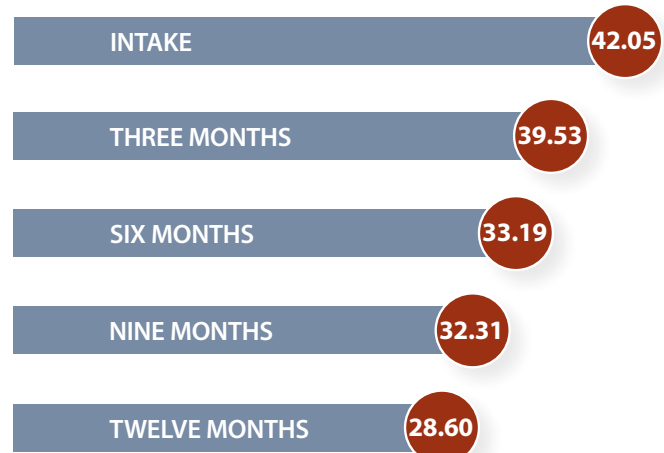
SPDAT is not a one-time measurement, as support workers complete follow up assessments at three month intervals or if there are major changes in their clients' lives. The support workers visit their clients on a regular basis, and conversations about the SPDAT components are a natural extension of conversations that they are already having.

A decreasing SPDAT score indicates that the individual is:

- becoming more stable within the SPDAT components,
- managing the issue in a more positive manner and it is becoming a non-issue,
- becoming higher-functioning within that component.

Additionally, a decreasing SPDAT score is one component to becoming a graduate of a Housing First program.

