

# A PROGRESS REPORT ON HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS IN ALBERTA

ALBERTA INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS

April 1, 2013 - March 31, 2014 | Presented to the Minister of Human Services

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COUNCIL SAYS PROVINCIAL PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS IS WORKING,  
BUT MORE AFFORDABLE HOUSING IS NEEDED ACROSS ALBERTA.



Albertans who were homeless or at risk of becoming homeless are receiving help through the work of the 10-Year Plan.

## OUR VISION

*By 2019, all Albertans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to safe, affordable, permanent housing and the supports required to maintain their housing.*

## IN THIS REPORT

This Report describes the Council's progress in leading changes that are necessary to sustain the success of *A Plan for Alberta: Ending Homelessness in 10 Years*. Reflecting on the current state of housing and homelessness in Alberta, this Report includes the Council's appraisal of the systemic challenges to the success of the 10-Year Plan, outlines the Council's proposed solutions, and the actions the Council has taken to move these solutions forward.

## INTERAGENCY COUNCIL

IS MOVING ALBERTA'S 10-YEAR PLAN FORWARD

The Alberta Interagency Council on Homelessness is working to make sure that *A Plan for Alberta: Ending Homelessness in 10 Years* is successful. The goal of the 10-year Plan is that by 2019, all Albertans have access to a permanent and safe place to call home. Together, the 33 members of the Council have taken stock of risks that could derail the Plan, and are laying the ground work to make sure it stays on track.

Council members know that homelessness is not a problem that can be solved in isolation. Homelessness has no singular cause and no singular solution because the path into homelessness is unique to every individual, and so is the journey to a permanent and stable home. Council members also agree that housing will always be a part of that solution. The right combination of housing and supports varies according to each person's abilities and needs. Making sure those housing options and programs are available to Albertans where and when they need them is what the Council is working towards.

## MARKING THE HALFWAY POINT OF THE 10-YEAR PLAN

The 10-year Plan represents a big shift in how homelessness has traditionally been addressed in Alberta. It's a roadmap for transforming a system that has been geared to managing homelessness through an expensive, crisis intervention approach, into a system that ends homelessness through prevention and immediate access to housing and the supports people need to stay housed. That system is big – it's made up of community and government services, policies, and funding. At its centre are Albertans: individuals and families who come from a variety of backgrounds and whose only common trait may be that they do not have permanent, stable housing.

The Plan's five priority areas specify how each part of the system can be transformed. It includes a combination of more housing options, a housing first approach, effective public policy, better data, and coordinated systems.

This past year has marked the halfway point of that ambitious plan, and the Council is asking tough questions about what needs to happen in the next five years to make sure housing and homelessness systems are integrated, resourced, and effective. [Read about the status of Alberta's 10-Year Plan and the challenges still to overcome on page 4.](#)

## A LOOK AT THE COUNCIL'S FIRST-YEAR ACHIEVEMENTS

Since coming together in February 2013, members have assessed the risks to the Plan's success and translated those into priority areas. Members agree that ending homelessness requires a full spectrum approach that includes:

- > preventing homelessness;
- > providing homeless individuals and families with immediate access to permanent housing and appropriate supports to maintain the housing;
- > ensuring a range of affordable housing options are in place to meet Alberta's long-term housing needs.

In its first year, the Council provided recommendations to the Government of Alberta on all of these issues. At the very centre of the Council's advice is the understanding that ending homelessness and having an adequate provincial supply of affordable housing are inseparable tasks. The integration of governments' approach to the delivery and funding of homelessness supports and affordable housing is embedded throughout the Council's recommendations. [Read about the Council's first-year achievements and recommendations to the Government of Alberta in "Council Priorities & Achievements" on page 6.](#)





FRANCO SAVOIA, CO-CHAIR

On behalf of the members of the Alberta Interagency Council on Homelessness, we are pleased to provide the Council's first annual progress report.

In January 2013, the Government of Alberta created the Council as a forum for 33 leaders in housing and homelessness to build the solutions that would see *A Plan for Alberta: Ending Homelessness in 10 Years* to success. We can point to remarkable achievements during the first five years of the Plan. Housing First programs have helped thousands of Albertans to re-build their lives from the security of their own homes. And because people are well-supported within their homes and less reliant on expensive public systems when in crises, the Plan is demonstrating a return on investment. Upon government approval, we also look forward to supporting A Plan to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness in Alberta (the Youth Plan) as it is implemented within communities across the province. The Youth Plan, which will be the first of its kind in Canada, is the first provincial response to a specialized population under the 10-Year Plan. Through the leadership of community-based organizations, Housing First service providers, emergency shelter providers, private partners, and government, we have come a long way in our shared efforts to shift our approach from managing homelessness, to ending homelessness.

At the mid-way point of that Plan, it is time to take stock and ask critical questions about what we need to do to end homelessness by 2019. The Council has done that, and has determined that there are risks to the Plan's success. The rest of the journey requires us to build the housing and homelessness system and the system capacity that will prevent people from falling into homelessness, and rapidly rehouse those who are homeless in permanent and stable housing.

## MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

FRANCO SAVOIA, CO-CHAIR  
MARY ANNE JABLONSKI, CO-CHAIR

Those systems need to be in place in order to address the following challenges:

- > There is a housing crisis in Alberta across the housing spectrum. Development of new affordable housing for those experiencing homelessness has not kept pace with needs. As a result, there is an inadequate supply of affordable housing across the province, and particularly for those who need a high level of support to remain stably housed.
- > Difficulties in creating welcoming space for vulnerable Albertans in some of our neighbourhoods is stifling forward progress on the development of new affordable housing options.
- > There is a disjointed approach to planning, funding, monitoring, and delivering housing and support services. Integrating some of these processes will result in better outcomes for Albertans in housing need.
- > Prevention strategies have not been a priority. Over 9,400 people have been housed since the beginning of the Plan, but there is still high demand for emergency shelters across the province.
- > We must make sure that people have access to housing and supports that are tailored to their unique circumstances and experiences. Groups of individuals who benefit from specialized programming include youth, seniors, Aboriginal people, women and families fleeing violence, people with disabilities, and newcomers to Alberta.



