

RED DEER COMMUNITY HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

5 Year Integrated Plan

Technical Report 2019



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Community Housing & Homelessness Integrated Plan (CHHIP) would not be possible without the participation of community members in the City of Red Deer, particularly those with lived/living experience of homelessness. We thank them for their time.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

Abbreviation	Description
ACT	Assertive Community Treatment
CA	Coordinated Access
CAB	Community Advisory Board
CE	Community Entity
COH	Canadian Observatory on Homelessness
ETO	Efforts to Outcomes (Homeless Management Information System)
ICM	Intensive Case Management
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
PIT	Point-in-Time: Homeless Point-in-Time Count
RRH	Rapid Rehousing
SPDAT	Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool
FCSS	Family and Community Support Services
OSSI	Outreach & Support Services Initiative
CoRD	City of Red Deer
HPS	Homelessness Partnering Strategy

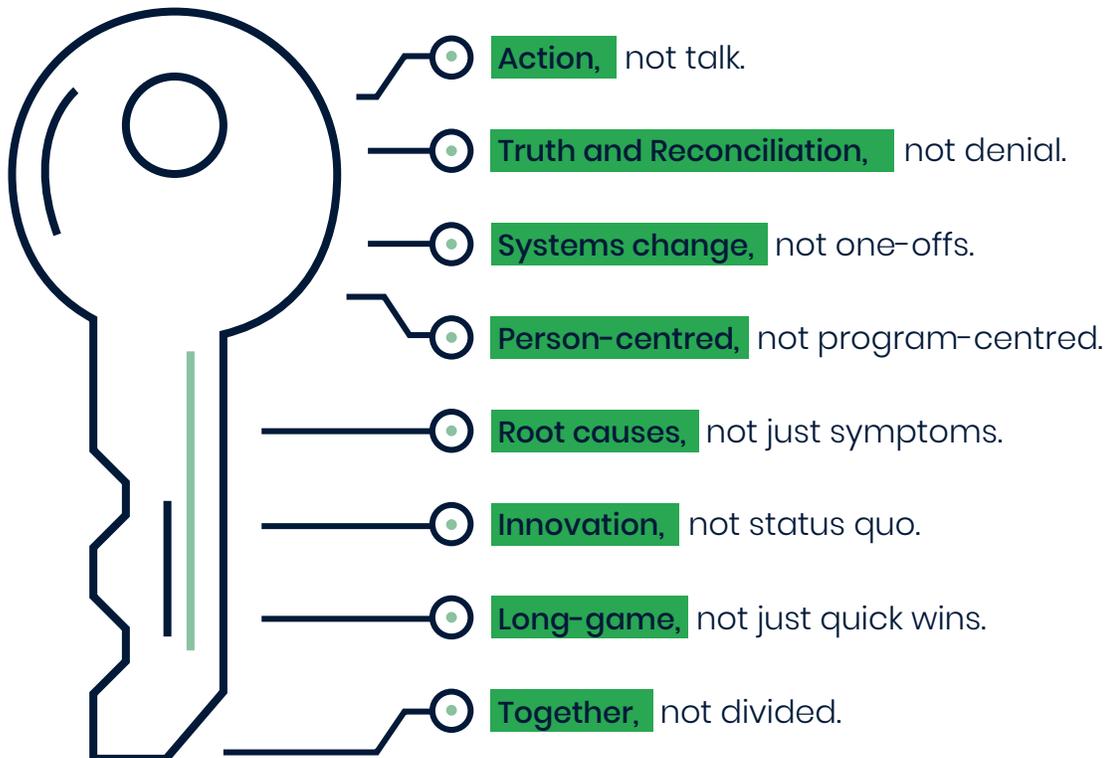
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COMMUNITY REPORT

It is important to continually assess how our community responds to our housing and homelessness needs. The Community Housing & Homelessness Integrated Plan captures key learnings from the last 10 years of research and action, combined with over 2,700 community voices.

An important step within the development of the Plan has been reflecting on where the community has been, what the current situation looks like, and projecting our future needs. In developing this Plan, we hope to ignite renewed sense of commitment and energy, creativity and hope to drive implementation.

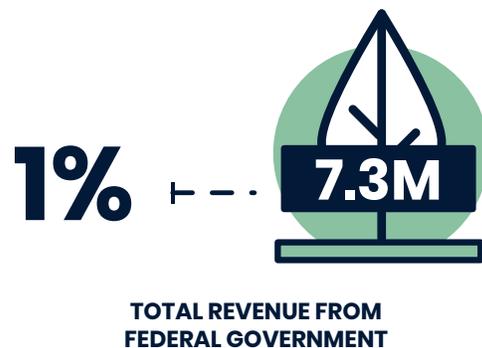
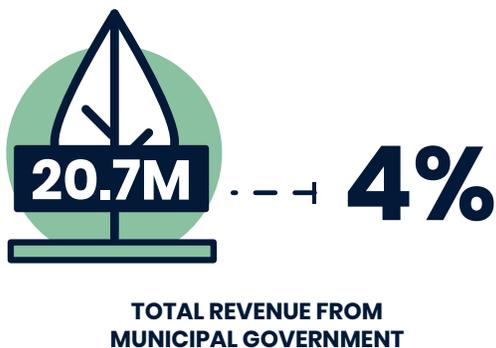
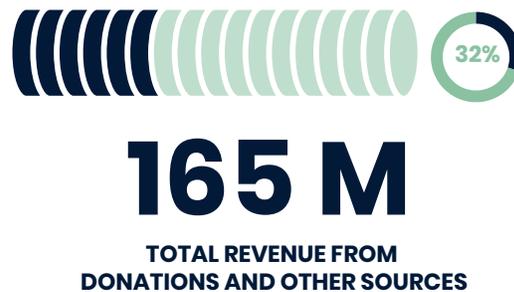
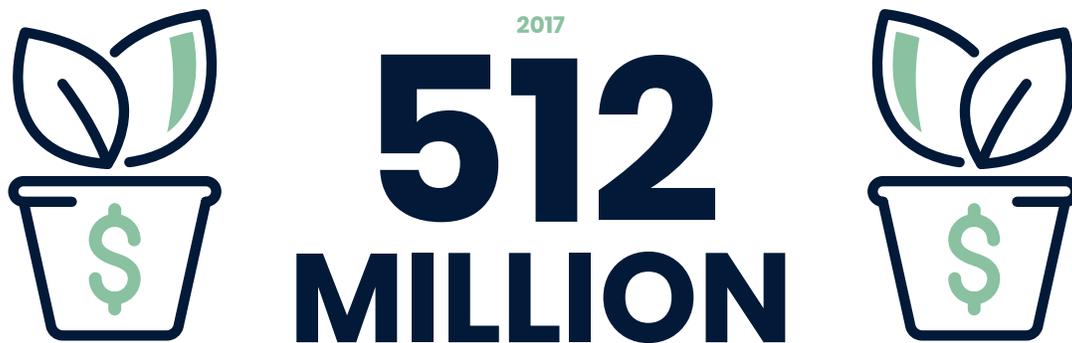
THE VOICES ENGAGED THROUGHOUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN CONFIRM THE KEY VALUES OF THE PLAN AND GROUND OUR APPROACH MOVING FORWARD:



Social Impact Audit

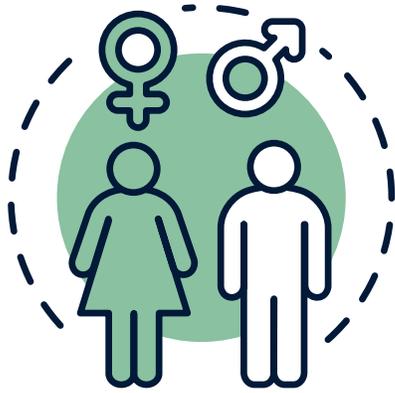
The HelpSeeker platform also supports systems leaders with Social Impact Audits to better understand real-time service duplication or gaps, user trends, feedback, demand, and sources of funding that exist in their community. With these analytics, communities can develop an agile, data-driven approach to integrated systems planning.

The preliminary Social Impact Audit of the Red Deer social safety net included a financial analysis of current homelessness, mental health, and addictions investments at the program-delivery (client) level to assess the best use of resources provincially to reinforce effective programs, and pinpoint underutilized/redundant programs.



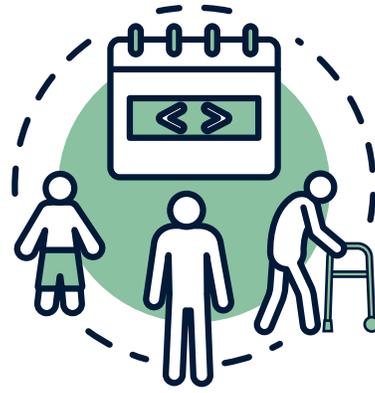
Our Current Situation

The following seeks to paint a clearer picture of the dynamics and realities of our community. We have highlighted important elements of the data which not only illustrates the uniqueness of our community but also the need for an equitable lens towards housing, a focus on community safety and bolstering efforts to support mental health and addictions. Our lens towards the innovations and actions within the CHHIP reflects these key focus areas.



POPULATION¹

104,900



AVERAGE AGE²

39.5



INDIGENOUS
PEOPLES³

5,185



RACIALIZED GROUPS AND
NEWCOMERS⁴

15,000



FAMILIES⁵



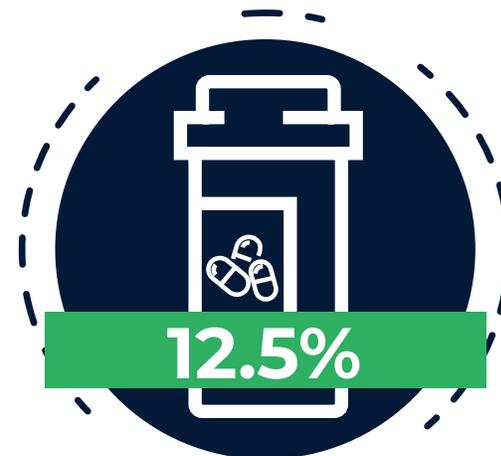
HOUSEHOLDS IN EXTREME CORE HOUSING NEED⁶



INDIVIDUALS SPENDING MORE THAN 30% OF THEIR INCOME ON HOUSING⁷



HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS⁸



TOP REASON FOR HOUSING LOSS IN 2018 - ADDICTION & SUBSTANCE USE⁹



NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO ACCESSED SHELTER IN THE LAST 10 YEARS¹⁰

What Red Deerians Said

Between May and August 2019, people from all walks of life including business, citizens, Indigenous communities, service providers, and those with Lived Experience engaged in critically important dialogue.

In total, 1,100 consultation hours were tallied through a wide range of mediums. Participation in the open house, online survey and the 20 design labs truly shaped our priorities and actions. This level of engagement demonstrates the people of Red Deer's admirable commitment to and interest in the issues which can be leveraged as we work towards implementation. The Design labs was where we gathered forward thinking, current challenges and innovative solutions. Across those 20, several things became apparent:

The need for optimizing resources, including efficiencies across sectors, service delivery and quality assurances and accountability was paramount.

"Agencies that take the time to get to know people make a difference. Housing First is good, we seem to have a lot of barriers to accessing it in Red Deer though."

Participants noted better accountability and service quality was needed.

"What works: preventing trauma that causes homelessness...prevention. Start in schools. Start serving the families and youth who are struggling, so that the cycle is broken."

Next, that more affordable housing needs to be made available, either through capital investments and incentives from government to the private sector, or by refurbishing existing builds.

"It's impossible to address unemployment, health, addictions, etc. while people are without safe, continuous housing. Taxpayers need to understand that housing people will save money on other issues, like healthcare."

The need for Indigenous voices and engagement was critical. Engagement from Indigenous Peoples should be Indigenous-led and it should be trauma-informed and culturally appropriate. Removing stigma and changing negative public perceptions towards those with lived experience of homelessness should be challenged and better service navigation should be available.

"The program needs to be flexible. It cannot be a one solution fits all. Each person currently rough sleeping will be different and have different needs, so you will need to adapt to each individual's needs."

As a result, the coupling of these findings along with the public survey responses and open house feedback, the following priorities will drive our actions over the course of the next five years.

FIVE PRIORITY AREAS HAVE BEEN POSITIONED WITHIN THE PLAN THAT REQUIRE BOLD ACTION, COMMUNITY CENTRED THINKING AND STRONG POLITICAL CONFIDENCE.

Wraparound Supports

Priority 1

As the work on housing and homelessness progresses, attention must be placed on ensuring these are fully integrated with anti-violence, mental health, and addictions efforts. A four-pillar approach to addictions and substance use being implemented across Canada, including Red Deer, calls for prevention, treatment, harm reduction, and enforcement actions.

These efforts will need to be well-integrated with supportive and affordable housing as well as Housing First programs moving forward to sustain recovery and prevent future issues while reducing harm.

Ensuring the mental health and homelessness supports are integrated is particularly essential in light of the impacts of trauma on long term health and wellbeing.

Truth & Reconciliation

Priority 2

Homelessness in Red Deer is a legacy of Canada's colonial past, intimately tied to the ongoing impacts of residential schooling and intergenerational trauma. As such, homelessness is much more than someone's lack of housing or shelter – it is a manifestation of dispossession, displacement, and disruption for people, families, and entire Indigenous communities at a spiritual, social, and material level.

Self-determination, cultural competency and a commitment to better understanding the Indigenous population's unique needs is important because failing to address these differences will result in ineffective or even harmful interventions.

Housing Options

Priority 3

Housing needs to be diverse, integrated in communities, affordable, safe, and appropriate. Innovative housing solutions, increasing development capacity, a more equitable lens towards ownership and housing retention and engagement of the private sector are within reach.

To respond to current needs in Red Deer, government enablers for development, innovation and partnerships need to be maximized.

This is coupled with an increase in development capacity, Indigenous-focused housing responses and capital investments that can facilitate more comprehensive rental market, ownership and housing retention strategies.

Early Intervention & Coordination

Priority 4

There is no better way to respond to homelessness than prevent it from occurring in the first place. This means employing strategies that can act early and address the risk of homelessness, as well as provide crisis intervention to those at-risk of homelessness.

Examples include: effective outreach, coordinated access to programs and services, shelter diversion and methods that identify signs of distress and rapidly take action to provide or connect individuals with support.

To support prevention, we need to enhance the integration of all the various services and benefits operating in our community. We need to think and operate differently across funding portfolios and organizational or regional boundaries, putting the person served first and meeting them where they're at.

Communication & Leadership

Priority 5

There is a need for further public education or awareness campaigns on a broad range of social issues (mental health, addictions, homelessness, domestic violence), in addition to education on the history of Indigenous peoples and their current issues, in an effort to address racism and misconceptions.

Enhanced collaboration and ongoing optimization of resources between funders (private companies, government, and foundations) requires not only the leveraging of existing decision making tables, but a focus on shared funding priorities and outcomes.

Meaningful and appropriate engagement of citizens and community members with lived/living experience of homelessness will be leveraged to support Plan implementation, enhance accountability and transparency. Coordinated public systems leadership will be essential to Plan implementation moving forward.

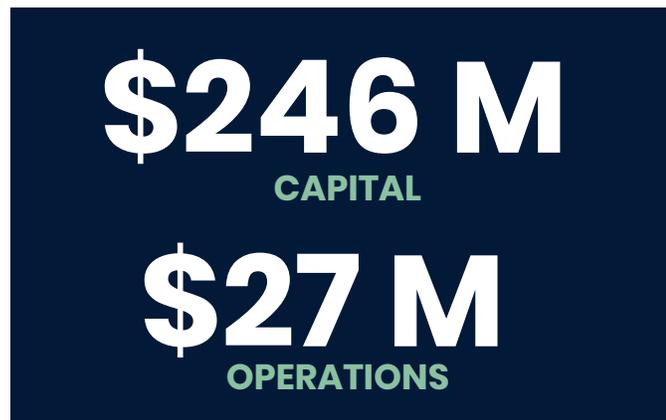
Targets

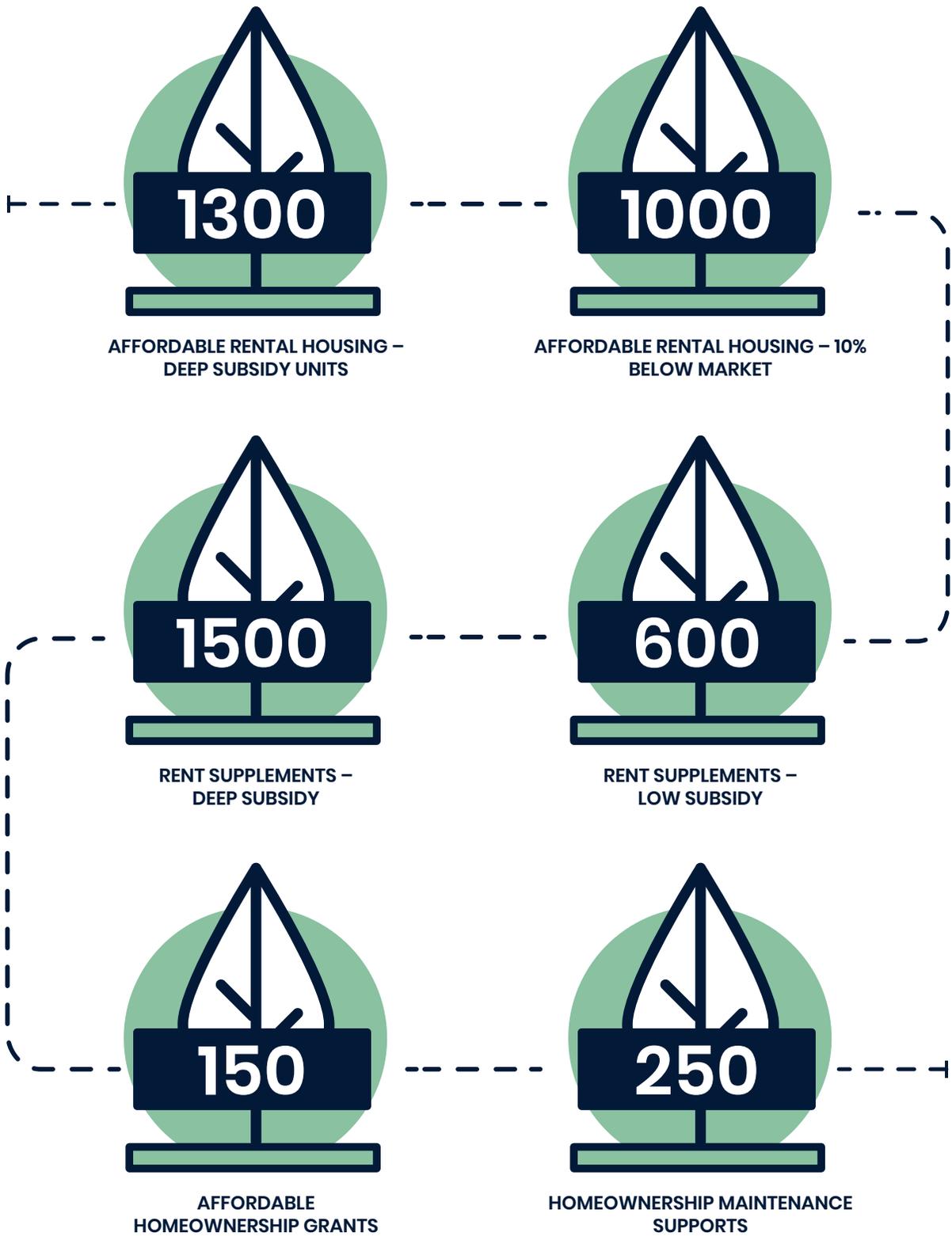
A number of key system gaps emerged, informing these affordable housing and homelessness targets. Realization of these targets will require an aggressive growth strategy, unwavering commitment from the private sector and leadership and support from all levels of government.

Moving forward, and anticipating minimal changes in the provincial budget, the City anticipates investing the following funds in homelessness responses. Note that the Indigenous stream is not confirmed at this time past 2019/20 – and assumed constant during the remainder of the Plan period.

Housing Affordability Investments

Based on the increasing numbers of shelter users, households waiting for subsidized housing, and households in Core Housing Need are at high risk of homelessness. A number of housing affordability measures are recommended over the next five years – at an estimated cost of **\$246M** in capital and **\$27M** in operations.





Homelessness Investments

As per financial modelling projections, the City will look to invest about **\$20.2M** over the next five years in housing programs, **\$1.2M** in system planning and coordinated access, and **\$1.8M** in systems planning and performance management activities.

These calculations assume funding continues with minimal increases, thereby requiring increased efficiency and leveraging.

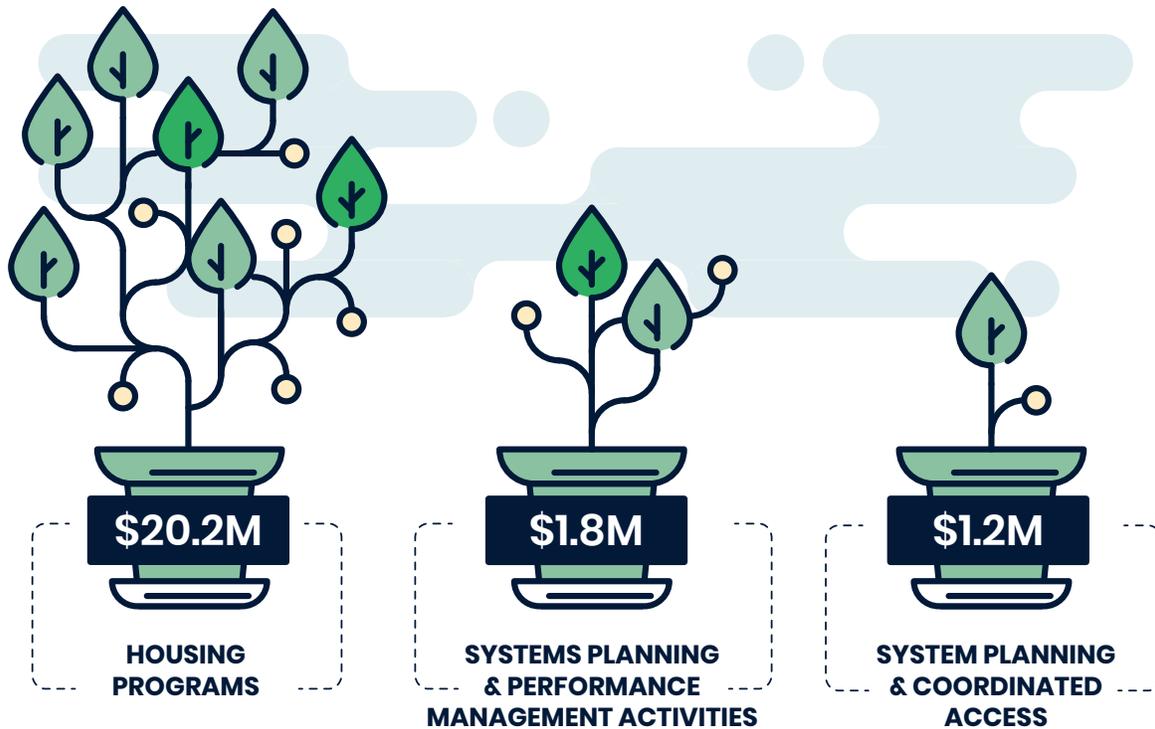


Figure: City's Projected 5-Year Homelessness Investments

City's Project 5-Year Homelessness Investments		
Housing Programs	\$20,240,413	87.2%
System Planning & Coordinated Access	\$1,160,574	5.0%
Administration	\$1,810,496	7.8%

Intervention Type And Spaces

Permanent Supportive Housing/
Supported Housing



+

39

existing units

Intensive Case
Management



Rapid
Rehousing



Transitional
Housing



existing units

Homelessness
Prevention



Goals

The City of Red Deer will work in partnership to build and implement a responsive, sustainable, and well-performing housing and homelessness response system that is informed by evidence-based research and best practice. Integrating this work and these priorities within the broader social safety net will:

This will contribute to an effective homelessness response that will:

1. Ensure 100% of chronically homeless individuals have access to appropriate housing options by 2025;
2. Provide homelessness prevention interventions to stabilize a minimum of 30% of those presenting at risk;
3. Develop protocols to ensure 100% of those who present for support through Coordinated Access are appropriately linked to the broader social safety net;
4. Coordinated Access will ensure 90% of clients are matched to appropriate housing in 90 days or less; this is driven by a 20% reduction in the average days between system entry and being document ready, and program matching.
5. Ensure returns to homelessness from housing interventions to less than 15% across funded programs by 2025.
6. Enhance service quality and impact through ongoing performance management-centred of lived experience and frontline engagement.

We believe strongly that all of our citizens should have access to safe and affordable housing. By prioritizing the sustainability and resilience of our housing and homelessness sector, these investments will seek to change lives. In Red Deer, we want individuals and families to thrive and build towards a social and community network we can be proud of.

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10. Completed a shelter intake

INTRODUCTION

We have experienced significant change in our community, especially over the past decade. As a result of ongoing growth and a changing environment, our city is facing dynamic social challenges, including housing affordability and homelessness.

Red Deer's unique social fabric has evolved due to a number of factors, including our location on the corridor between Alberta's two major centres. We have a vibrant, beautiful community home to just over one hundred thousand citizens today – some of whom are facing difficulties finding or maintaining an affordable, appropriate, and safe home. At the same time, many of us are concerned about the changes we are seeing happening in our community, impacting our sense of safety and overall wellbeing.

To ensure a strategic and comprehensive path forward is in place for Red Deer to address rapidly housing and homelessness issues, our City Council kick-started a community-based process to develop a blueprint of action for the next five years.

The Community Housing & Homelessness Integrated Plan (CHHIP) builds on learnings and successes of Housing First efforts in 2010. Since then, **over 1,000 formerly-homeless citizens have been housed** leveraging an increasingly coordinated approach among service providers, government, and the private sector.

Despite these successes, housing affordability and homelessness remain key challenges with a rapidly shifting context prompting the need for a revised approach and reworking of the community's approach to housing and homelessness. This is particularly critical in light of changes in the broader environment related to the economic downturn and the opioid/meth crisis, and community safety issues.

The consultation process to develop this Plan has involved almost **2,700 Red Deerians**, including citizens, business owners, Indigenous people, service providers, faith community members, and those with Lived Experience. Their diverse opinions reinforced that housing affordability and homelessness in Red Deer remain a priority for continued collective and urgent action.

Building on the progress and learnings gained over the course of the previous plan's implementation, renewed and refocused efforts are needed to deliver the desired impact for those in need of help as well as the broader community. The next five years will call on all partners to step up and do their parts as part of a systems change effort aimed at addressing the root causes as well as symptoms related to homelessness and housing issues. **This will require a different way of thinking and acting among those funding and delivering supports, decision-makers, as well as all of us as community members.**

Plan Values

We have heard all 2,674 voices confirm key values to ground our approach moving forward:

Action not talk.

This Plan calls us all to action, not words. We have debated and consulted – we know what our priorities are; now is the time to implement them. The time to act is here: we will experiment, succeed, and fail forward to do it better next time.

Truth and Reconciliation not denial.

There is no denying the connection between colonialism, intergenerational trauma, and the over-representation of Indigenous people amongst those in core housing need and homeless. This Plan prioritizes reconciliation across strategies.

Innovation not status quo.

Creative ideas welcome: we know we need to work smarter with what we have – and work differently. Engaging the faith and business community in Plan implementation will be essential in addition to looking further upstream to prioritize innovative prevention at the centre of our efforts.

Systems change not one-offs.

There is no single solution to address the complex issues of housing and homelessness. We are going to have to work through and engage with the complexity to actually change the systemic challenges at the root of these symptoms – which means we need to commit to long-term action in addition to finding quick ‘wins’.

Person-centred not program-centred.

People are unique and have multifaceted needs to achieve their full potential and be well. This means our approach has to be holistic and recognizes diversities including Indigeneity, age, sexual orientation, and changing needs as well as strengths.

Root causes not just symptoms.

We absolutely cannot ignore that housing and homelessness issues are tied to deeper root causes that might seem intractable including racism, mental health, violence, poverty, inequality, etc. This does not mean we do nothing; it does mean that we act mindfully and critically in light of these deeper systems issues.

Long-game not just quick wins.

We will respond to immediate pressures such as community safety concerns or rough sleeping with quick wins, but we will not forget to play the long game looking to prevent future problems for our children and youth by balancing intervention and prevention measures.

Together not divided.

How we move forward on enacting this Plan will say much about who we, as Red Deerians, are and aspire to become. We can descend into discord and factions, or we can find common ground and roll up our sleeves to get the job done together. The choice is ours.



POLITICAL AND POLICY CONTEXT

Red Deer's Community Housing and Homelessness Integrated Plan comes during a time of both leadership change and converging policy windows and opportunities across all orders of government. In this section the federal, provincial, and municipal landscape and connections to the CHHIP are explored.

Federal – Canada's National Housing Strategy & Reaching Home

For the first time in over 40 years, the federal government has taken a strategic role in the housing needs of Canadians through the National Housing Strategy (NHS). The ten-year NHS revamps old funding streams and creates new pots of funding with an emphasis on cross-sector collaboration to build new and renovate existing housing to be environmentally-friendly, accessible, and affordable.

A critical component of the NHS is the renewal of the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) with the launch of Reaching Home in April 2019. National consultations with HPS designated communities, people with lived experience, and other experts in the field resulted in a program that is designed to provide more flexibility with communities to set and fund local priorities. As a designated community under Reaching Home, Red Deer receives federal funds to address local homelessness priorities and must fulfill directives around Coordinated Access and prioritization. In line with the goals of Reaching Home, Red Deer is also proactively pursuing systems mapping and integration at an advanced level.

There are four outcome areas that Red Deer will be required to report on moving forward:

- Reductions in chronic homelessness (by 50% in 2028)
- Reducing the flow into homelessness (prevention)
- Reducing returns to homelessness (housing stability)
- Reducing homelessness among priority populations (Indigenous peoples, youth, women fleeing violence, etc.)