Red Deer's average SPDAT scores are decreasing

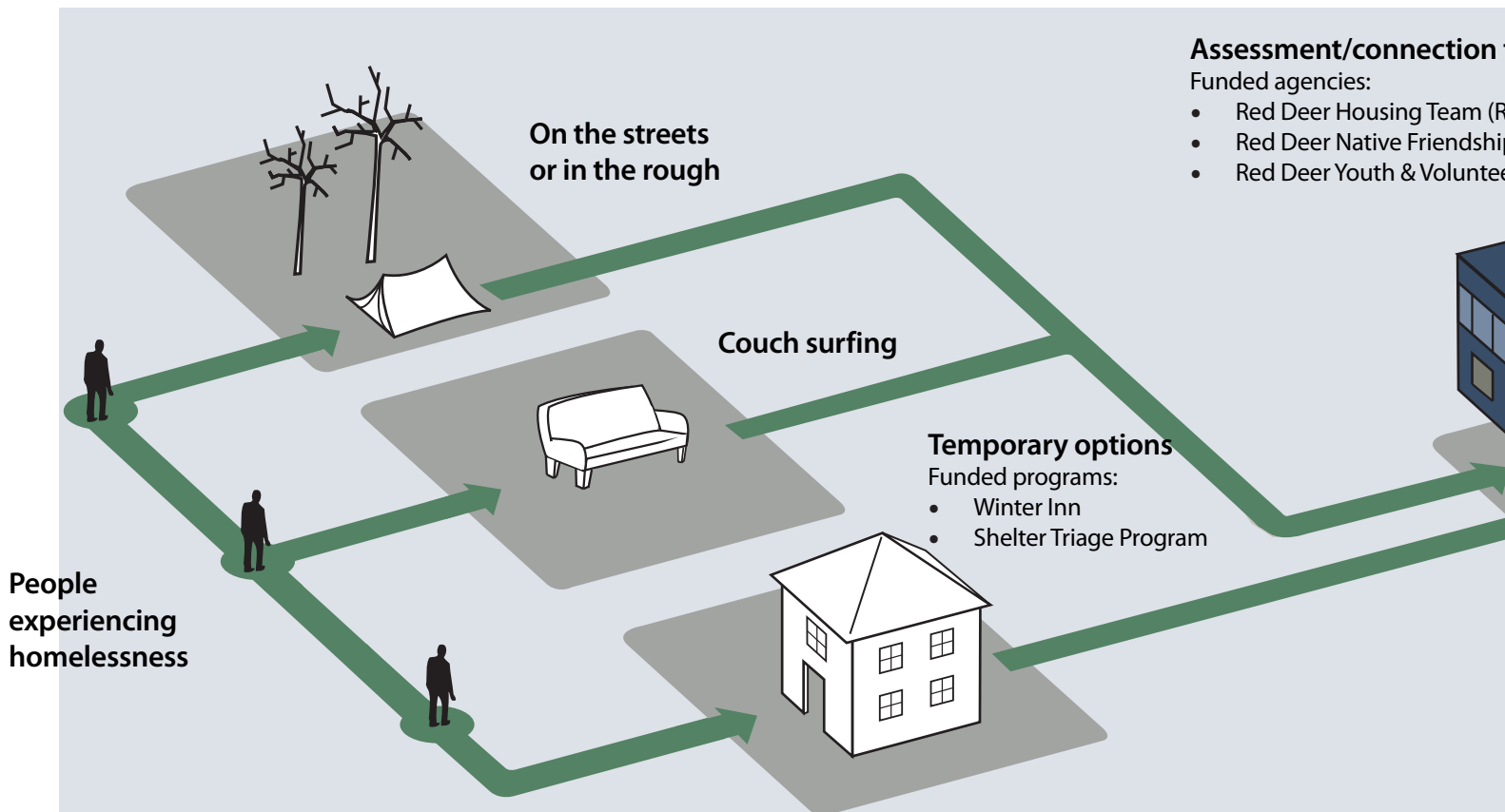


Source data from the Red Deer Housing Team.

Funded projects

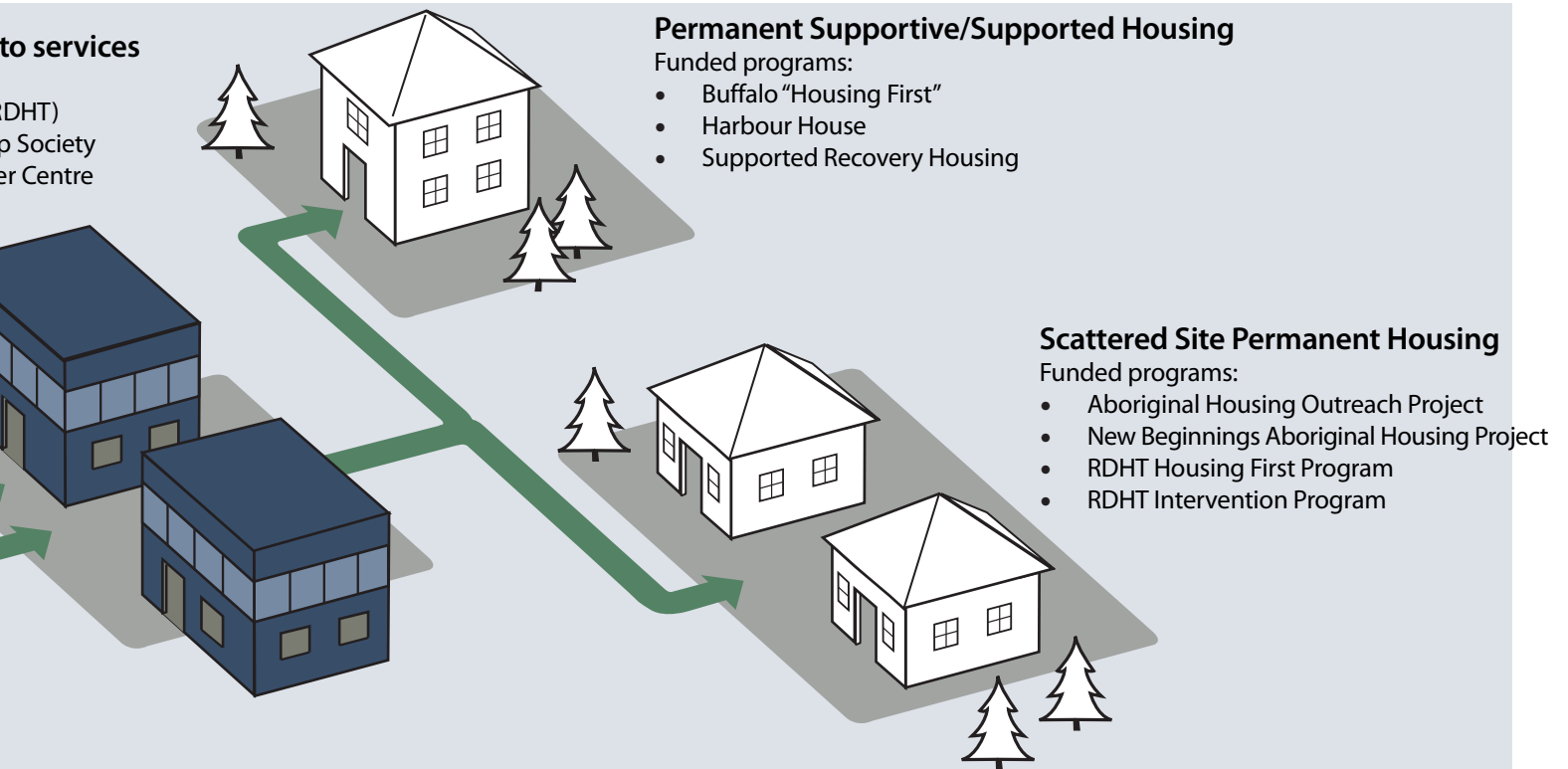
People experiencing homelessness in Red Deer may turn to living on the streets, couch surfing, or living in a shelter. The graph below details the various paths that people may follow, and it depicts the projects that receive funds

