

Date: Wednesday, July 7, 2021

Time: 10:00am – 12:00pm

Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81161969426>

Introduction of Forum Co-Chairs

- Mark Aston, TAEH Chair and Executive Director, Covenant House
- Ashleigh Dalton, Manager, Strategic Policy and Service Planning, SSHA

Welcome and Land Recognition

- Ashleigh provided a land acknowledgement, acknowledging the traditional territory and treaty holders
- Noted that starting in September, agenda will include an item focusing on Indigenous cultural safety and reconciliation.
 - Send in any ideas of topics or items for discussion to Kira at kira@taeh.ca

Agenda Review

Ashleigh provided an overview of agenda items

Update on MyAccessstoHousing TO Application Portal Launch

Ola Mirzoeva, Policy Development Officer, Access to Housing, SSHA

On July 6th – the MyAccessstoHousing TO portal was launched, for completing a rent-geared-to-income (RGI) application

- RGI application process has moved online www.toronto.ca/accesstohousing
- All communications will go through portal.
- Notice of Assessment (NOA) can be submitted through portal as well
- People will have to register in the system, instructions sent by mail with unique code to register. Mailing schedule is online.
- People experiencing homelessness are prioritized to support transition onto the portal
- Housing Help Centres and Community Agency Partners can help support registration
- Libraries also partnered to support access to technology

Discussion

Q: Is the NOA required for the registration or annually for the income review?

A: Homeless clients don't need to have NOA to apply.

- Additional comments and feedback from participants:
 - A number of people commented that it is a huge endeavour to have NOA once receiving the RGI. Looking for opportunity to provide feedback on that.

- Meetings were held with Housing Help Centres and different partners; this was flagged that it would be huge undertaking, not just the NOAs but the transition to online.
 - Sector has been told there are no additional resources for this, but one participant suggested perhaps they could come together and create a business case.
 - Have to acknowledge that this can create a barrier to housing for people; even for those willing and wanting to participate it is very challenging, but many people who will not want to participate and/or are not be prepared
- Next step: To invite the SSHA Manager of Access to Housing to a future TAEH forum meeting to discuss this as a dedicated agenda item

Special Workshop: Telling effective stories to end homelessness using data and results-based accountability

Heath Priston, Manager, Business Intelligence, Service Planning and Integrity, SSHA; Stephanie Malcher, Manager, Coordinated Access, SSHA & Kira Heineck, Executive Lead, TAEH

Heath – Reviewed agenda for the workshop (see slide deck)

Results Based Accountability – RBA, purpose is to:

- Improve performance
- Help tell stories of a program to stakeholders
- Help tell a shared story of collective impact

RBA resources are free and accessible for anyone working in community work

<http://raguide.org/>

What is RBA?

- 2 kinds of accountability
 - for a population – whole populations
 - for performance – client populations
 - In our setting we can look at the 'whole population' is the homelessness service system level and the client population can be individuals or program-level
- 3 kinds of performance measures – 1. how much did we do, 2. how well did we do it, 3. is anyone better off as a result?
- 7 questions to help "turn the curve"
 - Who are our 'customers'?
 - How can we measure if they're better off?
 - How can we measure if we're delivering services well?
 - How are we doing on the important of these measures?
 - Who are the partners that have a role in doing better?
 - What works and what could work better?
 - What do we propose to do?

Key Terms:

- What is the 'result' or 'outcome' you want – a statement
- What are your 'indicators' or 'benchmarks' of achieving that result/outcome
- 'Performance Measures' - How well did the program do at achieving that result/outcome (How much, How well, Better off?)

Three Results/Outcome statements developed for SSHA/homelessness system, based on Housing TO

Alameda County in USA produces a report card every year, can review online https://us02st1.zoom.us/web_client/ar4ild/html/externalLinkPage.html?ref=https://everyonehome.org/about/committees/results-based-accountability-committee/

- Have a desired outcome – everyone has a safe home
- Have 3 indicators for this
- And have a series of performance measures categorized into 'how much' measures, 'how well' measures, and 'better off' measures.

