

EVALUATION
OF THE
GRANDE PRAIRIE
MULTIYEAR PLAN TO
END HOMELESSNESS
FIVE YEARS IN

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Housing First's vision is a home for everyone. It seeks to move people experiencing homelessness into appropriate housing first, and then begin to work on the issues that contributed to their homelessness from the stability and safety of a home. Since the city's Multi Year Plan to end Homelessness, 833 people have been served in the Housing First initiative. This is estimated to be 65% of those experiencing homelessness in Grande Prairie. The success rate of the program has increased every year as it innovates to meet new understanding of the issues involved. Overall, two thirds of those in the program experience success and maintain their housing.

Given Grande Prairie's youthful demographic, there is an issue of children in relation to homelessness. It is estimated that the Housing First program is helping approximately 7 children per year leave temporary guardianship orders with the province and live with their families. This is a cost saving to the province of at least \$243,000.

In relation to the goals of the Multi Year Plan, 275 of the aimed at 550 affordable housing units either have or are being created. The work is coordinated with many agencies and landlords in the city. A survey indicated that 88% of agencies had heard of Housing First. There is an active Community Advisory Board on Homelessness and the city is involved provincially to learn from the other seven cities also working on ending homelessness. The emergency shelter system in the city involves shelters such as Odyssey House for women fleeing violence, Sunrise House for youth and Rotary House for most others experiencing homelessness. Odyssey House is nearing the beginning of building a second stage supportive housing complex for those in transition. Homeless prevention involves the creation of affordable housing and the support of an emergency fund to help with things like rent and utility arrears. Progress on ending homelessness is being tracked through the case management software - Efforts to Outcomes (ETO).

The following recommendations are made:

1. The plan needs to be revised to include S.M.A.R.T. goals (S.M.A.R.T. means specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely).
2. Creating affordable and social housing needs to be a high priority.
3. Responsive changes to the Housing First program need to be evaluated in terms of their cost on the stability of the program.
4. Communication with both the community and landlords needs to be enhanced.
5. Supportive housing for homeless youth need to be explored.
6. Investing in the data generated by the ETO software in terms of a designated ETO specialist to ensure clean data entry and customized reporting would allow for evidence based informed decision-making.

An analysis of how the current housing crunch is affecting people suggests that one in ten (or 1782) Grande Prairie families do not have enough income to meet their core shelter needs. Most of those affected are singles and single parent families, many being the working poor.

INTRODUCTION

The Multi-year Plan to End Homelessness in Grande Prairie was developed in 2009 as an impetus to create social change. This evaluation comes after the first five years.

The report begins with a look at the Housing First program including numbers of clients served and the success rate.

Each of the five goals of the multi-year plan are addressed in turn. This section provides details of these goals and their related strategies. It includes both questions and recommendations moving forward.

It then turns to a look at housing in Grande Prairie both in terms of ownership and rental. The affordability of housing is examined in more detail with references in income distributions and family size. Further assessment of the unique Grande Prairie landscape in relation to the homelessness issue includes an examination of demographics.

The last section is about *who's who* which includes the many partnerships and *what's what* which includes the many concepts.

A True Story

A chronically homeless gentleman spent over 10 years on the streets sleeping rough and using the emergency shelter mat program. He connected to the Housing First program and was assigned a case manager. He was in extremely poor physical health, and had an addiction problem. This gentleman ended up in the hospital and from there with assistance from his case manager was discharged into supported housing. With on-going supports from many community service providers he has maintained his housing for over a year.

HOUSING FIRST

HOW IT WORKS IN THEORY

The Housing First approach is innovative. It differs from traditional care of the homeless which expected them to address the issues that led to their homelessness, such as mental illness or addictions, before they were housed. With Housing First, the priority is to quickly move people experiencing homelessness into appropriate housing first, and then begin to work on the issues that contributed to their homelessness from the stability and safety of a home. Housing First programs respect client choice, follow a harm reduction approach and see permanent housing as a basic human right.

The Housing First approach is a partnership between homeless people, landlords and case managers.

A key component of Housing First is intensive case management. Agencies are contracted with the city to work with homeless people. Contracts are tendered every few years.

Funding for the Housing First initiatives in Grande Prairie comes primarily from two sources. The provincial government has contracted with the city to be a Community Based Organization (CBO) through which they send funds in the Outreach and Support Services Initiative (OSSI). The Government of Canada recognizes the city as a Community Entity (CE) and funds them through their Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS).

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How much continuity with clients is lost through the periodic retendering of agencies supporting homeless individuals?
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The process begins with an intake assessment where as much as possible is learned about the person experiencing homelessness. This includes testing using the Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool known as a SPDAT. The 15 components of SPDAT measure things like self-care and daily living skills, mental health and wellness, substance use, and history of homelessness and housing. The tool is designed to assist service providers to access programs and services best aligned to end clients' homelessness.

Client choice is a key component to the program. Clients are engaged in the process of finding housing appropriate to their needs. In the current rental market in Grande Prairie, this is a difficult process for people without barriers. The extra challenges experienced by people experiencing homelessness are mitigated by their case managers and a newly created housing locator position with Accredited Supportive Living Society.

There are many aspects of maintaining housing. The most evident is financial. The Housing Support Fund with the CBO is a first step in helping with the initial costs of moving into a home such as damage deposit and first month's rent. Beyond that, clients work with their case managers to find the financial supports to maintain long term housing. These vary by case and can include employment income, rent subsidies, assured income for the severely handicapped (AISH), or income and employment supports through Alberta Works.