MARY ANNE JABLONSKI, CO-CHAIR

None of these issues can be solved in isolation. That is why the Council contributes a housing and homelessness lens to Government of Alberta policy initiatives, such as the *Municipal Government Act Review*, *Together We Raise Tomorrow* and *Social Policy Framework* consultations.

We commit that the Council will continue to broker new partnerships and champion initiatives that will address these challenges. But much of this change has to be led by government. The Council has put forward solutions to these challenges, which are summarized on page 6 and 7. We look to leadership in government to turn these solutions into action. In some cases, that means more resources but in many cases it means transforming our approach.

We share, with the Government of Alberta, a common vision: to permanently end homelessness in Alberta by 2019. The Government of Alberta has invested their trust in the members of the Council to point the way there, and the Council will continue to call attention to the critical path to reach that goal. Achieving consensus among such diverse perspectives is not always easy. However, we have provided carefully considered strategic advice that will drive changes to provincial funding and investment strategies in housing and homelessness systems, and will guide the transformation of service delivery to be more integrated and outcomes-focused.

Thank you for investing your trust in this group of individuals to take a hard look at what needs to be done to see the Plan through to success. We've honoured this task, and will continue to provide you with honest assessments and necessary actions to reach our shared goal of permanently ending homelessness in Alberta by 2019.

Sincerely,  
Franco Savoia, 2013-14 Co-Chair  
Mary Anne Jablonski, MLA, 2013-14 Co-Chair

### ORGANIZATIONS AND SECTORS REPRESENTED BY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Alberta Association of Chiefs of Police  
Alberta Council of Women's Shelters  
Alberta Health  
Alberta Health Services  
Alberta Human Services  
Alberta Justice and Solicitor General  
Alberta Municipal Affairs  
Alberta Urban Municipalities Association  
Alberta Secretariat for Action on Homelessness (Former)  
Albertan with Lived Experience  
Apartment and Residential Rental Associations  
City of Calgary  
City of Edmonton  
Community-Based Organizations  
Family and Community Support Services  
First Nations, Métis, Inuit Organizations  
Government of Canada  
Habitat for Humanity  
Homeless Shelter Operators  
Housing First Service Delivery Agencies  
Housing Management Bodies

### THE COUNCIL'S ROLE

Established in February 2013, the Alberta Interagency Council on Homelessness is a unique partnership between community leaders and all orders of government.

The Council has been tasked with identifying systemic barriers, developing solutions, and providing strategic recommendations to the Government of Alberta, through the Minister of Human Services.

The Council's work will result in lasting policy shifts that will lead us away from perpetually managing homelessness, and towards permanently ending it.

*"We can point to remarkable achievements during the first five years of the Plan...  
The Council has [also] determined that there are risks to the Plan's success."*

~ Council Co-Chairs Savoia and Jablonski



## RESULTS SNAPSHOT

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE COUNCIL'S FIRST YEAR

### STRATEGY AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Progress on an **Integrated Housing and Supports Framework** to guide housing and homelessness planning, investments, and service delivery.

Policy recommendations to the Government of Alberta for increased capital investments in affordable housing, stronger emphasis on homelessness prevention, and the creation of a provincial housing strategy to address Alberta's long-term housing needs.

### FUNDING MODEL REVIEW

A **Funding Framework** to support innovative and sustainable approaches to financing housing development and service delivery.

### STRATEGIC RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

Working with the Alberta Centre for Child, Family and Community Research to develop an **Alberta Housing and Homelessness Research Strategy** to guide policy and practice decisions.

Working with the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness to develop a Canada-wide **Framework for Homelessness Prevention**.

### SPECIALIZED POPULATIONS

A focus on particularly vulnerable Albertans who can benefit from access to housing and supports that are specifically tailored to their strengths and experiences.

## ABOUT A PLAN FOR ALBERTA:

ENDING HOMELESSNESS IN 10 YEARS

In 2009, Alberta became the only province committed to ending homelessness. This is a fundamental change in how homelessness has traditionally been addressed, and requires a shift in thinking and approach. The 10-Year Plan is the road map to take us from managing homelessness to ending homelessness, and it is on track with Alberta's direction on social policy.

The 10-Year Plan has already had an impact for thousands of people who have received housing and supports, and for the agencies that deliver housing services to Albertans in need. In the longer term, it will have a lasting impact on government's approach to housing and homelessness, including "better integration of policy and delivery systems, an enhanced focus on outcomes, and increased policy capacity and innovation." (Alberta's Social Policy Framework)

### AN INTEGRATED APPROACH



### THE 10-YEAR PLAN INCLUDES 5 PRIORITY AREAS:

#### MORE HOUSING OPTIONS

Increasing the quantity and variety of housing options so that every Albertan has a home.

#### BETTER INFORMATION

Collecting, researching, and sharing essential information that focuses on outcomes.

#### AGGRESSIVE ASSISTANCE

Making sure Albertans have the resources they need to secure and keep stable homes.

#### COORDINATED SYSTEMS

Ensuring governments, agencies, and communities work together in an integrated, efficient way towards shared objectives.

#### EFFECTIVE POLICIES

Implementing government policies that bring down barriers to re-housing and actively promote the goal of ending homelessness.

### HOUSING FIRST IS A PILLAR OF THE 10-YEAR PLAN

The "housing first" approach recognizes that people are better able to break the cycle of homelessness from the safety and security of their own home. People in housing first programs are provided with permanent and affordable housing, and access to supports that will help them stay housed and move towards greater self-sufficiency. [See the Housing First Report on page 4.](#)



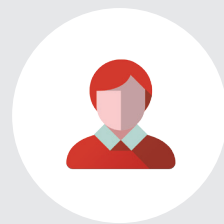
Everyone has access to safe, affordable, permanent housing.

## THE BOLD VISION

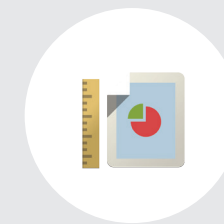
OF THE 10 YEAR PLAN



Addressing root causes of homelessness is essential to ending homelessness.



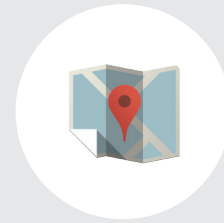
Preventing and ending homelessness is a shared responsibility.