through The City of Red Deer from the Province of Alberta's Outreach and Support Services Initiative (OSSI) grant and from the Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) grant.





For information on additional supports and projects available through other agencies, see page 23.



Original concept for this diagram courtesy of the Edmonton Homeless Commission.

Details of funded projects

The following programs are highlighted in the graphic on pages eight and nine.

Central Alberta Safe Harbour Society – Winter Inn

- Shelter for adults who have no other overnight alternative; accepts individuals under the influence

Central Alberta Safe Harbour Society – Shelter Triage Program

- Program for clients in the overnight shelter programs
- Clients requiring low or short-term support are diverted to appropriate community resources
- Clients requiring longer term or intensive supports complete the assessment tool, which increases access to housing and homelessness supports
- 331 unique clients were assisted from September 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013

Red Deer Youth & Volunteer Centre – Youth Winter Inn/Housing Support

- Youth program for recently homeless or those at risk of homelessness; uses a case management model
- Focus on reconnecting youth with their families; if not possible, participants are linked to mainstream services and assisted with planning for housing stability
- 35 youth were assisted and supported in their move from homelessness to more stable housing options from April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013

Central Alberta Women's Outreach Society – Red Deer Housing Team (RDHT)

RDHT Housing First Program

- Partnership between Canadian Mental Health Association, Central Alberta Safe Harbour Society and Central Alberta Women's Outreach Society (CAWOS)
- Intensive case management program and rapid re-housing program
- Assists individuals or families with a history of chronic or episodic homelessness
- Clients agree to work on being good tenants, have regular visits from support workers and arrange direct rent payments from their income sources
- Support workers assist clients in maintaining housing for approximately 12 months
- 175 adults were supported to find or retain their housing from April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013 *

RDHT Intervention Program

- Assists individuals or families who cannot access other services; they are helped to prevent an eviction or receive assistance to be rapidly re-housed
- Staff negotiates with landlords to arrange orderly repayment of rent arrears, access funds for arrears, or access funds for extreme cleaning services
- Case management may be provided for six months
- 87 adults received supports and either maintained their housing or moved into new housing from April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013 *



Canadian Mental Health Association – Buffalo “Housing First”

- Permanent supportive housing; tenants have access to staff 24/7
- Located in a 39-unit apartment building
- Sobriety is not a condition to accessing housing
- 52 adults received housing from April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013

Central Alberta Safe Harbour Society – Harbour House

- Permanent supportive housing; tenants have access to staff 24/7
- Located in an 8-unit housing complex – tenants share common areas and a kitchen
- Sobriety is not a condition to accessing housing
- 11 adults received housing from April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013

Central Alberta Safe Harbour Society – Supported Recovery Housing

- Permanent supported housing
- No support service staff on site, tenants receive support through a support worker
- Five housing units with space for 20 individuals
- Tenants have a history of homelessness and now have the goal of living a sober lifestyle
- Substance use is not allowed
- 47 adults received housing/support from April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013

Red Deer Native Friendship Society – Aboriginal Housing Outreach Project

- Intervention model
- Support for individuals who are at risk of becoming homeless or who have recently become homeless
- Cultural and holistic assessment to identify clients’ specific needs
- Housing plan is developed between the client and the support worker; the worker provides culturally relevant awareness and education
- 75 adults received supports and either maintained their housing or moved into new housing from April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013 *

Red Deer Native Friendship Society – New Beginnings Aboriginal Housing Project

- Rapid rehousing model
- Clients have a history of episodic homelessness and want to engage in a sober lifestyle
- Case management model is used and an Elder also supports the client in attaining their goals
- Clients agree to work on being good tenants, have regular visits from support workers and arrange direct rent payments from their income sources
- 21 adults were supported to find or retain their housing from April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013 *

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

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 Social Planning 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 the five year plan.