Case management also involves addressing the variety of issues that homeless people experience. It might be addressing health issues, learning housekeeping skills, engaging in harm reduction around addictions, finding effective means of managing money.

The support clients receive from case managers decreases over time to the point where the end goal is for people to function independently without supports from the Housing First program. Exit plans are developed to ensure long term success. When people exit or graduate from the Housing First program they are often still eligible for supports for a period of time. There are also periodic follow-ups.

THE NUMBERS

Housing First success is measured by the number of people who exit the program having retained their housing. This information comes from the Efforts to Outcome (ETO) database. Agencies put information on their clients into the database according to some generally accepted proceduresⁱ.

In table 4 the numbers of successful people are contrasted with those who are unsuccessful or have dropped out during the period of the supported program. Honourable exits are those who have either relocated or passed away during the duration of the program. Unknown exits are people served, but their status at exit was unknown due to the disappearance of the client. . Beyond the numbers shown, there were 114 cases active at the time of writing this report. That means that Housing First has served a total 833 people experiencing homelessness in Grande Prairie, many with children.

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Some people are successful in the program and for a period of follow-up time afterwards but end up returning to homelessness later. What additional support is needed in the long run?

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The original plan identified 854 homeless in Grande Prairie in 2008 and estimated a 7% growth rate. That would mean a 2014 estimate of the homeless population would be 1282. This suggests that 65% of the homeless population has or is being served by Housing First.

Table 1 Exit Outcomes

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14*	TOTAL
Successful	10	120	64	119	103	416
Unsuccessful	47	71	36	36	24	214
Honourable exit	0	0	1	0	18	19
Unknown exit	6	27	9	18	10	70
TOTAL	63	218	110	173	155	719
Success Rate	18%	63%	64%	77%	81%	66%

* Only 11 months of data included as year is not yet finished

Every year that the program has been in place the success rate has improved.

Figure 1 - Success Rate



In looking at the characteristics of people when they leave the Housing First program, the following observations can be madeⁱⁱ:

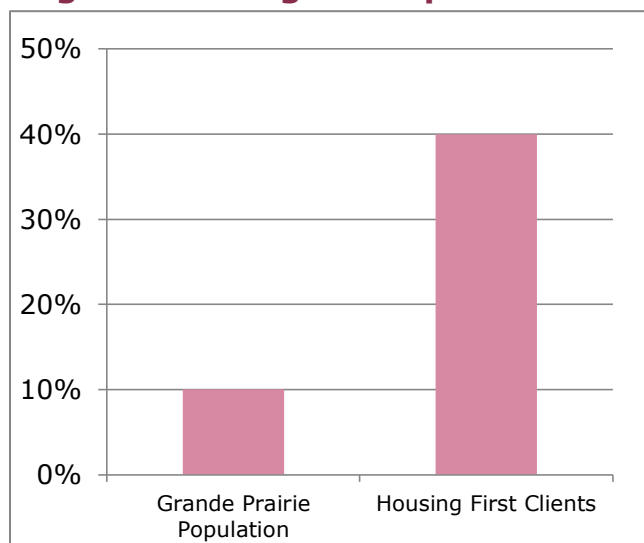
- The majority are between 36-64 years old
- The 25-35 year olds were less likely to be successful than those younger and older
- There were slightly more females than males
- Women tended to be significantly more successful in the program than males

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What factors lead to more success? How can the information gathered be used to discover these factors? In particular, does having children make a difference? Why is this not currently tracked?

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Figure 2 Aboriginal Population



Aboriginal status is very interesting. Statistics Canada reports that approximately 10% of Grande Prairie's population is Aboriginalⁱⁱⁱ. But regarding Housing First clients, the percentage is much higher at 40%.

Aboriginal clients are over 20% more successful in the Housing First Program.

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Why are Aboriginal clients so much more successful?

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CHILDREN IN CARE














Homelessness has a cost to children. This is uniquely poignant in Grande Prairie given the city's young population.

Human Services estimates that having a child in care costs \$40,515 per child per year and it can be more if there are treatments involved. An estimate of the number of children in care to parents experiencing homelessness in Grande Prairie is 28 at any given point in time. Housing is not the only reason these children are in care. However, once they are housed through the Housing First program, this number goes down to 21^{iv}. That means that the Housing First program is saving Human Services approximately \$243,000 in child services each year. This is a social return on investment of the provincial homelessness initiative.

THE MULTIYEAR PLAN

The Multiyear plan to end homelessness has five main goals. They were written in ways that make their evaluation more generalized than specific and measurable. Each goal area is evaluated here with specific emphasis on the strategies related to the goal as outlined in the plan. The table on the next page shows all of the goals and strategies and rates their level of completion.