Another important development in federal policy in 2019 is the legislated Right to Housing. It will be important to follow along with how the Right to Housing is implemented and what the local and provincial implications may be moving forward.

There is also a policy window with the upcoming federal election on October 21st, 2019 to elevate the issues of housing and homelessness to current MPs and new local candidates. Red Deer can build on existing momentum to keep the spotlight on affordable housing and homelessness policy during and after the election. Beyond the election, there will be four years in which the newly-formed government will be seeking to support projects and efforts that show their ability to make a positive contribution to the Canadian economy and social fabric. There is no shortage of opportunity to leverage federal policy direction to help move the CHHIP forward.

Provincial – New Leadership & Economic Recovery

The Province of Alberta is under new leadership with Premier Jason Kenney and the United Conservative Party, which is an opportunity for new or renewed partnerships and to showcase the impact provincial investment has had in Red Deer. There is growing evidence of the efficacy and fiscal responsibility of spending money on homelessness prevention and early intervention as well as the returns-on-investment of getting people out of the cycle of poverty and homelessness. With the province still feeling the effects of an economic downturn, provincial leaders may be interested in identifying early ‘wins’ to get behind. Red Deer’s task in the first stages of the CHHIP implementation will be to effectively communicate the relevant components of the plan to the province by identifying potential roles and areas of collaboration. Forming and nurturing provincial partnerships and demonstrating the need and impact of provincial involvement will be an ongoing activity for those leading implementation.

Municipal – Continued Commitment to Partnership & Collaboration

The City of Red Deer has been deeply involved in marshalling community goals and priorities for addressing its housing and homelessness needs into local plans for action. Strong collaboration and meaningful partnership between City staff, community organizations, Indigenous leadership, the private sector, and other orders of government have been consistently identified as priorities for the community of Red Deer, emphasizing integration and coordination across sectors. The City of Red Deer also carefully tracks Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) data on the homeless system, and there is momentum for an increased role in building organizational data capacity and mobilizing the data for community education and tracking progress.

Red Deer is also participating in the national Built for Zero Canada campaign led by the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness. The campaign centres on ending chronic homelessness through the use of by-name prioritization lists, Coordinated

Access, and collecting and tracking data to see progress toward Functional Zero chronic homelessness. Efforts through the Built for Zero campaign will help contribute to improved homeless-system functioning and outcomes, and the lessons learned can be applied to populations outside of the chronically homeless.



THE RED DEER APPROACH

Key Concepts

Affordable, Appropriate, and Safe Housing

Housing should promote individual, family, and community wellbeing. The community members, advocates, and the City's Social Policy Framework understand that it is not adequate to set standards for housing based on affordability alone. Housing that is affordable may not be safe and appropriate and can exacerbate existing challenges or create new problems for individuals and families. It is important to define the basic standards for housing carefully so as not to incentivise offering the bare-minimum. The following are some basic definitions that can be used to set goals for housing and identify where Red Deer's housing options do not measure up.

Affordable:

The widely-accepted definition of affordable housing in Canada is when an individual or family's shelter costs amount to no more than 30% of their household income before tax. Red Deer's Social Policy Framework also notes the need for access to affordable transportation and child care.

Appropriate/Suitable:

Housing must be appropriately matched to the household size and composition needs as per the National Occupancy Standard.

Safe/Adequate:

Housing must be well-maintained and without the need for major repairs. Damages or costly repairs can put individuals and families at risk of financial hardship or, if left unaddressed, can pose a risk to personal safety. However, safety and adequacy also refer to the qualities of housing that create security and promote wellbeing which go beyond locking doors/windows and a roof over one's head. For example, families with children, or people fleeing domestic violence, or human trafficking face increased threats to personal safety that must be taken into consideration in the design and provision of housing options.

Defining Homelessness

The term 'homeless' can conjure stereotypical images often of adult men living on the street. In reality, people's experiences of homelessness are much more diverse and can reach all demographics of people regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, education, etc. Red Deer follows the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness's definition (Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, 2012), which identifies four categories of homelessness that require different housing options and interventions:

1. **Unsheltered** – those living on the streets or in places not intended for human habitation.
2. **Emergency Sheltered** – those staying in temporary overnight shelter accommodations for people experiencing homelessness, including shelters for people fleeing violence.
3. **Provisionally Accommodated** – those who may lack security of tenure or are living in temporary accommodations with no permanency.
4. **At Risk of Homelessness** – those who are not yet homeless, but who demonstrate risk factors for homelessness due to their precarious economic and/or housing situation, or their housing is not meeting public health and safety standards.

Individuals' and families' circumstances often shift and change quite dramatically and frequently, requiring systems and services to be nimble and adapt to evolving needs.

Indigenous Homelessness

Recognizing the colonial roots of the overrepresentation of Indigenous people among those experiencing homelessness, we can also look to an Indigenous Definition of Homelessness in Canada (Thistle, 2017), which breaks down the experience of homelessness even further into twelve dimensions. These dimensions include:

1. Historic Displacement Homelessness
2. Contemporary Geographic Separation Homelessness
3. Spiritual Disconnection Homelessness
4. Mental Disruption and Imbalance Homelessness
5. Cultural Disintegration and Loss Homelessness
6. Overcrowding Homelessness
7. Relocation and Mobility Homelessness
8. Going Home Homelessness
9. Nowhere to Go Homelessness
10. Escaping or Evading Harm Homelessness
11. Emergency Crisis Homelessness
12. Climatic Refugee Homelessness

Homelessness for Indigenous peoples extends beyond the loss of physical brick-and-mortar housing, and is tied to, “individuals, families, and communities being isolated from their relationships to land, water, place, family, kin, each other, animals, cultures, languages, and identities” (Thistle, 2017). Addressing the complex intersecting factors surrounding housing instability and homelessness with Indigenous community members and leaders in Red Deer and surrounding areas is a critical component of reconciliation.

Homelessness Typology

Homelessness is also understood in terms of chronicity and acuity or severity of need:

Chronic homelessness was defined by the federal government in consultation with the Homelessness Data Committee and refers to, “individuals who are currently experiencing homelessness AND who meet at least one of the following criteria:

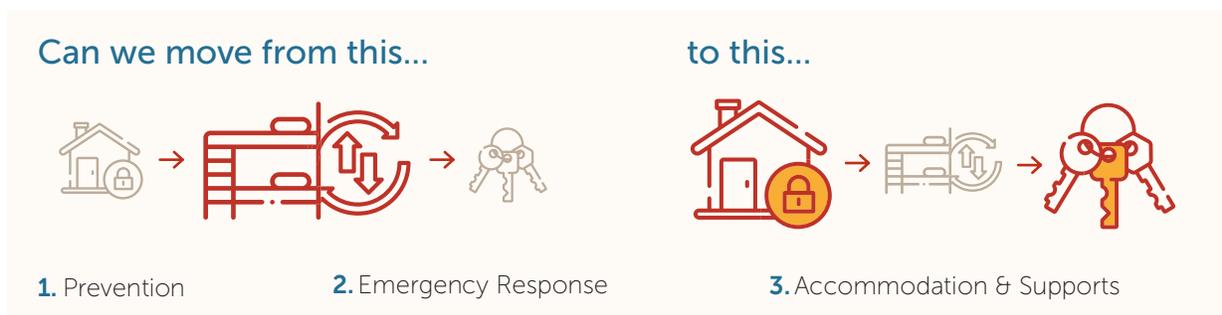
- They have a total of at least 6 months (180 days) of homelessness over the past year
- They have recurrent experiences of homelessness over the past 3 years, with a cumulative duration of at least 18 months (546 days)” (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2019).

Episodic homelessness occurs when an individual or family is homeless for less than a year and has fewer than four episodes of homelessness in the past three years, cycling between stretches of being homeless and housed. This may be because of the lack of support to maintain housing stability and to find social inclusion and belonging after securing housing.

Those with complex mental, physical, and social needs are considered higher acuity and require greater intensity of support compared to those with less complex needs. A one-size-fits-all approach, therefore, is not an effective or efficient way of addressing homelessness and housing instability. Individualized, client-driven housing and supports with appropriate matching of clients to services are essential for getting individuals and families to move from precarity to stability.

Along with defining the problem of housing instability and homelessness, we must also identify the range of services and interventions that offer solutions or means to end these problems. These include prevention, diversion and early intervention activities, crisis responses, and sustaining exits from homelessness. During community consultations, community members resonated with the national push to shift from heavy emphasis on crisis response to investing in more upstream prevention and diversion as well as the services and supports that will help people maintain housing stability and improve their wellbeing for the long term.

Figure 1: Diagram From Red Deer Open House Poster



Causes of Homelessness

Previous iterations of Red Deer's homelessness plans have examined the causes of homelessness through the lens of Risk, Trigger, and Trap, which was drawn from the Calgary Homeless Foundation's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness (2009):

The Risk, Trigger, Trap Road to Homelessness

Risk

People whose life experiences include one or more Risk factors:

- Poverty
- Mental illness
- Chronic substance use and addictions
- Physical and developmental disabilities
- Abuse, family conflict
- No or few social networks, isolation, lack of supportive relationships
- Lack of education
- Disruptive childhood experiences, such as time spent in foster homes

Trigger

People may encounter a Trigger event or an incident that leads to the loss of their homes:

- Financial, family crisis
- Moving for economic or social reasons
- Family, roommate, landlord conflict
- Health crisis
- Crime (the individual may either be the perpetrator or the victim)

The majority of people who lose their homes are able, with the help of family and friends, to get their lives back on track. They typically do not seek assistance from social agencies, and do not become part of the homeless number counts. But some are not as fortunate. They turn to outreach workers for help and are the real people behind the homeless count numbers.

Trap

People who are caught in the homelessness Trap find themselves up against multiple, cumulative barriers, including:

- "No address, no welfare: no welfare, no address"
- Getting "lost in the system:" navigating all municipal, provincial, and non-profit services for help becomes overwhelming, if not impossible
- Conditions put on housing: sobriety, no criminal record, good credit history

- Employment barriers: no permanent address, lack of transportation, health issues, insufficient education, poor hygiene, and lack of sleep from living on the streets or in a shelter
- Discrimination based either on race or on family circumstances

Some people from this subpopulation of homeless individuals will simply not be able to find their way out and will become chronically homeless.

The Housing and Supports Spectrum

Every community requires a range of housing and support options to meet the unique and changing needs of individuals and families in different social and economic circumstances. The following is a spectrum that illustrates the various options that ought to be present in any given community: (see figure p.35)

Figure: Housing And Supports Spectrum (1/3)

Homeless			
Type of Accommodation	Unsheltered	Emergency Sheltered	Provisionally Accommodated
Description	Living on the streets or in places not intended for human habitation	Emergency shelters for people who are homeless and have no alternative place to stay.	Accommodation is temporary or lacks security of tenure; Includes transitional housing facilities/ programs, and people accessing private temporary accommodation (ex. couchsurfing)
Supports	Outreach services that connect with people where they are at.	On-site essential services and facilitated access to supports.	Where accommodations are provided by government/ agencies, on-site access to supports may be available.

More Intensive Supports

Figure: Housing And Supports Spectrum (2/3)

Non-Market Housing			
Type of Accommodation	At Risk of Homelessness	Permanent Supportive Housing	Supported Housing
Description	Sheltered individuals whose current economic and/or housing situation is precarious or does not meet public health and safety (ex. overcrowding)	Combines accommodation with on-site supports and care. May be congregate or independent living units.	Private sector accommodations with supports arranged off-site.
Supports	Typically required to be initiated by the individual, however, can include outreach services to identify those at risk and triage into supports.	On-site staff provide or coordinate supports of varying intensities to residents	Customized support services to increase or maintain housing stability

Moderate Supports

Figure: Housing And Supports Spectrum (3/3)

Market Housing	
Type of Accommodation	Housing Subsidization Market-Rate Rental or Ownership
Description	Private market housing paid for in part or whole with ongoing subsidies Private market rentals or home ownership paid for independently without government support. This can include housing purchased using one-time government grants, loans, tax credits, etc. for homeownership.
Supports	Housing-specific financial support; social supports accessed independently through mainstream, non-homeless-specific services Social supports accessed independently through mainstream, non-homeless-specific services

Fewer/Light-Touch Supports

Key Terms

The following are key terms and concepts that will guide Red Deer's integrated approach to achieving the community's goals for housing and homelessness:

Homelessness Prevention

Homelessness prevention refers to policies, practices, and interventions that **reduce the likelihood that someone will experience homelessness**. The causes of homelessness may include individual and relational factors, broader population-based structural factors, and the failure of many public institutions to protect people from homelessness. This suggests that homelessness prevention must not only include interventions targeted at individuals, but broader structural reforms directed at addressing the drivers of homelessness.

In *EveryOne's Home: Red Deer's Five Year Plan to End Homelessness 2014–2018*, the community and stakeholders involved adopted a prevention framework for understanding and addressing homelessness in Red Deer. This includes three areas for collective effort:

- **Primary Prevention:** Reducing the risk of homelessness among the general population by targeting people who are housed in an effort to prevent new cases of homelessness.
- **Secondary Prevention:** Identifying individuals and addressing conditions at the earliest possible stages to prevent/divert people from entering into homelessness.
- **Tertiary Prevention:** Slowing the progression or mitigating the negative effects of homelessness once it has become established, by targeting people who have been homeless for some time to prevent recurrence and to focus on harm reduction activities to minimize repeated homelessness.

There is interest in continuing and enhancing efforts across these focus areas and identifying practices that will lead to greater coordination and collaboration to intervene further upstream.

Housing First Philosophy

Housing First is both a program model as well as a guiding philosophy for communities to ensure that all people are able to access safe, affordable housing and supports that meets their needs. Housing First is a recovery-oriented approach to ending homelessness that focuses on moving individuals experiencing homelessness into independent and permanent housing as quickly as possible without any preconditions (i.e., sobriety, medication adherence). Individuals are provided additional supports (i.e., case management) and services as needed to maintain their housing, and where able, to move into independent living.

Coordinated Access

Coordinated access creates a single point of entry for people experiencing homelessness. This can be done by using a common assessment tool to determine need, direct client placement, and track client progress. Coordinated access also promotes information sharing across different programs, and it ensures that programs have clear, consistent, and transparent eligibility and prioritization processes to support right matching of services for clients.

Systems Integration

System Integration can be defined broadly as the provision of services with high levels of coordination, communication, trust, and respect among service agencies, so that they are better able to work together to achieve common objectives. The work requires co-operation and co-ordination among organizations that may have different commitments and thinking, with the aim of creating mutual trust and effective relationships. The best way to think about integration is to picture a network and nodes of activity, interests, people, and resources as being parts of all the systems that provide services to the homeless.

Discharge Planning

Discharge planning is a necessary approach to ending homelessness. Services should be provided to support people leaving any type of institution (i.e., prison or jail, hospitals, child welfare), particularly, but not only, after a long stay. Discharge planning includes preparing someone to live independently or with certain supports in a non-institutional setting. This plan could include housing options, medical/psychiatric supports, counselling, identification, financial assistance/employment, education, etc.

Social Inclusion

Ending an individual or family's experience of homelessness cannot stop after they have acquired housing. Many people who experience homelessness also experience social exclusion, where they have been shut out or isolated from fully participating in society's social, economic, political, and cultural activities and practices. Participating in social, cultural, and civic engagement activities, building natural supports, connecting with professional supports, and connecting to meaningful activities in the community (education, employment, recreation & leisure) are all key components of sustaining exits from homelessness and preventing future returns to homelessness.

WHAT RED DEERIANS SAID

Between May and August 2019, almost 2,700 people participated in the consultation process from all walks of life including business, citizens, Indigenous communities, service providers, and those with Lived Experience representing about 1,100 consultation hours. Diverse modalities were offered to elicit effective participation: an open house, online survey, and 20 design labs.

This level of engagement demonstrates the people of Red Deer's admirable commitment to and interest in the issues which can be leveraged as we work towards implementation. There were many ideas and valuable suggestions shared as well as concerns about the current situation and emphasis on a need to act versus talk.

Open House Input

About 50 people participated in the Open House session during which a number of key themes emerged.

Addressing homelessness, substance use, and community safety.

Concerns were voiced that there are many people with addictions who are becoming homeless or are at risk in the coming years. Community safety, property crime, and business vitality were reported to be impacted by increasing drug use. While people noted not all who are homeless have an addiction or engage in criminal activity, the issues were noted in close relation to one another.

Improving coordination.

Positive messages and successes that were shared included stories of successful funding of shelters, detox and warming centres, and supervised consumption sites. There were several mentions of how well agencies are working together to solve problems, but this was also identified as an area to improve. Participants reported that siloing occurs too often and agencies "protect their turf" due to the way services are funded. The need for "wrap-around supports" was reiterated by several attendees recognizing the entwined issues surrounding homelessness.

More resources.

Reports that more funding is needed for the frontline across the board were common as well as for:

- income or rental supports, as rents continue to rise but income assistance does not follow suit – need to advocate for a basic personal income or living wage;
- shelters, supported and transitional housing – pressure to be put on Alberta provincial government to continue funding;
- job training and employment supports; and
- housing ownership opportunities (similar to Habitat for Humanity).

Indigenous voices

Stronger supports that meet the cultural needs of Indigenous people were noted as well, with an emphasis on ensuring Indigenous participation in the Plan development process.

Supporting people with complex needs.

A clear priority was developing more spaces / housing units for persons with addictions and homelessness, such as Permanent Supportive Housing combining a range of low barrier and sober options. Supportive housing should include more on-site health and support services, and the size of buildings should be on the smaller side (less than 30 units). Treatment options were needed as well, along with aftercare and detox for those in recovery.

Ramping up advocacy and awareness.

There is a need for further advocacy/awareness and education on homelessness for the public, starting with our children. Viewing of films followed by discussion, sharing of personal stories, and a lived experience design lab were all suggestions for how to get the message out. Citizens need to know that their concerns are being heard and many well-meaning people, agencies, etc., are working together to solve problems. Unfortunately the effect of NIMBY attitudes remains a barrier for agencies to obtain needed land and community approval to build projects (housing, shelters, safe injection sites, etc.).

Enhancing Housing First impact.

Housing First was viewed as a positive approach, and the need to continue with and expand on this approach was encouraged. While Housing First was seen positively, concerns were raised regarding responsibilities of both tenants and landlords, and support for landlords to monitor/inspect and maintain the units (as some tenants may damage or destroy their unit).

Supporting successful transitions.

There were a few comments regarding transitional housing or support for people leaving hospital, detox/treatment centres, Remand Centre, etc. as well as supports for youth leaving the foster care system. Where do these people end up?

Addressing interpersonal violence.

Another concern mentioned was interpersonal violence, particularly against women, and how it leads to homelessness, with the only alternative to homelessness for many women being to return to the abuser. There was a suggestion regarding intake processes to better recognize women seeking emergency shelter due to abuse as homeless women and incorporating this data into the SPDAT.

Improving regional planning.

There was mention of a regional approach to address housing and homelessness as people migrate from rural areas to larger centres for services. The need for coordination and avoidance of siloing was echoed a few times in different ways.

Public Survey Results

The public survey asked questions about current housing and homelessness initiatives and their impact on homelessness. Community members were asked about the importance of solving homelessness in the City of Red Deer, its main causes, approaches and strategies that were perceived as successful, and whether certain initiatives – such as Housing First – were helping to address homelessness, among other questions. These questions allowed for both scale-based and open-ended responses.

Indigenous, visible minority, and female respondents.

In total, 2,148 surveys were submitted, of which an average of 1,453 respondents completed the survey in its entirety. However, it should be noted that certain questions had a higher number of responses and this may be reflected in the analysis. Of the sample of 1,453 respondents, 14% identified themselves as Indigenous and 22% identified as a visible minority. Most respondents were female (68%).

Primarily older adult respondents.

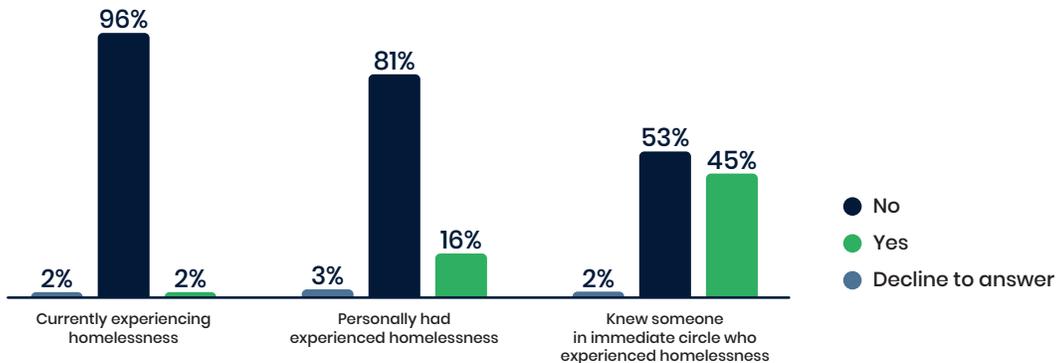
The largest group of respondents were older adults between the ages of 35 to 54 years old (49%), followed by adults between the ages of 25 to 35 years old (22%). In contrast, there was low representation from both young adults between 18 to 24 years old (4%) and seniors over the age of 76 years old (1%).

Past experience of homelessness.

Two percent (2%) responded that they were either currently experiencing or have experienced homelessness in the past year. Sixteen percent (16%) of respondents had personally experienced homelessness in their lifetime, with 45% also indicating that they knew someone in their immediate circle (i.e., family or friends) who had experienced homelessness.

Figure: Past Experience With Homelessness

Experience with Homelessness

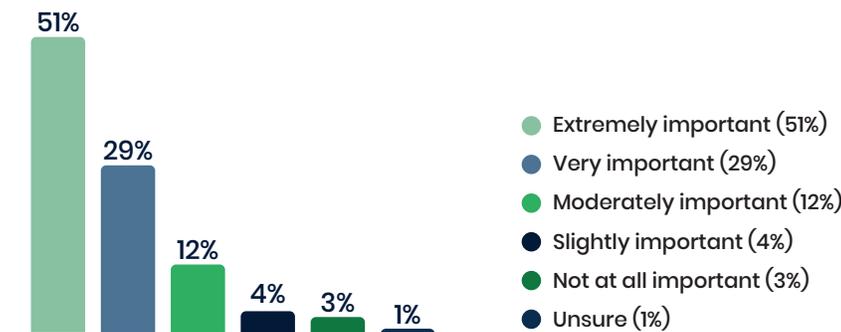


High importance of housing and homelessness-related issues.

In fact, 80% of respondents stated that solving homelessness was either extremely or very important. This trend demonstrates that community members were highly-invested in the currently housing and homelessness strategies that were being implemented in their community.

Figure: The Need To Solve Homelessness

Importance of solving homelessness in Red Deer

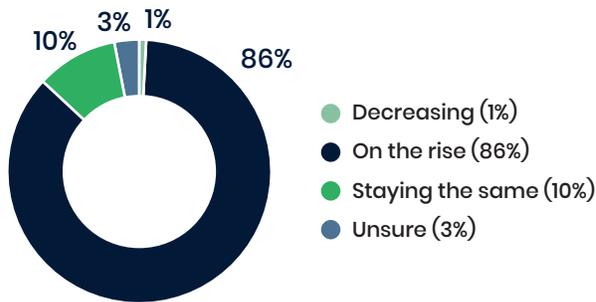


Homelessness seen as rising while there's a lack of adequate support.

Eighty-six percent (86%) believed that homelessness was on the rise or staying the same (10%). Forty-one (41%) of respondents either somewhat or strongly disagreed that those experiencing homelessness had access to the supports and housing they needed. In contrast, this was followed by 23% who somewhat agreed.

Figure: Perception Of Level Of Homelessness In Red Deer

Perception of level of homelessness in Red Deer



Level of awareness regarding efforts.

When asked if they were aware of the current approach by government, organizations, and agencies to address housing and homelessness issues, the majority indicated that they were somewhat aware (46%) or extremely aware (15%). But, 46% were moderately aware of the support systems and housing options available for those experiencing homelessness. This suggests that while community members are aware of different strategies that are implemented, they may not necessarily have as strong of an awareness of existing services and supports available ‘on the ground’ for those currently experiencing homelessness.

Support for diverse interventions.

When respondents asked about various measures to address housing and homelessness issues, most somewhat or strongly agreed that the following were effective: Housing First was supported (60%) as well as Long-Term Supportive Housing (64%), and Affordable Housing and/or Subsidized Rental Housing (66%). These findings indicate that, overall, a large majority of community members do believe that current housing-based initiatives were having a positive impact on reducing and ending homelessness in the City of Red Deer.

Survey Comments Analysis.

Community members were given the opportunity to provide open-ended responses to several questions. This allowed community members a chance to voice their stories and opinions on their perceptions of homelessness in the City of Red Deer. Due to the sheer volume of respondents, the qualitative data will only reflect some of the opinions of Red Deer's community but not all.

The qualitative data was coded using thematic analysis with NVivo 12 (Braun & Clarke, 2008). Once this list of anticipatory themes was created, the data was coded, and new thematic nodes were added as they presented themselves in the text. This allowed for the transcripts to be reviewed in a systematic manner (Morgan, Krueger & King, 1998).

See figure p.46



Theme	Description	Illustrative quotes
Housing options		
Unavailability of affordable housing	<p>Respondents described that affordable housing was not useful if it was difficult to access.</p>	<p><i>“The wait list is too long. I can barely make my rent and really struggle to provide for me and my daughter and have applied for the subsidy and have been waiting for eight months now.”</i></p> <p><i>“It’s impossible to address unemployment, health, addictions, etc. while people are without safe, continuous housing. Taxpayers need to understand that housing people will save money on other issues, like healthcare.”</i></p> <p><i>“Lighten up on the rules for legal suites. This would be an excellent way to help people make some extra cash by renting to people who need affordable housing. This is an initiative that does not cost the taxpayers.”</i></p>
Successes and pitfalls of Housing First	<p>Respondents described the difficulties and successes around implementing Housing First.</p>	<p><i>“Agencies that take the time to get to know people make a difference. Housing First is good, we seem to have a lot of barriers to accessing it in Red Deer though.”</i></p> <p><i>“Housing First will likely bring more people to our city with addictions. More services equal more people who want to abuse them. It’s unfortunate but true. This city is becoming an embarrassment due to the crime and social disorder in every corner of the city.”</i></p> <p><i>“The Housing First program needs more dedicated housing and the housing intake program that is run by Safe Harbour in cooperation with several social agencies in RD needs more available housing workers because there are too many people slipping through the cracks. What they are doing now is not ideal!”</i></p> <p><i>“The Buffalo housing has been an excellent place for those who are not interested in seeking treatment for their substance abuse and/or mental health concerns. It offers these people a chance for a home that’s not dependent on them quitting their substance use.”</i></p>

Theme **Description** **Illustrative quotes**

Addiction, homelessness and community safety

Safe Injection Sites

Respondents described their reaction to SIS in their community.

“Honestly, it comes down to drug usage. Insulin needles cost money yet addicts can get them free. They have too much support I think when it comes to getting help to live and less support when it comes to actually getting off the drug.”

“I truly believe that those fighting with addictions and experiencing homelessness in Red Deer care and will benefit from the Safe Injection Site. These people need people to be there and care for them, and give access to resources available at the SIS site.”

Substance abuse vs. homelessness

Respondents described the connection of homelessness and substance use, and their frustration with community impacts.

“I haven’t seen much success to be honest. I think it mostly comes down to the drug problem. Much of our youth get caught up in it and it’s just a downward spiral from there that becomes mental problems.”

“Drugs are keeping people where they are. They want their drugs more than they want to be a functioning human being. So, unless there is a place to take them and help them get off drugs for several months, the problem is only getting worse as more and more users come along.”

“Stop giving out needles and give out free info and access to recovery programs. When people have easy access to the needles and are cognitively unable to make important life decisions because their minds are impacted by the drugs, no positive strides will be made.”

Abuse of services

Respondents believed that homelessness was increasing due to the high availability of housing options and supportive programs.

“Just the city encouraging homeless from other cities to come to Red Deer because very appealing with city’s facilities.”

“There are plenty of services available, but most choose not to use them...maybe they enjoy the freedom of responsibility and use what’s necessary; however, injection sites are absolutely ridiculous. How can you expect these people to ‘get back into society’ if they high and the city is condoning it? And to fund it, some turn to crime. I believe there is way too much ‘unhealthy helping.’”

Theme **Description** **Illustrative quotes**

Homelessness strategies (1/2)

Intervention strategies

Respondents described housing-related strategies that were having a positive impact on reducing homelessness

“The Mustard Seed moving into the city has been an asset. We have a gap with regards to an addiction recovery centre and more affordable housing for people transitioning from homelessness to a different lifestyle.”

“Employment training, emergency housing for victims of domestic abuse, healthy plant-based food kitchens, fruit forests, more safe shelters for men, having detox beds available as well as rehab centres at no cost, counselling.”

Importance of prevention

Respondents described the importance of working upstream to reduce the risk of homelessness, especially in the education system.

“Primary prevention like affordable housing/vouchers directly prevents homelessness and improves outcomes (i.e. stress prevention, substance abuse prevention, family preservation).”

“What works: preventing trauma that causes homelessness...prevention. Start in schools. Start serving the families and youth who are struggling, so that the cycle is broken. Get real with addiction. Get actual proper dry-out centres and treatment centres.”

Theme **Description** **Illustrative quotes**

Homelessness strategies (2/2)

Systems or Systemic barriers

Respondents described the systems and systemic barriers that go on to cause homelessness.

“When having a cat makes you homeless, there’s a problem.”

“The program needs to be flexible. It cannot be a one solution fits all. Each person currently rough sleeping will be different and have different needs, so you will need to adapt to each individual’s needs. While some may initially be unwilling to accept help you will need to continue to offer different alternatives until you find a match.”

Lack of dignity

Respondents described the lack of dignity those experiencing homelessness may feel when accessing services.

“I feel this type of housing works but only when the people being offered the housing also have a sense of purpose and pride for the home.”