A recap of the goals:

- 

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 communication, 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, 2012 to March 31, 2013, The City of Red Deer allocated:

\$2,749,167 through the OSSI grant from the Province of Alberta.

\$479,118 through the HPS fund from the Government of Canada.

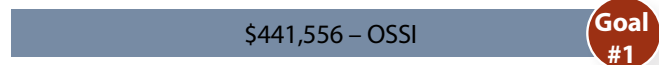


Achieving goals from the five year plan

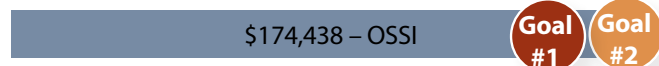
Canadian Mental Health Association – Buffalo
“Housing First”



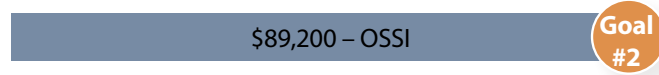
Central Alberta Safe Harbour Society –
Harbour House



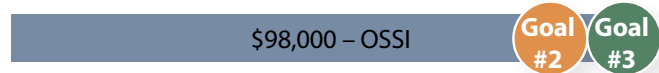
Central Alberta Safe Harbour Society –
Supported Recovery Housing



Central Alberta Safe Harbour Society –
Shelter Triage Program



Central Alberta Safe Harbour Society –
Winter Inn



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



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



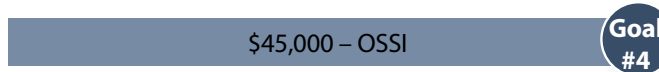
Red Deer Native Friendship Society – Aboriginal Housing
Outreach Project & New Beginnings Aboriginal Housing Project



Red Deer Youth & Volunteer Centre – Youth Winter Inn/
Housing Support



Housing Data Analyst – The City of Red Deer





Words of thanks

March 4, 2013

I am writing this letter in support of the Red Deer Housing Team. Almost a year ago, the Red Deer Housing Team found my first apartment in Red Deer. I was HOMELESS. I was emotionally, physically, and spiritually a wreck. My first caseworker was great, a big ol' teddy bear, but I didn't want to join the team. He was more than willing to help, but I – like most substance abusers – kept getting in my own way. And I wanted to do it my way. It started out okay. I paid rent and fed myself, but I didn't take my medication for bipolar disorder.

Subsequently, my substance abuse caught up with me. And I was worse than ever. I was at the end of a two-week-long bender; that was two months ago. I was in arrears for two months' rent and facing eviction. I didn't care, because I knew how to survive on the streets: stay drunk and you're invisible. I was blessed that it was my caseworker who found me. He never gave up on me, always kept track of me, and knew my past. My caseworker has bent over backwards for me and with the help of him I have an apartment – and me!

He has helped keep all my appointments – income support, doctors, drug and alcohol counsellor, and mental health therapist, to name just a few. He has also enrolled me in the Back to Basics program, which I was hesitant to join at first but now find extremely helpful. I now have goals and can see a glimpse of light at the end of the tunnel.

I can honestly say if it was not for the help and guidance of my caseworkers (because I had two) and the whole Red Deer Housing Team, I would be drunk, in jail or DEAD. I would be “just another statistic.” I am happy to say I have now jumped on board, both feet this time. I look forward to waking up and working closely with my caseworker and the Team. I know I am still not out of the woods, but I'll get there one day!

Words cannot express my gratitude to the Red Deer Housing Team.

Thankfully and respectfully,
Red Deer Housing Team client

**“I now have goals and can see a glimpse of
light at the end of the tunnel.”**



Creating a life full of possibilities

Judy could no longer be a victim of domestic violence. She wanted a better life for herself and her one-year-old son, so she moved to Red Deer.

Judy was broken, emotional and alone, with no family or friends to stay with and nobody to support her. She was also having a difficult time in her search for housing and had no source of income. Her greatest fear was that she wouldn't be able to find housing or get income support, so she would have to send her son back to live with his father. The thought of doing that was more than she could handle. Judy knew she couldn't go back because of the abuse, but she was struggling with being homeless and the effect that was having on her son. The situation was causing her turmoil, increasing her stress and anxiety; she desperately wanted to live a life free from violence where she could still provide for her son.