Recommendations are made where appropriate. The first recommendation is that the plan be revised to use S.M.A.R.T. goals (S.M.A.R.T. means specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely)

Goals	Strategies	Progress
1. Facilitate an adequate supply of appropriate permanent housing options for our homeless.		
	S1 Develop 550 units of affordable housing, including 75 units of supportive housing.	
2. Provide enhanced and coordinated services for people who are homeless.		
	S1 Strengthen coordination and avoid fragmentation of services.	
	S2 Continue to implement, expand and educate on a Grande Prairie based "Housing First" approach.	
	S3 Enhance the local Housing Support Fund.	
	S4 Advocate for all levels of government to take a more systemic approach to addressing homelessness.	
3. Ensure appropriate emergency accommodation is available as needed, but transition people quickly into permanent housing.		
	S1 Improve the capacity of programs to rapidly house and re-house people	
	S2 Advocate for adequate and appropriate resources to help agencies address the challenges and pressures they face.	
	S3 Establish Second Stage Housing for women and children fleeing domestic violence.	
	S4 Support the youth shelter and agencies that deliver services to homeless youth.	
4. Prevent people from becoming homeless.		
	S1 Continue to take preventative measures when addressing homelessness.	
5. Establish an implementation process for the Plan that builds on the strengths of the community; develops capacity; promotes collaboration, innovation and cost-effectiveness; and measures progress.		
	S1 Committee formed to establish implementation process and action plan for the Plan.	
	S2 Implement a data management system	
	S3 Development of annual reports and communications to keep community and agencies informed.	

Key: Completed Barely Started



APPROPRIATE PERMANENT HOUSING

GOAL 1 - Facilitate an adequate supply of appropriate permanent housing options for our homeless.

STRATEGY 1 - Develop 550 units of affordable housing, including 75 units of supportive housing.

Table 5 provides a list of the housing that has been (or is being) built or supported since the beginning of this plan.

Table 2 Additional Housing

Project	Type	Amount	Units
Oasis Fellowship	Affordable	1,000,000	20
RMS Group	Affordable	100,000	2
Wild Rose Manor Villa with Grande Spirit Foundation	Affordable	1,381,941	15
Second Stage Housing with Odyssey House	Supportive	2,234,483	15
CAIRNS on the Boulevard	Affordable	400,000	66
Penners	Affordable	150,000	3
Rotary House	Transitional	7,000,000	49
City House by CMHA	Affordable		3
Aboriginal Off Reserve Home Ownership Assistance	Ownership	494,855	24
Affordable Home Ownership Assistance	Ownership	1,574,345	78
TOTAL		14,335,624	275

An attempt at providing some supportive housing was the Fletcher Building. During the winter of 2012-13, the Canadian Mental Health Association leased the Fletcher Building to provide homes for 50 homeless people with addictions and mental health issues. Building safety concerns ended this homeless reduction experiment in May 2013^v.

There were 28 social housing (rent geared to income) units on 108th Avenue which were closed, again due to building safety concerns that required significant investment to meet standards.

The lack of affordable housing is a major contributor to both poverty and homelessness in the city. It is recommended that this continue to be a high priority in any plan to end homelessness.

ENHANCED AND COORDINATED SERVICES

GOAL 2 - Provide enhanced and coordinated services for people who are homeless.

STRATEGY 1 - Strengthen coordination and avoid fragmentation of services.

STRATEGY 2 - Continue to implement, expand and educate on a Grande Prairie based "Housing First" approach.

STRATEGY 3 - Enhance the local Housing Support Fund.

STRATEGY 4 - Advocate for all levels of government to take a more systemic approach to addressing homelessness.

Providing coordinated and enhanced services for people who are homeless involves many things. It involves an investment in the Housing First approach both in terms of people resources and financial resources. Partnerships in the community are critical, particularly with agencies and landlords. Good policy and action directions from all levels of government play a support role.

The Housing First program has been evolving in Grande Prairie. The City of Grande Prairie, as the Community Based Organization (CBO), has received money from the Provincial Government for Outreach and Support Services using the Housing First model. Table 6 shows the amounts received over the years.

Table 3 Provincial Outreach and Support Services Funding

Year	Amount
2010-11	\$1,360,000
2011-12	\$2,200,000
2012-13	\$2,392,000
2013-14	\$2,392,000

The City of Grande Prairie began doing centralized intake and assessment and then referring to six agencies. These agencies were contracted with the City to do intensive case management using the Housing First model. There were identified challenges with having so many agencies involved in the processes. Each agency had only a small staff dedicated to Housing First. When there was staff turnover or staff away for other reasons (i.e. training, vacation) service to clients potentially suffered. The City acting as the CBO in conjunction with the Community Advisory Board on Homelessness put out a request for proposals requesting increased case management capacity for new funded projects. They also wanted to only use agencies that were on board with the Housing First philosophy. Now there are three agencies doing intensive case management, each with a specific niche or area of expertise and increased numbers of case managers per agency. Likewise, the City also contracted out the provision of intake and assessment services to a community agency, rather than provide the service themselves. This function is called triage, intake assessment and client supports.

The Housing First model is a three way partnership with an individual experiencing homelessness, a landlord and a case manager. The current housing crisis in Grande Prairie (high rents and low vacancy) has made finding housing difficult. In the past this was an activity done by the homeless individual with assistance from the case manager. There has now been created a position of a housing locator to assist in this process.

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Why are there more small landlords involved in Housing First and the larger ones are staying away from the program?

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One of the first activities that Housing First clients and their case workers tackle is securing ongoing income to support housing. Agencies involved in the program have developed

working relationship with Human Services in terms of income and employment supports and assured income for the severely handicapped (AISH). The homeless Initiatives program has the capacity to assist with the costs of security deposits and first month's rent for clients who have found housing if their income support paperwork is still in progress, or they do not qualify for support through Alberta Works or AISH. Dedicated individuals are involved in finding these types of creative solutions to systemic hurdles.