“All government programs are set up to make people feel worthless. The amount of effort and time it takes to get on any of their programs while you’re already stressed, depressed, suicidal, and starving comes too late and are purposely set up so people just give up. The wait lists are ridiculous. No one looks at why so many people are homeless, and communities look at us as losers that should just disappear.”

Design Labs

A total of 20 Design Labs were facilitated over the course of the summer, attended by 178 unique participants:

1. Advocacy Strategy to Support Plan Implementation
2. Plan Roles & Accountability Framework
3. Funders Forum
4. Regional Partnerships
5. Youth Homelessness
6. Landlords Roles in Plan Implementation
7. Engaging the Faith Community
8. Affordable Housing Development
9. Innovation and Tech-Based Solutions
10. Mental Health & Addictions Supports
11. Integrating Responses to Intimate Partner Violence
12. Research Agenda to Support the Plan
13. Early Identification and Prevention Strategies
14. Housing First
15. Linking Poverty Reduction & Homelessness Initiatives
16. Community Safety and Homelessness
17. Coordinated Access & Assessment
18. Public Education & Understanding
19. Ending Homelessness & Reconciliation
20. Systems Leadership Team

Key themes from the sessions are summarized in this section, with a focus on the solutions presented during these sessions.

Across all 20 Design Labs, several things became apparent:

- The need for optimizing resources, including efficiencies across sectors, service delivery and quality assurances and accountability was paramount.
- Participants noted that accountability and quality assurance should be conducted through evidence-informed and results-focused measures and that investments should be focused around these measures.

- Next, that more affordable housing needs to be made available, either through capital investments and incentives from government to the private sector, or by refurbishing existing builds.
- The need for Indigenous voices and engagement was critical. Engagement from Indigenous Peoples should be Indigenous-led and it should be trauma-informed and culturally appropriate. Removing stigma and changing negative public perceptions towards those with lived experience of homelessness should be challenged and better service navigation should be available.

As a result, based on these findings, several recommendations can be made.

- Housing and Homelessness services should be human-centered and include the voices of those with lived/living experience.
- Partnerships and engagement with Indigenous Peoples should be meaningful and Indigenous-led. Funding and decision making should be led by Indigenous leaders.
- More resources are needed for structural, systems and early intervention practices, specifically in transitional supports and navigation as people move within the service and housing continuums.
- Workers, case managers, peers and the community at large should walk alongside those that have exited homelessness to maintain housing and provide a sense of belonging.
- A complete housing continuum should be created, including affordable, culturally-appropriate, suitable and safe housing and should include subsidies for those who need them.
- Funders and partnerships should be leveraged so that different sectors have knowledge of each other's' programs, funding, roles and responsibilities.
- Better coordination and improved Coordinated Access should be implemented to allow for community agencies to better utilize resources and deliver shared outcomes.

The rest of this section will dive into these key themes in further detail.

Systems Integration, Coordination, and Navigation

The role of partnerships and systems integration was a major thematic finding from several Design Labs. The Regional Partnerships design lab found that increased **partnerships with jurisdictions** outside Red Deer proper could alleviate the lack of housing options for its community members. Building regional coalitions and partnerships to streamline processes across jurisdictions would improve affordability, increase systems navigation and would streamline support systems. Participants believed that effective partnerships with other jurisdictions could be done **through a regional assessment of housing supply and demand**.

Underutilized housing could be leveraged, and unique housing options could be created (e.g., students renting homes in seniors' homes). These partnerships could be created by leveraging **existing regional tables or models** (e.g., Alberta Rural Development Network, Central Alberta Poverty Reduction Network) and that an exploration of ways to leverage or pool together resources could be done. These partnerships would increase the choice of housing options, it would optimize housing outcomes for residents, it would use resources more efficiently and finally, it would increase the collective impact of stakeholders.

The Funders Forum design lab also explored ways that government and philanthropic investments could be better coordinated. Although competing priorities and different funding timetables and agendas were discussed as potential challenges, it was important to note that funders often felt **disconnected and siloed**. Again, re-establishing a **funders network** would increase partnerships across different systems. Participants discussed that leveraging **joint priorities** and developing **common questions in funding applications** for housing and homelessness proposals would reduce siloing, build public trust and confidence and it would optimize funding impact.

A key challenge brought forward in the Innovation and Tech-Based Solutions design lab was around **sustainable funding**, where a lack of accessible information or the need for existing data and information needed to be mobilized more effectively. As iterated above, the need for collaboration between the social services sector and funders was required in order to set **community-minded funding priorities** to create housing and homelessness solutions that had ownership. This needed to be done through data storytelling – where the **most current data** and lived experience ambassadors could showcase successes and opportunities to engage the public and motivate service providers.

The need for “wrap-around supports” was reiterated by several attendees, who recognized that there were entwined issues surrounding homelessness. Attendees envisioned that supports for individuals experiencing homelessness could provide an opportunity to improve their minds, bodies and spirits toward healthy, balanced living. For example, they discussed imagining supports like after hours at pools, recreational activities, learning opportunities at the library, and arts and crafts activities.

The Housing First design lab found that supports from other sectors were not readily available, including natural supports. This lack of coordination across systems meant that often times, individuals experiencing homelessness were falling between the cracks. Discharge planning, landlord engagement and other capacity building and training for front-line staff were deemed as necessary aspects of wrap-around supports. Participants believed that an effective strategy would be to create an **accountability framework** to reduce the inefficient use of resources. By leveraging the existing investments available through coordination and the centralization of shared activities, people with living or lived experience could be empowered to engage more with housing programs and services.

Affordable Housing

The lack of affordable housing was a major thematic category found in the design labs. The Seniors design lab found that a lack of affordable seniors housing or affordable housing in general was a large cause of the marginalization of certain populations. Limitations like age and income kept certain populations out of affordable housing (e.g., AISH income and age cut offs). In addition, an immigration influx put a severe strain on the limited affordable options available and other resources that could have mitigated such a strain. Community members discussed that in order to improve the lack of affordable options available, there needed to be an increase in educating individuals on what resources existed. **Improved coordination and increased public awareness** could improve accessibility to not only shelters but also housing options for marginalized populations. Increasing **affordable housing stock** and other affordable options, specifically for seniors, would improve the quality of life for those living in Red Deer and would also be the most efficient way to use resources (including the use of vacant land and buildings).

The key challenges discussed in the Affordable Housing Development design lab concerned the financing of affordable housing builds. It was discussed by community members that coordination between **all three levels of government** need to take place, in addition to increased coordination between different sectors. Barriers from the private sector due to **complex zoning, by-laws and other processes** were difficult to overcome and that social stigma and NIMBY-ism were a significant challenge. However, it was discussed that a strategy to overcome these challenges could involve exploring other local communities' by-laws and zoning restrictions to better understand how to promote affordable housing developments. By collaborating with the planning and economic development departments at the municipal level, streamlining development applications for affordable housing could be done. Additionally, advocating to the federal government on creating more incentives for developers to build more affordable housing, in conjunction with marketing and branding campaigns could be effective steps forward.

Mental Health, Addictions, and Community Safety

A clear priority was developing more spaces/housing units for persons with **addictions and homelessness**, such as Permanent Supportive Housing including a range of low barrier and sober options. Supportive housing should include more on-site health and support services, and the size of buildings should be on the smaller side (less than 30 units). Treatment options were needed as well, along with aftercare and detox for those in recovery. While Design Lab participants noted not all who are homeless have an addiction or engage in criminal activity, the issues were noted in close relation to one another.

“Developing housing where addicts won’t be evicted so they won’t have to waste resources to be rehoused.”

The key challenges noted in the Community Safety design lab was the negative perceptions held by community members around those who used drugs or were facing addictions. Backlogs to the justice system and to managing criminal activities were also notable issues. Due to the perception of the high level of crime in downtown Red Deer, business vitality was also brought up as a key concern. Interestingly, strategies to alleviate these challenges were around **improved systems coordination**, including **discharge planning** and the **repurposing of existing buildings**.

These strategies were discussed as necessary to improving “right-matching” of service users to programs that matched their needs and preferences. The need to develop a client-centered, trauma informed model which included a range of services was determined to be a necessary action for Red Deer. There was also a need for **private sector engagement**, specifically local businesses, to dispel myths around addictions and homelessness. Private sponsorships to fund life-skills programs and building a **community hub** (i.e., a one-stop shop) for housing, homelessness, social assistance, health and childcare services was deemed mandatory. Finally, creating a graduated **work experience model** where those with living/lived experience of homelessness could have be mentored by a local business owner would reduce recidivism back into systems, reduce crime and support individuals to re-engage with their community.

Public Awareness, Education, and Social Inclusion

There is a need for further **advocacy and awareness** and education on homelessness for the public, starting as young as children. Viewing of films followed by active discussion, sharing of personal stories, and a lived experience design lab were all suggestions for how to get the message out. Community members believed that continuing with advocacy and public awareness campaigns is positive and that these allow community members to know their concerns are being heard and that many individuals and organizations are working together. The Public Education and

Understanding design lab's objective were to design innovative strategies to dispel myths and misconceptions around homelessness and to enhance the community's support for the CHHIP. A large aspect of the negative perception around homelessness was due to **NIMBY-ism** and segregation of communities because one's socio-economic status. Many community members believed that a public perception that much work on homelessness was not being done by the City was due to the **lack of awareness** of what resources existed. Attendees discussed designing a storytelling marketing strategy that would engage the community to active reduce the stigmas and negative public perceptions around homelessness. In this way, by shifting the public perception around homelessness, Red Deer could eliminate its "us" versus "them" narrative.

The Developing Mental Health and Addictions Supports design lab had similar findings. The main challenge around providing prevention and early intervention supports to those with addictions was the lack of service navigation and transition planning. The need for more and faster access to specialized services and housing was apparent and that a lack of compassion and community stigma was a large barrier to this. Again, **transition supports** to eliminate **gaps in services** was key; as was widening options on the housing continuum to include other options like holistic in-house supports. A central team responsible for public education was necessary and that a public awareness campaign this should be done in tandem with **systems mapping**, so community members with no ties to the social services sector had information on where to go for services and supports.

Engaging the Faith Community

Engaging the Faith community was a necessary step in the creation of the CHHIP. Red Deer's faith communities have made considerable strides and investments in addressing local social issues. Exploring how this role can be enhanced in advancing the Plan was a key objective of the design labs. One of the major challenges faced by the faith communities was understanding how to **support individuals beyond crises**. The faith community wanted to understand what their role was once individuals are housed or are connected with health and addictions services and supports. Simply, they wanted to understand where the gaps and needs were at a systems level so that they could continue to leverage their own resources by identifying and acknowledging the issues without resorting to "dogma".

Strategies that were identified concerned **coordinating an inter-agency council of all faith communities** through an awareness "Love Thy Neighbour" campaign. This inter-agency council could develop common goals and a coordinated "**preaching plan**" across faith communities in order to support individuals after they have been housed. One interesting example brought up in the Design Labs was the walking tours

provided by the lead Pastor of the Inner City Pastoral Ministry. They provided walking tours of downtown Red Deer during the day, which were educational but this also provided an opportunity for service users and service providers to engage with those experiencing homelessness in a safe and authentic way.

Focusing on Prevention

This design lab's objective was to explore the most current thinking on policy, planning and practice to prevent and sustain youth homelessness and to identify priorities, strategies and approaches appropriate for the City of Red Deer. Some of the key challenges to preventing and ending youth homelessness concerned a lack of **systems navigation** and **youth-specific resources and supports**. Participants believed that there were barriers across the different systems, specifically the school board and that the role of natural supports were unclear. A key challenge was also the **lack of housing options** for youth and a lack of focus on integrating social and cultural resources. In addition to this, not only were **youth voices** not engaged, wellness and skills development were not a focus.

Community members believed that having a common community definition of 'youth' was necessary and that this population required a designated building, operated by staff and youth mentors, with supports in place was key. Moreover, creative models like a **Community Hub model** could provide unique housing options for youth and that landlord engagement strategies or an incentive program to allow youth the opportunities to become renters was necessary. Finally, participants believed that these strategies should be conducted in tandem to building **greater independence and resiliency** in youth and may even reduce future reliance on public systems.

Indigenous Homelessness and Reconciliation

As part of the broader CHHIP consultation process, citizens of Red Deer attended a design lab on looking at homelessness through the lens of Reconciliation and building an approach in Red Deer that advances the Calls to Action. A total of 32 participants attended this session.

Key Messages

- Indigenous people are overrepresented in many populations: incarcerated persons, children in foster care, and the homeless population.
- Racism, stigmatization, and marginalization of Indigenous persons is pervasive.
- Homelessness among Indigenous people should be considered as a form of ongoing colonialism due to the system's failure to address Indigenous cultural needs.

- Indigenous definitions of homelessness identify broader wellbeing dimensions at Indigenous, community, and societal levels; healing and cultural practices must be embedded in any solutions.
- Solutions should be Indigenous-led, but there are calls for accountability and system disruption among everyone.
- Lack of housing units in general, but specifically units that are accessible/barrier-free, units for single persons “without issues”, and units that are culturally-appropriate in design and service delivery.
- Lack of housing services for youth, and specifically for Indigenous youth.
- Housing services/programs are scattered with varying mandates, and landlords vary in their willingness to even participate in programs.

Current systems and services are seemingly working to reduce homelessness overall, but the proportion of Indigenous Peoples experiencing homelessness remains high. Design Lab participants offered several suggestions for solving problems grounded in the TRC focus on self-determination. These calls for disruption and reform come from a place of hurt and frustration, but also from a desire for true change and progress. Participants discussed how homelessness among Indigenous people should be considered as a form of **ongoing colonialism**, due to the system’s failure to address Indigenous cultural needs. A critical requirement was that funding and decision making should be **Indigenous-led**, but that there should be calls for accountability and system disruption among everyone.

It was also discussed in the design lab that the City should encourage and provide the means for Indigenous persons to take ownership and control, to build and run the programs, services, and housing that they need. For non-Indigenous people, the City should continue to provide unfiltered, culturally sensitive, solution-focused education of historic events such as residential schools, the Sixties Scoop, and other injustices and that all of this history must be embedded in the Canadian curriculum and not glossed over or brushed aside. A familiarity with **local Indigenous practices** is essential.

Addressing **intergenerational trauma** should be held into account by funding preventative programming and supports to address holistic health and healing and that Indigenous Peoples with lived experience who successfully overcame their addictions and/or experience with homelessness could provide encouragement and guidance to those who are struggling with these issues. Finally, another action was to create housing units with a **Cultural Community model** where the housing would contain on-site Indigenous/traditional health treatment, social and cultural supports, with Indigenous landlords or property managers who support cultural practices such as smudging. This would be overseen by an Indigenous Housing Authority to control funding, develop diverse units, support transition, and include Elders in the entire process.

Emerging Directions

Engaged and informed commentary was offered by the participants of the Design Lab, and their suggestions are summarized below – with their specific actions integrated into the Plan strategies.

1. Indigenous Leadership in Systems Disruption

Current systems and services are seemingly working to reduce homelessness overall, but the proportion of Indigenous homelessness remains high. Design lab participants offered several suggestions for solving problems grounded in the TRC focus on self-determination. These calls for disruption and reform come from a place of hurt and frustration, but also from a desire for true change and progress.

This was echoed in comments that efforts to not further traumatize individuals by creating an environment where clients feel powerless or lack control (e.g. programs run by non-Indigenous persons without any Indigenous input or cultural awareness may seem like a continued form of colonialism). For Indigenous persons who have a background impacted by colonialism, the ability to make their own decisions and regain control over their life choices allows them to feel safe.

2. Education, Training, and Public Awareness

There is ongoing, pervasive social and economic marginalization of the Indigenous population. The TRC report and Calls to Action have been a reminder to address how Indigenous peoples have been treated and how to forge a new path of reconciliation. A first step is to “raise good people” with an understanding of Indigenous history from an early age across the mainstream population.

3. Addressing Trauma

Housing is just a symptom of the root of the problem: intergenerational trauma. Trauma-informed practices should be embedded in the practice of all health/social/housing service providers, and training provided if that is not the case.

4. Cultural Community Housing Model

The transition from reserve to town or city living is challenging, and for many the culture shock, racism, loss of culture, and loss of sense of community can be contributing pathways to homelessness. For those who struggled with life on-reserve (due to poor living conditions, abuse, substance use), they will likely find city living even more difficult.

Embedding Lived Experience

One of the key considerations from prototyping the CHHIP was a well-intended but, at times, limited understanding of firsthand experiences. As a result, those with lived or living experience of homelessness was engaged in a separate consultation facilitated by City of Red Deer staff and local service providers.

A total of 14 sessions were hosted with 58 participants.

One of the main concerns of those with lived experience was **housing affordability**. Many individuals had come into the City of Red Deer from other jurisdictions because the rental market was deemed unaffordable. However, in recent years, the housing market has made rents in Red Deer unaffordable or affordable but located in neighbourhoods that were unsafe. As one participant noted, they had lived in the same townhouse for 5 years and loved their home but couldn't move to a safer neighbourhood because the few options available meant you had to **"take what you could get"**.

Another matter was that AISH funding did not provide enough income supports in order to live a full and meaningful life. Participants discussed that medical supports would be helpful, that they were discriminatory towards single men and that it did not leave enough at the end of the month to buy fresh and healthy food.

"Money. That's the biggest issue. How do I decide if I pay for shelter or food? It'd be nice if Income Support paid for a landline, 'cause I can't afford a phone."

Illegal rental suites were also a major concern. One participant had seen many advertisements for illegal suites. These suites were run by property management agents but barriers like credit checks meant that they could not access these options. Several strategies were provided to make looking for affordable housing easier for those with lived experience.

Participants discussed the necessity of **government-owned, rent-controlled properties**. They believed that these properties would be more affordable and would also be better maintained. Finally, participants also discussed the need for **programming** in addition to housing supports. For example, this participant said:

"People in the streets have nothing to do. They leave MATS and have nowhere to go, so they just fall back into old habits."

As demonstrated earlier, the need for wrap-around, community-based supports were critical. While a wide range of housing options were necessary for those experiencing homelessness, programmatic solutions were also needed.

Coordinated Access

The **need for systems navigation** and reducing systems gaps was apparent throughout the design labs. One of the key challenges to coordinated access was not having all key players at the table; specifically, non-Housing First providers being connected to the Coordinated Access Process (CAP). Participants discussed the need for more supports for individuals with high and mid-level acuity, as well as, those waiting for housing placements. Participants also discussed the need for **broader outreach services** and targeted strategies to reach specific populations that were underutilizing CAP. The lack of trust and not feeling comfortable enough to access Safe Harbour for Coordinated Entry should be investigated, specifically through the lenses of priority populations.

*“You’re broke, you got no money, you need to steal to stay alive. Someone offers you a ‘hit’ to make you feel better, then all of a sudden you’re an addict.”
(in explaining his fears around using a shelter close to drug-users)*

The use of Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (SPDAT) as an **invasive and culturally inappropriate tool** was also a key challenge and finally, that systems navigation was reliant on the initiation of individuals, which was difficult for those with mental health and addictions-related challenges.

“We need more supports for people coming out of detox, so they’re not literally walking back into the situation they just left.”

Strategies that would support better coordinated access across services were implementing a community diversion strategy, where screening could be client-centred, culturally appropriate, trauma-informed and simple. It was also strategized that Coordinated Access should be done through **multiple sites** and that multiple agencies could be funded to do intake through outreach, specifically for populations that weren’t already connected to services.

HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS SITUATION

Key Population Trends & Demographics

Population Growth

The CHHIP must take into account not only the needs of the existing population of Red Deer, but also the evolving needs of the community over time. The 2019 Municipal Census (City of Red Deer, 2019a) found that the population of Red Deer has grown since 2016 to 101,002 people after seeing a drop in population below 100,000 between 2015 and 2016. The initial decline was likely a result of the decline of the energy sector that pulled Alberta into an economic downturn. Medium growth projections for Red Deer are expected to be roughly 2.2% per year, which would add 30,000 people to the population by 2028.

Figure: Population Forecast For The City Of Red Deer From 2013

Year	Total Population	Additional Population (Cumulative from 2016)
2013	90,570	-
2016	100,420	-
2018	104,900	4,480
2023	117,000	16,580
2028	130,400	29,980

Source: (City of Red Deer, 2018a)

Indigenous Peoples

The City of Red Deer is located on both Treaty 6 and Treaty 7 lands which are the traditional territories of Cree, Dene, Saulteaux, Stoney-Nakoda, Nakota Sioux, and Blackfoot Confederacy Nations. Red Deer also occupies land within Regional Zone 3 under the Métis Nation of Alberta Association (Alberta Teachers' Association, 2019). In the 2016 national census, about 5% (5,155) of individuals in Red Deer stated that they identified as Indigenous – over half (2,895) of whom identified as Métis.

The average age of people with Indigenous identity was 29.6 (Statistics Canada, 2018a) – a full ten years below the overall average for the community in 2019. This reflects a national trend in which generally young Indigenous populations are growing at a rate four times faster than the general population (Statistics Canada, 2018b).

At the same time, however, Indigenous peoples are overrepresented among the homeless population, are less likely to be homeowners, and are more likely to be in Core Housing Need. Ongoing racism and discrimination, along with the impacts of intergenerational trauma from colonialism on Indigenous peoples have led to an urgent need for the implementation of the Calls to Action within the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Experiences of racism and discrimination can be both a barrier to and a deterrent from seeking support. Improved cultural competency and awareness of Indigenous experiences of trauma and victimization will help increase the understanding within mainstream organizations and service providers to be able to meet the diverse needs of Indigenous community members.

Given the rapid population growth that does not show signs of slowing and a greater proportion of young people within the Indigenous population, Red Deer's approach to housing and homelessness must take into consideration how it will accommodate this growing demographic. National trends also show migration from reserves with 45-70% of Indigenous people living in urban areas. If this trend continues, the need for culturally-appropriate Indigenous housing and services will grow.

Age, Gender, Diversity, and Ability

Red Deer is a young city with a low, average age of 39.5 (City of Red Deer, 2019a), but the population of those living in Red Deer who are under the age of 30 has dropped by over 25% from 39,740 (40%) in 2016 to 29,590 (29.3%) in 2019. The greatest drop in population is among working-age young people. The percent of the population in Red Deer between the ages of 15 to 29 has dropped from 21% in 2016 to 14.5% in 2019. This shift may be linked to a lack of education and employment options for young adults looking to start careers and families, causing them to seek opportunities elsewhere.

Figure: Proportion Of Residents By Age Group

Age Group	# of Residents	% of Population
0-14	14,878	15%
15-24	9,594	9%
25-64	44,984	45%
65+	12,902	13%
Rather not say	5,827	6%
Missing	12,817	13%
Total	101,002	100%

Source: City of Red Deer, 2019a

Seniors made up 13% of the population in 2019 and, like elsewhere in the country, the population in Red Deer is aging, which requires accessible housing units for people with mobility and mental or physical health issues. Greater longevity of this population increases the demand for home care and alternatives to purpose-built seniors residences, while at the same time requiring improvements to the accessibility of existing housing and infrastructure.

In 2019, just under half of the Red Deer population identified as female (45.5%), and 2.5% stated they identified as “other” or would rather not disclose their gender. Female-identifying and non-binary people are at greater risk of violence and discrimination based on their gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation. Housing and supports must be designed with the safety concerns and the needs of female-identifying and non-binary people.

Red Deer also receives about 1,500 newcomers each year, and the 2016 national census found that over 15,000 people (15.5%) identify as a visible minority – the largest group being Filipino (6,225 people). Recent immigration data shows 5,230 people immigrated between 2011 and 2016, and the top 5 recent immigrant countries of origin

being the Philippines, Ukraine, India, Syria, and Nigeria. Currently, 1,400 people do not have permanent resident status, either living in Red Deer on a visa or as a refugee claimant (Statistics Canada, 2017a).

Many farms in the Red Deer region are reliant on foreign temporary workers to fill job vacancies, and in 2010, a study conducted in Red Deer County found that there were 671 temporary workers employed, with the vast majority (611) living in the City of Red Deer, Innisfail, and Delburne. Racialized communities face greater rates of marginalization, housing and employment discrimination, and poverty, with racialized individuals disproportionately engaging in, “contract, temporary, part-time, and shift work with poor job security, low wages and benefits” (Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, 2019).

Family and Household Composition

The average household size in Red Deer is 2.5 people. Red Deer has a higher percentage of lone-parent families than the province as a whole, with 17.4% of households either being led by a lone female or male parent with children. The number of lone-parent households grew by 9% between 2011 and 2016. These families are at increased risk of housing instability and discrimination, and during community consultations, participants noted a need for safe, affordable housing options for parents with children.

Figure: Family Structure

	Red Deer		Alberta	
Total Census Families	26,965	100%	1,114,585	100%
Total Couple Families	22,270	82.6%	953,325	85.5%
Married Couples	17,965	80.7%	793,195	83.2%
Common-Law	4,305	19.3%	160,130	16.8%
Lone Parent (Total)	4,695	17.4%	161,260	14.5%
Lone Female Parent	3,755	80%	123,490	76.6%
Lone Male Parent	935	20%	37,770	23.4%
Persons not in census families	20,090	678,535	678,535	100%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2017a

Figure: Family type (Red Deer)

	2011	2016	%ch
Total Census Families	24,535	26,965	9%
Couples Without Children	10,155	10,915	7%
Couples With Children	9,400	11,355	17.3%
Lone Parent Families	4,280	4,695	9%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2017a

Key Points

- **Growing population.** As one of Alberta’s largest mid-size cities, Red Deer has grown to over 100,000 residents representing a growth of 12% over the last decade, despite the economic downturn.
- **A smaller population of children and seniors.** Red Deer’s children and seniors’ population is 15% and 11%, respectively (City of Red Deer, 2019a) This is of note as it represents a smaller population dependency rate in relation to the working-age demographic distinguished from the comparative cities (City of Red Deer, 2019a).
- **A growing urban Indigenous population.** Five percent (5%) of Red Deer’s population stated that they identified as Indigenous – over half (2,895) of whom identified as Métis. The average age of people with Indigenous identity was 29.6 reflecting the national trend in which generally young Indigenous populations are growing at a rate four times faster than the general population.
- **A higher immigrant population.** Newcomers to the city represent 15% of the Red Deer’s population (Statistics Canada, 2017a). The top 5 recent immigrant countries of origin are the Philippines, Ukraine, India, Syria, and Nigeria.

Economic Trends

Economic Growth

Red Deer's key industries for employment are manufacturing, retail and wholesale services, agriculture, tourism, and oil and petrochemicals. The province has been recovering from an economic downturn and although there are signs of recovery, it is unlikely that the extent of growth and employment will return to what it was during the height of the sector. Further, the evolving nature of work poses challenges and threats to employment for Red Deerians.

While manufacturing, construction, and agricultural jobs are significant industries for Red Deer residents, these sectors are particularly vulnerable to new developments in technology and automation that require fewer workers. The service sector is likely to see the greatest prospects in terms of economic and employment growth. The wide range of jobs that fall within the service sector are less likely to be replaced through automation and are largely essential services that will need continuous supply of an educated workforce.

The changing nature of work is seeing a widening gap with a shift toward demand for high-skill labour. Low and no-skill labour is still needed, but are often lower-paid and precarious. Those that hold mid- to low-skill jobs in manufacturing and agriculture are at risk of becoming obsolete and may require programs and training to reskill and prepare themselves for career changes.

Current Labour Market

Red Deer's labour force has declined by almost 5,000 people since February 2019 despite the province seeing an overall increase in its labour force. Unemployment in Red Deer steadily increased to 7.5% in May of 2019, which is more than 2 percentage points higher than the rest of the country (5.5), and 0.7 percentage points higher than Alberta (6.8) as a whole. Red Deer also registers the second-highest unemployment rate in Alberta after Edmonton (7.7), followed by Calgary (6.5), over the same period of time (Statistics Canada, 2019a). Unemployment more than doubled from 3.4% to 8.9% between 2006 and 2016 for those 25 and older in Red Deer (Statistics Canada, 2017c). For youth between the ages of 15 and 24, unemployment has risen from 7.0% in 2006 to 16.8% in 2016. This corresponds with findings in the 2019 municipal census that show a 30% drop in population between the ages of 15 and 29 since 2016.

The only age group in Red Deer to see an increase in employment and decrease in unemployment were those over 65 years old (Statistics Canada, 2017c). This may be related to national trends of increasing rates of seniors staying employed beyond the age of 65. Since 1995, the percentage of seniors who are working has doubled – 30% of which are full time (Statistics Canada, 2017d). This indicates a twofold challenge: (1)

seniors cannot afford to retire and are increasingly needing to work beyond the age of 65, either remaining in their positions or taking on part-time work, and (2) younger people are not able to move into jobs that would have previously been vacated by those reaching 65.

Figure: Unemployment by Age Group

	2006	2011	2016
15 to 24	7.0	13.9	16.8
25 to 64	3.4	4.6	8.9
65 and over	7.2	6.4	4.7

Source: Statistics Canada, 2018c

Figure: Employment by Age Group

	2006	2011	2016
15 to 24	75.8	62.1	58.4
25 to 64	82.6	79.5	75.7
65 and over	15.1	15.0	18.3

Source: Statistics Canada, 2018c

Further, there is a relationship between unemployment rates and job vacancy rates. During the first quarter of 2018, the job vacancy rate sat at 3.0 and \$22.25 was the average hourly wage offered in the city; the first quarter of 2019 registered a decrease in both figures sitting at 2.0 and \$21.65, respectively. Compared with the Canadian (3.1 and \$21.80) and the Albertan (2.5 and \$24.30) estimates in 2019, Red Deer’s job vacancy rate is below the country’s and province’s average, and hourly wages are similar (Statistics Canada, 2018c). This suggests that for some reason workers are finding it tougher to get work than in the past. This might be because the jobs are in places where the unemployed are not, or that the unemployed lack the skills required for the jobs that are available, or it might be that the type of work available is not enough to stop people looking for more work – ie because even though they have a part-time job they are still actively looking for work.