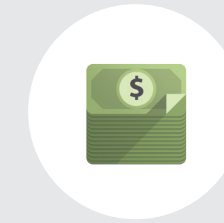
Programs & services are evidence-informed in their planning, and demonstrate measurable outcomes.



Current essential services and supports are maintained during the transition to permanent housing.



Goals & initiatives are client-centered and community-driven.



Funding is long-term, predictable, and aligned with a community plan to end homelessness.

# REPORT TO DATE

## THE 10-YEAR PLAN AND CHALLENGES

Key facts and figures show the significant impact of the Plan in the first 5 years: new government investments and Housing First-focused programming in Alberta's largest communities have resulted in thousands of homeless Albertans receiving housing with supports. That can only happen when community organizations and governments work together to bring the right combination of housing and services to each of those individuals.

But what about the next steps in this journey? How should these successes be turned into permanent solutions so that anyone, anywhere in the province can access housing and appropriate supports if they become homeless? How do we prevent people from becoming homeless in the first place?

The data also point to trends and issues that may pose challenges to the long-term success of the Plan. Council members considered these and contributed knowledge from within their own field of expertise to collectively assess the current state of the Plan, and pose the key questions that need to be answered to move Alberta closer to ending homelessness.

## 2009 - 2014

### HOUSING FIRST REPORT

#### 5 Year Key Achievements

9,451 homeless Albertans entered Housing First programs. They have been provided housing and individualized supports that will help them remain housed.

3,037 people have 'graduated' from Housing First, meaning they are able to maintain their housing.

73% of Housing First clients have remained housed for at least 12 months. (Target provincial outcome: 85%)

#### Changes in how Housing First clients use public systems, after receiving housing\*

\*Changes in utilization of public systems were self-reported by Housing First program participants.

**Health**  
 Interactions with EMS: reduced by 61%  
 Emergency Room visits: reduced by 54%  
 Days in Hospital: reduced by 67%

**Justice**  
 Interactions with Police: reduced by 59%  
 Days in jail: reduced by 85%  
 Court appearances: reduced by 52%

Figures compare systems use among participants for the year prior to being housed to the first year in housing.

#### Housing First Program Participant Information

The following provides information about the people who are participating in Housing First programs throughout Alberta.

It is not reflective of Alberta's overall homeless population. All information is self-reported by clients.

- > Gender breakdown Male: 57% Female: 43%
- > 33% Aboriginal people
- > 30% individuals experiencing family violence\*
- > 14% unaccompanied youth (Up to 24 years old)
- > 1% seniors (65+)
- > 1% recent migrants to Alberta\*
- > 1% newcomers to Canada\* (includes landed immigrant, temporary foreign workers, international students, refugee claimants)
- > Clients reporting mental health issues: 43%, physical health issues: 44%, substance abuse issues: 47%. (Clients may report more than one.)

\*Data is for April 1, 2012 - March 31, 2014 only.

#### >>> KEY QUESTIONS <<<

- How should Housing First be tailored for youth? Aboriginal people? Seniors? Women fleeing violence? Immigrants? People with disabilities?
- How should we ensure adequate access to mental health and addictions treatment?
- What's the scope of rural homelessness in Alberta and what should be done about it?

## HOUSING

Government of Alberta investments in housing development for those experiencing homelessness.

The 10-Year Plan estimated that to end homelessness, \$1.258 billion should be invested to build 8,000 new units over 10 years.

#### Progress to date on the construction of the 1,966 units with committed funding.

Completed Units	Units To Be Completed
1,013 (52%)	953 (48%)

#### Capital investments in Housing for the Homeless (millions).

2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
\$100	\$58	\$34	\$0	\$0	\$0

#### Government of Alberta investments in temporary housing for those experiencing homelessness (millions). \*2014/15 figures are estimates.

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Women's Shelters	\$25.1	\$26.0	\$26.4	\$27.7	\$28.8	\$31.9
Youth Shelters	\$4.2	\$4.3	\$4.3	\$5.2	\$5.2	\$5.2
Emergency/Short Term/Long Term Supportive Housing	\$42.3	\$41.0	\$39.1	\$39.0	\$40.0	\$39.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$71.6</b>	<b>\$71.3</b>	<b>\$69.8</b>	<b>\$71.9</b>	<b>\$74.0</b>	<b>\$76.3</b>

#### >>> KEY QUESTIONS <<<

- How do we increase the supply of affordable housing?
- How can we reach the Plan's housing investment target of \$1.258 billion?
- What are the long-term projections for housing need in Alberta?
- How do we create space for vulnerable Albertans in established neighbourhoods?
- What's the long term vision the role of emergency shelters in Alberta?
- What's the private sector's role in housing?
- What impact does industry have on housing affordability in rural areas?

## PROGRAMMING

Government of Alberta investments in Housing First programming provides housing and a range of supports to Albertans experiencing homelessness.

#### Government of Alberta investments in Housing First programming. (millions)

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Pathways to Housing	\$2.4	\$2.5	\$2.5	\$2.5	\$2.5	\$2.5
Alberta Health Services				\$5.0	\$5.0	\$5.0
Rent Supplements	\$75.1	\$75.3	\$58.9	\$59.1	\$52.5	\$52.3
Housing First Graduate Rental Assistance			\$4.0			
Housing First	\$31.6	\$41.2	\$47.5	\$59.8	\$59.8	\$85.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$109.1</b>	<b>\$119.0</b>	<b>\$112.9</b>	<b>\$126.4</b>	<b>\$119.8</b>	<b>\$145.3</b>

#### >>> KEY QUESTIONS <<<

- How should housing and program funding and delivery be better integrated?
- How do we ensure there's a range of housing options and supports to meet a range of needs?



## EMERGENCY SHELTERS IN ALBERTA: KEY FACTS

Changes in the number of people using emergency shelters is one indicator that can be used to measure how effectively homeless Albertans are being re-housed. Reductions may indicate that people are finding their way out of homelessness and are being appropriately housed. Shelter occupancy rates by themselves, however, are not a sign of the Plan's overall progress because economic fluctuations, weather, in-migration, employment levels, poverty rates and other factors will always have an effect on how many people are homeless at any given time. Shelters are often a first point of contact for people experiencing a housing crisis, and are a critical part of the homeless-serving system for redirecting people out of homelessness as quickly as possible.