A portion of the funding received by the CBO is dedicated to the Housing Support Fund. Table 7 shows the amounts over the years. This fund was originally used to support the first month's rent, security deposits and rent enhancement only. Other financial needs have emerged that were not being supported from other sources. Funding allocations can be given for vouchers or gift certificates to purchase other needs related to being housed (i.e. shower curtains, vacuum cleaners, second-hand furniture) as the fund allows. In the past, when clients left the transitioned in or from the program (i.e. went to treatment), any possessions they had accumulated were often times lost to them. Landlords didn't like having to clean up after tenants either. The fund allows for some assistance with moving and storage so that when the person is ready again they are not starting from scratch.

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What happens to people after they exit the Housing First program when the rent enhancement they have relied on to help them make ends meet is no longer available and other alternatives involve waitlists?

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Table 4 Housing Support Fund

Year	Amount
2010-11	\$126,954
2011-12	\$431,003
2012-13	\$420,460
2013-14	\$373,816

To evaluate community understanding of the Housing First approach, a survey was conducted. Participants were invited using the interagency e-mail distribution list. There were 34 respondents. Their answers are summarized in table 8.

Table 5 Survey Responses

Question	Yes
Have you heard about Housing First?	88%
Do you know who is eligible for Housing First?	53%
Do you know how people access Housing First?	62%
Have you referred people to Housing First?	59%

It is interesting to observe that though 59% of respondents had referred people to Housing First, only 53% felt that they knew who was eligible for Housing First services. This observation was confirmed by the intake agency who said that often people who were not eligible were being referred by other agencies. The intake agency was responding to these misconceptions by holding information sessions with various groups about Housing First eligibility and processes.

Respondents were asked if there was anything else they wanted to let the evaluator know about the multi-year plan to end homelessness. These are some representative responses:

- I fully support this plan and feel it is desperately needed in our community - Grande Prairie. Homeless shelters are only a temporary fix and do not resolve the issues.
- Housing First cannot be approached in isolation - there are many individuals "at-risk" of being homeless who do not qualify for Housing First supports but that does not make them any less vulnerable. To truly eliminate homelessness we have to look at the continuum of housing and ensure there is adequate capacity AND supports at every level.
- Some of the problem is the lack of truly affordable housing in this city. Not necessarily that the people themselves are "hard to house".

A True Story

A Dad was working towards making positive changes in his life so that he could get his son back from the child welfare system. His work was in Grande Prairie but his son lived 700 km away. His new found dedication to his son saw him driving to see him every week – something that strained his budget. A Housing First case manager got Child and Family Services involved to arrange for his son to visit him in Grande Prairie. Dad continued to work on other areas in his life like budgeting and learning to parent. He now has his son back, is working and providing a home for his family

Other responses bring up issues of concern:

- There needs to be supports for children that have experienced homelessness. We need to be looking at early intervention supports for these children so that we are supporting the child as well as the parent.
- There needs to be an Aboriginal agency as one of the agencies providing the services also.
- The information available to the public is very poor ... No eligibility or public roll-out means very few people know what it is or how to access it.
- It seems that the demand for Housing First workers is much larger than what the workers can accommodate.

Some landlords were approached to provide their unique perspective and experience with Housing First. Their experiences were mixed and in one case brought about a reticence to participate in the program.

Some talked about excellent case workers that went the extra mile towards the success of the clients and the relationship with the landlord. One spoke about how rules, policies and procedures were beginning to restrain that type of effective case management. They all had stories of poor communication with case managers when they did not feel like they were in a three way partnership. They saw case managers as generally dedicated individuals who did not always have sufficient knowledge, training and time (high case loads) to be as effective as they would have liked.

Landlords were not sure that their concerns about their investment in their properties were being sufficiently recognized. They talked about the poor planning during a transition of agencies when all the monthly rents were late. This cash flow crisis for them could have been averted with more consideration of their expressed concerns around the transition.

A True Story

A landlord who spoke at the 2012 annual celebration event spoke to the community about his experience with the Housing First program. He stated that he was debating on giving up having rental properties until he heard about the Housing First program and decided to give it one more try. He stated that the high level of support he received as a landlord from the agency and case managers, enabled him to leave the city for the winter.

For the purpose of advocating for a systemic approach to ending homelessness, the city has engaged with all 7 cities in Alberta who are working on homeless issues. The overall purpose of the 7 Cities Network was to provide a forum to address issues of common interest and concern in the implementation of individual community plans to end homelessness; to develop and implement collective strategies to move these plans forward; and to maintain dialogue with the federal and provincial governments on housing and homelessness. They have focused on:

- *Engagement and Education* – Clarify and strengthen the relationship with Housing and Urban Affairs and the Alberta Secretariat for Action on Homelessness. Ensure working together by advocating as well as being a valued partner in delivering services.
- *Policy Change* – Identify and agree on high impact policy, identify provincial priorities and align with the cross ministerial policy work and influence policy.
- *Sustainable Funding* – Advocate for 3 year funding and obtain a commitment from the Government of Alberta.
- *National Recognition* – Help secure the ability to deliver by having a strong reputation nationally and provincially.
- *Provide Expertise* - Support and deliver “what works” – be prepared to do the heavy lifting and take risks.