Incomes, Income Distribution, and Poverty

The median household income in Red Deer grew by over 36% between 2006 and 2016 from \$63,034 to \$85,794. This is a 36% increase from 2006. In August 2018, the federal government announced that from now on, the Market Basket Measure (MBM)¹ would be an official poverty line, and as such would be used by the federal government as the basis of its efforts to alleviate poverty. Almost 12% individuals (11,680) in Red Deer have MBM low-income status.

Figure: Poverty Line in 2016, Red Deer, Alberta

	Single Person	Lone Parent with One Child	Couple with Two Children
Red Deer	\$19,153	\$27,086	\$38,306

Source: Wilkins & Kneebone, 2018

Key Points

- Growing unemployment rate. Recent labour market statistics show Red Deer's unemployment rate has increased by 1.8 going from 5.6 in July 2018 to 7.4 in July 2019. Among age groups, according to the most recent data from 2016, the highest unemployment rate is registered in ages between 15 and 24, with a rate of 16.8 (Statistics Canada, 2017c).
- Job vacancies and average wages are down slightly. During the first quarter of 2019, Red Deer registered a decrease in both vacancy and wage, sitting at 2.0 and \$21.65, respectively. Part-time work may cause wage decline: hours decline, so wages decline.
- Income can be assessed against the new poverty line. Almost twelve percent (12%) of households in the city have MBM Low income status (Statistics Canada, 2018c).

¹The Market Basket Measure defines the cost of purchasing a specified basket of goods and services. These goods and services define what experts have determined as being necessary for a household – consisting of two adults aged 25 to 49 and two children aged nine to 13 – to purchase in order to enjoy a modest, basic standard of living.

Housing Market Trends

Homeownership

The majority of Red Deerians own their homes while only 34% rent. The average price of a home in Red Deer in 2018 was \$330,611, and was ranked the ninth least affordable community in Alberta (Zielinski, 2018). The majority of the housing starts over the last five years have been intended for homeownership, though starts and completions have steadily declined in that time.

Figure: Housing in Red Deer (2016)

	#	%
Total Private Households	39,695	100.0
Owner	26,010	66
Condominium	5,660	14
Renter	13,684	34

Source: Statistics Canada, 2017a

Rental Stock

Between 2015 and 2017, the vacancy rates for private market rental apartments increased from 5.4% to 13.1% due to an increase in rental and ownership housing starts and completions from 2014-2016. The sudden influx of new units and increase in vacancy rates caused a drop in the average monthly rent. The rental market is recovering with vacancy rates dropping in 2018 to 8.6%, and the average rent has almost returning to what it was in 2015. Vacancy rates are anticipated to continue to decrease without increased supply.

Sixty-five percent (65%) of total private households are occupied by families, while 34% are occupied by a single person or people living together (not as a family). Units with 3+ bedrooms are at 5.6%, which may make it challenging for families to find appropriate, affordable housing.

Nichols Applied Management's analysis of the housing market cited no noticeable change in demand for housing because of the economic downturn in 2015.

Figure: Private Rental Apartment Vacancy Rates (%)

	Oct - 2015	Oct - 2016	Oct - 2017	Oct - 2018
Bachelor	3.0	7.0	9.5	8.6
1 BR	5.3	12.7	13.0	9.3
2 BR	5.8	14.7	13.1	8.3
3 BR+	1.6	10.3	18.0	5.6
Total	5.4	13.6	13.1	8.6

Source: Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2019b

Figure: Summary Statistics – Primary Rental Market

	Vacancy Rate (%)	Availability Rate (%)	Avg Apt Rent/Mo (\$)	%ch	Units
Oct 2015	5.4	6.2	967	2.6	4,749
Oct 2016	13.6	14.8	946	-3.9	5,038
Oct 2017	13.1	13.8	942	-0.4	5,188
Oct 2018	8.6	N/A	960	2.1	5,213

Source: Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2019b

Figure: Red Deer Housing Starts and Completions

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
Starts (Total)	867	702	375	331	272	2,547
Starts (Rental)	270	356	154	74	130	984
Completions (Total)	877	762	419	320	221	2,599
Completions (Rental)	322	245	190	72	13	842

Source: Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2019b

While these construction starts and completions are promising, there is a lack of accessible units being built. People who use wheelchairs often wait years to find affordable housing with the right accessibility features and supports to meet their needs. Challenges may include:

- Inadequate supply and very low turnover of accessible affordable housing.
- No common standards to describe accessibility needs and unit features with sufficient precision to determine what's a good fit.
- No single central marketplace to match accessible housing vacancies and applicants.
- Length of time to secure disability supports and special equipment for a new home

In 2011, 11,500 households were recorded as having at least one person with activity limitations; of these, 1,830 (16%) were also in Core Housing Need (Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2019a).

Key Points

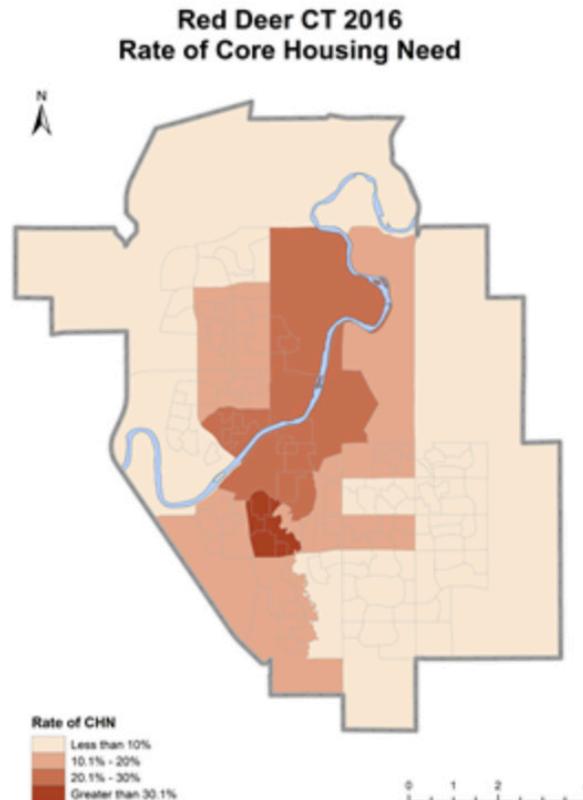
- A third of Red Deerians rent their homes. In terms of homeowners in comparison to renters, Red Deer (34%) has the highest percentage of renters compared to Alberta (27%) and Canada (32%) as a whole.
- The majority of households are family units. Sixty-five percent (65%) of total private households are occupied by families, while 34% are occupied by a single person or people living together (not as a family).
- Rental housing units are increasing. Between 2015 and 2017, the vacancy rates for private market rental apartments increased from 5.4% to 13.1%, likely tied to the economic downturn. The sudden increase in vacancy rates caused a drop in the average monthly rent.
- Accessible housing is in demand. In 2011, 11,500 households were recorded as having at least one person with activity limitations; of these, 1,830 (16%) were also in Core Housing Need (Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2019a).

Core Housing Need

Core Housing Need (CHN) is commonly referred to as the household which dwelling is considered unsuitable, inadequate, or unaffordable, and whose income levels are such that they could not afford alternative, suitable, and adequate housing in their community. In particular, a household is considered to be in need if housing is reported by their residents as requiring major repairs (inadequate), costs more than 30% of total before-tax household income (unaffordable), and does not have enough bedrooms for the size and makeup of resident households according to National Occupancy Standard (NOS) requirements (unsuitable) (Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2018).

In 2016, 12% of all occupied private dwellings in Red Deer were identified as being in CHN following a similar trend in Alberta (11%) and Canada (12%). Two cities of similar size, Medicine Hat and Lethbridge are also shown in the table below for comparison purposes.

Figure: Rate of CHN Red Deer



Of Red Deer households in CHN, 83% of them reported to cost more than 30% of total before-tax household income. This represents a higher proportion of people spending more than 30% of their total before-tax household income on housing compared to the Canadian and Alberta average, evidencing higher needs of affordable housing support. (See Figure: *Core Housing Need* p. 74)

Overall, incomes have not kept pace with the cost of shelter regardless of whether the unit is rented or owned, but there are disparities between the renting population and those who own their homes. Compared to other jurisdictions, Red Deer has more individuals renting alone, spending over 30% of their income on shelter, with respect to owners. Among owners and renters living in family households, however, the city follows a similar pattern to those in other jurisdictions having about 50% of owners and renters spending over 30% of their income on shelter-related costs.

In terms of the condition of houses in Red Deer, the period of construction provides an overview of the level of repairs needed. 2011 data is available that shows out of 36,345 houses in Red Deer, 2,155 (6%) are in need of major repairs (Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2019a). Owners make almost twice as much as the average renting household. In fact, while renters' median income failed to keep pace with the increase in shelter costs between 2011 and 2016, homeowners' median income growth exceeded the increase in median annual shelter costs.

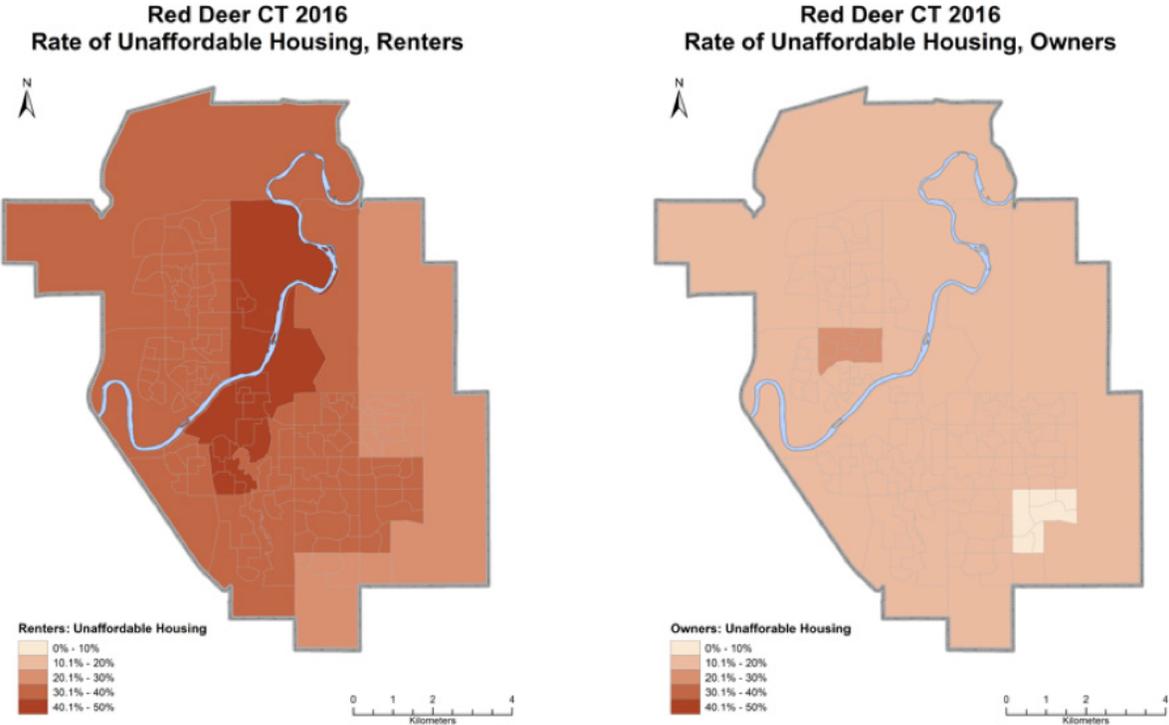
The disparity between renters and owners is particularly pronounced among households spending over 30% of their household income on shelter costs. The median household income of renters spending between 30% and 100% on shelter costs in 2016 was \$28,463, compared to \$47,765 for homeowners with unaffordable housing.

Figure: Core Housing Need

CMA/Province/ Country	Occupied private dwellings	Households in core housing need	% households in Core Housing Need	Unaffordable	Unsustainable	Inadequate	Core housing need, two or more dimensions
Medicine Hat	31,500	2,800	9%	85%	2%	2%	12%
Lethbridge	45,695	4,345	10%	80%	3%	4%	14%
Red Deer	39,980	4,680	12%	83%	3%	3%	11%
Alberta	1,527,680	164,280	11%	78%	4%	5%	13%
Canada	14,072,080	1,693,775	12%	76%	4%	4%	15%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2017e

Figure: Unaffordability Rates For Owners And Renters



Tenants living in Red Deer Housing Authority’s subsidized housing have the lowest average annual income in the community at \$17,000. This average has decreased in recent years due to the economic turndown in 2015.

Figure: Housing Quality & Affordability (2016)

	#	%
Suitable	38,565	96.5
Not Suitable	1,415	3.5
Major Repairs Needed	1,785	4.5
Spending 30% or more of income on shelter costs	8,760	21.9
30% to less than 100%	7,735	19.3
Owners spending 30% or more	N/A	13.7
Tenants spending 30% or more	N/A	38.1
Tenant in subsidized housing	N/A	10.3

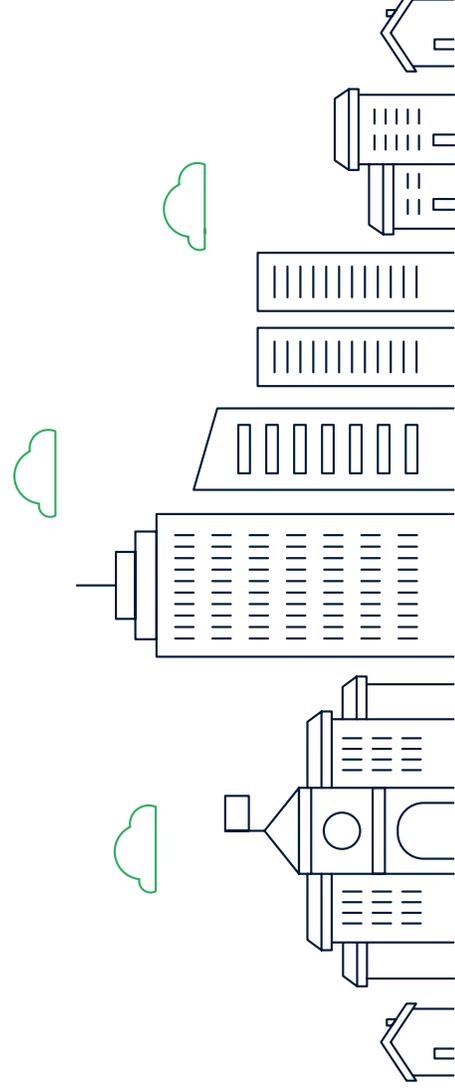
Source: Source: Statistics Canada, 2017a

Figure: Median Income to Median Shelter Costs

	2011			% ch from 2006			2016			% ch from 2011		
	Total	Rent	Own	Total	Rent	Own	Total	Rent	Own	Total	Rent	Own
Median HH Income BT (\$)	76,569	46,388	93,692	18	11.7	20.2	85,829	54,356	106,868	12.1	17.2	14.1
Median Yearly Shelter Costs (\$)	13,620	11,388	15,996	26	26.4	25	-	13,728	17,520	-	20.5	9.5

Source: Statistics Canada, 2017a

The overall rate of households in CHN in 2011 was 9.5-10.5% in Red Deer, but for renting households the rate was 23%, with a lack of affordability being the primary driver of CHN. Renter households with only one income-earner face significantly greater rates of CHN, with lone-parent females (48.7) and lone senior females (57%) and males (47.8%) having the highest rates. Rates of CHN are also notably higher among Indigenous and newcomer households.



Extreme Core Housing Need

We can look to Extreme Core Housing Need as a proxy for risk of homelessness. A household is in Extreme Core Housing Need when it is spending more than 50% of its annual income on shelter costs and is earning under \$20,000 per year. In 2016, 1,760 households were in Extreme Core Housing Need – 1,300 of which are renters. **It is estimated that 2,683 individuals are at-risk of homelessness in Red Deer.**

Figure: Extreme Core Housing Need Red Deer, 2016 (Total)

Under \$10,000	\$10,000–19,999	Total	Prevalence among hhs under \$20,000 (%)	Prevalence among all households (%)
720	1,040	1,760	69%	4.4%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2017a

Figure: Extreme Core Housing Need Red Deer, 2016 (Renters)

Under \$10,000	\$10,000–19,999	Total	Prevalence among hhs under \$20,000 (%)	Prevalence among all households (%)
720	1,040	1,760	69%	4.4%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2017a

Figure: At Risk of Homelessness Estimate

Renters in Core Housing Need	Households	Individuals
2+ Occupant	39,695	100.0
Owner	26,010	66
Total	5,660	14

Source: Statistics Canada, 2017a

Similarly, for the City of Red Deer, both families and individuals renting are more likely to spend 30% or more of their income on shelter costs compared to owners. However, individuals renting alone tend to experience more affordable housing issues as 64% of the one-person household renters are estimated to be spending over 30% of their income on shelter. Renters, as a result, and particularly one-person household renters, are more likely to be renters at-risk of experiencing homelessness than owners.

Key Points

- *Rate of Core Housing Need is higher than average.* 12% of all occupied private dwellings in Red Deer were identified as being in CHN following a similar trend in Alberta (11%) and Canada (12%).
- *Owners make almost twice as much as the average renting household.* The median household income of renters spending between 30% and 100% on shelter costs in 2016 was \$28,463, compared to \$47,765 for homeowners with unaffordable housing.
- *Many renter households are in unaffordable housing.* Renter households with only one income-earner face significantly greater rates of CHN, with lone-parent females (48.7) and lone senior females (57%) and males (47.8%) having the highest rates. Rates of CHN are also notably higher among Indigenous and newcomer households.
- *Renters are most at risk of homelessness.* It is estimated that 2,683 individuals are at-risk of homelessness in Red Deer.

Homelessness Trends

Shelter Utilization

Over the past decade, 2,792¹ people required emergency shelter and completed an intake form in Red Deer. Of these, 25% of these people identified as Indigenous, 22% were women, and 34% were new to the Red Deer².

Figure: Number Of Unique Shelter Intakes Per Year

Shelter Intakes/Year



The occupancy data for shelters suggests a smaller number of people stay longer in shelter versus the self-identified information captured on the intake forms. For example, the start and exit dates for clients are used to calculate the number of days people spend in shelter, and analysis indicates approximately 70% of clients spend less than 30 days, and 4% of clients spend more than 180 days (either consecutively or dispersed throughout the year). Yet, their response to “Are you chronic or episodic?” on the shelter intake form indicates higher levels of chronicity for the group (20%).

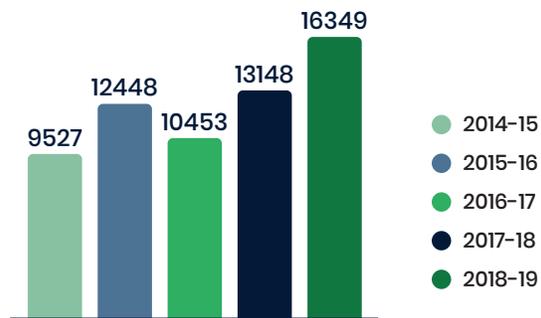
Figure: Number Of Days Based On Shelter Stay Dates Vs Client Self Identification Of Chronicity

¹ Completed a shelter intake
² Arrived within the last three months

More recently, the number of clients utilizing the Warming Centre increased by 6.7% (536 to 572) – a smaller increase than the previous of 11%. Frequency of use also increased in 2018/19 by 24%. The average number of clients per day in 2018/19 increased by 18 clients for an average of 91 clients/day. While overall utilizations were up, the progression of increase in usage over the winter and spring was typical.

Figure: Warming Centre Utilisation By Year

Warming Center Utilization by Year



The last year saw a 5% increase in females utilizing the Warming Centre. Ethnicity proportions utilizing the Warming Centre have mostly remained constant since November 2014. The age distribution of under 24 years is 13%, and the largest age representation is the 25-44 year group at 63%.

Homeless Point-in-Time Count

When we look in more depth at the trends shown by the 2018 Homeless Point-in-Time Count, a number of notable trends emerge around key populations are experiencing homelessness.

Indigenous Peoples

The legacy of the Residential School system, the Sixties Scoop, and ongoing colonization and racism perpetuate intergenerational trauma that continues to be experienced by Indigenous young people and their families to this day. In 2018, Indigenous peoples represented 44.3% of the total homeless population in Red Deer. – a steady increase compared to the 2014 and 2016 homeless counts where this population accounted for 24.2% and 40.7%, respectively. Red Deer’s percentage of Indigenous homeless population is 44%, lower than the provincial average (50%) (7 Cities, 2018).

An additional 17% of Indigenous households were in Core Housing Need in 2011. Meanwhile, Indigenous people make up just 5.3% of the population in Red Deer. Continued commitment to Truth and Reconciliation involves addressing factors that put Indigenous individuals, families, and communities at risk of disconnection from their land, culture, kin, and homes.

Figure: Point In Time Count Demographics

	Red Deer PiT Count 2012	Red Deer PiT Count 2014	Red Deer PiT Count 2016	Red Deer PiT Count 2018	National PiT Count 2018
Male	68%	75%	72%	69%	62%
Female	32%	25%	28%	31%	36%
LGBTQ2S+	-	-	5%	3.8%	11%
Dependent children under 15	1.9%	2%	0.8%	4.6%	13%*
Youth (15-24)	25.2%	13.3%	11.5%	12.5%	13%**
Seniors	0%	1%	4.9%	1.1%	3%
Indigenous	44.4%	24.2%	40.7%	44.3%	30%
Immigrants & Refugees	-	10.1%	2%	7%	14%
Veteran (Military/RCMP)	5.7%	6.1%	7%	1.2%	4.7%
TOTAL #	279	137	149	144	-

Source: Red Deer PiT Counts for 2012, 2014, 2016 and 2018; National PiT Count Highlights Report (2018)

* National data includes children under 13 as “Dependents”

** National data includes children 13 and over as “Unaccompanied Youth”

Women

The percentage of women experiencing homelessness has increased over the years going from 25% in 2014 and 28% in 2016, to 31% in 2018. Women are more likely to find alternative accommodations when living in abusive relationships or when they have dependent children. This causes their experiences of homelessness to be hidden from public view, sometimes because of couchsurfing or exchanging sex for a place to stay. Women who fall victim to gender-based or intimate partner violence are at-risk of homelessness, which is compounded if they leave an abusive partner or environment as the cost of living can be too high, particularly with children. Single-parent households led by women had the highest incidence of Core Housing Need in 2011, at a rate of 30.1% (900 households) overall, or 48.7% for women renting their homes.

Youth

Youth homelessness (15-24) was slightly less prevalent in Red Deer at 12.5% when compared to the results of 13% in the National PiT Count, though the age groupings of the data differ between the national and local breakdowns which could cause some discrepancies. When including young people under 15, youth make up 17% of the homeless population. The national data also examined the age of individuals when they had their first experience of homelessness. Overall, 50% of respondents across Canada had their first experience of homelessness before the age of 25, indicating life-long trajectories of housing instability that started in childhood, youth, or young adulthood.

Young people are also more likely to be among the hidden homeless population that is difficult to capture in a Point-in-Time count. This age group requires a youth development-oriented approach with regards to strategies to prevent them from entering homelessness or moving them out of homelessness quickly.

The first National Youth Homelessness Survey, *Without A Home* (Gaetz, O'Grady, Kidd, and Schwan, 2016), found that of more than 1,100 respondents, almost 30% of youth who experience homelessness nationwide, identified as LGBTQ2S+. Underreporting is possible if young people felt uncomfortable giving up that information. Regardless, this is a significant portion of the youth population experiencing homelessness that needs to be given special consideration.

Without A Home also found that 30% of youth experiencing homelessness in Canada were Indigenous. In 2016 it was reported that of the children in care under the age of 14 in Alberta, 71% were Indigenous (Edwards, 2018) Given the link that is established between child welfare involvement and homelessness, and the general over representation of Indigenous people experiencing homelessness, it is imperative to address the needs and uphold the rights of Indigenous children and youth.

Many youths' experiences of homelessness are linked to family conflict with a parent or guardian. This is different from domestic violence that would make living at home potentially unsafe for the young person. This points to a need for early intervention that can explore opportunities for family mediation in order to prevent homelessness. Shelter diversion and Family and Natural Support Programs, such as McMan's program that is a part of national demonstration project Making the Shift, are some avenues through which youth and their families can be supported to stay out of homelessness. The Roadmap for the Prevention of Youth Homelessness offers a range of prevention interventions and programs that could be explored.

Single Men

Homelessness among men can be the result of a number of factors, including job loss, inability to find affordable rental housing, struggles with mental health and addictions, and breakdowns in social and economic support systems. In the 2018 PiT Count, men made up 69% of the population that was experiencing homelessness in Red Deer. Being on a single income can also increase the risk of homelessness among men, particularly if they are seniors or have dependent children.

Newcomers

When looking at immigration and refugee status as a whole, homelessness among newcomers presents itself as being relatively low at 7% compared to 14.9% of people in the community who identify as newcomers. While the foreign-born population during the 2016 PiT count only accounted for 2% of those individuals experiencing homelessness in Red Deer, in 2018 this population constituted 7% of the homeless population.

The needs of newcomer populations are different from those who were born in Canada, and may include adjusting to a new language and culture or navigating new legal and service systems. Newcomers may also lack social capital when they arrive in Canada and can face discrimination when searching for jobs or housing.

Seniors

While seniors made up only 1.1% of the homeless population at a rate lower than the national average in 2018 PiT Count data, income, housing, and food security are of concern among those ages 65 and over. Seniors living independently experienced very high rates of Core Housing Need, particularly for women. Loss of income from employment, the death of a spouse, declining physical and mental health, and the lack of housing that is affordable on low-income or government assistance can put seniors at risk of homelessness. Loneliness and social isolation is a detriment to overall wellbeing and quality of life and is a common issue among seniors. Older persons who experience homelessness may suffer from chronic illness, loss of mobility, or may be in need of palliative/end-of-life care more frequently than other homeless persons.

Veterans

Veterans in the Canadian Armed Forces or the RCMP made up 1.2% of the homeless population in 2018. Veterans transitioning back to civilian life can be at greater risk of homelessness due to a number of factors, including the inability to secure a job with a living wage, lack of affordable housing options, traumatic brain injury, addictions, and PTSD or other mental health issues. Ongoing and accessible social and economic supports are necessary for veterans and their families in order to thrive in civilian life.

Causes of Homelessness

Homelessness is caused by an array of often layered and intersecting factors. The PiT Count surveys have changed over the years in the options available to people to identify the reasons for their most recent experience of housing loss. In 2016, the main reason people gave for their current experience of homelessness was having an illness or medical condition, while in 2018 addiction and substance use were the leading reasons cited. Conflict between people living together (whether parents/guardians, spouses/partners, roommates, etc.) are consistently listed among the top reasons for housing loss, along with job loss.

Increased support for people with addictions and substance use challenges, as Red Deer has felt the impacts of the opioid crisis and the overall trends within the homeless population, are indicating that people are presenting with more substantial needs than in previous years.

Figure: Housing Loss Reasons

Top Reasons for Housing Loss 2016	Self-reported Top Reasons for Housing Loss 2018
Illness/Medical Condition 18.8%	Addiction and Substance Use 12.5%
Domestic Abuse 11.9%	Conflict with Spouse/Partner 9.7%
Eviction 11.3%	Job Loss 9.0%
Left Care (Child & Family Services) 8.8%	Domestic Abuse 8.3%
Job Loss 8.1%	Mental Health or Illness 7.6%
Conflict with Roommate 8.1%	Unable to Pay Rent or Mortgage 7.6%

Source: Red Deer PiT Count 2016 and 2018

Additional Point In Time Count Findings

Stabilizing numbers.

The number of people counted as experiencing homelessness was 144, which is a small decrease of 3.4% from the 2016 count of 149 persons. Successful housing and support programs may have contributed to this stabilization, though there were also variations in the count methodology.

Increasing of addiction and substance use as leading cause for homelessness.

In 2018, addiction and substance use continued to be the most cited reason by respondents for homelessness. Compared to the 2016 results, the percentage of people citing this reason has increased going from 6.9% to 12.5% in 2018.

High proportion of chronic homelessness, but smaller than provincial average.

Among the homeless population counted, 55% of them were identified as chronic, 33% as transitional, and 12% as episodic. Due to a change in the definitions used to categorize homeless population in 2018, percentages are not comparable to previous counts. Red Deer's percentage of chronic homelessness (55%) is smaller than the proportion found in the provincial (62%) average.

More children.

Compared to previous PiT counts in the city, the proportion of children experiencing homelessness significantly increased from 0.8% in 2016 to 4.6%. A similar trend was followed by individuals aged 15 to 24 years (youth) and 45 to 64 years (older working age) experiencing an increase of 1% and 9%, respectively; yet people within the ages of 25 to 44 years (younger working age) continue to represent the largest proportion of individuals experiencing homelessness over the years (44.7% in 2018).

More staying at emergency shelters.

Eighty-six people (60%) were staying in an emergency shelter on the night of the count, which is an increase of 12% from the count in 2016. Eighty-two percent (82%) of the people included in the count reported using an emergency shelter in the past 12 months.

Fewer veterans counted.

Between 2016 and 2018, a significant decrease was found in the proportion of veterans amongst the homeless population in Red Deer. In particular, during the 2016 PiT count, 7% of the total homeless population identified as veteran; in 2018 only 1.2% identified as such.

Key Points

- *Key populations experience homelessness at disproportionate rates and the recent Pit Count reflects this.* Men, women, Indigenous people, youth, LGBTQ2S+, and immigrant population groups have each seen an increase in homelessness over time.
- *2018 Pit Count data shows a link with the drug crisis.* The top reason for housing loss was Addiction and Substance Use (12.5%), whereas this did not make the top 5 previously in 2016.
- *Emergency shelter use stabilizes, despite population growth.* New shelter intakes have remained steady at less than 300 annually over the past 3 years.
- *Majority of people used shelters for very short periods of time.* The occupancy data for shelters suggests a considerable proportion of people stay less than 30 days in shelter over the course of a year.
- *Warming centre use goes up and use is primarily by males.* While overall utilizations were up, the progression of increase in usage over the winter and spring was typical.