When Judy was accepted into the Red Deer Housing Team (Intervention Program), her support worker helped her to secure Income Support and Fleeing Abuse Funds.

Unfortunately, the funds were not enough, and she was having difficulty budgeting: either the rent got paid, with no money left over for food and necessities, or there was money for food and necessities and the rent did not get paid. Through Red Deer Housing Team, Judy was also able to receive a rent subsidy to assist with her overall expenses.

For three months, Judy has consistently been working with her support worker, and her housing situation is beginning to stabilize. She no longer has to think about sending her son back to live with his father or about going back to the abusive situation herself.

Judy and her son are establishing a new life – they have supports in place and are free from violence. Life is full of possibilities and opportunities.

“For three months, Judy has consistently been working with her support worker, and her housing situation is beginning to stabilize.”



Collaboration

Monthly meetings

Staff from community agencies that receive OSSI or HPS funding attend a monthly meeting with Social Planning staff. In 2011, this group developed a protocol for referring clients to other programs within the “continuum of care” model. In 2012, they developed an exit plan checklist that all non-permanent Red Deer housing programs will adhere to.

Evaluation and Monitoring

Social Planning staff completed a comprehensive monitoring of all the OSSI funded projects: the process covered Records Management and Confidentiality, Financial Management and Risk Mitigation, Program Design and Access, Program Delivery and Case Management and client file audits. Each agency commented on the monitors’ observations and collaboratively developed an action plan with specific deadlines for the areas of improvement.

Additionally, Orgcode Consulting Inc. was hired by Social Planning to complete a comprehensive process evaluation on the entire Red Deer Housing Team project.

Social Planning itself was monitored by the Province of Alberta and the Government of Canada.



Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) Database – Red Deer’s Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS)

All OSSI funded projects are required to enter data and case notes into the Social Solutions – ETO database. Social Planning staff worked with the Provincial and Federal governments and added HPS intervention programs to the database. The two programs are separated within the database; however, with the consent of the client, agencies are able to search the entire database to ensure the individual is not already connected to a similar program in Red Deer. If the client is not in the system, the worker goes ahead with the intake process, and the client receives a seamless, streamlined intake.

This work provides the foundation of an HMIS, or an overarching homelessness management information system, in Red Deer. The ultimate goal is to develop a FOIP-compliant database platform that can be accessed by all funded and non-funded agencies, ensuring the most efficient support system for individuals and families experiencing homelessness.



Training

Each agency that receives funding has its own required training for staff. Executive directors and senior management from the funded agencies have been working to develop an outline of training for all staff involved in delivering housing first programs. The group has also been working to offer coordinated, inter-agency training for staff members.

“The delivery of Housing First is no easy task. It requires dedication to training and professionalism in practice. It requires reflecting on how to best serve people, often with complex and co-occurring issues. And it requires continuous improvement.”

Iain De Jong, Orgcode Consulting Inc.

Training offered in 2012 – 2013

| Training: | Organized by: |
|--|--|
| Aboriginal trauma training | Red Deer Native Friendship Society |
| Addiction 101, Relationship Building, Harm Reduction, Universal Precautions, Non-Violent Crisis Intervention | Safe Harbour Society |
| Caregiver Fatigue | Canadian Mental Health Association |
| FOIP Training | Social Planning/ Province of Alberta |
| Motivational Interviewing, Suicide Awareness Training | Central Alberta Women’s Outreach Society |
| Team Leader Summit | 7 Cities on Housing and Homelessness |
| Train the Trainer SPDAT Workshop | Organized provincially by Orgcode Consulting Inc. |
| Housing First Leadership Course | Organized provincially by Orgcode Consulting Inc. |
| Housing First Training | Red Deer Housing Team contracted Orgcode Consulting Inc. |





Provincial connections

7 Cities on Housing and Homelessness

The 7 Cities on Housing and Homelessness is a collaborative forum composed of representation from each of the seven major urban cities in Alberta. 7 Cities provides a forum and collective voice to address issues of common interest and concern in the implementation of individual community plans to end homelessness in Alberta. 7 Cities also provides a forum for dialogue with the Federal and Provincial representatives on housing and homelessness.