The 7 cities made 16 recommendations in a 2009 evaluation. Many revolved around improving Housing First service delivery. However some included addressing systemic problems with homeless. These are:

- There are policy barriers for youth (i.e. legality of age) that are problematic in serving homeless youth.
- Having services to address health issues (physical and mental) need to be part of the solution. It involves an analysis of health care barriers and access to responsive detox and addictions treatment.
- One clear and prevalent cause of homelessness is the low level of education, consequent lack of employment readiness, and associated poverty. A strong focus on early identification of youth at risk for addiction, mental health problems, and academic failure are an essential component of homelessness prevention.

- Housing supply is a big issue - affordable housing, supported housing, subsidized housing and transitional housing are in short supply throughout the province, but particularly in some smaller communities.
- The process for obtaining Alberta Works, AISH (Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped) and PDD (Persons with Development Disabilities) funding is too complex for many clients from the chronic street population to complete without substantial assistance.

In terms of evaluation, without a doubt the city has provided coordinated and enhanced services for people who are homeless. They have invested in the Housing First approach working continually to respond to needs as they surface. There are gaps in the understanding in the community of the Housing First approach, particularly around program eligibility. Landlords also spoke about needing to be kept in the loop as things were evolving. Good partnerships require excellent communication. This is needed with community agencies and landlords. It is recommended that a balance be struck between

A True Story

A single mother with two small children couldn't pay her rent because she lost her job again. She kept arriving at work late because she had to get one child to childcare and another to school before she could get to work. Housing First case workers discovered that she didn't have the child care that she needed. With subsidized childcare, a support team and a job that starts a little later, she is now able to keep her job and pay her rent.

continual evolution of the program and the need for stability in terms of a clearer understanding in the community. Also that communication be a focus both with the community and with landlords.

Provide Emergency Shelter but Transition to Permanent Housing

GOAL 3 - Ensure appropriate emergency accommodation is available as needed, but transition people quickly into permanent housing.

Strategy 1 - Improve the capacity of programs to rapidly house and re-house people.

Strategy 2 - Advocate for adequate and appropriate resources to help agencies address the challenges and pressures they face.

Strategy 3 - Establish Second Stage Housing for women and children fleeing domestic violence.

Strategy 4 - Support the youth shelter and agencies that deliver services to homeless youth.

Managing homelessness has been about providing emergency shelter for people in crisis. Grande Prairie has targeted emergency shelter: Sunrise House for youth, Odyssey House for women fleeing violence and Rotary House for others. Helping people move beyond the crisis stage into appropriate housing for them is the next step. Provincial targets are that

people transition within 21 days^{vi}. This is the idea behind rapidly housing and rehousing people. How this looks is as diverse as the individuals involved. This section provides a snap shot of some of the activity in emergency housing and transitioning.

The funding received from the provincial government for Outreach and Support Services has been the main driver in hiring agencies to work with clients in the Housing First model. Leads from the various agencies meet monthly with the CBO to look at strategies to improve success. They are constantly solving issues that arise. Those solutions involve things as diverse as arranging for the donation of school supplies to renting storage lockers for people who are transitioning. Another change has been in the creation of a housing locator. One agency has hired a street outreach worker who engages clients where they are, including those who have been in the program and fallen back into homelessness.

Provincial funding comes with expected processes and outcomes. The number of clients for each case manager is established by the funder. This has been a challenge considering the number of children involved with homeless individuals. Grande Prairie has begun tracking this additional dynamic.

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How can the approach to homelessness consider the complexity of the involvement of children both who are with their parents and in care with the province?

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Training of case managers is ongoing in Grande Prairie with a combination of sending people to training and having trainers come to the city. The city also asked agencies to ensure sufficient salaries for their staff to be able to recruit competent individuals in this tight labour market.

Newly formed in Grande Prairie is a Shelter Visioning Committee that focuses on the various emergency shelters with an eye towards moving towards a 21 day stay as housing issues for the homeless are being addressed.

Rotary House is a combination of emergency shelter and supportive housing environment. It opened in 2009. It can accommodate up to 140 clients. Table 9 describes the various programs that they offer. They've operated at capacity almost every night since July 2011. The addition of Rotary House to the Grande Prairie social services environment addressing housing has been significant.

Table 6 Programs at Rotary House

Type	Beds
Emergency Men's Cots	40
Emergency Women's Cots	12
Short-term beds (semi-private suites)	28
Permanent supportive bachelor suites	20
Mat Intox - dedicated room for clients under the influence of drugs or alcohol	40

Odyssey House is a shelter for women fleeing violence. It is one of the busiest shelters in Alberta. They always maintain space for women and children fleeing domestic violence however they have, on occasion, housed homeless individuals and families on an as-need basis. It is an emergency shelter and the average length of stay is 21 days. The 15 apartment supportive housing project that Odyssey house is working towards will be a next

step for women who have left abusive relationships. The original estimated cost was **4.6 million** but this number has to be revisited in terms of current building costs. They have received funding support from all three levels of government – **federal, provincial and municipal including nearby municipalities**. They have almost raised the total amount and hope to break sod this spring, 2014. It will take approximately 12 months to build.

The goal of the second stage housing is to provide supportive living to women in transition. The focus will be on those who are at high-risk according to the Danger Assessment Tool and are committed to moving beyond unhealthy relationships. The ideal would be that they stay in this supportive environment while they plan their next steps of work or school. Often women and children fleeing violence have health issues related to the trauma they have experienced. Rent would be geared to income. The support workers would provide case management with the end goal of independence and transitioning to another living arrangement. They expect women would stay approximately one year however some might need more or less support. Responsibilities would be added as women become ready to assume more responsibilities (i.e. utility bills or increased rent if they get a job).

