

# Toronto Housing and Homelessness Service System Planning Forum

## March 8, 2023

**Date and time:** March 8, 2023; 10:00am – 12:00pm

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81540086227>

### 1. SSHA Items and Updates

- **Shelter System Flow Data** by Trish Lenz, Acting Manager, Coordinated Access, SSHA
- Presented snapshots of the City of Toronto's website: [Shelter System Flow Data](#). In January 2023, there were 10,702 people actively homeless in the last three months (highest number recorded since January 2018).
- *Refer to slide deck presentation*
  - **Q:** Is there any data on homeless people access housing through rent café? How many people were housed in January through this DA code? January
  - **A:** We will follow-up with our colleagues in Access to Housing

### 2. Housing Secretariat Items and Updates

- **Update on RHI 3 and Review of Survey Results**, Matt Hilder, Manager, Policy & Program Planning
- City of Toronto will be sending our investment plan to CMHC for the Rapid Housing Initiative Phase 3 (a CMHC administered plan). We apply on behalf of our funders (our Indigenous and non-profit partners). [Rapid Housing Initiative | CMHC \(cmhc-schl.gc.ca\)](#)
- We provided a summary of the different population groups that we were able to secure units for in Phase 1 and 2. The City prioritizes new supportive housing for people experiencing homelessness in shelter system.
- We also conducted a survey with our partners to ensure the submission to the federal government was reflective of the needs of our priority populations. Used the 2021 Street Needs Assessment and Shelter Flow Data to complement the submission.
- Results from the survey also expressed a strong interest in feeding back to CMHC additional disabilities that need to be recognized (beyond physical).
- *Refer to slide deck presentation*
  - **Q:** Where are the refugees prioritized? It appears that CMHC is prioritizing refugees but the City isn't.
  - **A:** The City has funded partners that provide support to Toronto's refugee population. Also, there is federal funding coming.
  - <https://taeh.ca/s/Toronto-Alliance-to-End-Homelessness-2023-Federal-Budget-Submission-9efx.pdf>
  - **Q:** How many people completed the survey?

- **A:** There were 59 people who completed the survey. It was sent to over 400 people (14% response rate). Most of the responses came from organizations that were thinking about their own development projects.
- **Q:** Is there a reason why the focus is on physical disabilities and not disabilities more broadly? Wondering why people with mental illness and substance use problems are not considered priorities?
- **A:** CMHC does have a lens on disabilities, and have recognized other disabilities. The City has put forward our successes towards mental health investments in the submission, and we need to share this with our partners. There is a need to broaden the National Housing Strategy priority groups. Mental health needs to be recognized. It is a challenge in the shelter system and with people experiencing homelessness, and it must be a priority.
- **Q:** When do you expect to have approvals on the projects submitted?
- **A:** June 15, 2023.
- **Supportive Housing Graduate RGI Priority**, Aviva Levy, Senior Strategic Policy Consultant
- Update around the recent engagement with housing providers on revising our RGI priorities. These priorities have not been updated in over 20 years. The revised priorities have been sent to Council.
- The discussion focused on tenants who are receiving housing supports, who are now capable of living independently in RGI housing (using the definition of readiness from the City of Ottawa).
- Discussion questions included 'what life skills are required to maintain a home?'
- The goal for the revision to RGI priorities is to create a flow in the system – housing with low intensity supports versus housing with high intensity supports, and how do we make sure that people are 'ready' to live independently in RGI housing.
- The revisions and implementation will be ready for July 1, 2023.
- There has been some work like this in the U.S. HUD provides some templates, etc. <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/moving-on/>
- *Refer to slide deck presentation*
  - **Q:** This seems contradictory to the Housing First approach; has the City shifted from this approach?
  - **A:** No, people need to have the skills to be successfully housed, and will still be assessed to ensure their readiness for independent living. This is an opportunity for our clients to be able to access permanent affordable housing. The shift is towards the need to have access to affordable housing when people are deemed 'ready'.
  - **Q:** When a person moves to RGI housing, what happens if independent living does not work and can they return to the supportive housing provider?

- **A:** Currently, the focus is on the transition to independent living. Housing providers understand the transition process and will have appropriate supports available. People need successful transition plans. We will also support people through short-stay residential programs (mental health and/or substance use) so that they can stabilize without losing their permanent housing once in independent living.

### 3. TAEH Updates

- **Beyond Housing Pilot**, Chirysh Dupie, Care Conference Access Coordinator, TAEH & John Ecker, Research Manager MAP Centre for Urban Health Solutions
- This pilot project builds on the research findings from the At Home/Chez Soi research project, where we know there are gaps within the Housing First approach.
- This is a three year pilot project with an evaluation conducted by St. Michael's Hospital. The pilot project will be within Dixon Hall's three shelter/hotel programs.
- There are three main components: 1) care conference tables (person centred and focused on different populations), 2) wellness team (physical and mental health care supports, including counselling – focused on trauma, community integration via community support workers, and health and social system navigation), 3) open-ended and long-term case management in partnership with LOFT community services (working with clients earlier in the housing process to support rapport development).
- *Refer to slide deck presentation*
  - **Q:** Will the team be St. Michael's hospital staff?
  - **A:** No, we have found more success when staff from community agencies are doing this work.
  - **Q:** How are people referred?
  - **A:** Dixon Hall staff from the three shelter/hotel programs will identify residents/clients who would be a good fit for the project.
  - **Q:** Where are the housing opportunities located?
  - **A:** We are not offering housing, just working with partners (Dixon Hall, TCHC and private housing) to pilot the project.
  - **Q:** What makes this pilot successful re: the connection to supports?
  - **A:** When working with clients, we investigate programs and supports that the person would be interested in or need, such as language or translation services. Coordinating with Dixon Hall has made the program more successful.

### 4. Community Presentation

- **Community Gathering to Support Downtown East HIV**, Health and Housing Providers, Nadine Sookermany, Fife House

- In January 2023, there was a downtown east community gathering in which Fife House was part of. A lot of community partners attended. The focus was on health, housing and HIV.
- The reason for this gathering: partners were feeling very disconnected from one another so they wanted to discuss strategies for shared resources, collaborative spaces, network of services for care, and connections for HIV supports.
- The gathering was very successful because this was the first time, post-COVID that partners could network in-person in the past three years.
- Partners agreed to meet every other month with a goal to remain connected.
- If you are in the downtown east, your organization is welcome to join. Please reach out reach out to Savhanna or Nadine: [nsookermany@fifehouse.org](mailto:nsookermany@fifehouse.org)
- *Refer to slide deck presentation*
  - **Q:** Is the gathering always in-person or can it be a hybrid meeting?
  - **A:** We might have the capacity to do a hybrid meeting.

#### **5. Other Business** (Savhanna Wilson, TAEH)

- Suggestion for future presentations:
  - new rooming house changes
  - prioritization sub-committee from SSHA

**Next meeting:** Wednesday April 12, 2023, 10:00 am -12:00 pm  
**Zoom Meeting**