In 2012, 7 Cities organized and oversaw a successful Leadership Summit, which was held from April 16 to 18. This summit attracted senior representatives from the Government of Alberta, as well as senior leaders from government and non-profits from across Canada. In September, 7 Cities offered a Team Leader Summit in Edmonton for all supervisors and team leaders from housing first programs from across Alberta.



Alberta Secretariat for Action on Homelessness

The Secretariat released its 3 Year Progress Report on February 7, and passed the important work of overseeing *A Plan for Alberta: Ending Homelessness in 10 Years* to the newly created Alberta Interagency Council on Homelessness.

Learn more about the [3 Year Progress Report](#).

“I am very honoured to serve as co-chair for the Interagency Council on Homelessness. With 33 dedicated and passionate members of the Council from across the province, we will move closer to eradicating homelessness in Alberta.”

Mary Anne Jablonski,
MLA for Red Deer - North

National connections

Alberta Interagency Council on Homelessness

The Alberta Interagency Council on Homelessness was established to support the plan to end homelessness in Alberta by 2019 by ensuring:

- Albertans are housed and provided the supports they need to remain housed
- Homeless prevention and reduction programs are coordinated across systems
- Alberta's 10 year plan to end homelessness remains a priority for the Province, communities, and Albertans

The Alberta Interagency Council on Homelessness provides advice and guidance on policy, regulatory and program changes required for successful implementation of the 10-year plan. The Council is accountable to the Minister of Human Services, and the group will report annually on progress made on the implementation of the 10-year plan.

Franco Savoia and Mary Anne Jabolonski are co-chairs of this Council. 7 Cities has four permanent Council seats, with current representation by: Roxana Nielsen Stewart, Susan McGee, John Rook, and Jaime Rogers. Senior representatives from Human Services, Municipal Affairs, Health, Justice and Solicitor General also sit on the Council.

For information on the Alberta Interagency Council on Homelessness is available on the [Council website](#).

Inaugural meeting of Community Entities/ Community Advisory Boards

For the first time since the implementation of the Homelessness Partnering Strategy grant, representatives from the Community Entities and Community Advisory Boards were invited to a national meeting in St. John's, Newfoundland. Red Deer representatives attended this meeting.

The goal of this inaugural meeting was to:

- Network face-to-face with colleagues from across the country
- Exchange information and practices
- Learn about the latest research and national program updates

The inaugural meeting was successful: research concepts were brought back to the Red Deer community, connections were made with similar projects across the country, and learnings were shared between projects across the county.

The second meeting of this group took place in early May of 2013. The Government of Canada announced the continuation of the Homelessness Partnering Strategy grant for 2014 to 2019; therefore, the focus of this meeting was on the "housing first" concept and how the next funding cycle of the grant could support this concept. Federal representatives attended the meeting and learned about projects from across the country.

Definitions

Shelter Triage Program – provides deliberate engagement and support structure to focus on permanent housing within the shelter setting.

Intervention Program – support is intended for individuals/families who are recently homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless. Basic criterion for an intervention program includes:

- Individual/family has a positive housing history. The client has a history of living successfully on their own – no history of being chronic or episodically homeless
- Individual/family does not have significant barriers to retaining their housing
- Short term intervention would be helpful – client accepts support by a case worker for approximately three months, with a possible three month extension
- One-time financial assistance would be sufficient to stabilize this individual or family, however the individual/family 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.

Housing First – a client-centred approach that holds to the belief that, before someone can break the cycle of homelessness, a safe and secure home is necessary, with support services readily available. Housing First places priority on providing affordable, safe, and permanent housing quickly, with minimal requirements beyond a standard lease agreement. Services, such as medication support, drug or alcohol treatment, and counselling are available as needed. Basic criterion of a Housing First approach includes:

1. Moving people into housing directly from streets and shelters without preconditions of treatment acceptance or compliance
2. Establishing the lease in the client's name and, whenever possible, arranging for the landlord to be paid directly from the client's income source
3. The client agreeing to have ongoing visits from a support worker
4. Establishing the goal of moving clients toward the highest level of self-reliance possible: support services are not intended to continue indefinitely

Red Deer has some programs where the focus is on sobriety, though this contradicts the basic philosophy of "housing first." In Red Deer, clients have a choice of programming and an individual who does not want to focus on sobriety is referred to and welcomed in one of the other programs. Except for the identified programs where sobriety is a condition, the program should have no expectation of sobriety, or treatment compliance.