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Once second stage housing is built, who will pay for ongoing operations of the wrap around services?

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The predominant support for homeless youth in Grande Prairie is the emergency shelter - Sunrise House. They are able to accommodate 10 teens between 12 and 17.

In 2010 the shelter closed for a period to undergo renovations and refocus on their mandate. They are now exclusively an emergency shelter and run only one additional program. The family enhancement program uses mediation to help youth return to their parents or other relatives.

The demand for emergency accommodation for youth is increasing. It quadrupled between 2011 and 2012 but went down slightly in 2013. Given the growing youth demographic in this city, it is expected to continue to grow.

The City supports Sunrise House with an annual grant of \$110,000 but they also have to raise an additional \$200,000 each year.

Youth who do not want to be assessed for services can remain at the shelter 3-5 days. Those being assessed often stay around 10 days as the next step in their journey is

A True Story

A 19 year old woman who grew up in the child welfare system struggled with homelessness since the age of 13. Between using shelters and couch surfing, she never had a place to call her own. Housing First helped her sign a lease and feel comfortable in her own place. They also referred her to agencies that could support her dream of working in the oil patch as a medic by connecting her to the education she requires. Not only does she have a home base now, but from it she is springing into a bright future.

determined. If the youth is fleeing violence, neglect or abuse they stay during the child welfare investigation period before a transition strategy is determined.

One difficulty in transitioning youth out of homelessness is that landlords are reluctant to accept young people with no rental history and there are concerns with the legality of under aged youth signing lease agreements. A model that Sunrise House has used to help young people find housing is room and board situations with families. In one case it was in exchange for babysitting services, in another the youth was more-or-less adopted by the family.

Another difficulty is that young people who find themselves at Sunrise House often have a multitude of challenges such as FASD (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder), addiction, and/or mental health issues. They need more than average support. The Housing First model involves case managers who touch base regularly. Some of these young people need a more supportive environment with structure. Sometimes they need someone to check in with regularly to avoid social isolation, help them get up and get going to whatever their day involves (i.e. school, work, appointments). This is particularly true for high needs youth. Just as the women fleeing violence need additional supports as they make a final exit from their violent situation, youth are also in need of supportive housing. Creative solutions need to be explored. It is recommended that supportive housing options for homeless youth be explored.

The emergency shelter system in Grande Prairie is fully active and engaged in supporting a variety of people in crises. Agencies are engaged in providing a multitude of support services including intake and assessment for Housing First on site. Transitioning for women fleeing violence into a supportive housing environment is on the horizon. The picture for homeless youth is less clear.

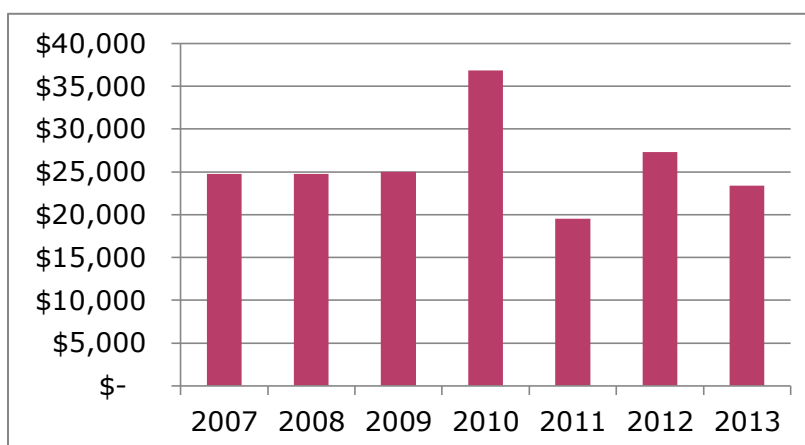
PREVENT HOMELESSNESS

GOAL 4 - Prevent people from becoming homeless.

Strategy 1 - Continue to take preventative measures when addressing homelessness.

One of the homelessness prevention methods is the Emergency Fund. Originally developed by the City, it has been funded by the United Way since 2004. It is used to assist those in crisis with accommodation costs, food, medication, transportation, utilities and work equipment (i.e. steel toed boots, safety vests). People can only access this fund once per year. They must also have expected future income such as employment, employment

Figure 3 United Way Emergency Fund



insurance, or AISH.

Approximately 70% of these funds are used to support housing. This proportion has not changed significantly over time. Those working with people with housing crises report also referring them to churches who sometimes have benevolent funds and other agencies and services.

The City is also engaged in a provincial poverty reduction initiative. In March 2013 the city released a report calculating a "Living Wage" in Grande Prairie.

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How can the emergency fund stay responsive to changing demand as rents increase?

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There are two sides to the prevention coin. The first is ensuring an adequate supply of affordable and social housing including supports for people with lower incomes (fixed incomes and the working poor). The other is helping those who find themselves in difficulty. The first is being addressed with the first goal of this plan. The second is with the emergency fund.

ESTABLISH A GOOD PLAN

Goal 5 - Establish an implementation process for the Plan that builds on the strengths of the community; develops capacity; promotes collaboration, innovation and cost-effectiveness; and measures progress.