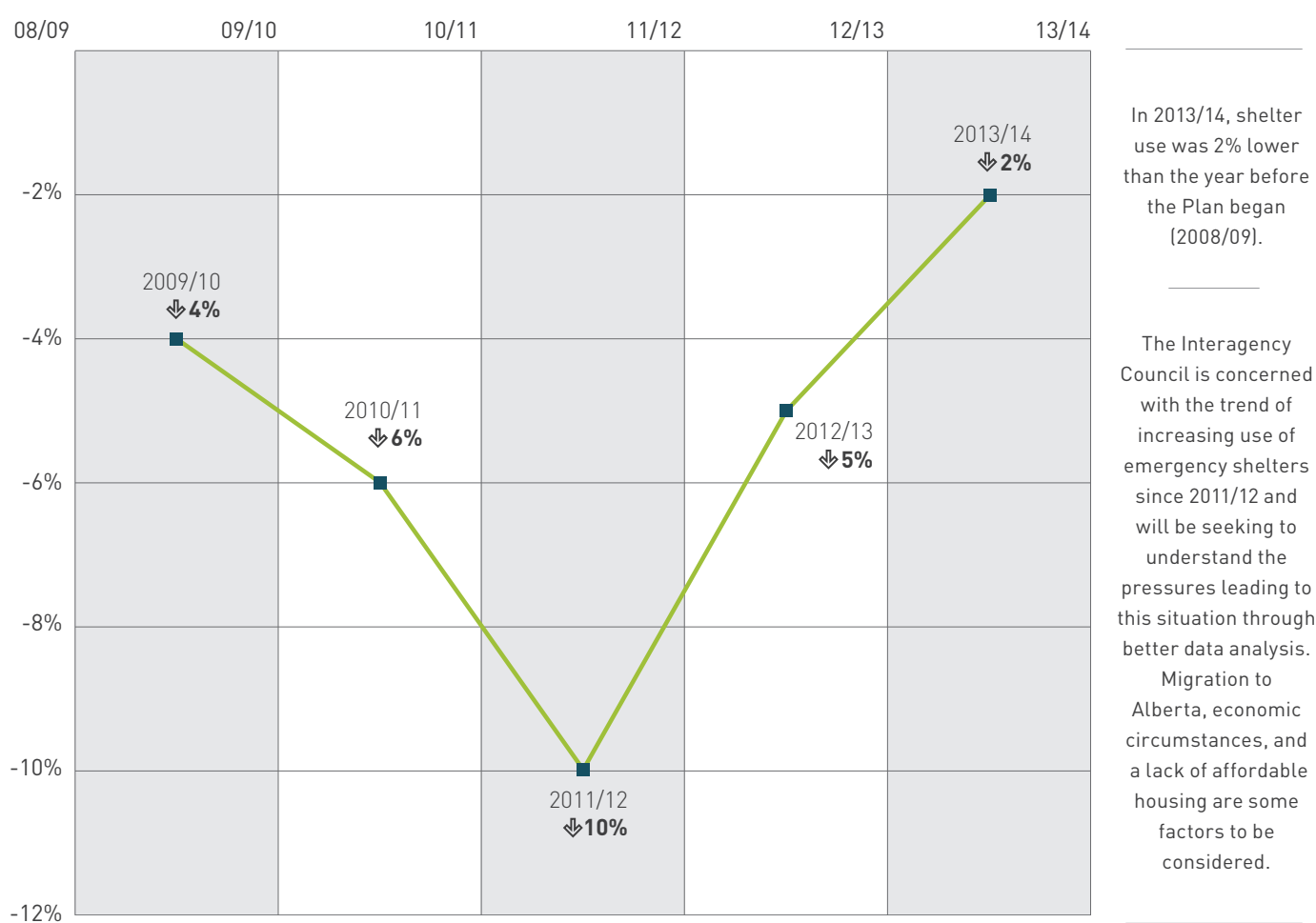
### Shelter Capacity in Alberta is Dropping

Ten-year plans in Alberta and elsewhere include an expectation that as the number of chronically homeless individuals decrease, resources could be shifted from emergency responses towards permanent housing and supports.

- > Since 2009 the total number of funded spaces across the province has decreased by 10%.

## EMERGENCY SHELTER USE IN ALBERTA

IN 2013/14, THE ALBERTA GOVERNMENT FUNDED 3,193 SPACES IN 26 EMERGENCY HOMELESS SHELTERS IN THE PROVINCE, (NOT INCLUDING SHELTERS FOR YOUTH OR WOMEN FLEEING VIOLENCE).



### CHANGE IN THE OCCUPANCY RATE OF SHELTER BEDS PER YEAR COMPARED TO THE YEAR BEFORE THE 10-YEAR PLAN BEGAN (2008/09).

Province-wide, use of Government of Alberta-funded shelters is lower since the Plan began in 2009/10. However, shelter use has increased in the past two years.

### New Shelter Data is Coming

New data collection systems rolled out across the province in 2013 are providing more information about who is using emergency shelters and how long people are staying in shelters before finding their own way out or being assisted into housing programs. This data will be essential for monitoring effectiveness of programming and targeting resources more appropriately.

## NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

Transforming a system that is made up of many community and government programs that people touch on their journey into and out of homelessness is difficult. These are just a few projects that are changing the way agencies and systems respond to people who are in housing crisis:

### THE SHELTER VISIONING PROJECT

The Shelter Visioning Project is promoting dialogue in seven major centres across Alberta to define the role of emergency shelters within the local homeless-serving system. Shelters play a key part in the overall response to homelessness by triaging, assessing, and referring people to appropriate housing in the community.

### HOUSING FIRST QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (2013-16)

This project will track the experiences of over 6,600 formerly homeless people who have participated in Housing First programs across the province. It will show how their interactions with publicly-funded health, corrections, and justice systems have changed since receiving permanent housing and supports. Other Canadian studies have shown that Housing First is less costly than relying on emergency responses and this project will measure if Alberta's experience is similar.