Community Safety & Wellbeing Trends

Some of the most urgent and recent social issues identified in the media, civil sector, and local government in Red Deer often relate to addiction and mental health, public safety and poverty, as well as the economic and housing needs referred to previously. Distinct figures enable us to picture the way that the ongoing opioid crisis Canada faces, shapes the current community safety and wellbeing panorama in Red Deer.

Social and Material Deprivation

The Canadian Deprivation Index (DI) was created using demographic data from the 2016 Canadian Census for each dissemination area (Institut National de Santé Publique du Québec, n.d.). The DI is a marker of social inequalities in health¹. It allows for monitoring of inequalities over time and space, and constitutes a useful tool for public health planning, intervention, and service delivery. Thus, its utility in developing a Homelessness and Housing Strategy is recognized.

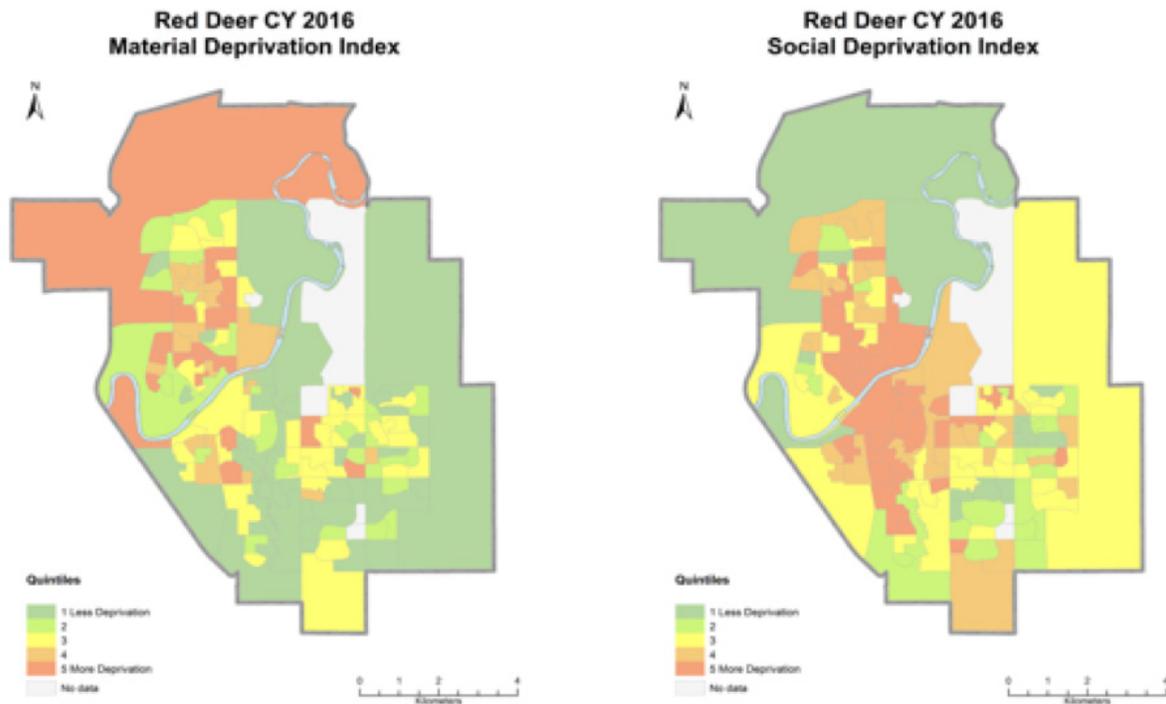
This version makes it possible to observe the deprivation variations in each geographic area and compare the areas based on their relative variations. In other words, to compare people within each geographic area, but not between geographic areas:

1. Material Deprivation Index – reflects the deprivation of goods and conveniences. This index includes the following indicators: average household income; unemployment rate; and high school education rate (Pampalon and Raymond, 2000).
2. Social Deprivation Index – reflects the deprivation of relationships among individuals in the family, the workplace, and the community. This index includes the following indicators: proportion of the population separated, divorced, or widowed; proportion of the population that lives alone; and proportion of the population that has moved in the past five years.

Mapping this data allows for identification of “pockets” of high deprivation (or lack of opportunity) that might otherwise be missed if looking at larger aggregates, such as Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) or Economic Regions. The utility of mapping this data enables targeting of anti-poverty initiatives, or allocating resources for poverty alleviation or homelessness prevention initiatives.

¹ Each index for a geographic area is the result of PCAs carried out in each region separately, and a distribution of deprivation values observed in each area in quintiles (each quintile representing 20% of the population), from the most privileged (Quintile 1) to the most deprived (Quintile 5).

Figure: Deprivation Indices By Census Tract



Poverty and deprivation remain an issue in Red Deer (City of Red Deer, 2018). It is estimated that almost 5,000 households in Red Deer experience food insecurity and approximately 3,300 children under 19 years live in a food insecure income household. Moreover, recent figures estimate that at least 15.4% of children aged five to 10 years in Red Deer live in low-income households, and that a family of four in Red Deer with both parents working full-time, making minimum wage of \$15 dollars per hour, spend more than 73% of their annual income on shelter, child care, food, and transportation. In addition to this scenario, over 40% of the potential work force in Red Deer work only part-time or part of the year in positions that likely do not include benefits. Similarly, adult literacy levels need improvement. Forty-four point six percent (44.6%) of all adults have reading skills that limit their abilities, and 15% are at the lowest literacy level.

Community Safety

Despite the overall decrease in the Crime Severity Index (Statistics Canada, 2019c) and the reduction in crime incidents overall (Statistics Canada, 2019d) between 2017 and 2018 in Red Deer, 2019 crime reports estimate that comparing the first six months of 2019 to the similar period in 2018, criminal code violations increased in the city by 20% mainly driven by the rise in property crime (26% increment) and particularly violations related to theft of motor vehicle, theft under \$5,000, mischief to property, break and enters, and disturbing the peace (City of Red Deer, 2019c). Of note, in 2018, the RCMP had 1580 calls for service in relation to Domestic Violence (Everything Grande Prairie, 2019).

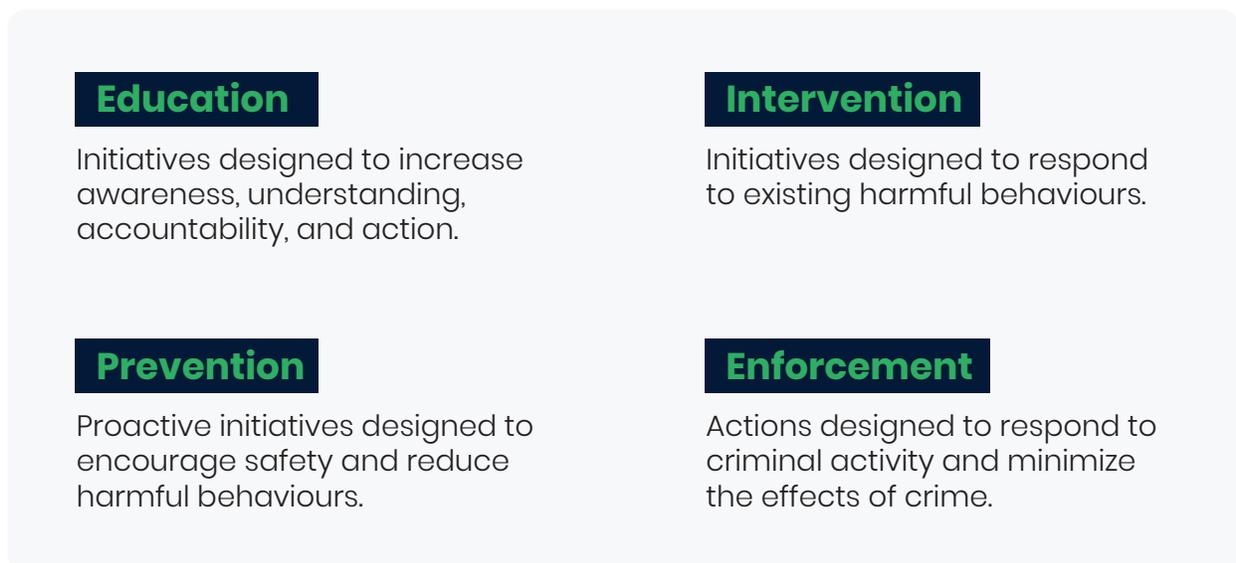
Red Deer's Community Safety Strategy (2016) notes that community safety goals and goals around housing are intertwined along with other social and economic components that impact community wellbeing (Refer to figures below). Lack of affordable housing and housing for those with complex needs were recognized as significant risk factors for crime, and putting people into desperate situations where they are vulnerable to involvement in or becoming victims of criminal activity that they otherwise would have avoided.

Providing access to safe, affordable housing options along with the support to maintain housing stability can help prevent and reduce crime by removing a risk factor that can lead to criminal activity. This is especially the case when housing promotes social connection within the community. Children and youth in particular need access to affordable, low-barrier, recreational programs and facilities that fulfill their need to develop positive identity and connect with peers in healthy ways.

Housing First is identified as a community asset that contributes to crime prevention and intervention. Rather than leaving people to live on the streets, in public parks, or in shelters – where they are vulnerable to becoming both victims and perpetrators of crime – people are quickly connected to appropriate housing and supports. These options need expansion, particularly Permanent Supportive Housing for those with complex ongoing needs.

The justice system's role in homelessness prevention is to ensure there are smooth transitions that will not only ensure that people exiting corrections are stably housed and do not end up homeless, but also ensure reducing recidivism and the likelihood that they will commit crimes in the future. Without a safe, affordable place to live, people may be driven back into the environment, relationships, and other factors that led to criminal activity in the first place.

Figure: Community Safety Strategy Focus Areas



Community Safety Plan Strategic Directions

- Lead the way
- Form a collaborative to most effectively and efficiently deal with community safety issues
- Identify and address the root causes of community safety concerns, including identifying local risk factors
- Focus on the personal investment and social connection components of community safety
- Focus on Downtown

Social Inclusion & Social Capital

The World Health Organization (2019) defines social exclusion as, “the exclusion of particular groups of people from engaging fully in community/social life”, which can lead to unequal access to resources, capabilities, and rights, and ultimately have negative impacts on individual health and wellbeing.

People who experience poverty, housing instability, and homelessness face different forms of social exclusion, connected to the stigma and fear that isolates them from fully participating in the community. It can be difficult for people who are entrenched in homelessness to move into housing, leaving behind the social connections that may have been formed while living on the streets or in shelters. Loneliness and isolation can make people struggle to remain housed for the long-term.

Similarly, social capital is measured through the strength, breadth, and depth of a person’s networks with other people or groups. People who are on the margins of society, including those experiencing poverty and homelessness, may not have strong or expansive networks because of fewer opportunities to build their social capital. Having fewer or weaker connections not only impacts a person or family’s ability to receive support to navigate through the ebbs and flows of life, but can also limit the opportunities available to them for social mobility. For example, someone who lacks social capital may not have social connections that are critical for opening up employment opportunities¹.

Programs and services that promote social inclusion and social capital put the person at the centre and are designed with the flexibility to meet the current and evolving needs of the individual or family. When creating new housing options and housing

¹ See Bassa Social Innovations (2019) for more perspectives on developing social capital in the community.

programs or services, consideration should be given to how spaces and programs will promote social inclusion and social capital. This includes considerations around the built-environment's ability to promote social interaction as well as providing opportunities to connect with people based on common interests, skills development, or shared experiences.

Program Spotlight - Social Inclusion

Red Deer has some existing community initiatives that are helping to create a sense of community belonging and connection. In 2015, the community established its Welcoming and Inclusive Communities Network to address racism and discrimination in Red Deer with the vision of creating a diverse and inclusive community where everyone feels safe and can fully participate in community life. Priority areas of focus and action include improving programs and services for Indigenous people and people with complex needs as well as building capacity of service providers, employers, and others to address discrimination.

Great Neighbours is an initiative that receives Family and Community Support Services funds to connect neighbours on rural and urban blocks. The program builds up natural supports in the community by reducing the barriers to getting to know people in the neighbourhood. Grants for community events are available, and Block Connectors are recruited to promote informal opportunities for connection. Initiatives like these can bridge the gaps between marginalized people and the broader community to build up their sense of belonging and social capital.

Physical and Mental Health & Addictions Services

Housing affordability, safety, and stability impact individual and family physical and mental health. When housing is unaffordable, or when an individual is experiencing homelessness, people may go without the dental and vision care, prescription drugs they need, or counselling services. Low-paying jobs may not provide benefits or, if they do, the benefits may not provide sufficient coverage. Those on low-income experiencing health difficulties also may not be able to afford to miss work to see a health professional. Opportunities for prevention and early intervention in health issues can be missed, and health conditions worsen. Intervention and/or treatment of a health crisis is often more costly, takes longer, and can be complex.

High costs of housing can also put undue strain on families with children, and the stress of not knowing whether one can afford rent can impact one's physical and mental health. Individuals and families are less able to afford healthy, nutritious food,

memberships in gyms or fitness programs, and other health promotion activities that can lead to long-term positive health outcomes. Family breakdown and violence may also be triggered by financial stress. Communities need strong early intervention strategies to support people in times of physical and mental health crisis. The Police and Crisis Team (P.A.C.T.) is an example of a program that assists people in crisis to access the mental health and support services they need.

Mental health and addictions challenges can be both a cause and an effect of homelessness. If a person does not have a mental health challenge or addiction when they become homeless, they are far more likely to develop one while living precariously on the streets or in shelters where they may experience trauma, violence, victimization, and hopelessness. It is therefore critical that prevention and early interventions help divert people from homelessness into housing and create a housing plan with options for people to rapidly move them out of homelessness.

In the event that an individual or family loses their housing and are living precariously or on the street, they will need timely access to mental and physical health services. An example of a program that offers these services is the Street Clinic, which operates in downtown Red Deer on weekdays from 9:00 a.m. – noon and 1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m., with a Mental Health Drop-In from 1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. on Wednesdays.

Red Deer has been hit particularly hard by the opioid crisis and has the highest rate of opioid poisoning Emergency Department (ED) visits, the second-largest rate of opioid hospitalizations, the second-largest rate of Emergency Medical Responses (EMS), and leads the accidental non-fentanyl, opioid-related poisoning death rates in Alberta. In 2018, fentanyl-related deaths more than doubled to 47 people from 23 in the previous year (Zielinski, 2019a). Of note, between January 1, 2015 and December 31, 2018, 1,703 (or 4%) of the total emergency visits related to harm associated with opioid and other drug-use in the province were registered at the Red Deer Regional Hospital, ranking sixth in the top 10 of facilities in Alberta with the highest emergency visits related to such harm (Alberta Health, 2019). With respect to Red Deer, it is placed second after Lethbridge (491) in the rate per 100,000 people of such responses in Alberta with 216.

Red Deer's Drug & Alcohol Strategy Report outlines community priorities and opportunities across the categories of prevention, treatment, Harm Reduction, and community safety (See figure below). A number of the recommendations are related to improved housing options, systems integration, and transition planning between programs, facilities, and institutions. This mirrors the needs identified in community consultations for the CHHIP.

Red Deer has one temporary overdose prevention site, Turning Point, which has seen over 21,000 visitors since opening in October of 2018, including roughly 200 unique users per month. Between October 2018 and May 2019, Turning Point has been able to reverse 481 overdoses and avert 437 ambulance calls (Gillard, 2019). A permanent location would allow Turning Point to offer a more fulsome range of services beyond needle

exchange and supervised injection, filling a much-needed gap for the community as it struggles to keep the opioid crisis under control.

Business community perceptions of safety in the downtown have been impacted by the presence of support services. The business community has expressed concern about the impacts that having services clustered in the downtown area have had on customer and staff movement throughout the city and willingness to work and shop downtown. Working with the business community will be critical to finding options that promote health, safety and wellbeing for all Red Deerians.

Key Points

- *Decreasing Crime Severity Index while non-violent crime increases.* Providing access to safe, affordable housing options along with the support to maintain housing stability can help prevent and reduce crime by removing a risk factor that can lead to criminal activity.
- *Alarming provincial rates in opioid-related harm, ED visits, EMS responses, and hospitalizations per 100,000 population.* Red Deer has been hit particularly hard by the opioid crisis and fentanyl with the highest rates of fentanyl-related deaths in the province.
- *Food insecurity, low-income, and adult literacy are significant factors of poverty.* Investing in early childhood and providing food security and the tools for a better education are key elements to break the cycle of poverty for vulnerable children.
- *Northern and central suburbs within Red Deer have pockets of high deprivation.* Knowing which areas to target will help with prioritizing prevention and intervention initiatives.
- *Mental health and addictions challenges can be both a cause and an effect of homelessness.* Mental illness can impair a person's ability to be resilient and resourceful; it can cloud thinking and impair judgment, and leave people at greater risk of experiencing homelessness. In turn, the stress of experiencing homelessness may exacerbate previous mental illness and encourage anxiety, fear, depression, sleeplessness, and substance use.
- *People who experience poverty, housing instability, and homelessness face different forms of social exclusion, connected to the stigma and fear that isolates them from fully participating in the community.* Red Deer has several programs that promote social inclusion and social capital and individuals can access resources and institutions to their benefit.

CURRENT APPROACH

Building on a Comprehensive Social Safety Net

Systems Mapping

System mapping is an essential step in rolling out a systems planning approach to preventing and ending homelessness. System mapping involves a series of activities that achieves a comprehensive view of a community's resources connected to homelessness. Specifically, system mapping includes:

- An up-to-date resource directory for all services available to people at risk of or experiencing homelessness in a community;
- Mapping of the locations of the various community resources to discern location patterns;
- Categorization of all programs by target population, eligibility criteria, geographical scope, service model, and focus;
- Real-time occupancy report to show what spaces are available in services;
- Clear eligibility criteria, access/referral process for those looking for help/support;
- Feedback loop from clients/users of services to each of the resources; and
- Performance indicators to track community demand and feedback on services.

In 2018, the Community Safety Systems Leadership Team initiated a social asset mapping exercise, which produced an initial snapshot for Red Deer. In 2019, as a part of a national pilot, the City of Red Deer was able to digitize its systems mapping efforts in partnership with HelpSeeker to fully analyze the local social safety net of health and social programs in real-time online. While the process of systems mapping is ongoing, to date more than 800 programs have been catalogued and are now available to Red Deerians on the HelpSeeker.org site.

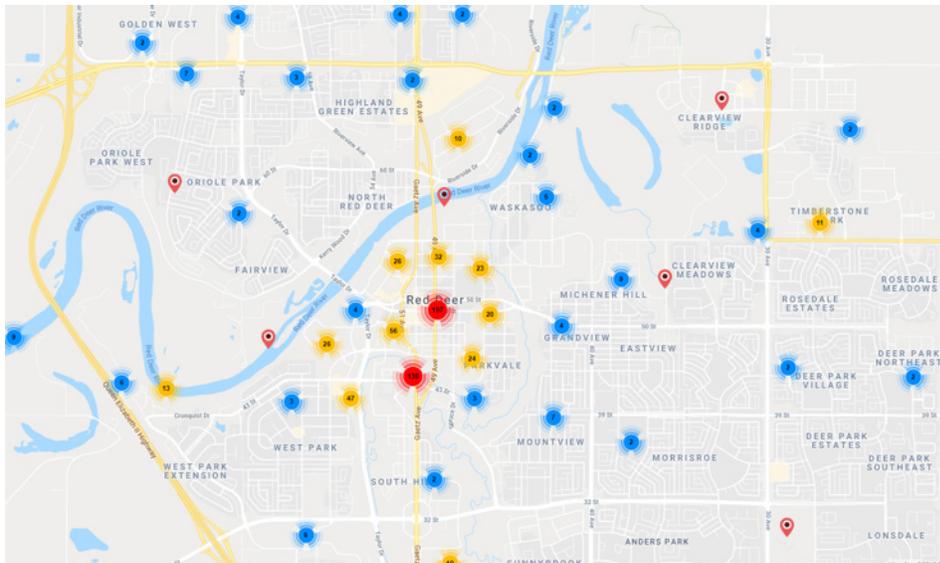
The insights from this effort are of note: we learned that Red Deer has a vast and diverse network of supports in place that can be leveraged to support the Plan's priority actions. This will allow us to build a better and integrated response without duplicating what is already in place. It will also allow us to respond to the person's diverse needs, beyond housing, and tackle the root causes that contributed to their instability in the first place.

Red Deer Systems Map

Currently, HelpSeeker has been able to map over 830 service listings across Red Deer in a variety of areas such as education and training, mental health, addictions, housing, shelter, employment, safety, and recreation among others.

The following image shows the spatial distribution of the total number of organizations mapped in HelpSeeker for Red Deer. Of note is the number of organizations concentrated in the downtown area versus those located in the outskirts of the city.

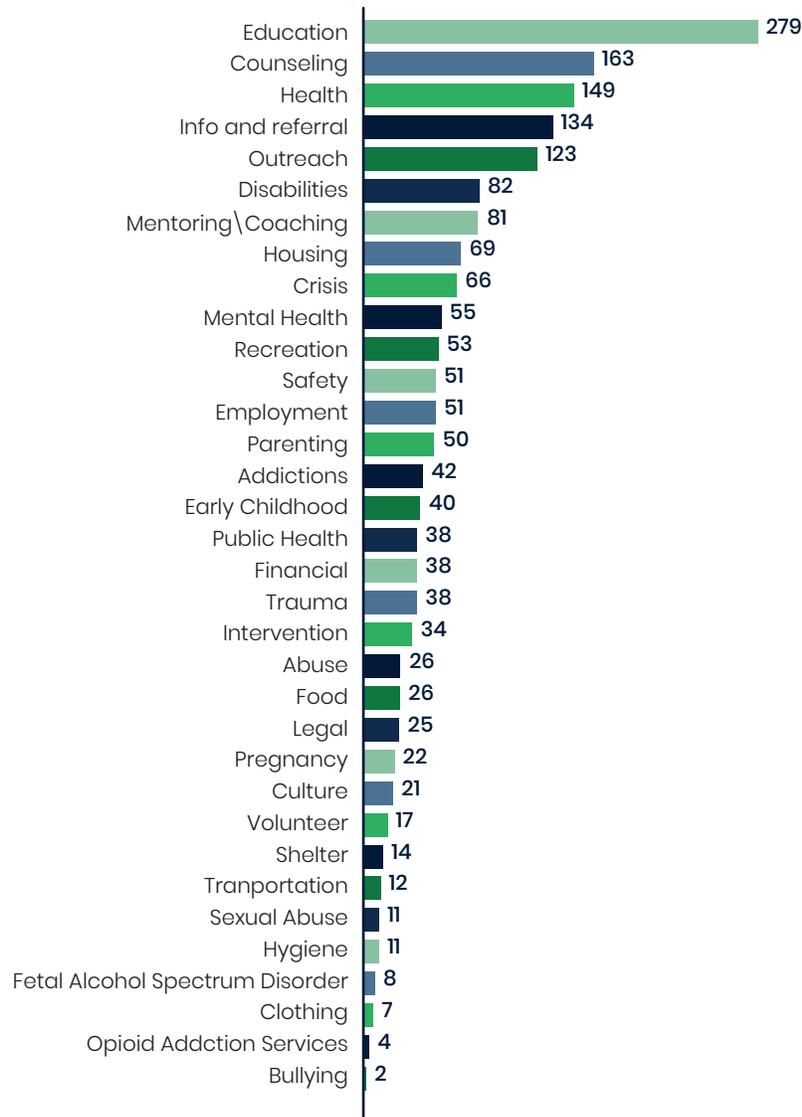
Figure: Distribution Of Organisations Providing Support In Red Deer



According to HelpSeeker data organized by service needs, the categories with the most programs available in Red Deer are education and training (279), followed by counselling (163) and health (149). In particular, such services are offered in 65 different locations in the city. In contrast, few programs are available in the city for individuals looking for clothing (7), bullying (2), or opioid addiction services (4).

Figure: Number Of Programs By Service Needs

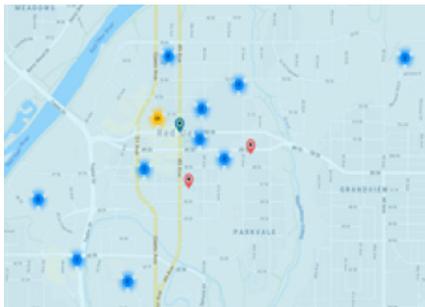
HelpSeeker – Number of programs by service needs, Red Deer as of August 2019



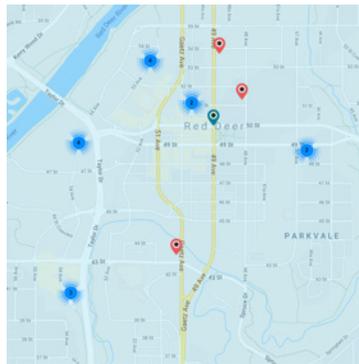
Using the geolocation feature offered by HelpSeeker, it is possible to see the distribution of organizations by service in the city. In particular, as can be seen in the following images, while locations for mental health services are mostly located around the downtown area and the southwest area of the city, with two locations in the northeast, shelter and addiction services are mainly concentrated out of the downtown area with few locations in the southwest, and three more locations in the north for people dealing with addiction issues. Areas such as the southwest and northwest only have a small number of locations available for mental health, shelter, or addiction services.

Figure: Concentration Of Organizations By Priority Service

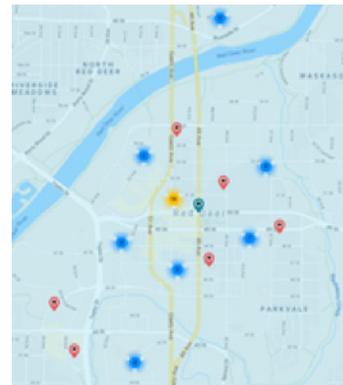
Mental Health



Shelter



Addiction



Social Impact Audit

The HelpSeeker platform also supports systems leaders with Social Impact Audits to better understand real-time service duplication or gaps, user trends, feedback, demand, and sources of funding that exist in their community. With these analytics, communities can develop an agile, data-driven approach to integrated systems planning.

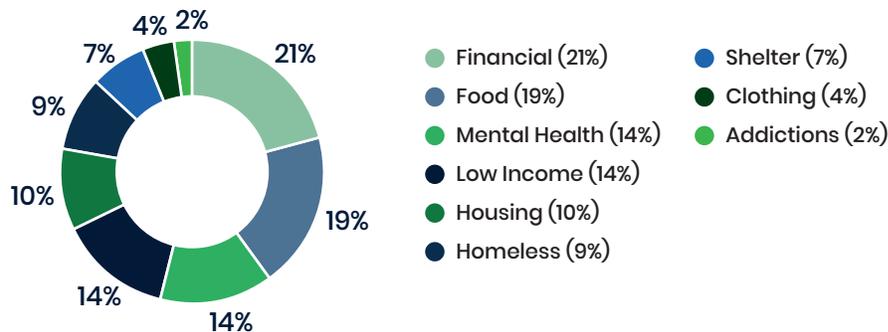
The preliminary Social Impact Audit of the Red Deer social safety net included a financial analysis of current homelessness, mental health, and addictions investments at the program-delivery (client) level to assess the best use of resources provincially to reinforce effective programs, and pinpoint underutilized/redundant programs.

Charity Financial Analysis

Using HelpSeeker information and financial information provided by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), it is estimated that charities in the city received \$512 million in 2017. About 62% (\$319 million) of the total revenue came from the provincial government and 32% (\$165 million) from donations and other sources. Moreover, while the municipal government's total contributions accounted for 4% (\$20.7 million) and the total federal contributions to charities in Red Deer was estimated to be only 1% (\$7.3 million) of the total revenue.

Figure: Red Deer Charities – Distribution Of Revenue By Sources

HelpSeeker – Percentage of homelessness related services by programs in Red Deer, as of August 2019



Homelessness Supports

In 2009, Red Deer began implementing Everyone’s Home – Red Deer’s Vision and Framework on Ending Homelessness by 2018 (Red Deer & District Community Foundation, 2014). This ambitious plan set the goal of dramatically reducing the number of people experiencing homelessness using the Housing First approach. Housing First basically sets out the philosophy that everyone has a right to and deserves a home, thus we should not expect people to prove being housing-ready. The approach also calls for wrap-around supports to ensure once housed, people are supported on their journeys toward stability and well-being. Everyone’s Home also called for measures to prevent or divert vulnerable persons from becoming homeless in the first place as well.

Of note, mid-way through the Plan in the summer of 2015, the price of oil crashed and the unemployment rate in Red Deer doubled to 8%. In 2016, the escalating opioid crisis killed over 2,000 people across Canada with Red Deer having the highest OD rate in Alberta (Alberta Health, 2018). Amidst this challenging landscape, Red Deer’s homeless serving system has achieved a number of successes including:

- We Care social marketing campaign to raise public awareness about the causes and impacts of homelessness;
- Everyone’s Home Leadership Model involving community stakeholders collaborating and pooling resources;
- Creation of an integrated service model to enhance coordination of support;
- Rollout of Housing First programs to house over 1,000 people;
- Implementation of the Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) data management system to connect services;

- Annual accountability reports to ensure progress accountability to the public; and
- Creation of Red Deer’s Coordinated Access to increase efficiency and ease of access to homelessness programs.

City Investment in Responses

The City of Red Deer provides system planning support to the homeless-serving system and oversees flow-through grants from the provincial and federal governments to local providers. In 2018/19, these grants totaled about \$4.6 million; a further \$3.9M/year is invested in Central Alberta in prevention services using FCSS funds flowed from the province and matched 80/20 by The City and its regional partners. Smaller amounts from the City and Alberta Health also come into the pool of funds directed to encampment cleanup and needle pickups respectively.