Do we have the ability to drill down in our data, similar to what they have Alameda County?

- Valuable to bring forward examples of data that we think would be helpful to determine if we have it or what we can do to get that data
- Would be great to have longer term quality of life data, more to characterize if people are 'better off.'

Breakout Groups – Discuss the ways you currently measure or would like to measure:

- How much your agency/program is doing?
- How well your agency does it?
- Who do you know if the people you serve are better off

Full group discussion:

- Need to define the 'better off', what does that really mean
- Need to focus on the number of people who lose housing and return to homelessness, this must be the key priority, there has to be a better way
- People with lived experience must be involved in defining the measure, especially with respect to "are people better off", we need common indicators and measurements; look at what clients say about 'quality and being better off' and adopt those as the system performance measures
- Need to figure this out as a "system" – city, shelters, hospitals, emergency services – come together as a true system
- Has been an inundation of expectations around data collection – think it is now incumbent on the city to coordinate how we use it
- Need to push for improved race-based data
- Not doing a good job of looking at how well data links up with strategic goals across the system; what are our strategic goals as a system
- How many people return to homelessness 'data' is not well defined/clear; the proportion coming back from housing is quite low so where are all the others coming 'back' from?
- Current data is shelter focused, need housing focused data

Discussion on the outcome statement: Making homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring

- Very important – how do we end homelessness not just manage it
- Making sure that everything we do helps us to:
 - o Prevent homelessness
 - o Supporting people to find housing again quickly
 - o Deliver service to support people to maintain their housing
- The statement is in the HousingTO Action Plan, in the Toronto Housing For All Charter and part of SSHA's service plan
- We need a baseline – where are we starting from
- We need measures – those that Heath outlined (how much, how well, better off?)
- We need quality – timely data so we can see progress on a frequent basis
- We need to understand our own role and power to make change – how what we do is contributing to what we are all trying to do across Toronto

Stephanie highlighted the shelter system flow data and the data points used to look at the goals of 'rare, brief and non-recurring'

- Rare:
 - o Number of people actively experiencing homelessness (who use shelters) – i.e. people who have used the shelter system at least one time in the past three months and did not move to permanent housing
 - Important that discharge disposition is recorded accurately and it can now be updated within up to 14 days, for example if you find out they moved into housing
 - o Newly identified – entering the shelter system for the first time
 - Important not to create a new file for someone who is already in SMIS; it happens, so when it does, make request to merge the files
 - o One important piece of rare is the prevention piece but it is not reflected in the data that we have
- Brief:
 - o Percentage of people experiencing 'chronic homelessness' (based on federal definition)
 - Duplicate client files impact on this as well; again why it is important to always look for existing file in SMIS
 - o Moved to permanent housing
 - Make sure discharge disposition is recorded accurately
 - Other support/service providers can help with this by letting shelter provider know if they've helped someone move on to housing
- Non-recurring
 - o Returned from Permanent Housing
 - Critical to understand this group

Group Discussion

- Is there any data on those who have moved into permanent housing?
 - o Not through SMIS but may be captured by supportive housing providers
 - o Each housing agency has their own internal tenant surveys, usually tied to AGM, some element of 'customer satisfaction' could be gathered there

- We seem to have identified common population level results - we need a process to confirm these. Recommendation: that we do some work in our smaller systems (i.e. shelter, supportive, etc.) to identify shared outcomes and indicators that align with the population level results and then reconvene to identify our common big dots. There has been some work on shared outcomes and indicators through the Supportive Housing Growth Plan already. Both TSN and TAEH keen to do more on this.
- Critical issues:
 - o Need a better understanding what is happening around those returning to homelessness
 - o Need identified outcomes and performance measures for housing stability, wrap around supports
 - o Research community has some data, needs to be shared back, integrated
 - o Data integration, so much data captured outside of SMIS, must integrate system data, funders work together to develop a data strategy
 - o Formalize agreements with housing agencies/providers to use their anonymized tenant surveys

Other business/close

Next meeting – September