Under the umbrella of “Housing First,” supports or services may be separated into one of the four program types.

Rapid Re-Housing Program – individuals with moderately acute needs require case management supports to assist with housing and life stability; otherwise, they may cycle in and out of homelessness.

Scattered-site Intensive Case Management

– some individuals with higher acuity benefit from integration into existing buildings and neighbourhoods with an intensive case management care structure in order to maintain housing.

Permanent Supportive Housing – an intensive model of housing and services designed to serve individuals experiencing homelessness for longer periods of time. These people may be chronically homeless and may have many complex and likely co-occurring issues, such as a mental health condition, physical health conditions, and/or addiction, and who may benefit from tightly linked supportive services in order to use the clinical services they need in order to stabilize their lives and maintain stable housing. Staff work in the housing to provide support 24 hours per day, seven days per week.

Permanent Supported Housing – as with permanent supportive housing, this housing type provides comprehensive support services for complex individuals experiencing homelessness. However, the delivery model is different: there are no support service staff on site. The support staff come into the housing unit on a regular basis.

Intensive Case Management – a supportive housing service delivery model that helps homeless clients develop housing plans to ensure housing stability and assist them in achieving optimal quality of life and community living.

Permanent Housing – is defined as safe and secure accommodation that meets all applicable federal, provincial and municipal housing codes and licensing requirements. Permanent housing does not have established time limitations for residency and comes with the expectation of long-term sustainability.



Staying the course



A few of the 2013 – 2014 initiatives

- Community consultations and conversations are occurring to help define and develop supports for youth.
 - As one example, Dr. Belanger from the University of Lethbridge is conducting a comparative study between three communities: Red Deer, Medicine Hat, and Lethbridge. This study will help to determine the extent and scope of youth homelessness across the communities, which will help to define and develop supports for at risk or homeless youth.
- Housing First will continue in the community through the following initiatives:
 1. Buffalo “Housing First”
 2. Harbour House
 3. Safe Harbour Housing & Triage
 4. The Red Deer Housing Team
 5. New Beginnings Aboriginal Housing Project
- The continued use of the ETO database by all Red Deer funded agencies will pinpoint gaps in current service for specific clients.
- A research consultant will be contracted by Red Deer & District Community Foundation and the Housing Options Working Group to prepare a Non-Market Housing Framework and Strategy. This document will assess Red Deer’s existing housing stock and will guide the development of more affordable housing stock in the community.
- The City of Red Deer will work on developing an affordable housing strategy.
- The EveryOne’s Home Healthy Relationship and Support Working Groups are planning an agency information event for up to 80 community agencies in the fall of 2013. Each agency will share information on their programs and services, providing valuable connections and resources across the community
- The EveryOne’s Home Working Group members will participate in a facilitated planning and strategy event to review the EveryOne’s Home Model; this will determine if a revised or new strategic framework should be created to enhance the community’s work to end homelessness by 2019.
- The EveryOne’s Home Lead Team will be developing the next *5 Year Plan Towards Ending Homelessness in Red Deer*, which will commence in the spring of 2014 when the current plan ends.



A community effort

The following community organizations, programs and activities also support housing, homelessness initiatives, and vulnerable populations in the community:

- Abundant Safe Living House
- Art from the Streets
- Berachah Place
- CAANS – Night Reach
- Catholic Social Services – Settlement Services
- Family Services of Central Alberta – The Road Home
- High Risk Youth Coalition
- Loaves & Fishes
- Parkland Youth Homes – P.O.W.E.R. Youth Initiative
- Parkland Youth Homes – Street Ties
- Police & Crisis Team (PACT)
- Potter’s Hands Ministries – Soup Kitchen & Housing
- Primary Care Network – Street Nurse Clinic
- Red Deer Food Bank
- Schizophrenia Society
- Shining Mountains Living Community Services

Note: This list includes organizations, programs, and activities not previously mentioned in this report.

**“I think what you do is awesome, and I’m
sure there is more need for people like you.”**

**Man experiencing homelessness to
Central Alberta Aids Network Society staff**



Thank you

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Red Deer Housing Team

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For more information on The City of Red Deer housing and homelessness initiatives, visit www.reddeer.ab.ca/socialplanning.

Additional information on Red Deer & District Community Foundation is available at <http://reddeeranddistrictcommunityfoundation.ca>.

Visit www.everyoneshome.ca to learn more about ending homelessness in Red Deer.

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