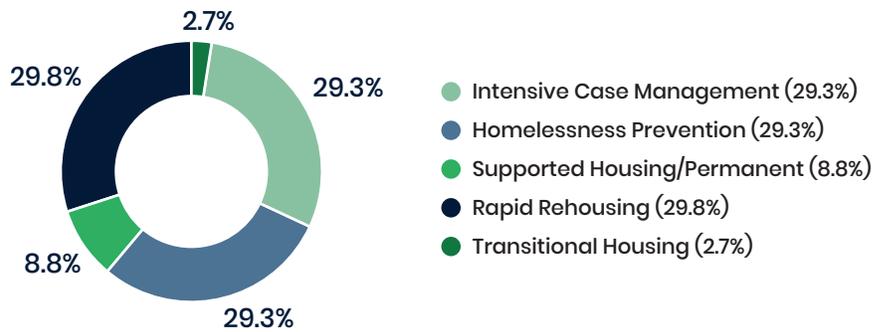
Figure: Homelessness Services And Prevention Funding

Homelessness Funded Service Providers (\$4.6M/yr)	Prevention Funded Service Providers (\$3.9M/yr)
Bredin Centre for Learning	Benalto Playschool Society
Canadian Mental Health Association	Delburne Playschool Society
Central Alberta Women’s Outreach Society	Elnora Playschool Society
McMan Central	Spruce View Rural Child Care Society
Red Deer Native Friendship Society	Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Red Deer and District
Safe Harbour Society	Boys and Girls Club of Red Deer and District
	Central Alberta Refugee Effort (CARE)
	Chinook’s Edge School Division No 73
	Circle of Red Deer Seniors Society
	Red Deer Family Services Bureau
	Red Deer Meals on Wheels
	Red Deer Public School District
	Shalom Counselling Centre of Alberta
	Town of Penhold
	Vantage Community Services Society
	Village of Elnora
	Red Deer County
	Town of Bowden
	Village of Delburne
	Village of Elnora
	Town of Penhold
	City of Red Deer
	Red Deer County
	Regional Projects
	Great Neighbours
	Aboriginal Stream (Indigenous Initiative)

The City invests in a number of programs to support those at risk of or experiencing homelessness. About 443 program spaces are supported through Reaching Home and OSSI funding. Additional supports (cultural supports, furniture, etc.) as well as coordinated access and assessments are also funded, though these services do not directly house clients.

Figure: Homelessness Program Spaces

Homelessness Program Spaces (n=443)



The table below describes the City's investments in homelessness interventions further.

Program Type	Organization	Program	Overview	Spaces
Homelessness Prevention	Bredin Centre for Learning	PATH Program	Target population is individuals and families at risk of homelessness or recently homeless for the first time. Provides Housing Loss Prevention and Housing Placement activities. Client Support is limited and includes emergency housing funding such as utility deposits, security deposits, one-time rent arrears assistance and move-in costs. Duration is 3 to 6 months. This program serves 90 clients/year.	90
	Red Deer Native Friendship Society	Homelessness Prevention Program (Aboriginal)	Target population is individuals and families at risk of homelessness or recently homeless for the first time. Provides Housing Loss Prevention and Housing Placement activities including Aboriginal cultural support. Client Support is limited and includes emergency housing funding such as utility deposits, security deposits, one-time rent arrears assistance and move-in costs. Duration is 3 to 6 months. This program serves 40 clients/year.	40
Rapid Rehousing	Central Alberta Women's Outreach Society	Red Deer Housing Team (HPS Housing First)	Connect clients to permanent housing and provide support services through case management. Includes limited financial assistance for those who have been homeless for 3 to 6 months and/or have experienced two or more episodes of homelessness over a year. This is a scattered site model which involves supporting clients in obtaining appropriate housing units in the community. Target population is moderate acuity clients with a SPDAT score of 20-34. Duration is 6-12 months. This program serves 25-35 clients/year.	35
	Red Deer Native Friendship Society	HPS Housing First – Aboriginal	Connect clients to permanent housing and provide support services through case management. Includes Aboriginal cultural support and limited financial assistance for those who have been homeless for 3 to 6 months and/or have experienced two or more episodes of homelessness over a year. This is a scattered site model which involves supporting clients in obtaining appropriate housing units in the community. Target population is moderate acuity clients with a SPDAT score of 20-34. Duration is 6-12 months. This program serves 2 clients/year.	2

Program Type	Organization	Program	Overview	Spaces
Coordinated Access	Central Alberta Women's Outreach Society	Coordinated Access Process (CAP)	A process of matching individuals and families experiencing chronic and episodic homeless to a housing first program that meets their needs. Individuals are prioritized for service based on history of homelessness and acuity with a focus on long-term shelter stayers and/or rough sleepers.	N/A
	Safe Harbour Society	Coordinated Entry	Coordinated intake and assessment for all individuals experiencing homelessness including adults, families and youth. Includes diversion; assertive outreach and engagement; standardized assessment and intake; mobile outreach to shelters, systems and assertive street outreach.	N/A
Rapid Rehousing	Central Alberta Women's Outreach Society	Red Deer Housing Team (Rapid Rehousing)	Provides targeted, time-limited financial assistance and support services for those experiencing episodic homelessness in order to help them quickly exit homelessness. This is a scattered site model which involves supporting clients in obtaining appropriate housing units in the community with case management. Duration is 6 to 12 months. Target population is moderate acuity clients with a SPDAT score of 20-34. This program serves 90 clients/year.	90
	Safe Harbour Society	Supported Housing	Provides housing and support services for individuals experiencing episodic homelessness. This is a place-based model where clients are housed in a location with other tenants an off-site case management support is provided. Target population is moderate acuity clients with a SPDAT score of 20-40. Sobriety is a condition of participating in the program. This program serves 5 clients/ year.	5

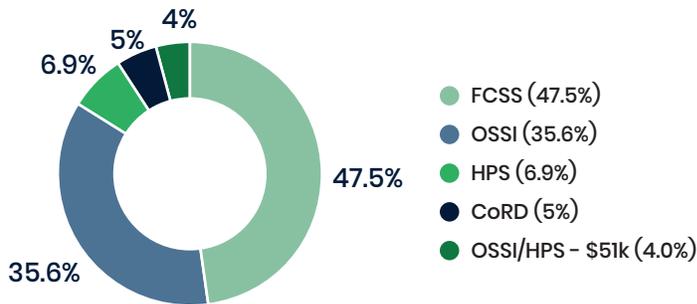
Program Type	Organization	Program	Overview	Spaces
	Canadian Mental Health Association	HomeLinks Intensive Case Management	Provides longer-term intensive case management and housing support to individuals and families experiencing chronic homelessness. This is a scattered site model which involves supporting clients in obtaining appropriate housing units in the community. Duration is 12 to 18 months. Target population is high acuity clients with a SPDAT score of 35-60. This program serves 100 clients/year.	100
Intensive Case Management	Red Deer Native Friendship Society	Pimâcihowin Aboriginal Intensive Case Management	Provides longer-term intensive case management and housing support to individuals and families experiencing chronic homelessness. Rooted in Aboriginal culture this program has a strong emphasis on connecting clients with ceremony, traditional practice, community and cultural activities in support of their healing journey and housing stability. This is a scattered site model which involves supporting clients in obtaining appropriate housing units in the community. Duration is 12 to 18 months. Target population is high acuity clients with a SPDAT score of 35-60. This program serves 30 clients/year.	30
Permanent Supportive Housing	Canadian Mental Health Association	The Buffalo Housing First Community	Provides long term housing and support to individuals who are homeless and experiencing complex mental health, addiction and physical health barriers. This is a place-based model where clients are housed in a location with other tenants and 24 hour support is provided on site. Target population is high acuity clients with a SPDAT score of 45-60. There are 39 units at the Buffalo. This program serves 39 clients/year.	39
Transitional Housing	McMan Central	Arcadia Housing	Provides case management and housing support for youth aged 16-24 experiencing homelessness. Target population is high acuity youth with a SPDAT score of 20-60. This program serves 12 clients/year. Two types of housing models: (1) Place-based model where clients are housed in a transitional house with other youth. A house mentor lives on site to provide good neighbor/good roommate skills. There are 4 units available. (2) Scattered site housing which involves supporting youth in obtaining appropriate housing units in the community.	12

Program Type	Organization	Program	Overview	Spaces
Support Services	Red Deer Native Friendship Society	Cultural Connections	Provides Indigenous cultural support to individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness and accessing programs in Red Deer's System Framework for Housing & Support. This program provides opportunities for cultural learning through group sessions and facilitates access to Elder support and ceremonies. The program also provides Aboriginal Awareness sessions to program staff.	N/A
	Central Alberta Women's Outreach Society	Shoestring Depot	Provides affordable furniture and household items to individuals and families transitioning out of homelessness and into permanent housing. The program also provides coordination of move-in and move-outs, extra cleaning when necessary, and small repairs for damages caused by clients to their homes.	N/A
	Central Alberta Women's Outreach Society	Landlord Engagement Services	Recruit landlords to provide suitable and affordable housing units for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. This includes strengthening existing relationships with landlords and developing new collaborations with property owners, residential property managers and property management firms.	N/A
	Red Deer Native Friendship Society	Landlord Engagement Services	Recruit landlords to provide suitable and affordable housing units for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. This includes strengthening existing relationships with landlords and developing new collaborations with property owners, residential property managers and property management firms.	N/A
	Canadian Mental Health Association	Landlord Engagement Services	Recruit landlords to provide suitable and affordable housing units for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. This includes strengthening existing relationships with landlords and developing new collaborations with property owners, residential property managers and property management firms.	N/A
	Safe Harbour Society	Coordinated Entry	Coordinated intake and assessment for all individuals experiencing homelessness including adults, families and youth. Includes diversion; assertive outreach and engagement; standardized assessment and intake; mobile outreach to shelters, systems and assertive street outreach.	N/A

When we account for the total pool of funding the City provides oversight for, we see 83% of the total amount of funding coming from one specific agency (FCSS, 48%) and one particular program (OSSI, 36%). Only a small amount comes from the CoRD (5%) program and Alberta Health (1%).

Figure: Federal and Provincial Funding

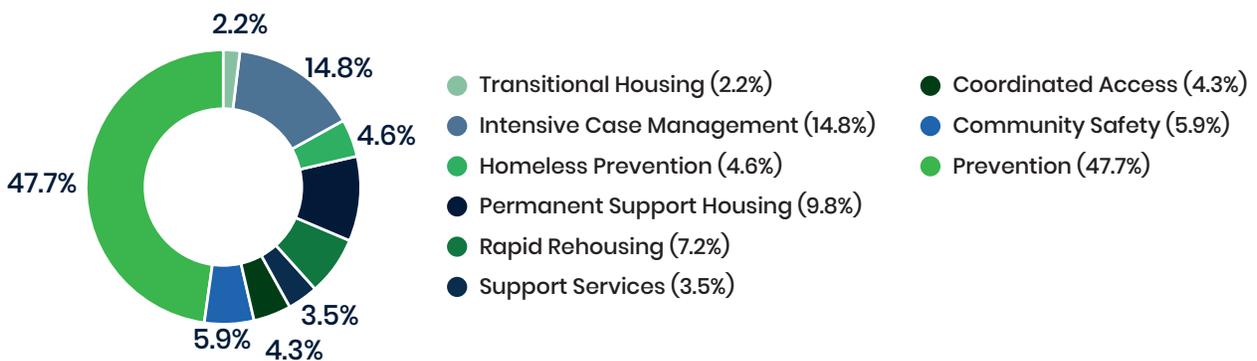
Federal and provincial funding Red Deer oversights by program and agency 2018/19



Looking at this funding by program, we find a considerable amount dedicated to prevention (47.7%) via FCSS mandate with the balance primarily going to homelessness supports. Homelessness diversion and prevention programs and services are available to those who are at-risk of experiencing or newly homeless. A number initiatives are funded through Red Deer’s Family and Community Supports Services funding to enhance child, youth, family, and community wellbeing. Almost \$4.2 million was spent on various initiatives through the provincial cost-sharing program in 2019. The programs funded through FCSS cost-sharing range from infant, child, and youth programming that promotes positive development, to family counselling, to community and school liaisons and workers, and community-building initiatives.

Figure: Funding By Program Type

Funding By Program Type



Emergency Shelters

There are four emergency shelters in Red Deer that cater to populations with different needs funded by primarily by the Government of Alberta directly. The chart below (see p.106) compares each shelter's occupancy during each of Red Deer's PIT Counts.

Figure: Emergency Shelter Occupancy and Capacity 2012-2018

Emergency Shelter Facility Name	Classification of Shelter	2012		2014		2016		2018	
		Capacity	Occupancy	Capacity	Occupancy	Capacity	Occupancy	Capacity	Occupancy
People's place	Adult Dry Shelter	23	23	35	36	35	31	46	32
Mat Program	Adult Wet Shelter	20	25	26	23	26	14	26	23
49th Street Youth Shelter	Youth Shelter	8	4	8	6	8	7	12	1
Central Alberta Women's Emergency Shelter	Violence Against Women Shelter	36	26	40	27	40	25	40	30
Totals		107	93	129	104	129	77	124	86

In March of 2019, the province announced that it would provide \$7 million for a new 120-bed, 24-hour emergency shelter to fill the gap that will be left when funding for the 24-hour Warming Centre and overnight Mat Program in September 2019. It is hoped that the new shelter will curb the 60-80 rough sleeper camps within Red Deer's park system. The shelter is projected to open some time in 2020 (Grant, 2019). In the wake of a change in provincial leadership, Red Deer is currently (as of September 2019) awaiting confirmation of funding for this project from the province.

Coordinated Entry & Coordinated Access

Red Deer has had Coordinated Entry and a Coordinated Access Process (CAP) in place since 2015 to match individuals and families to Housing First supports. When an individual or family in Red Deer experiences homelessness, they can go through the Coordinated Entry process run through Safe Harbour Society. Safe Harbour facilitates Coordinated Entry onsite as well as through outreach services that circulate at common service points in the city. From there, clients are triaged using the SPDAT tool that examines acuity and chronicity. Those that meet the eligibility requirements for Housing First programs are referred to the Coordinated Access Process to be matched during weekly meetings, which are led by Central Alberta Women's Outreach Society. Between 2016 and 2018, 945 people have been housed and received support through the CAP.

Within the last year, Red Deer has seen an overall increase in the acuity or severity of clients' presenting issues when they reach Coordinated Entry. This means there is a greater depth and complexity of needs that must be addressed to improve the long-term housing outcomes for people experiencing homelessness in Red Deer.

Figure: Coordinated Entry and Access Data

	2016/17	2017/18
Entering and Exiting the Homeless-Serving System (# of people)		
Coordinated Entry: intake & assessment	523	486
Coordinated Access: eligible for Housing First Programs	415	410
Housed & receiving supports	436	509
Of those matched to housing and supports through Coordinated Access...		
Young People (17-25)	7.5%	9.5%
Adults (26-55)	74.9%	74.3%
Older Adults (56+)	18.1%	15.5%
Caucasian	65.9%	62.9%
Indigenous	29.5%	32.5%
Other	4.5%	4.6%
Female	33.3%	34.6%
Transgender/Transsexual	1.5%	1.1%
Male	65.2%	64.3%

An assessment of the Coordinated Entry and CAP was conducted by OrgCode and released in December 2018 (OrgCode, 2018), which identified some of the ongoing challenges with the existing Coordinated Entry and CAP. In particular, the report found that Indigenous people, families, and youth were reluctant to go to Safe Harbour to participate in Coordinated Entry. Recommendations were made for how to improve leadership and governance, and access to the Coordinated Entry process with dedicated entry points. Other recommendations focused on the CAP to improve the transparency of the prioritization process, and clarify and expand the tasks completed by the CAP team.

Participation in Built for Zero Canada

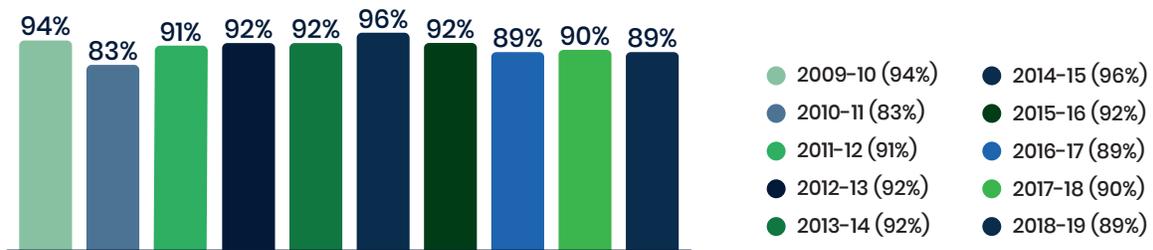
In 2018, Red Deer joined the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness’s initiative, Built for Zero Canada (BFZ-C), previously the 20,000 Homes Campaign. Building on the model started in the United States, BFZ-C works with communities across Canada one-on-one and as a group to help them establish and continuously improve the quality of their By-Name Priority Lists, data on chronic homelessness, and CAP, with the goal of ending chronic homelessness. Red Deer operates a by-name list of each individual experiencing homelessness to better keep track of those that are becoming homeless and exiting homelessness in their community, and to help prioritize individuals and families for Housing First program placements.

Homeless Service Performance

When examined over time, the City’s funded homelessness portfolio housed 1,355 people from April 1, 2009 – June 30, 2019. Of these, 513 have graduated, and 396 have exited the program for various reasons.

Figure: Housing First Retention Rates

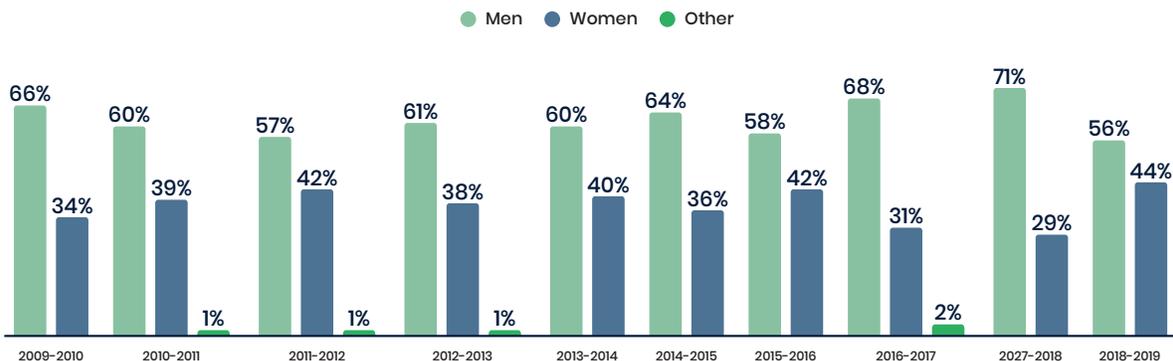
OSSI Housing First Programs – Yearly Retention Rate



Housing retention average is 90.9%, and the average caseload over time is 438.

Figure: Gender In Housing First Programs

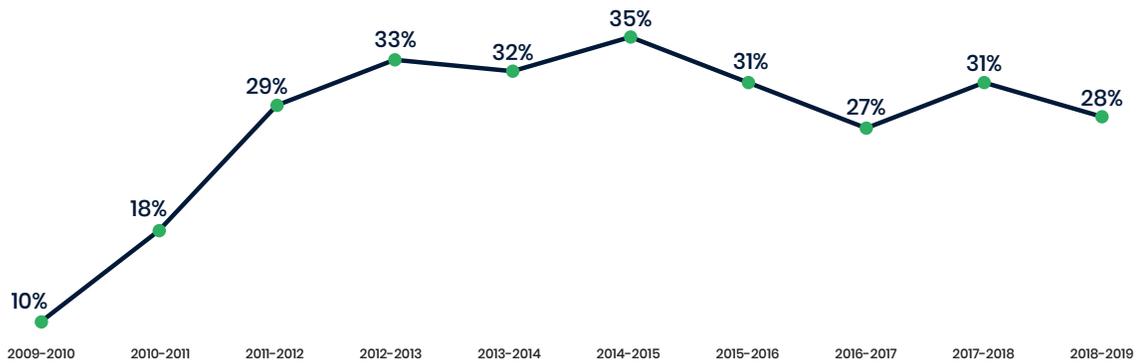
Gender in HF Programs



Demographic information for the clients entering the program include gender: men (62.1%), women (37.4%), other (0.4%); 13.9% are children and youth, 13.1% are families; 40.7% state Chronic homelessness; and 41% are Indigenous.

Figure: Indigenous People In Housing First Programs

Indigenous People in HF Programs

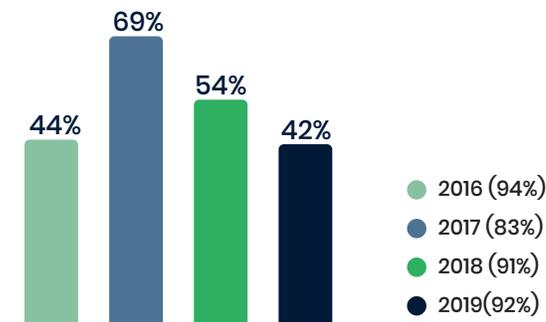


In terms of their health, clients report Mental Health Issues (59.7%) and Substance Abuse Issues (57.9%); and many report receiving government transfers, with 62.8% having Alberta Works as their main income source.

The Coordinated Access Process (CAP) is a method of matching individuals and families experiencing chronic and episodic homelessness to a housing first program that meets their needs. The purpose of CAP is to streamline access and referral to housing programs. Great work has been occurring through the current Coordinated Access Process (CAP). Clients have been successfully matched to existing programs.

Figure: Average Weekly Cap Prioritization By Year

Average Weekly Cap Prioritization List By Year



Affordable Housing

There are 5,655 households (14%) that live on annual incomes below \$30,000/year, and after taxes and transfers, 10% of households live below the Low Income Threshold. When an individual or family is living on minimum wage or is not able to earn part- or full-time employment income, the cost of living quickly outpaces their income. These individuals and families turn to the safety net of income supports to help make ends meet, often temporarily until circumstances change. Access to affordable, safe, and suitable housing is essential for people on low-income to maintain a good standard of living and to get out of the cycle of debt and poverty.

Social Assistance and Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped are Alberta's provincial income support programs. Rates for both programs are inadequate compared to the estimated living wage required to live in Red Deer. While the minimum wage of \$15/hour is close to the living wage for a single adult, it is insufficient for a single parent with at least one child. Singles face the greatest housing affordability challenges out of all population groups because they live on a single and/or fixed income, and this is especially the case for seniors and single parents. (see figure p.111)

Figure Income Sources

	After Tax (AT) Income (2017)	Low-Income Measure AT (LIM-AT)	Difference	Min Wage & Welfare Income as % of LIM-AT Threshold	Annual Living Wage AT Income for Red Deer (Maytree, (2017)	Difference	Min Wage & Welfare Income as % of Living Wage (Annual)
Median Household Income (Family of 4)	\$ 85,794 (BT)	\$44,266	\$41,528	193.8%	\$73,026	\$12,768	117.4%
Single Person Minimum Wage (Full Time; After Tax)	\$24,725	\$22,133	\$2,592	111.71%	\$25,094	\$369	98.53%
Two People Minimum Wage (Full Time; After Tax)	\$54,472	\$31,301	\$23,171	174.03%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Two People Minimum Wage (Full Time; After Tax) w/ 2 Children	\$54,472	\$44,266	\$10,206	123.06%	\$73,026	\$18,554	60.62%
Single Person Social Assistance (SA)*	\$8,027	\$22,133	-\$14,106	36.27%	\$25,094	\$17,067	88.20%
Single Parent w/ 1 Child SA*	\$19,743	\$31,301	-\$11,558	63.07%	\$48,764	\$29,021	64.19%
Two Parents w/ 2 Children SA*	\$28,989	\$44,266	-\$15,277	65.49%	\$73,026	\$44,037	39.70%
Single Person with a Disability SA*	\$10,225	\$22,133		46.20%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Single Person w/ Disability on AISH** program income*	\$19,705	\$22,133	-\$2,428	89.03%	N/A	N/A	N/A

* Includes provincial social assistance rate AND other provincial and federal tax credits and benefits

** Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped – flat rate regardless of household size

Figure: Red Deer Living Wage

Household Type	Wage/Hour
Couple, 2 children	\$17.74/parent
Lone parent, 1 child	\$17.44
Single adult	\$15.11

Source: Haener, 2018

Even with an influx of housing starts in 2014/2015, many of the new rental builds in Red Deer have been targeting the higher-end of the rental market, which does not address the affordability needs of people on low incomes. Social, subsidized, or non-market housing attempt to address market failings that make it difficult for some individuals and families to participate in the private market.

The Red Deer Housing Authority (RDHA) owns and operates 309 units of subsidized housing. A total of 1,440 households live in subsidized housing offered by RDHA or Piper Creek Foundation (seniors' housing). Of the subsidized units in Red Deer, the largest portion (38% or 548 households) are subsidized through rent supplements offered by the Government of Alberta. Seniors self-contained housing, seniors lodges, and other seniors housing make up 43% of the subsidized housing. People on provincial income supports, including Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH), make up 46% of RDHA clientele, while 17% are employed.

The local maximum income threshold to be eligible for RDHA subsidized units in Red Deer are shown in the table below. RDHA also offers rent supplements for individuals and families that are unable to afford market rent. RDHA rent supplement amounts are determined by the household size requirements and current funding maximums are as follows:

	Income threshold	Rent supplements
Bachelor:	\$30,500	-
1 Bedroom:	\$34,500	\$300
2 Bedrooms:	\$43,500	\$350
3 Bedrooms:	\$52,000	\$400
4+ Bedrooms	\$60,000	\$400

To qualify for rent supplements, household income may not exceed the following thresholds (See figure p.114)

Figure: Income Thresholds And Number Of Bedrooms

Community	Bachelor	1 bdrm	2 bdrm	3 bdrm	4+ bdrm
Innisfail	\$34,500	\$34,500	\$38,000	\$45,000	\$50,000
Red Deer	\$29,000	\$34,000	\$42,000	\$50,000	\$57,500
Sylvan Lake	\$32,500	\$36,000	\$38,000	\$40,500	\$46,500
RMH	\$34,500	\$34,500	\$38,000	\$45,000	\$50,000
Penhold	\$34,500	\$34,500	\$38,000	\$45,000	\$50,000
Leslieville	-	\$64,500	\$72,500	\$78,500	\$85,000
Caroline	\$34,500	\$34,500	-	\$45,000	\$50,000

The RDHA along with the City of Red Deer are mandated to enable the “efficient provision of a basic level of housing accommodations for persons, who because of financial, social or other circumstances require assistance to obtain or maintain housing accommodation” (Red Deer Housing Authority, 2018). The RDHA operates 289 units in Red Deer, 13 units in Innisfail and 7 in Sylvan Lake. Of the RDHA units, 276 are provincially-owned¹, 24 municipally-owned, and 10 are owned by the Housing Authority. Currently, the RDHA houses over 850 low-income Albertans and delivers rent assistance to 565 households in the city (Red Deer Housing Authority, 2018). The RDHA’s capital funding and rental assistance is financed by the provincial government. It is estimated that the Housing Authority operates a \$5.1 million budget – 51% of which is allocated for rental assistance, 39% for rental property operations, and 10% for capital maintenance and renewal.

Metis Urban Housing Corporation also provides 10 affordable housing units for Indigenous community members in Red Deer.

¹ 256 units in Red Deer and all units in Innisfail and Sylvan Lake are provincially-owned.

Figure: Housing and Program Spaces

	Housing / Program Type	Spaces
Non-Market Housing	Shelter	83
	Intensive Case Management	130
	Permanent Supportive Housing	39
	Rapid Rehousing	132
	Homelessness Prevention	130
	Specialized Housing	459
	Transitional Housing	90
	Supportive Housing for Seniors	300
	Group Homes - Homes	65
	Group Homes - Beds	240
	Rent Supplements	615
	Rent Geared to Income (30% of income)	654
	Rent Geared to Income (below 10% of market value)	502
	Mental Health beds	25
Addiction beds	45	
Market Housing	Total occupied dwellings	39,980
	Secondary Rental Universe	5,660*
	Primary Rental Universe (CMHC Oct 2018)	6,654
	Homeownership Units (Census 2016)	26,260

*This number reflects the number of condominiums identified in the 2016 Census for Red Deer. However, the Census does not allow to differentiate between owned or rented units. A survey done in 2013 in Red Deer found that about 18% of the respondents were living in subsidized housing, 17% own a house or condo, and about 39% were renting. It is estimated that about half of the rented homes in the census metropolitan areas in Canada corresponds to secondary rental market (Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2016).

Source: Red Deer Non Market Housing Inventory, 2019; HelpSeeker Dashboard as of April 2019; Statistics Canada (2017a); Statistics Canada (2017e); Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (2018).

During the past decade, Red Deer also saw the addition of a number of new affordable and supportive housing initiatives. Between 2008 and 2016, Red Deer had projected to have 136 affordable housing units operated and owned by different community agencies in the city. To date, all these units are still running and add 24 more municipally-owned units and eight more Housing Authority-owned units in the city¹. Most recently, the Government of Alberta announced \$7 million in capital funding for a 24/7 homeless shelter with 120 beds and wraparound supports.

Figure: Units Built 2008 – 2016

Building Name	Number of Units	Focus	Operator
Elenor's Place	8	Disabilities	Catholic Social Services
Julietta's Place	10	Family Violence, Women, Children	Central Alberta Women's Outreach Society
Habitat for Humanity	8	Low-income families	Habitat for Humanity Red Deer Region Society
Heritage Family Services	2	Seniors	Heritage Family Services
Lovella Centre Society	8	Disabilities	Schizophrenia Society of Alberta
Convent Park Townhouses	7	Individuals, Families, Mental disabilities	Potter's Hands
River Valley	71	Individuals, Families, Low-income	Potter's Hands
Douglas Place	9	Individuals, Families, Low-income	Red Deer Housing Authority
Vista Village Condo	1	Individuals, Families, Low-income	Red Deer Housing Authority
Second Steps	12	No	Shining Mountains Living Community Services
Total	136		

Source: City of Red Deer (2016)

¹ For a detailed list of all the units that the Red Deer Housing Authority operates and owned, see Red Deer Housing Authority (2018).