Strategy 2 - Committee formed to establish implementation process and action plan for the Plan

Strategy 3 - Implement a data management system

Strategy 4 - Development of annual reports and communications to keep community and agencies informed

Social change, such as the goal of ending homelessness, requires concerted and directed effort. The directions to take need to be based on good information and decisions should be made based on evidence. Good research is essential. Context is equally important. It involves understanding the landscape of Grande Prairie in terms of the demographics, history of agencies working together, understanding local landlord challenges, working within economic cycles and other unique characteristics. This goal addresses not only the plan itself but the context in which it functions.

The Community Advisory Board on Homelessness (CABH) implements and monitors the Community Plan to end homelessness and recommends how the related provincial and federal funding to Grande Prairie is allocated. CABH's mission is to lead social change by mobilizing the community in ending homelessness.

CABH believes in:

- Inclusive communities
- Everyone's right to safe and secure housing
- Client's right to self-determination
- Community responsibility for access to affordable housing
- Empowering individuals

They have engaged in a variety of activities with these ends in mind. For example, they recommended that a good wage for Housing First case workers be included in the request for proposals. They saw and acted on the need for centralized assessment. They've met with other levels of government including an MLA and deputy minister.

Current Community Advisory Board Members:

Vi Meck, Chair, Alberta Health Services Representative and Aboriginal Representative
Mieke de Groot, Canadian Paraplegic Association Representative
Christa Gilroy, Shelter Advisor, Family Violence Prevention and Homeless Supports
Division, Ministry of Human Services
Lorelei Hicks, Homeless Initiatives Administrative Assistant
Donelda Laing, Manager of Community Social Development
Paul Lemay, Seniors Representative
Loleen MacDonald, Service Canada Senior Development Officer
Jane Manning, Interagency Council on Homelessness Representative
Michelle Margarit, Newcomers and Francophone Representative
Erna Moon, Youth Representative
Debbie Normington, Executive Director, Grande Spirit Foundation
Angie Peters, Property Management Representative
Katherine Sheppard, Homeless Initiative Supervisor
Adrea Simmons, Alberta Health Services Representative

Instead of each agency managing their own professional development dollars, they suggested these amounts be put together to increase the ease of coordinating city-wide training for Housing First staff. For example, all Housing First staff had the opportunity to attend the 7 Cities Road Home Conference in Edmonton on November 15-17, 2010. That same month saw Justine Barber with Housing and Urban Affairs engage in training with Housing First and shelter staff.

Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) is a human service software designed for case management and data collection. It is being used provincially to track the success of Housing First.

Case management staff and the team leads have received training to input data. There is also an accompanying manual. The data fields include demographic information about clients, a record of all interactions, measures such as SPADAT scores and outcomes. The team leads have the responsibility to monitor and ensure accurate data from the case managers is put into the ETO system. A challenge within the CBO has been to have a designated person to ensure accuracy and cleanliness of the data. ETO can be a powerful tool to inform evidence based decision making. For that to happen, the data would need to be more carefully monitored and reporting customized. It is recommended to invest further in this area.

Almost every year of this plan, an annual report of some sort has been prepared. In 2009-10 it was a Community Housing report with a focus on various affordable housing projects. It also reported on the beginnings of the Housing First initiative. For 2011-12 the Community Homeless Initiatives annual report described Housing First. It talked about the numbers of clients served and the agencies engaged. Changes to the Housing First initiative were described including centralized intake and assessment, a rent enhancement fund supporting Housing First clients during their first year with the program, and a training program with the partner agencies. The 2012-13 Homelessness Annual Report was a thorough report on the accomplishments to date of the multi-year plan to end homelessness. It addressed the work of the Community Advisory Board on Homelessness. It talked about the funding received and how it was used including the number of clients served. As with this report, it went through the goals and strategies of the multi-year plan. It described the partner agencies and how they have worked together with the CBO.

Some of the community engagement activities over the years include:

- A Community Engagement Extravaganza as part of Community Engagement week in April 2010. Iain DeJong from OrgCode came to Grande Prairie to engage in agency training for three days. His focus was to assist with landlord relations which culminated in a breakfast meeting with landlords.
- A Ground Zero Task Force which met from 2007-2011 to discuss emergent issues in Grande Prairie around homelessness.
- Annual Homeless Connect Days for the last five years in November.
- A Homeless Initiatives Appreciation Luncheon to acknowledge the many partners contributing to the success of ending homelessness, April 2012.
- A Community Consultation, March 2013.
- Interagency Council on Homelessness Presentation, February 2014.
- Community Consultations January-April 2014.

The supports for the plan – CABH, Shelter Visioning Committee, a tracking mechanism and regular reflective reporting are in place.

HOUSING

Housing in Grande Prairie is a story onto itself. With times of boom and bust, the market has seen wide fluctuations. The current conditions are difficult for many people, not only homeless people.

Two thirds of all households in Grande Prairie are owned versus rented^{vii}. In an article from the Herald Tribune^{viii} from March 2012 it says that the residential real estate market was at an all time high in January 2012. There was a 30% jump from the same month last year compared to the provincial 8% increase. The average price listed house price in Grande Prairie was \$250,111. "A lot of companies are buying houses for their staff now once again, so the multi-family market has picked up a lot" said Susan Rankin, president of the Grande Prairie Realtors Association. Several people interviewed for this evaluation mentioned the prevalence of corporate investment in both housing ownership and rental units as a way of retaining staff in this time for labour shortages.