### CONNECTING HOMELESS CLIENTS WITH GOVERNMENT SUPPORTS IN LETHBRIDGE

A Lethbridge-based project tested a new process to connect chronically homeless clients more quickly with government programs and supports. Streamlining systems, removing barriers, and improving access to supports are critical to making sure people receive the supports they need to remain stably housed. Lessons learned from the Lethbridge project will inform changes in practice in other communities.

### COORDINATED DISCHARGE PLANNING AT ALBERTA HOSPITAL EDMONTON

In this test project, patients at Alberta Hospital Edmonton's Acute Care Mental Health Unit were connected with government and community programs, such as Housing First, prior to being discharged. Supported by Alberta's Information Sharing Strategy, the project is informing transition planning across the health, corrections and human services sectors, so that in the future, no one is discharged into homelessness from a provincial institution.

### ADDITIONAL MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES FROM ALBERTA HEALTH

Well over 40% of Housing First clients report mental health and/or addiction issues. A \$15 million three-year funding commitment (2012/13 to 2014/15) from Alberta Health is helping to make sure Albertans remain housed by providing additional mental health and addiction services for homeless Albertans in Housing First programs. This funding enhanced existing services in Calgary, Edmonton, and Lethbridge. Supporting vulnerable Albertans is also an important part of *Creating Connections: Alberta's Addiction and Mental Health Strategy*.

2013-14  
**COUNCIL PRIORITIES  
 & ACHIEVEMENTS**

**COUNCIL PRIORITIES**

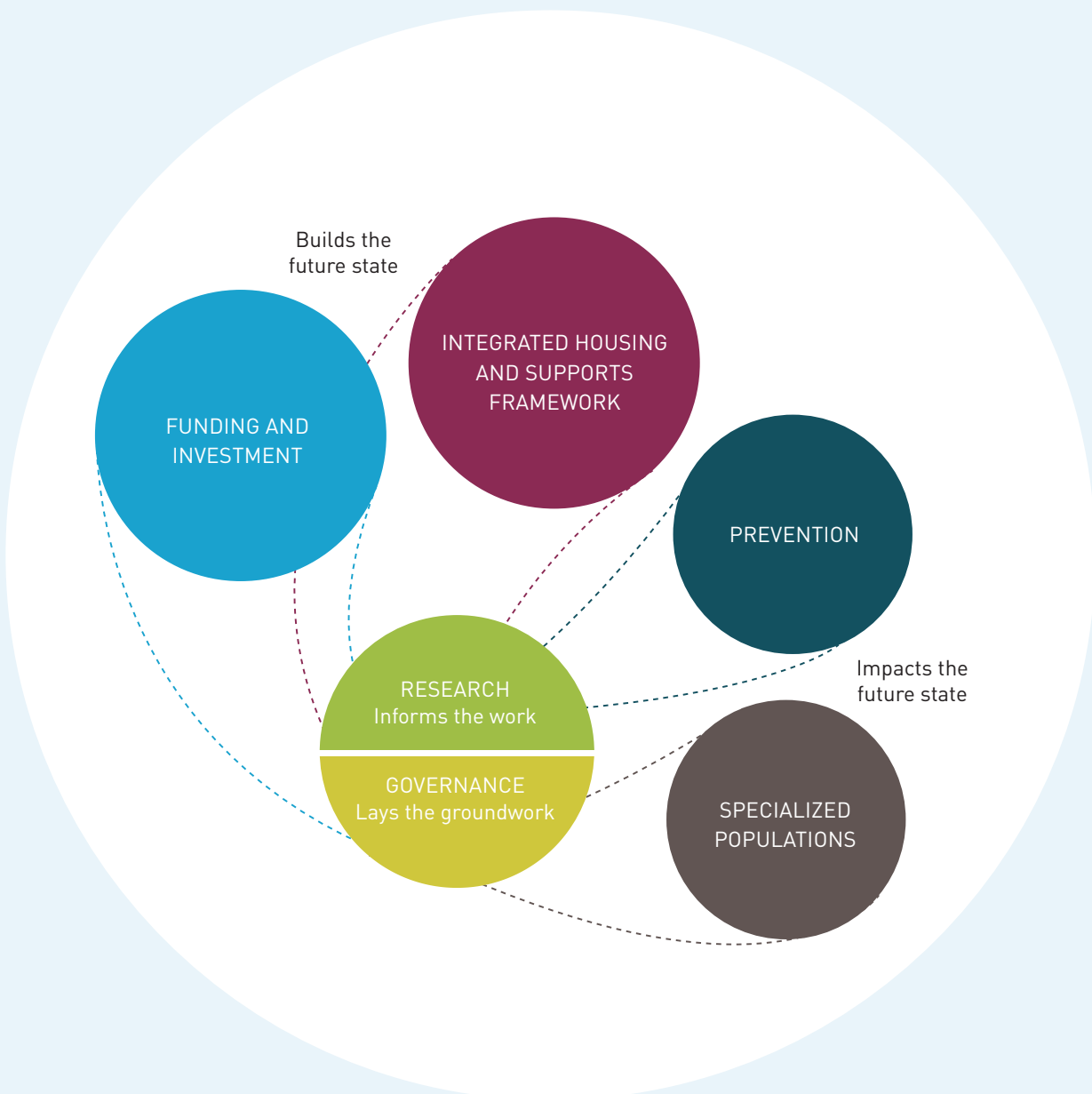
Aboriginal people, youth, seniors, women fleeing violence, newcomers, persons with disabilities, and other sub-populations have access to specialized housing and support services that are tailored to their unique circumstances and experiences.

Prevention of homelessness is adequately resourced and successful.

Sustainable investment strategies are in place to achieve the successful implementation of the 10-Year Plan.

Integrated case management and service delivery are characteristics of local homeless-serving systems.

The root causes of homelessness are addressed through integrated service delivery and public policy.



The Council was established at a crucial time in the 10-Year Plan's lifespan: government and communities have laid the groundwork for shifting the approach from managing to ending homelessness, but significant challenges to its long-term success remain.

The Council is guiding the next phase of the 10-Year Plan by making sure the long-term systems are in place that will prevent and permanently end homelessness. This will impact how provincial and community-based housing and services are organized and delivered.