There were 635 households on the waitlist for RDHA's subsidized housing and rent supplements in mid-2018. A full 81% of households on the waitlist are singles, including single-parent households. Fixed income and no income households, including those on income supports, AISH, and pensions represent two-thirds of RDHA's clientele due to their inability to keep pace with increasing costs of living.

In October of 2018, Nichol Applied Management (Nichols) released a Social and Affordable Housing Needs Assessment for the City of Red Deer.¹ The assessment covered the range of social housing available in Red Deer, from housing subsidized through government capital contributions to subsidized units and rent-geared-to-income. The supply of housing subsidies and depth of those subsidies is insufficient to meet the needs of the community. Nichols's Needs Assessment found a dearth in one-bedroom units to meet the demand of 200 single clients on the RDHA waitlist, and insufficient funds to provide rent supplements to allow these individuals to occupy private market rental units.

Seniors housing waitlists also range from 0.9 to 2.9 years in length. The needs of seniors are changing, with many seniors living longer and having more mobility. Demands for self-contained units and live-in, or home care options are likely to increase over time.

In addition to creating new affordable housing stock, it is important to keep existing stock up to health and safety standards, and extend their longevity and viability into the future. For example, only one of Bridges Community Living buildings was built after 2000, with another coming on stream soon. The rest are largely over 30 years old,² and all but one have an estimated life expectancy of 50 years or less. Planning for day-to-day and capital maintenance fees, in addition to new stock, is critical to meeting current and future housing needs in the community.

Indigenous Housing Needs

Indigenous community members must lead and inform decisions and actions taken to address the gaps in affordable housing. In 2007, the Aboriginal Housing Needs and Priorities report called for:

- Creating a complete range of housing including options that are low-barrier, and options specific to women, seniors, and families;
- Looking to Indigenous ways of knowing to inform the design and operation of housing for Indigenous Peoples (e.g. Traditional gathering spaces, access to Elders, places for healing and cultural practices);
- Expansion of Indigenous peer navigators/liaison workers;

¹ Nichols Applied Management. (2018). Social and Affordable Housing Needs Assessment for the City of Red Deer. Prepared for Piper Creek Foundation.

² Two of Bridges buildings over 60 years; One over 50 years; Two over 40 years; Many over 30 years.

- A dedicated entry point and addressing discrimination, racism, and barriers to housing that are specific to Indigenous people in Red Deer;
- Promoting cultural awareness and understanding in mainstream organizations through training and hiring Indigenous staff as well as providing culturally-specific programs and services; and
- Offering transition supports for people moving off-reserve into urban areas.

Systems integration was a critical component of ensuring Indigenous peoples' needs are met, and individuals and families do not fall through the cracks or bounce around from system to system. Transitioning from or between systems can be particularly challenging and requires extra support for Indigenous community members.

The Aboriginal Voices on Housing Network (AVOHN) project released a report in 2018 to identify ongoing barriers and recommendations for Indigenous housing in the community. Some of the barriers identified included:

- Racism and discrimination when accessing housing and services;
- Identification documentation requirements to apply for housing are not attainable for many Indigenous people;
- Fixed or low-incomes;
- Transitions from reserve to urban life without proper support; and
- Rules that do not allow immediate or extended family members to stay in units if not on the lease, leading to eviction of the tenant.

A range of recommendations from immediate to long-term were included in the report, such as:

- Addressing racism in the community by changing the community perception of Indigenous peoples, especially among service providers, landlords, etc.;
- Designating an Indigenous entry point for access to housing for increased safety and immediate understanding of Indigenous peoples experiences and needs;
- Improving data collection and mapping of Indigenous programs, living situations, and needs within Red Deer;
- Relaxing or removing requirements on identification, or providing alternative means to prove identity for Indigenous community members;
- Offering cultural supports for housing;
- Restoring and improving existing housing to promote self-determination and homeownership for low-income community members;
- Providing interest free loans available through a Rent Bank to prevent homelessness;

- Improving access to and dissemination of information about Indigenous housing and programs; and
- Establishing a dedicated Indigenous housing strategy for the community with reliable funding.

Affordable Housing Gaps

Housing affordability can be an income problem in the sense that affordability is measured by the point where income and housing costs meet. As a result, lack of affordability affects households with low to moderate incomes as the cost of housing consumes a larger proportion of their monthly household budget. Housing affordability is also a supply problem: in many communities the demand for housing that is affordable to households with low-to-moderate incomes significantly exceeds the supply of units available.

‘Shelter cost’ refers to the average monthly total of all shelter expenses paid by households that own or rent their dwelling. Shelter costs for owner households include, where applicable: mortgage payments, property taxes and condominium fees, along with the costs of electricity, heat, water and other municipal services. For renter households, shelter costs include, where applicable: the rent and the costs of electricity, heat, water, and other municipal services.

Based on these figures, assuming the constant population stability (2.2% growth yearly), over the next five years we will need to introduce measures and investments to fill a number of key gaps among households with severe and moderate affordability challenges.

As evident below, there are a total of 6,415 households that are experiencing housing affordability challenges – of these, 2,390 are spending 50-99% on shelter, and 4,050 between 30-50%. Renters are much more likely to experience this challenge.

Figure: Shelter Costs and income

Income Level	Shelter Cost-to-Income Ratio 50%-99%					Shelter Cost-to-Income Ratio 30%-50%				
	Households	Owner Households	Renter Households	Subsidized Hsg	Not Subsidized Housing	Households	Owner Households	Renter Households	Subsidized Hsg	Not Subsidized Housing
Under \$10,000	90	30	55	25	35	15	10	10	10	0
\$10,000-\$19,999	730	110	625	110	510	345	95	255	115	140
\$20,000-\$29,999	910	260	650	95	555	1,020	210	810	280	535
\$30,000-\$39,100	415	220	195	25	170	995	255	740	45	690
\$40,000-\$49,100	185	145	40	0	40	915	355	560	10	550
\$50,000-\$59,100	60	55	0	0	0	735	375	360	10	350
Total Individuals	6415	13%	1565	24%	1310	4025	20%	2735	43%	2265

Source: Statistics Canada, 2016

Figure: Shelter Costs And Household Type

	Single Person Hshd			2+ Person Household		
	Total	Owner	Renter	Total	Owner	Renter
Shelter Cost-to-Income Ratio 50%-99%	1,255	385	870	110	50	60
	-	31%	69%		45%	55%
Shelter Cost-to-Income Ratio 30%-50%	2,360	900	1,465	315	85	230
	-	38%	62%	-	27%	73%
Total	3,615			425		

Source: Statistics Canada, 2016

Most of these challenges are found in single-person households (about 90%) versus families with two or more persons (10%). There were 3,615 single-person households in deep need – primarily renters, compared to 425 families in this situation.

Based on this information, an estimated 7,000 individuals (90% in single-person households, and 10% in families) will benefit from affordable housing interventions. As not all of these individuals can be assisted, we estimate projections that all of those in extreme and high housing need would be served, followed by 50% and 30% of those in moderate- and low-need respectively.

Figure: Need and Intervention Options

	Estimate	Individuals in Need	Target Served	Intervention Options
Extreme Need	24%	1,721	100%	Deep subsidy affordable housing rental, rent support
High Need	43%	3,008	100%	Rent-geared to income units, rent supports, affordable homeownership
Moderate Need	13%	902	50%	Near market affordable housing rental, affordable homeownership, small rent subsidies
Low Need	20%	1,430	30%	Homeownership support, affordable homeownership
Total	100%	7,060		

PLAN TARGETS & PRIORITIES

Based on our review of community input, data and learnings over the last decade, and international best practices, a number of strategic directions were identified with corresponding actions.

Plan Targets

A number of key system gaps emerged, informing affordable housing and homelessness targets. Note that it will be very difficult to meet these targets without an aggressive growth strategy dedicated to bringing these units to market.

New Housing Targets

Based on the increasing numbers of shelter users, households waiting for subsidized housing, and households in Core Housing Need are at high risk of homelessness. A number of housing affordability measures are recommended over the next five years – at an estimated cost of \$246M in capital and \$27M in operations.

Proposed measures to support 7,000 people include:

- 1,300 Affordable Rental Housing – deep subsidy spaces for renters in Extreme Core Housing Need;
- 1,000 Affordable Rental Housing – spaces for renters in Core Housing Need that are 10% below market rent;
- 1,500 Rent Supplements – Deep Subsidy for renters in Extreme Core Housing Need;
- 600 Rent Supplements – Low Subsidy for renters in Core Housing Need;
- 2,000 Affordable Homeownership Incentives for renters and owner in Core Housing Need; and
- 250 Homeownership Social Supports for homeowners in Extreme Core Housing Need.

Ninety percent (90%) of new units accommodate single-person households – tiny homes, bachelor, single-room occupancy – and 10% are for two- and three-bedroom units in townhomes, attached, or single-family housing to accommodate families.

A minimum of 25% should be fully accessible to accommodate persons with disabilities in light of an aging population.

Figure: New Unit Type

	Spaces Created	Single Person Hshd	2+ Person Hshd	Cost/Space OpEx	Cost/Space CapEx
Affordable Rental Housing – Deep Subsidy Units	1,300	1,170	130	\$5,000	\$150,000
Affordable Rental Housing – minimum 10% below market	1,000	900	100	\$4,000	\$50,000
Rent Supplements – Deep Subsidy	1,500	1,350	150	\$8,000	-
Rent Supplements – Low Subsidy	600	540	60	\$400	-
Affordable Homeownership Incentive	150	135	15	\$10,000	-
Homeowner Social Supports	250	225	25	\$1,400	-
Total	4,800	4,320	480	-	-

Measures to protect and improve our purpose-built rental housing stock are needed in light of the rate of rental housing in need of major repairs, the decrease in purpose-built rental housing units, and the relatively high vacancy rate for these units.

Overall, measures to diversify the housing supply to accommodate smaller household sizes, higher proportion of households with physical disability, and the aging population will also be needed.

Non-Market Housing Maintenance & Renewal Targets

Red Deer Housing Authority’s total estimated 3-year capital maintenance needs were estimated at \$7.8M per year while Bridges Community Living’s 3-year estimate was \$600,000 for capital maintenance.

Of note, these organizations represent about 50% of the non-market housing stock in the city, thus a more comprehensive estimate would put the **cost of capital maintenance across the community is much higher; the final figure needs to be fully scoped with the non-market providers.**

In 2019, the Province of Alberta approved \$184,000 of the Red Deer Housing Authority's Capital Maintenance and Renewal ask. Projects are prioritized for provincial funding based on where they fall across the following categories:

1. Life, Health and Safety Needs: the imperative to address these projects is based on identification of issues that need to be addressed to mitigate a real potential or imminent risk to the life, health and/or safety of building residents. This category includes projects that ensure both accessible and safe housing for Albertans, including those with disabilities; and life safety systems including the installation of fire suppression systems in government supported seniors' lodges.
2. Immediate Needs: the imperative to address these projects is based on identification of issues that need attention in order to prevent them from escalating to Priority 1, or could lead to serious or prolonged deterioration of a building or its systems and negatively affect the residents.
3. General Needs: projects that are assessed as non-urgent and can be planned over a period of time without undue risk to the residents and/or building systems. They are generally components that are replaced or upgrades based on their life cycle (e.g. siding and windows).
4. Suite Renewals: projects that are required to address issues within housing units between tenants, and those that bring off-line (not habitable) units up to a more adequate condition, to reduce vacancies, increase revenues and address waiting lists.

While top priority projects are most likely to be funded, it is imperative that lower priority maintenance requests are fulfilled moving forward to uphold the integrity of current aging units and to avoid more significant and costly repairs in the future.

Homelessness Targets

We forecast the City of Red Deer maintaining current investments at about \$4.6M per year, totaling about **\$23.2M** over five years to support program supports to achieve priority goals.

Our review identified a supportive housing gap of 100 spaces, thus new capital investment of about **\$17M** is needed to meet this demand in light of the increasing numbers of chronically homeless individuals with complex addictions and mental health needs.

This will result in an effective homelessness response that will:

- Ensure **100%** of chronically homeless individuals have access to appropriate housing options by 2025;

- Provide homelessness prevention interventions to stabilize a minimum of **20%** of those presenting at risk;
- Develop protocols to ensure **100%** of those who present for support through Coordinated Access are appropriately linked to the broader social safety net; and
- Ensure returns to homelessness from housing interventions to less than **15%** across funded programs by 2025.
- Develop protocols to ensure **100%** of those who present for support through Coordinated Access are appropriately linked to the broader social safety net;
- Enhance **service quality and impact** through ongoing performance management-centred of lived experience and frontline engagement.

At this time, we are outlining the possible sources of spaces for funding to create new spaces below. These will be further fleshed out in implementation and through our ongoing calls for proposals in consultation with the community. As we work on implementing the Plan, key leaders and champions can develop a policy/funding advocacy strategy that includes briefing Ministers on Plan needs and discussing contribution options in further detail.

Figure: Space and Intake estimates

Program Type	Spaces Needed	Current Spaces	#Intakes over 5 Years	Per Year Average # intakes
Permanent Supportive Housing/ Supported Housing	139	39	216	43
Intensive Case Management	150	140	378	76
Rapid Rehousing	100	132	610	116
Transitional Housing	12	12	153	31
Homelessness Prevention	200	130	1240	248

It should be noted here that the assumptions are being are specific to the City of Red Deer funding portfolio, and assume provincial investments to occur in treatment, second stage and recovery housing needed under the addictions, domestic violence, and mental health portfolios of Health and Community and Social Services. The new emergency shelter investment made is also excluded as this was already announced.

Priority 1: Wraparound Supports

Many consultation participants were keenly aware of the public health emergency caused by the current drug crisis and its interconnectedness to homelessness and public safety. It is important for citizens to note that not all homeless people have addictions, and not all people with addictions are homeless: in fact, in BC as an example, the majority of overdose deaths are reported to occur in private homes (Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, 2019). Nonetheless, people with disabling conditions such as mental health, addictions, or physical health issues are over-represented among those experiencing housing instability and homelessness. Substance use was the leading reason cited for loss of housing in the 2019 homeless count with mental health being the fourth (City of Red Deer, 2018b). A large proportion of people experiencing homelessness are also experiencing mental health and/or addiction issues, and are less likely to seek treatment compared to people who are not homeless (City of Red Deer, 2018b).

In 2018, Red Deer had the highest rate of fentanyl-related deaths in the province (Alberta Health, 2019) While a temporary safe consumption site and medically-assisted detox beds exist, there is no treatment centre in the city. The province, as the funder of health services, has invested in a new, larger youth detox centre in Red Deer, and is currently reviewing supervised consumption site plans across the province.

Interpersonal violence is commonly considered the leading cause of homelessness among women, and disproportionately affects those with low socioeconomic status and Indigenous women. In Red Deer, current systems need to better address the needs of individuals and families escaping situations of domestic violence. Further, men are most often the perpetrators but can also be the victims; thus there is a need for more services or programs for men (both perpetrators and victims).

As we continue with work on housing and homelessness issues, a greater focus is needed on ensuring these are fully integrated with anti-violence, mental health, and addictions efforts. A four-pillar approach to addictions and substance use being implemented across Canada, including Red Deer, calls for prevention, treatment, harm reduction, and enforcement. These efforts will need to be well-integrated with supportive and affordable housing as well as Housing First programs moving forward to sustain recovery and prevent future issues while reducing harm.

Figure: Red Deer Drug & Alcohol Strategy Report – Themes and Recommendation:

Prevention

Public education | Prevention programming for schools & community | Increased access to information | Communication and data sharing between sectors

Harm Reduction

Safety programming for those actively using substances | Overdose prevention and awareness programming | Harm Reduction for prenatal programs | Safer partying program/awareness for young adults | Increased variety of Housing First options in community

Treatment

Improved staff-to-client ratios | Increased treatment options | Cultural programming for Indigenous peoples and newcomers | Supports in school systems | Accessible & affordable residential treatment for youth and adults | Long-term assisted living and palliative care

Community Safety

Coordinating policy and community stakeholders to address substance-related crime | RCMP enforcement resources prioritize drug production and trafficking | Support and evaluate Community Response Unit (CRU) and Police and Crisis Team (PACT) programs | Divert from justice to health supports | Implement a drug court

Source: (Central Alberta Addictions Consortium, 2014)

Red Deerians proposed that prevention measures be introduced in schools and communities to intervene with children, youth, and families early and promote mental health, reduce Adverse Childhood Experiences, and prevent future addictions and homelessness long-term. They also called for immediate measures to address community safety concerns related to rough sleeping and public intoxication while improving understanding of addictions and homelessness broadly.

Strategies

1. Encourage the provincial government to introduce an integrated **addictions and housing continuum** in Red Deer including: prevention, treatment, harm reduction, intoxic, detox, treatment, recovery aftercare, recovery housing, and transitional and permanent supportive housing.
2. Ensure **safe spaces** that are low barrier are available 24/7 for those experiencing intoxication and homelessness.
3. Enhance and integrate current domestic **violence response teams** in the homelessness and housing services including the Police and Crisis Team (PACT), Domestic Violence Unit (DVU), and Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART) teams.
4. Introduce a **community drug court** to more effectively deal with crimes related to addictions by diverting people as appropriate from the justice system into treatment, health, and social supports.
5. Develop an **Integrated Service Delivery** model that includes homelessness and housing as well as health, justice, housing, and social systems working in tandem for wrap-around supports and best impact.
6. Explore the development of an **Integrated Access** to connect 800 services working on issues related to homelessness and housing, mental health, addictions, community safety, and social wellbeing.
7. Work with the Systems Leadership team to develop a **High System Users of Service** initiative to intervene and support complex clients interacting with health, homelessness, justice, and safety systems.
8. Support and nurture a **peer navigator** and peer worker network of those with lived and living experience to support vulnerable community members. This could include a Clean Sweep social enterprise or SAGE Clan program to enhance community safety and connect people to supports.
9. Support the implementation of **safety measures** outlined in *Red Deer's Safety Strategy* (2018) to address safety concerns for those experiencing vulnerability and homeless as well as impacted community members.

Priority 2: Truth & Reconciliation

Homelessness in Red Deer is a legacy of Canada's colonial past, intimately tied to the ongoing impacts of residential schooling and intergenerational trauma. As such, homelessness is much more than someone's lack of housing or shelter – it is a manifestation of dispossession, displacement, and disruption for people, families, and entire Indigenous communities at a spiritual, social, and material level. Indigenous voices need to be well-represented during this system change. In Red Deer, 44% of the homeless population identified as Indigenous in the 2018 homeless count, and Indigenous people are over-represented among those in Core Housing Need. Indigenous people have a significant, vested interest in any plans to address the issue. The consultation process highlighted how important self-determination was to Indigenous participants alongside community awareness on the root causes behind this over-representation.

Cultural competency and a commitment to better understanding the Indigenous population's unique needs is important because failing to address these differences will result in ineffective or even harmful interventions. The ongoing impacts of intergenerational trauma and their relationship to social challenges, like homelessness, addiction and involvement with children's services or justice systems was highlighted with clear recommendations on how a culturally-appropriate response could be rolled out.

Strategies

1. Enhance **education** and awareness-raising about Indigenous history and colonialism for all service providers with specific training for staff who work with Indigenous persons. Cultural sensitivity and trauma-informed approaches should be embedded in service provider daily operations. This includes unfiltered, culturally sensitive, solution-focused education of historic events such as residential schools, the Sixties Scoop, and other injustices; all of this history must be embedded in the Canadian curriculum and not glossed over or brushed aside.
2. Create an awareness or **marketing campaign** on Indigenous history and the modern-day effects including homelessness and addictions as well as addressing misconceptions in order to capture the attention of all Canadians: "if you feel it, it has meaning."
3. Invest in, support, and integrate the current primary Indigenous service providers of housing and social supports to **build local capacity** for service delivery including: Red Deer Native Friendship Society, Heritage Family Services, Métis Capital Housing Corporation, Shining Mountain Living Community Services, and Native Counselling Services of Alberta.

4. Empower Indigenous clients to make their own decisions and regain control over their life choices in a **culturally-sensitive environment** which allows Indigenous people to feel safe and is supportive of cultural practices and ceremonies.
5. Develop and provide appropriate **training** for healthcare professionals and social/housing service providers to enhance their knowledge of Indigenous culture as well as the impact of intergenerational trauma and colonialism. An understanding of Indigenous cultural practices is essential in promoting and understanding the healing process. However, traditional healing practices are very localized and culturally-specific. Familiarity with **local** Indigenous practices is essential.
6. Support **Indigenous self-determination** via an Indigenous Housing Authority with Indigenous leadership and control of funding, the building of units, and ongoing decision making and management is a suitable response to current system failures to effectively address cultural needs and challenges of ongoing colonialism. This involves encouraging and providing the means for Indigenous persons to take ownership and control, to build and run the programs, services, and housing that they need.
7. Leverage the **Elders Circle** to provide input, knowledge, cultural perspectives, and awareness of the urban Indigenous experience in Red Deer across diverse community processes to reduce the consultation burden on Indigenous people.
8. Ensure **Indigenous entry points** into Integrated Access to improve the benefits of providing a culturally safe and appropriate environment and maintaining a seamless integration with the overall systems approach. With Indigenous leadership and stronger Indigenous/non-Indigenous partnerships, work to make assessment culturally-appropriate, which could require Indigenous-specific processes/assessments/etc.
9. Use the **TRC Calls to Action** as a framework to guide and prioritize decisions in the Plan's implementation, and create partnerships that are meaningful and solution-focused while acknowledging the past and the impacts on present realities for Indigenous persons.
10. Work to address the **intergenerational trauma** by funding preventative programming and supports to address holistic health and healing for Indigenous families and individuals, for family reunification, and strengthening of family ties.

11. Develop an **Indigenous Housing Authority** to control funding, develop diverse units, support transition, and include Elders to develop a **cultural community** model – housing with on-site Indigenous/traditional health treatment, social and cultural supports. Examples to explore include: Nanaimo (Nuuksuut Lelum), Calgary (Kootenay Lodge for Indigenous persons with a disability), and Vancouver (Lu'ma Native Housing Society).
12. **Educate and encourage landlords** or property managers to rent to Indigenous people and to support cultural practices such as smudging in their units.
13. Embed **cultural and healing practices** across services and housing programs, such as:
 - Employee Indigenous Awareness training in supporting an Indigenous person in a culturally-appropriate way; enhanced training on FASD prevention, residential school impact;
 - Elder-led workshops to help establish a baseline of cultural understanding;
 - Indigenous liaison workers at service providers, public institutions, etc. to provide cultural support to Indigenous persons navigating these systems;
 - Staff participation in traditional practices including pow wows, round dances, sweat lodges, smudging, sweetgrass and naming ceremonies, cultural medicines, prayers, traditional cooking, and feasts;
 - Culturally-relevant activities such as arts and crafts, button blanket making, and jewellery making;
 - Indigenous representation at the employee, management and board levels;
 - Seven Sacred Teachings – Truth, Honesty, Humility, Courage, Respect, Wisdom and Love – embedded in service models; and
 - Provide client choice to have traditional, contemporary, or a mixture of services.

Priority 3: Housing Options

Despite the success of Housing First in Red Deer (over 1,000 people housed), the lack of affordable or appropriate housing choices means many people remain and continue to become homeless. The Red Deer Housing Authority (RDHA) manages and maintains 289 units within Red Deer and, at present, there are approximately 400 people on the waitlist for affordable housing (which includes persons in the Housing First program). This backlog must be reduced and partnerships with the City and agencies must leverage funding opportunities by aligning projects with new federal housing strategies.

Specific supportive housing options are also in short supply: barrier-free or accessible units, units with on-site services for seniors or persons with complex needs. Regulations for designing new housing are restrictive especially for hard-to-house and high-need people. A range of low-barrier and sober options are needed with on-site treatment and recovery supports.

The success of any plan to address homelessness hinges on the availability of housing, period. Housing needs to be diverse, integrated in communities, affordable, safe, and appropriate. Yet the data and consultations highlight that Red Deer is falling short for a considerable segment of our population.

Strategies

Government Enablers

1. City of Red Deer to review and implement a slate of **incentives and enablers** to advance affordable housing and supports:
 - 1.1 Review **zoning** restrictions or exercise their zoning discretion differently so that creative measures can be taken to help solve the homelessness problem.
 - 1.2 Explore zoning for **innovative housing styles** including “tiny houses”, guest cottages, multi-generational housing, and mixed-use in existing buildings.
 - 1.3 Explore the **conversion of commercial buildings** in various areas of the City to be used as housing options.
 - 1.4 Introduce incentives for private sector developers and builders to create **below-market rental units** in partnership with provincial and federal housing partners.
 - 1.5 Exempt **development/construction** fees on new affordable housing projects.
 - 1.6 **Use Community inclusion** frameworks for including vulnerable populations in housing discussions and/or consultations.

- 1.7 Introduce **Yes-In-My-Backyard** (YIMBY) strategies to combat opposition with respect to affordable housing or supports services locating in neighbourhoods.
 - 1.8 Review and enhance the accessibility of City **social infrastructure lands in new communities** to nonprofits for affordable housing development or decentralized service delivery.
 - 1.9 **Designate a percentage** (e.g. 10%) of land in greenfield or brownfield developments to affordable housing.
 - 1.10 Support **funding applications** of nonprofits to federal and provincial funding for new affordable units.
 - 1.11 Introduce attractive **density bonuses** in exchange for affordable units.
 - 1.12 Waive **property taxes** on affordable housing projects.
 - 1.13 Implement **relaxations** (parking) on affordable housing projects.
 - 1.14 **Fast-track applications** on affordable housing and new rental projects.
 - 1.15 Develop a **secondary suites** policy that enhances safety of current and new units.
2. Advocate to the **provincial and federal government** for meaningful incentive programs for the private sector to develop new rental stock, including a low-income housing tax credit to incentivize new, affordable rental stock, and exemptions on capital gains tax on donations of land.
 3. Advocate for **operational and capital funding** to provincial and federal government (under the National Housing Strategy) to bring investment into Red Deer for affordable and supportive housing including Permanent Supportive Housing and Rent-Geared-to-Income Units.
 4. Ensure **capital maintenance needs** for existing non-market housing stock is thoroughly reviewed and an action plan is in place to ensure sustainability of quality, affordable units.
 - 5.

Development Capacity

6. Introduce an aggressive **non-market rental unit growth strategy** with partners including the Red Deer Housing Authority to bring Plan target units to market.
7. Support the creation/enhancement of a dedicated **affordable housing development bodies** with an aggressive growth strategy to deliver the unit gap identified in the Plan. Ensure **Indigenous leadership** is engaged and supported to lead housing development in this approach.

8. Support the creation of the **Indigenous Housing Authority** to develop and operate units embedded in cultural practice.
9. Develop a process to track the **affordable housing pipeline** leveraging technology such as Smartsheet to assess progress against Plan goals, assign accountabilities, and track resources in realtime.
10. Introduce a **Community Investment Campaign** to drive capital contributions and coordinated builds and investment while also getting buy-in from government and non-government systems and community members.
11. Encourage all governments, public systems, faith, and nonprofits to explore opportunities to contribute land and/or buildings to new stock, track, and advertize opportunities in an **Affordable Housing Land Bank**.

Affordable Rental & Ownership

12. Advance the creation of **Homeownership Grants** for low-income households to purchase smaller homes, tiny homes, or other modest housing options.
13. Encourage investment in **homeownership programs** such as Habitat for Humanity, or consider creating a program that helps buyers with down-payments and works with developers to create below-market value units to meet Plan targets.
14. Explore innovative ways to support low-income **homeowners** at risk of losing their housing with additional income assistance, including secondary suites, senior-student home sharing, or intergenerational housing.
15. Rollout a **landlord engagement strategy** to encourage participation in housing programs, and prevent evictions, minimize damage, and maintain relationships.
16. Expand **rent supplement** programs paid directly to the client to cover housing costs in market units to meet Plan targets.
17. Continue to optimize **Housing First** programs supporting clients in the rental market including Rapid Rehousing, Intensive Case Management, Assertive Community Treatment, and expand collaborations on supports with health, justice, and social service partners to meet Plan targets.

Priority 4: Early Intervention & Coordination

Services and funding coordination between different agencies, sectors, and systems need further improvement. Any initiatives towards improved integration need to be undertaken with the goal of improving client outcomes. Integration can be defined as, “...services, providers, and organizations from across the continuum working together so that services are complementary, coordinated, in a seamless unified system, with continuity for the client” (Alberta Health, 2009).

Crisis supports such as shelters and warming centres remain essential; however, best practices and community voices confirm the need for early identification and diversion of individuals and families at-risk of becoming homeless. Improving housing affordability and tackling complex needs that compound someone’s vulnerability are essential when we consider preventative approaches.

To support prevention, however, we need to enhance the integration of all the various services and benefits operating in our community. We need to think and operate differently across funding portfolios and organizational or regional boundaries, putting the person served first and meeting them where they’re at.

Strategies

1. Fully implement the online systems map platform to track capacity and occupancy across Red Deer’s social safety net to track system-level trends, financial investments, and user feedback.
2. Leverage online platforms as early intervention, screening, diversion, and systems navigation tools at the population level to connect those in need with accurate and real-time information about services across the social safety net.
3. Work with system partners to transform Coordinated Access into Integrated Access to coordinate services delivery, and ensure access to diverse population groups, particularly Indigenous people and youth.
4. Embed participation in systems mapping and Integrated Access into service contracts, program operating policies, and procedures to ensure clients are referred to the full scope of available 800+ supports in the community to prevent homelessness and ensure housing stabilization long-term.
5. Expand prevention and intervention strategies tailored for youth including Upstream programming with schools, Housing First for Youth experiencing homelessness, and supportive housing models such as Foyers.
6. Create prevention response teams in schools providing psycho-social, clinical, and housing supports to children, youth, and their families identified as being at-risk to homelessness, addictions, abuse, or other social vulnerabilities

7. Explore the decentralization of services into diverse neighbourhoods to encourage integration in communities, and lessen the impact on the downtown core while enhancing prevention and service access closer to home.
8. Explore the location of prevention programs that provide system navigation support, such as those funded through FCSS and United Way, in community hubs across the city, to enhance access while reducing downtown service concentration in partnership with Primary Care Networks.
9. Expand regional coordination with Edmonton and Calgary, smaller towns, and First Nations around Red Deer to fully leverage every available service and funding in Red Deer's greater region, and understand demand trends.