In response to the issues that members assessed as challenges to the 10-Year Plan's success, the Council adopted priorities that will drive its work over the three years of its mandate. The priorities are provincial in scope, interdependent, and require the collective participation of multiple community and government partners.

2013-14  
**COUNCIL ACHIEVEMENTS**

The Council has achieved a great deal in the first year of its mandate. Members explored the systemic changes necessary to sustain the forward progress of the Plan, and began leading the way on removing barriers to the ultimate success of the 10-Year Plan. The Council recognizes that the integration of housing and homelessness efforts across departmental and organizational boundaries will have a significant and positive long-term impact on funding strategies and service delivery. This perspective has been ingrained within the Council's activities in 2013/14, as described below.

⇒ **INTEGRATING HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS EFFORTS**

At the very centre of the Council's efforts is the recognition that housing and homelessness must be inseparable in any approach and indistinguishable in any solution. The biggest challenge to the 10-Year Plan going forward is the separate and often disjointed approaches to providing social and affordable housing and efforts to end homelessness.

**STRATEGY AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

The Council's primary focus is on influencing policy change within government, which will in turn drive changes to how housing and homelessness is addressed throughout the province. It provides a housing and homelessness lens through which policy initiatives should be viewed.

*The Integrated Housing and Supports Framework* drafted by the Council will combine the physical housing with support programs to better meet peoples' needs. The Framework will integrate the funding, delivery, and evaluation of housing and supports across Alberta, including those delivered under the 10-Year Plan. Multiple ministries and organizations will contribute to the Framework's development and will participate in bringing it to life.

To date, the Council has developed key components of the Framework, including the Housing and Supports Spectrum, the identification of specialized populations, and roles and responsibilities of key partners who play a role. [See the Housing and Supports Spectrum on page 8.](#)

**A Plan to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness in Alberta:** The Council has endorsed the creation of the Youth Plan in order to focus on the unique needs of this population.

**Municipal Government Act Review:** Council members put forward potential revisions to the Act that will remove barriers and improve municipalities' ability to develop more social and affordable housing.

**Together We Raise Tomorrow, Alberta's Social Policy Framework, Results-based Budgeting, Poverty Reduction Strategy, Children's Charter, Creating Connections: Alberta's Addiction and Mental Health Strategy:** The Council provided housing and homelessness-specific insights into the development and evolution of these Government of Alberta policy initiatives.

**FUNDING MODEL REVIEW**

Developing innovative, diversified approaches to financing housing development and service delivery has the potential to increase the housing supply in Alberta and reduce the number of homeless citizens.

In order to determine sustainable investment strategies, the Council assessed current funding models used to finance the full spectrum of housing and supports. In addition, the Council is evaluating social financing strategies as potential approaches to diversify housing and supports.

To support these efforts, the Council is working on: **A Framework for Homeless Capital and Supports Funding** that, if adopted, will strengthen accountability of government-funded development and expedite delivery of outstanding capital projects for housing for the homeless.

**COUNCIL OPERATIONS**

The Council's priorities are translated into meaningful action by six committees. All decision-making, including the selection of priorities and the determination of an appropriate course of action, is by consensus. This model is challenging for a council with such diverse members and where there are pre-existing relationships, but members remain committed to this approach, which contributes to comprehensive, well-thought out solutions.



### DEFINED KEY TERMINOLOGY

In order to develop a seamless narrative between stakeholders, community organizations and government, the Council defined key terminology. A shared understanding of language brings clarity and efficiency to discussions surrounding priorities, policy, and recommendations.

The Council defined two key terms that will be embedded within its strategic policy work:

Integration as it applies to the *Integrated Housing and Supports Framework*.

*Prevention of Homelessness*, including Primary Prevention, Secondary Prevention, and Tertiary Prevention. [See the full definitions on page 8.](#)

### RESEARCH AND PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The research partnerships and projects the Council has initiated will contribute to ensuring the Council's efforts, and all decisions made within the context of the Plan, are informed by evidence.

The Council has formed a partnership with *The Alberta Centre for Child, Family, and Community Research* to drive Alberta-focused housing and homelessness research efforts, support community-based research, and leverage new research funding.

This partnership will result in:

**An Alberta Housing and Homelessness Research Strategy** that supports the priorities that the Council recognizes as key to the success of the 10-Year Plan. The Strategy will coordinate research efforts in order to guide the necessary shifts in housing and homelessness policy and delivery.

**A Rural Homelessness Scoping Initiative** that will provide a better understanding of rural homelessness in Alberta.

**A Data Linkage Strategy** that will link valuable cross-government and non-government housing and homelessness-related data sets to support longitudinal and cross-sector research and analysis.

**A Canada-wide Framework for Homelessness Prevention**, in partnership with the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness.

**A Knowledge Mobilization Strategy** that will make sure research is accessible and has an impact on policy and services.

### RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE MINISTER

In 2013/14, the Council provided 11 recommendations to the Government of Alberta, through the Minister of Human Services, based on careful analysis of appropriate responses to issues that risk the success of the 10-Year Plan. Recommendations Council made to government in its first year are thematically summarized below:

#### Systemic Changes to Government Operations

Procedural and capacity improvements to government's current systems of housing development and delivery of supports to vulnerable Albertans that will strengthen accountability and contribute to better funding outcomes.

#### Co-ordinated Funding and Planning

New investments in housing development to address the critical shortage in the provincial supply of affordable housing.

The creation of a provincial Housing Strategy to address Alberta's long-term housing needs.

The development of a cross-government capacity plan to integrate housing development investments to meet the housing needs of vulnerable Albertans.

Strategic opportunities to promote the creation of a National Housing Strategy.

#### Community Capacity-Building

Strategies to build capacity at the community level to develop and deliver housing.

Approaches that will remove barriers and create space for vulnerable Albertans in established neighbourhoods.

#### Prevention of Homelessness

Strategies to prevent people from being released from provincial and community systems of care into homelessness.

Expanding diversion practices across the province that support people to remain in their current housing or divert them away from homelessness.

Building a comprehensive understanding of pathways into homelessness in Alberta, particularly for youth, Aboriginal people, women fleeing violence, seniors, and newcomers to Alberta.

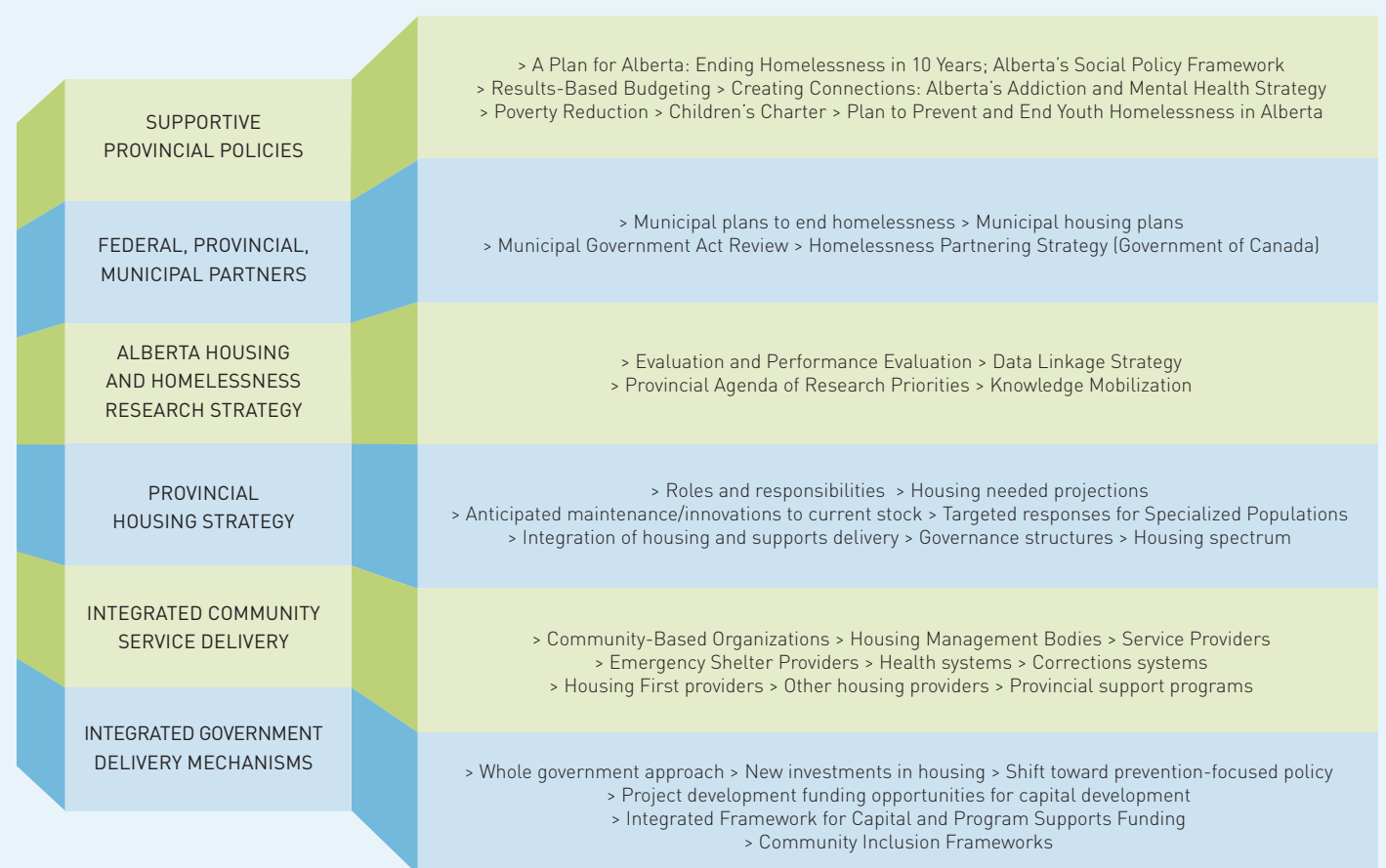
## THE WAY FORWARD

In order to end homelessness in Alberta many stakeholders must work together—the Council provides a forum for this partnership. Through analysis, debate and problem-solving, the Council has carefully crafted a route that will make sure we achieve the goals of the 10-Year Plan, and will lead to a long-term, sustainable approach to housing and homelessness in Alberta.

### POLICY DIRECTION

#### PROVINCIAL 10-YEAR PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS (2009 - 2019)

The policy-focused recommendations the Council provides to the Government of Alberta will drive future government approaches to delivery and investment in housing and homelessness, and drive the integration of service delivery by community partners.



## MEMBERS OF THE ALBERTA INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS



All Alberta Interagency Council on Homelessness members are appointed by the Minister of Human Services for terms expiring December 31st, 2015. Affiliations at the time of appointment are noted.

**Back row:** Chief Rod Knecht, *Edmonton Police Service*; Robb Campre, *Wicahitowin Circle of Shared Responsibility & Stewardship*; Alfred Nikolai, *Habitat for Humanity*; Bruce Reith, *Hope Mission*; Aaron Barner, *Métis Nation of Alberta*; Roxana Nielsen Stewart, *City of Red Deer*; Brent Davies, *Edmonton Apartment Association*; John Rook, *Calgary Homeless Foundation*.

**Middle row:** Jan Reimer, *Alberta Council of Women's Shelters*; Karen Stone, *Council Executive Director, Government of Alberta*; Lorette Garrick, *George Spady Centre Society*; Rick Farrell, *Calgary Housing Company*; Keith McMullen, *Calgary Residential Rental Association*; Jane Manning, *member of the former Alberta Secretariat for Action on Homelessness*; Kathy Christiansen, *Calgary Alpha House Society*; Mike Leathwood, *Municipal Affairs, Government of Alberta*.

**Front row:** Jaime Rogers, *Medicine Hat Community Housing Society*; Jay Freeman, *City of Edmonton*; Debbie Newman, *Calgary Drop-In & Rehab Centre*; Franco Savoia, *Council Co-Chair, Roger Morgadinho, Inn From the Cold*; Susan Taylor, *Human Services, Government of Alberta*; Nelson Mayer, *Alberta Native Friendship Centres Association*.