Priority 5: Communication & Leadership

There is a need for further public education or awareness campaigns on a broad range of social issues (mental health, addictions, homelessness, domestic violence), in addition to education on the history of Indigenous peoples and their current issues, in an effort to address racism and misconceptions. The level of engagement during the consultation process demonstrates the level of interest and desire for change among the people of Red Deer; continue to harness and leverage this engagement.

The City of Red Deer can take the lead on creating these awareness campaigns with input from people with Lived Experience. The value of first voice input cannot be overstated: those who have lived/are living through complex life experiences including homelessness, addiction, mental health concerns, and domestic violence will provide insight as they are true experts.

Finally, without a strategic implementation approach and clear accountabilities, our best intentions and thought-out plans will not take root to engender the change we want to see. To this end, the CHHIP committee has considered a number of implementation models and is recommending a number of directions.

Strategies

1. Introduce **targeted awareness**, engagement, and behaviour change campaigns focused on preventing homelessness, interpersonal violence, addictions and mental health, and tackling stereotypes to key demographics, particularly youth and their parents. Tailor messaging to key groups how to access services, and to service providers (agencies, medical professionals, first responders, and funders) on how to properly support families and better coordinate services for improved outcomes.
2. Increase community **engagement**, awareness and compassion building, and communicating the benefits and positive outcomes of efforts, so Red Deerians better understand homelessness, addiction, interpersonal violence, and mental health through service, workshops, and education to reduce stigma and dispel myths.
3. Catalyze the faith community to develop an **Interfaith Action Council** to coordinate efforts supporting vulnerable community members across denominations complementing public systems.
4. Implement targeted and ongoing consultation with the **business community**. By getting the private sector more involved those people will develop a deeper understanding of the problem and win-win solutions.

5. Develop meaningful and appropriate ways to engage community members with lived/living experience to provide input and drive change to policy and practice. As per previous recommendations, a **LivEx Council** should be supported and composed of persons with a variety of experiences (homelessness, addiction, victim of domestic violence, etc.) to support Plan implementation.
6. Leverage existing systems-level **decision-maker tables** such as the Systems Leadership Team to ensure a coordinated and strategic approach to operationalizing the Plan is in place across relevant systems.
7. Build a **Funders' Network** to enhance collaboration and ongoing optimization of resources between funders (private companies, government, and foundations) in order to set sustainable community funding priorities and share outcomes.
8. Support **Indigenous self-determination** in funding decisions through community-based approaches to decision-making on Indigenous funds.
9. **Advocate to provincial and federal government** partners at the political and administration levels to support Red Deer's Plan and priorities on homelessness and housing.
10. Develop an **Implementation Matrix** using realtime technology (such as Smartsheet) to align diverse implementation partners and track actions and accountability in a transparent manner.
11. Develop a regular and comprehensive reporting and accountability mechanism to assess and communicate **Plan goals and progress** to the public and seek input on an ongoing basis.

THE CITY'S ROLE

This section will dive deeper into the proposed design and operations of homelessness services in Red Deer currently overseen by the City of Red Deer as Community Entity and Community-Based Organization managing federal and provincial homelessness investments.

System Performance

In examining the performance of the current investments under Red Deer's System Framework for Housing & Supports (2016-2018) (City of Red Deer, 2018b), the consultant team reviewed past performance against demand in the context of the new Plan. Note that this assumes the City completes a thorough review of system and service quality, and performance on an ongoing basis.

Performance management is essential to understand the effectiveness of interventions as well as the community's overall progress towards reducing homelessness. Performance management:

- Articulates what the ecosystem and its diverse service providers, as a whole, are trying to achieve;
- Illustrates whether progress is being made towards preventing and reducing homelessness in a particular community;
- Keeps funded interventions accountable to funders and taxpayers;
- Quantifies achievements towards the goals of the Plan;
- Uses information gathered for continuous improvement;
- Aligns program-level results to participant outcomes at the individual and system-levels; and
- Informs the next round of strategy review and investment planning.

A systems-focused performance management process can develop a clear understanding of impact on priority populations against targets, but also illustrate levels of performance at the service level!¹ This requires stakeholders to agree on common indicators and targets at the system and program levels.

The Framework sets out a number of system targets for the City's investments (see figure p. 140)

¹ For a full discussion on program and system indicators and targets, see Turner (2015).

Targets – 2016–2018

Overall homelessness is reduced by 60% by 2018.

Chronically – and episodically – homeless numbers are reduced by 20% by 2018.

85% of clients are stabilized in permanent housing by 2018.

Usage of emergency shelters is reduced by 15% by 2018. The average length of stay in shelter is reduced to 4 days.

90% of clients have improved self-sufficiency at program exit.

Inappropriate use of public systems is decreased by 25% among clients at program exit.

50% of homeless programs participate in integrated information system by 2018.

90% of clients will be successfully matched to a housing first program within 90 days

Performance

Overall shelter use (unique intakes) increased 23% from 240 to 295 shelter users; Homeless Count numbers were the same (149) both years.

Shelter-unique intake data:

Chronic homelessness 66 in 2016, 79 in 2017, 75 in 2018. This suggests an increase of 13.6%.

Episodic homelessness 172 in 2016, 195 in 2017, 210 in 2018. This suggests an increase of 22.0%

ETO data suggests stabilization and 90.9% housing retention rates exceeding targets, however negative exits exceed recommended benchmark of 15%.

Shelter intakes increased 23% from 240 to 295 shelter users – but average length of stay in 2018 stabilized at 4 days.

Aggregate data shows a decline in individuals without source of income from 8.9% program entry to 2.7% at program exit.

Between 2015–18 OSSI reduced inappropriate use of several public systems. When looking at an average of the annual reductions for this timeframe, the largest reductions were in Days in Jail (64.3%), Days in Hospital (53.6%), & EMS Responses (50.3%). The only area with an increase was in Court Appearances (-16.4%).

93.6% of identified Housing Service Providers are utilizing the integrated information system

Average from system entry to program matching is 49 days; and from document ready date to program matching is 40 days.

Figure: Performance Results

	Capacity/Outputs		Costs		Length of Stay		Occupancy		Negative Exits	
	Spaces	# Clients Served 2018 /19	Funding	Average/ Space	Target Range	2018/19	Target	2018/19	Target	2018/19
Transitional Housing	12	10	\$ 180,000	\$ 15,000	6-12 mo	17	95%	90%	15%	33%
Intensive Case Management	130	138	\$ 1,193,635	\$ 9,182	12-18 mo	14	95%	73%	15%	33%
Homelessness Prevention	130	186	\$ 369,407	\$ 2,842	n/a	n/a	95%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Supported Housing/ Permanent Supportive Housing	39	64	\$ 792,712	\$ 20,326	n/a	36	95%	76%	15%	58%
Rapid Rehousing	132	92	\$ 578,244	\$ 4,381	6-12 mo	6	95%	75%	15%	43%
Support Services	n/a	142	\$ 282,608	n/a	n/a	n/a	95%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Coordinated Access	n/a	463	\$ 350,333	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

As illustrated, the length of stay target ranges were generally met by programs in 2018/19; however, there are challenges emerging when we look at the rates of negative exits, which are considerably higher than the proposed targets for ICM, Rapid Rehousing, Transitional Housing, and supportive housing in the Framework. There are further areas that should be examined closer around occupancy rates, which are lower than target as well in the ICM, Rapid Rehousing and supportive housing programs in particular.

Homelessness Key Performance Indicators

In reviewing current performance, the consultant team suggests a number of revisions to the City's Framework building on the existing Framework, primarily ramping up the Key Performance Indicators for Red Deer's future homelessness investments. These KPIs align at the systems level to demonstrate how a particular intervention contributes to overall progress towards addressing homelessness.

These KPIs should be included in the development of future procurement activities, performance monitoring, and service standards.

Further, it is recommended that the City review its FCSS investments in relation to the Plan to align performance management in an integrated fashion across the portfolio.

Note that these are indicators we are proposing to use as part of a Living Plan approach, learning through implementation – to this end, we will work with funded partners to continuously improve these on an ongoing basis. (See table p.143)

KPIs at a Glance		Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Outreach	Homelessness Prevention	Rapid Rehousing	Housing First ICM	Permanent Supportive Housing
System optimization	Average occupancy across program spaces	95%	100%	95%	95%	100%	100%	100%
	Average length of stay	10 days	6 mo	n/a	2 mo	9 mo	18 mo	3 yrs
	% participants with appropriate length of stay in program	75%	80%	n/a	90%	95%	95%	80%
	% right-matched participants to supports/housing	75%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
	% program spaces allocated through Coordinated Access	n/a	100%	n/a	100%	100%	100%	100%
	% program spaces reporting into ETO	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	% participants who require re-housing	n/a	n/a	n/a	10%	15%	15%	15%
Housing stabilization	% participants maintain housing at 6 mo.	n/a	n/a	n/a	90%	90%	90%	90%
	% participants maintain housing at 12 mo.	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	80%	80%	80%
	% participants supported to access permanent housing & supports	50%	95%	70%	80%	95%	95%	95%
	% returns to homelessness at program exit	20%	10%	50%	10%	10%	10%	5%
	% positive housing destination at program exit	80%	95%	50%	90%	90%	90%	95%

KPIs at a Glance		Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Outreach	Homelessness Prevention	Rapid Rehousing	Housing First ICM	Permanent Supportive Housing
Systems prevention	% participants connected to services outside homelessness-serving programs	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	% people discharged into homelessness from systems at program entry	25%	25%	n/a	50%	20%	20%	20%
	% new to homelessness-serving programs per year	20%	10%	15%	50%	20%	10%	5%
	% participants who require re-housing	n/a	n/a	n/a	10%	15%	15%	15%
Participant Voice	% participants maintain housing at 6 mo.	n/a	n/a	n/a	90%	90%	90%	90%
	% chronic	50%	90%	50%	0%	50%	100%	98%
Equity Lens	% at risk of homelessness	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	10%
	% youth (18-24)	10%	25%	25%	25%	10%	10%	10%
	% Indigenous	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%
	% women	25%	25%	30%	30%	25%	25%	50%
	% in families	25%	5%	5%	40%	25%	5%	5%

KPIs at a Glance		Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Outreach	Homelessness Prevention	Rapid Rehousing	Housing First ICM	Permanent Supportive Housing
Wellbeing	% decrease in participant acuity score (SPDAT) at program entry vs. exit	10%	65%	n/a	30%	45%	50%	65%
	% increase in self-sufficiency/wellbeing (XX assessment or self-report) at program entry vs exit	25%	75%	15%	30%	50%	65%	75%
	% participants who improved employment/education/training at program entry vs. exit	10%	75%	10%	75%	80%	80%	80%
	% decrease in systems use (Aggregate #EMS, #ER, #PoliceInteraction, #Court Appearances, #Jail/Prison Days, #Days Hospital)	n/a	65%	n/a	20%	45%	50%	65%
	% participants achieved stable income / increased income at program entry vs. exit	25%	85%	10%	65%	85%	90%	95%

City 5-Year Targets

Based on these assumptions, the City should expect performance across homelessness investments in this manner to achieve a number of targets over the next five years. These were generated through financial modelling based on ongoing levels of investments in the portfolio.

Outcome

The City of Red Deer will work in partnership to build and implement a responsive, sustainable, and well-performing homelessness response informed by evidence-based research and best practice that is effectively integrated into the broader social safety net.

Goals

This will contribute to an effective homelessness response that will:

1. Ensure **100%** of chronically homeless individuals have access to appropriate housing options by 2025;
2. Provide homelessness prevention interventions to stabilize a minimum of **30%** of those presenting at risk;
3. Develop protocols to ensure **100%** of those who present for support through Coordinated Access are appropriately linked to the broader social safety net;
4. Coordinated Access will ensure 90% of clients are matched to appropriate housing in **90 days** or less; this is driven by a 20% reduction in the average days between system entry and being document ready, and program matching.
5. Ensure returns to homelessness from housing interventions to less than **15%** across funded programs by 2025.
6. Enhance **service quality and impact** through ongoing performance management-centred of lived experience and frontline engagement.

Investment Strategy

Moving forward, and anticipating minimal changes in the provincial budget, the City anticipates investing the following funds in homelessness responses. Note that the Indigenous stream is not confirmed at this time past 2019/20 – and assumed constant during the remainder of the Plan period.

Figure: Future Funding

Future Funding	Government of Alberta - OSSI	Government of Canada - Reaching Home- Designated Community	Government of Canada - Reaching Home- Indigenous
2019/20	\$3,835,000	\$548,002	\$243,904
2020/21	\$3,835,000	\$548,002	\$243,904
2021/22	\$3,835,000	\$576,653	\$243,904
2022/23	\$3,835,000	\$572,153	\$243,904
2023/24	\$3,835,000	\$572,153	\$243,904
Total	\$19,175,000	\$2,816,963	\$1,219,520

In total, \$23.2M is anticipated for Red Deer, primarily from provincial (83%) and federal (17%) sources.

As per financial modelling projections, the City will look to invest about \$20.2M over the next five years in housing programs, \$1.2M in system planning and coordinated access, and \$1.8M in systems planning and performance management activities.

Figure: City's Project 5-Year Homelessness Investments.

Housing Programs	\$20,240,413	87.2%
System Planning & Coordinated Access	\$1,160,574	5.0%
Administration	\$1,810,496	7.8%

Financial Modelling

This section provides an overview of the modelling approach to determine Plan targets and performance metrics, key inputs, and assumptions.

Understanding Stock and Flow

A key principle of developing a systems planning model is that homelessness is not static – individuals transition in and out of homelessness and access various housing programs and services throughout their journey to stable housing. System modelling must account for these dynamic changes in this population and adjust estimations of need accordingly.

The model discussed in this Plan uses a **stock and flow** analysis to better understand how homelessness will change over time in Red Deer. A **stock** is a quantity at a particular point in time – in this case, we consider the number of individuals experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. A **flow** is the movement of individuals between categories (e.g., at risk of homelessness, transitionally homeless, chronically homeless, stably housed). A stock and flow perspective is embedded in the concept of Functional Zero – we must ensure that outflows from homelessness exceed inflows to homelessness for a long enough period that the stock of individuals experiencing homelessness approaches zero.

Estimating Demand

Homelessness

A stock and flow analysis helps us understand why local data sources on homelessness may differ. We used the shelter occupancy to estimate people were experiencing chronic, episodic, and transitional homelessness in 2018.

The number of unique clients recording a shelter stay in 2018 was 481¹. Clients with over 180 days recorded were classed as chronic: 48 (10%), clients with 3 or more shelter stays were classed as episodic: 242 (50%); and remaining clients were classed as transitional: 188 (39%). We estimated serving 100% of chronic and episodic homeless, and 60% of transitionally homeless over the course of the 5 years.

At Imminent Risk

There is significant risk of homelessness due to housing unaffordability. When examining shelter-to-income-ratios for households in Red Deer with a total income below \$20,000, we estimate using Census 2016 data, and that about 2,005 people who live in renter households are spending 50% on housing with a total income below \$20,000, and are spending over half of their income on housing. This impacts their risk

¹ A start date (open) with a corresponding end date in 2018; and a start date in 2018 with a corresponding end date (2018-present). Three records had date errors.

of falling into homelessness significantly. We estimated about 20% of those at risk end up using shelters and will require a homelessness prevention intervention.

These numbers are our best estimates and do not necessarily capture the changing nature of homelessness in Red Deer over time and reinforce the importance of a sector-wide Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and ongoing, real-time systems planning and modelling efforts. Data from comparable Canadian cities was used in the model where local data was lacking (e.g. cost of implementing new program types, such as Rapid Rehousing or Prevention).

Matching Need to Program Type

Homeless serving systems use common assessment tools to triage individuals according to level of need – often referred to as acuity. This also helps to identify what type of program is likely to be a good fit, which is confirmed when a more fulsome assessment is completed. To assess demand for programs, assumptions about acuity are needed. For people experiencing chronic and episodic homelessness, the model estimates what share of these individuals have high, medium, and low levels of need/acuity, shown in the table below.

Figure: Homelessness Type And Acuity

	High Acuity	Medium Acuity	Low Acuity
Chronic	80%	15%	5%
Episodic	50%	30%	20%
Transitional	10%	30%	60%
At-Risk	5%	15%	80%

The following chart outlines how the model matches level of need to program type: (see figure p.150)

Group's Level of Need (Acuity)	Program Type	Proportion of Acuity Group served by Program Type
High acuity Chronic, episodic homelessness	Permanent Supportive Housing Intensive Case Management Transitional Housing	100% 90% 20%
Moderate acuity Episodic homelessness; Transitional homelessness; At-Risk	Transitional Housing Intensive Case Management	60% 10%
Low acuity Transitional homelessness; At-Risk	Rapid Rehousing Prevention	10% 100%

These proportions account for individuals who may re-enter homelessness services multiple times or require a transition to a higher-intensity program to maintain their housing long-term.

Cost & Performance Assumptions

As there was limited data locally available to run the cost analysis, we had to use learnings from studies and reports from other Canadian jurisdictions to develop a costs model. As the implementation rolls out, these assumptions should be refined with local data.

Figure: Program Space And Cost Estimates

Program Type	Spaces Needed	Current Spaces	#Intakes over 5 Years	Per Year Average # intakes	Target Turnover	Target Negative Exit	OpEx/Space/Yr	CapEx/ New Space
Permanent Supportive Housing/ Supported Housing	139	39	216	43	25%	20%	\$20,000	\$165k
Intensive Case Management	150	140	378	76	50%	20%	\$9,200	n/a
Rapid Rehousing	100	132	610	116	150%	20%	\$4,500	n/a
Transitional Housing	12	12	153	31	300%	20%	\$15,000	n/a
Homelessness Prevention	200	130	1,240	242	200%	30%	\$2,800	n/a

It should be noted here that the assumptions are being are specific to the City of Red Deer funding portfolio, and assume provincial investments to occur in treatment, second stage and recovery housing needed under the addictions, domestic violence, and mental health portfolios of Health and Community and Social Services. The new emergency shelter investment made is also excluded as this was already announced.

Model Limitations

There are several limitations to this model. The model uses higher population growth rates for the chronically- and episodically-homeless (5%) and transitional/at-risk groups (1%) compared to the Red Deer average (0.2%) annually to predict how the number of people experiencing homelessness will change over time. While a population growth rate reflects demography and migration, it does not reflect external factors that may uniquely impact homelessness (e.g., increases to the minimum wage or to average rents).

This rate can change significantly as a result of shifts in the economy impacting lower-income populations as well as public policy at the federal and provincial levels in particular. For instance, poverty rates are related to core housing need and homelessness risk, thus poverty reduction measures can mitigate homelessness risk; alternatively, sustained economic downturn can result in new groups entering the at-risk of homelessness group, leading to increased rates.

Without the prevention measures proposed as well as the new affordable housing and rent supplements, and provincial plans to address homelessness and poverty, we cannot assume current rates of homelessness risk to change for this group. This is an estimation that assumes that measures are put into place and are effective (Brydon, 2016)

Without consistent data sharing among programs, shelter providers, and outreach teams, we continue to have limited data on the number of unsheltered homeless or provisionally-accommodated individuals, particularly those sleeping rough. This model makes assumptions that a significant portion of individuals who sleep outdoors do not interface with the emergency shelter system.

Our supply-side figures are limited largely due to uncertainty about the future. Predicting the number of housing units and homeless-serving program spaces over a five-year period is challenging for a number of reasons: political priorities and funding allocations will change, the local economy will shift, and new program types will be introduced based on research, evidence, and best practice. Our model identifies the “known knowns” (e.g. confirmed affordable housing developments) and makes informed assumptions about how housing units and homeless-serving program spaces will change over time.

Implementation Cost Scenario Development

Assuming these figures as indicative of unmet demand in Red Deer, we then looked at the most effective ways of addressing needs over the next five years. We modeled various scenarios in which we served all chronic and episodically homeless individuals and varying figures from the transitionally-homeless and at-risk pools. We landed on the current scenarios as a means of addressing the immediate backlog of chronically- and episodically-homeless individuals while still moving into prevention and diversion for all groups – though the current measures, assume only 50% of transitionally-homeless and 20% of those at imminent risk would be served through new Plan measures.

The scenario also assumes limited capital investment focused on Permanent Supportive Housing complemented by Housing First Intensive Case Management and Rapid Rehousing to leverage already existing units in the non-market and private market.

There are several limitations to this approach; firstly, there is limited impact on lower-need populations and thus limited investment in affordable housing and prevention compared to programs proposed for higher-need groups. This points to the need for a complementary poverty and affordable housing strategy to step into this gap to address at-risk groups in a more fulsome manner. We chose to focus this Plan on measurable impact on visible and costly forms of homelessness with some prevention work as a means of leveraging existing resources and housing units. By no means is this approach the silver bullet to all homelessness; if implemented, however, it will make a visible dent in the current backlog and enable us to move increasingly upstream into more prevention longer term.

IN CLOSING

The Community Housing & Homelessness Integrated Plan builds upon current research and proven solutions that will assist the Red Deerians each year who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

To implement the CHHIP, intergovernmental, inter-agency cooperation and collaboration is critical. Indigenous networks, social service agencies, public systems, and the community at large need to work together for any approach to work.

This CHHIP platform represents a way forward for Red Deer to build on the success of the previous plan to end homelessness, address the lack of affordable housing, and improve mental health and addictions supports as the community works to mitigate the drug crisis. Unifying these priorities by sharing data and resources across agencies will enhance system-wide efficiencies. Similarly, bringing so many diverse stakeholders to the table will ensure that the resulting implementation will be informed by those working closest to the ground and thus is responsive to community needs.



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

At-Risk of Homelessness – People who are not currently homeless, but whose current social, economic and/or housing situation is precarious and/or does not meet public health and safety standards and are therefore more likely to become homeless.

Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Team – A client-centered, recovery-oriented mental health service delivery model that has received substantial empirical support for facilitating community living, psychosocial rehabilitation, and recovery for persons with complex, high acuity needs. Clients of ACT Teams have the most serious mental illnesses, have severe symptoms and impairments, and/or have not benefited from traditional outpatient programs.

Affordable Housing – Housing (rental/home ownership, permanent/temporary, private/social) that costs less than 30% of a household's before-tax income.

Case Management – A collaborative and client centered approach to service provision for persons experiencing homelessness. In this approach, a case worker assesses the needs of the client (and potentially their families) and when appropriate, arranges coordinates and advocates for delivery and access to a range of programs and services to address the individual's needs.

Coordinated Access Process – In Red Deer, the Coordinated Access Process is a weekly meeting of Housing First program providers to match clients that have been identified through Coordinated Entry as qualifying for support to program spaces. Coordinated Access need not be limited to Housing First programs, and can include representatives from multiple services and sectors to both prevent homelessness and match clients to services that will rapidly get people out of homelessness.

Coordinated Entry – In Red Deer, Coordinated Entry is the standardized approach to assessing a person's current situation, the acuity of their needs and the services they currently receive and may require in the future, and takes into account the background factors that contribute to risk and resilience, changes in acuity, the role of friends, family, caregivers, community, and environmental factors.

Core Housing Need – A household is in Core Housing Need if its housing falls below at least one of the standards for adequacy, affordability or suitability, which are defined as follows:

- Adequate housing is reported by their residents as not requiring any major repairs.
- Affordable housing has shelter costs equal to less than 30% of total before-tax household income.
- Suitable housing has enough bedrooms for the size and composition of resident households according to National Occupancy Standard requirements.

Households are also considered to be in Core Housing Need if they would have to spend more than 30% of its total before-tax income to pay the median rent of alternative local housing that meets all three housing standards.

Discharge/Transition Planning – Preparing someone to transition out of or between programs, systems or institutions (ex. child welfare, criminal justice, hospital etc.). Proper discharge planning begins early enough to ensure that housing and social and/or financial supports are lined up to ensure the individual or family can smoothly transition into their new environment. The lack of proper discharge/transition planning can cause service disruptions, and can directly cause homelessness.

Housing First – Both a program model and guiding philosophy for addressing homelessness, Housing First is a recovery-oriented, rights-based and client-driven approach that centers on quickly moving people experiencing homelessness into permanent housing of their choosing without preconditions around housing readiness. Accompanying access to housing, the Housing First approach includes the provision of additional supports and services as needed and desired by the client.

Housing First for Youth – Housing First for Youth (HF4Y) is a rights-based intervention for young people (aged 13-24) who experience homelessness, or who are at risk. It is designed to address the needs of developing adolescents and young adults by providing them with immediate access to housing that is safe, affordable and appropriate, and the age-appropriate supports that focus on health, well-being, life skills, engagement in education and employment, and social inclusion. The goal of HF4Y is not simply to provide housing stability, but to support young people as youth and facilitate a healthy transition to adulthood. HF4Y can be considered both as an intervention or program model, as well as a philosophy guiding a community's response to youth homelessness.

Intensive Case Management (ICM) Teams – A recovery-oriented, client-driven approach to meeting the needs of low-acuity clients who need intensive support for a shorter period of time than those with more complex needs. ICM teams are made up of housing and complementary support workers that will cover regular operating hours of 12 hours a day, 7 days a week. Case managers work one-on-one with their clients to broker access to services and accompany the client to meetings and appointments.

Family and Natural Support Programs – Interventions focused on strengthening relationships between young people and their families and/or natural supports through mediation or brokering access to services and support, with an aim to keep the young person in place, thereby preventing youth homelessness.

Permanent Supportive Housing – Housing that comes with individualized flexible and voluntary support services for people with high acuity and/or complex needs related to physical or mental health, developmental disabilities or substance use.

Point-in-Time (PiT) Counts – A method of data collection that provides a snapshot of the number of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a specific date in a community. People included in PiT Counts include those sleeping rough, staying in shelters, living in transitional housing units, and those living in public institutions. An accompanying survey is often offered to collect demographic and contextual data that may be compared over time.

Period Prevalence Counts – Often used in some small and rural communities, Period Prevalence Counts typically use administrative data from shelters to determine how many people were homeless over a period of time (a month, year, etc.). This form of data collection does not capture the unsheltered or hidden homeless population that does not interact with the shelter system.

Homelessness Prevention – Refers to policies, practices and interventions that reduce the likelihood that people will become homeless. The typology of homelessness prevention includes: Structural Prevention, Systems Prevention, Early Intervention, Evictions Prevention, and Housing Stabilization. Prevention efforts either intervene in structural, systems and individual/relational factors that cause homelessness. Adapted from the public health model, prevention efforts can be understood as follows:

- Primary Prevention: Interventions that apply to the broadest range of individuals to prevent homelessness from occurring in the first place

- Secondary Prevention: Interventions that support those at imminent risk of homelessness, as well as those who have recently become homeless to divert or get them out of homelessness and connected to housing and supports as quickly as possible.
- Tertiary Prevention: Supporting individuals and families with previous experiences of homelessness to prevent future housing loss.

Provisionally Accommodated – Refers to those whose accommodation is temporary or lacks security of tenure.

Rapid Re-Housing – A subset of the Housing First approach, Rapid Re-Housing is an intervention to move individuals and families into permanent housing as quickly as possible without readiness requirements. Programs may include financial assistance, housing location and landlord engagement services, and are typically targeted toward people experiencing episodic and transitional homelessness.

Rental Supplements – Refers to government-funded subsidies that reduce the cost of housing for households that cannot afford suitable and appropriate housing at market rates. Supplements can be used for private market rental units or government/non-profit social housing units.

Rough Sleepers – People that are living unsheltered on the streets or in spaces that are not intended for human habitation.

Service Coordination – Inter- or intra-organizational efforts/practices or policies that coordinate supports that will meet the needs of individuals and families to avoid service disruption, duplication or gaps.

Shelter Diversion – Strategies/protocols to divert individuals and families away from the homeless-serving system at first contact by identifying alternative temporary/permanent housing options, and connecting them with timely community-based supports and interventions that will address the issue(s) that led to their interaction with the homeless-serving system.

Social Housing – Rental housing that is owned and/or operated by an order of government, non-profit or both, offering affordable alternatives to market rental units for low-income individuals or families. Eligibility requirements for social housing units are often based on income thresholds that are determined by the housing provider. Other eligibility criteria may be set depending on the target demographic of the housing units (ex. Women fleeing violence, families, seniors, etc.).

Substance Use – Refers to the use of all types of prescription or illegal drugs, inhalants, solvents, and alcohol. Individuals develop a substance use problem when their consumption of drugs or alcohol cause harm to others, and can lead to addiction. Substance use problems and addictions can affect people at any age or stage of life.

Systems Failures – System failures occur when the target group of a policy, practice or intervention encounter gaps in the system, difficulty transitioning out of or between systems, difficulty navigating systems, or are unable to get support when, where and how they need it.

Systems Integration – Improving the interface, leveraging and coordination of multiple systems (public, non-profit, and private) both within and outside of the homeless-serving sector in order to better match, refer and transition individuals and families to the housing and support they need to prevent and address homelessness, as well as other social problems. Strategic systems integration can improve the overall efficiency and cost-effectiveness of a community's investments in housing and supports.

Systems Planning – A process of strategically mapping, coordinating and delivering policy, practice and programs to create a complete system of care that is able to nimbly respond to the needs of each unique client. Systems planning brings together diverse actors, sectors and systems around a common goal to align and leverage the collective strengths and resources within a given jurisdiction for improved outcomes and solutions to complex social problems.

Transitional Housing – Refers to supportive/supported accommodation to bridge the gap between homelessness or institutional care and permanent housing by offering structure, supervision, support, life skills, education, etc. Transitional housing models can be either congregate or scattered-site, and are particularly valuable for young people who lack experience and skills for living independently. It should be noted, however, that transitional housing that is inflexibly time-limited or lacks housing/support planning for residents that are reaching the end of their stay can cause further housing precarity and homelessness.

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