**Not pictured:** Jacqueline Biollo, *Alberta Urban Municipalities Association*; Greg Bounds, *Capital Region Housing Corporation*; Curtis Clarke, *Justice and Solicitor General, Government of Alberta*; Mary Anne Jablonski, *MLA, Council Co-Chair*; Gael MacLeod, *City of Calgary*; Kirsten Mandes, *Youth Advisory Panel*; Susan McGee, *Homeward Trust Edmonton*; Anne Milne, *Government of Canada*; David O'Brien, *Alberta Health Services*; Diane Randell, *City of Lethbridge*; Kurt Sandstrom, *Justice and Solicitor General, Government of Alberta*; Susan Williams, *Alberta Health, Government of Alberta*.

\*Served as a Member of Council for a portion of 2013-14.

# HOUSING AND SUPPORTS SPECTRUM

DEVELOPED BY THE ALBERTA INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS

HOMELESS					HOUSED				
HOUSING CIRCUMSTANCE	Un-sheltered	Emergency Sheltered	Provisionally Accommodated	At-Risk of Homelessness	Supportive Housing	Supported Housing	Social Housing	Housing Subsidization	Market Housing
DESCRIPTION	Living on the streets or in places not intended for human habitation	Shelters for people who are homeless, and Women's Shelters	Accommodation is temporary or lacks security of tenure; includes transitional facilities and people accessing private, temporary accommodation	Sheltered individuals whose current economic and/or housing situation is dangerously precarious or does not meet public health and safety standards	Combines accommodation with on-site supports and care. May be congregate or independent living units	Accommodations with supports arranged off-site	Units are owned and operated by government or non-profits	Accommodations with subsidies	
ACCESS TO SUPPORTS	Outreach services that connect with people where they are	On-site essential services; facilitated access to supports	Where accommodations are provided by government/agencies, on-site access to supports may be available	Typically required to be initiated by the individual	On-site staff provide or co-ordinate supports of varying intensities to residents	A range of supports services customized to client needs to increase/ maintain housing stability	Supports accessed through mainstream services accessible to all Albertans	Housing-specific financial support	Supports accessed through mainstream services accessible to all Albertans
HOUSING EXAMPLES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Public spaces</li> <li>&gt; Squatting in private spaces</li> <li>&gt; Vehicles, attics, garages</li> <li>&gt; Makeshift shelters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Emergency Shelters</li> <li>&gt; Women's Shelters</li> <li>&gt; Youth Shelters</li> <li>&gt; Respite</li> <li>&gt; Community Crisis beds (Health Services)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Penal institutions</li> <li>&gt; Medical/mental health institutions</li> <li>&gt; Community Residential treatment facilities</li> <li>&gt; Foster care</li> <li>&gt; Youth group homes</li> <li>&gt; Refugee/newcomer accommodation centres</li> <li>&gt; Transitional Housing</li> <li>&gt; Second Stage Housing</li> <li>&gt; Staying with others/ 'couch surfing'</li> <li>&gt; Hostels, rooming houses, motels</li> <li>&gt; First Nations community temporary housing</li> <li>&gt; Disaster relief housing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Those whose employment is precarious</li> <li>&gt; Those experiencing sudden unemployment</li> <li>&gt; Households facing eviction</li> <li>&gt; Housing with transitional supports about to be discontinued</li> <li>&gt; People with severe and persistent mental illness, active addictions, substance use and/or behavioural issues</li> <li>&gt; Breakdown in family relations</li> <li>&gt; People facing or living in direct fear of violence/abuse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Residential living-group homes and harm-reduction housing</li> <li>&gt; Seniors lodges</li> <li>&gt; Assisted and enhanced assisted living facilities</li> <li>&gt; Rent Supplements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Housing First (e.g. Intensive Case Management/ Assertive Community Treatment)</li> <li>&gt; Home care for seniors and those with physical/ developmental disabilities</li> <li>&gt; Rent Supplements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Seniors Self Contained Accommodations</li> <li>&gt; Community housing managed by Housing Management Bodies</li> <li>&gt; Co-op/Co-Housing</li> <li>&gt; Rent Supplements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Rent supplements</li> <li>&gt; Habitat for Humanity</li> <li>&gt; Co-op/Co-Housing</li> <li>&gt; Employer-supported housing</li> <li>&gt; First time home buyers programs</li> <li>&gt; Affordable Housing</li> <li>&gt; Private Sector housing</li> </ul>	

FOR MORE INFORMATION: ALBERTA INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS

[www.humanservices.alberta.ca/homelessness](http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/homelessness) | [interagencycouncil@gov.ab.ca](mailto:interagencycouncil@gov.ab.ca)

## THE COUNCIL APPLIES THE FOLLOWING DEFINITIONS THROUGHOUT ITS WORK:

**Homelessness** - Individuals and families residing in these locations are considered to be homeless, in that they are "without stable, permanent, appropriate housing of the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it." Canadian Homeless Research Network (2012)

**Integration** - Integration is interdependence between partners, who may have different mandates, to create a seamless system where all partners share responsibility and accountability in achieving agreed upon outcomes. (Alberta Interagency Council on Homelessness)

**Prevention of homelessness** - a proactive, client-focused process which empowers individuals and systems. It requires that a comprehensive, measurable, risk-based series of collaborative, culturally relevant strategies be employed, including a focus on resiliency and how we can create conditions for risk adaptation to become learned. It is most successful in a community based targeted approach.

The Council further agreed to the following supplementary definitions related to the preventive activities required at different stages of homelessness or potential homelessness.

> **Primary Prevention** - Primary prevention activities seek to reduce the risk of homelessness among the general population or large parts of the population, by targeting people who are housed (Apicello, 2010), in an effort to prevent new cases of homelessness (Culhane et al., 2011).

> **Secondary Prevention** - Secondary prevention activities would seek to identify and address conditions at its earliest stages, such as when they enter shelters (Apicello, 2010). This includes people who have been in institutional care or those in crisis situations such as eviction or relationship breakdown, which are likely to lead to future homelessness.

> **Tertiary Prevention** - Activities developed for tertiary prevention attempts to slow the progression or mitigate the negative effects of homelessness once it has become established, by targeting people who have been homeless for some time. Prevention initiatives focus on harm reduction activities to minimize repeated homelessness (Apicello, 2010).