Figure 4 Residential Sales Activity

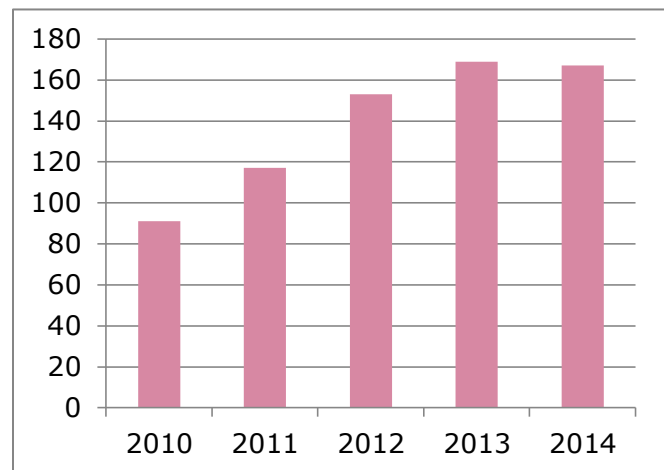
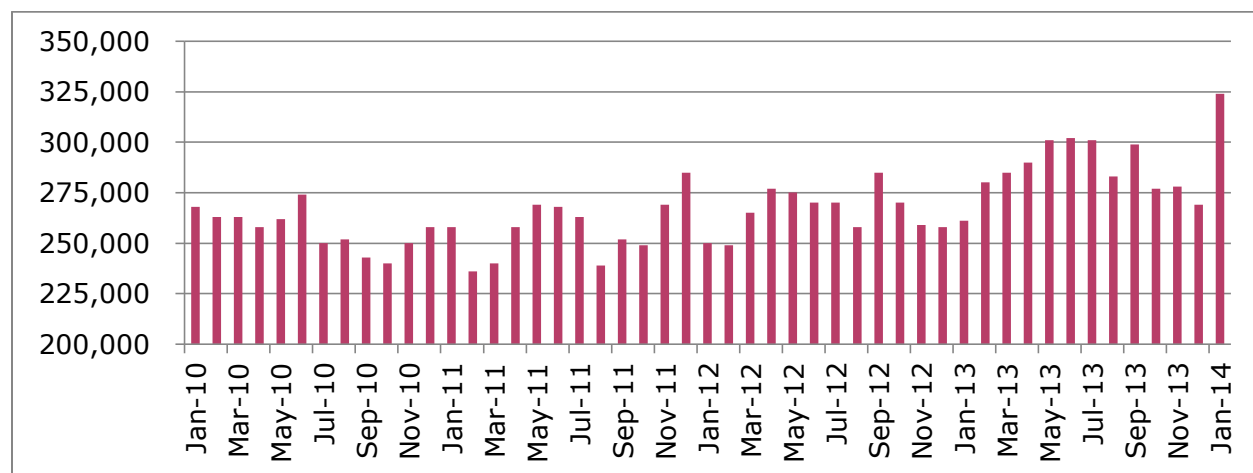


Figure 5 Average Residential House Price^{ix}



Grande Prairie Real Estate Board Statistics^x suggest that the trend of high sales continued into 2013. The average price of a home in November 2013 was \$284,955, up 10 per cent from the previous November. Interest rates have been fairly flat in the last three years so that is not a factor in the changes of housing sales.

The cost of home ownership is increasing more quickly than salaries are. This is putting pressure on people with lower incomes who might previously have been able to afford purchasing homes but are now forced to remain in the more volatile rental market. A quarter of all households spend more than 30% of their income on their housing^{xi}.

RENTAL MARKET^{xii}

The rental market shows more of the fluctuations.

Figure 3 shows the average rents along with the vacancy rates. In 2013 there were high rents and low vacancy, a case similar to 2006. If the past trend is any indicator, rents will continue to go up even if vacancy rates begin to increase. This is a difficult situation for poor people in the city.

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Why are developers building so many more homes for ownership than units designed for rent?

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Figure 6 Average Rents and Vacancy Rates^{xiii}



INCOME AND HOUSING

Core Need Income Thresholds (CNIT's) are established on an annual basis by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and Alberta Housing. Households with annual incomes equal to or less than CNIT are said to not have enough income to afford the on-going costs of suitable and adequate rental units in their area. Incomes below this level are eligible for rent subsidies.

Table 1 shows how many people in different family sizes are living below CNIT. There are 1782 families in Grande Prairie who do not have enough income to meet their ongoing housing costs.

Table 7 Core Need Income Thresholds for Various Family and Accommodation Sizes

	no children	1 child	2 children	3+ children	TOTAL
CORE accommodation size	1 bdrm	2 bdrm	3 bdrm	3 bdrm	
CORE need income threshold	\$ 30,000	\$ 36,500	\$ 46,000	\$ 46,000	
Total number of families	6,079	4,112	3,683	2,039	15,913
Number of families below CORE threshold	422	581	475	304	1,782
% of families below CORE threshold	7%	14%	13%	15%	11%

Statistics Canada has information available regarding the income distribution in Grande Prairie for households based on family size. Households with no children might hope to rent a single bedroom apartment or house, those with one child might expect to rent a two bedroom apartment or house, those with two or more children would likely hope to rent three bedrooms. Figures 4 look at the income distribution for each family size, the size of accommodation they would need and the average cost of that accommodation. The area on the left in grey indicates the people who cannot afford their housing and would be eligible for rent subsidy.

Figure 7 Income Distribution of Singles and Families with No Children

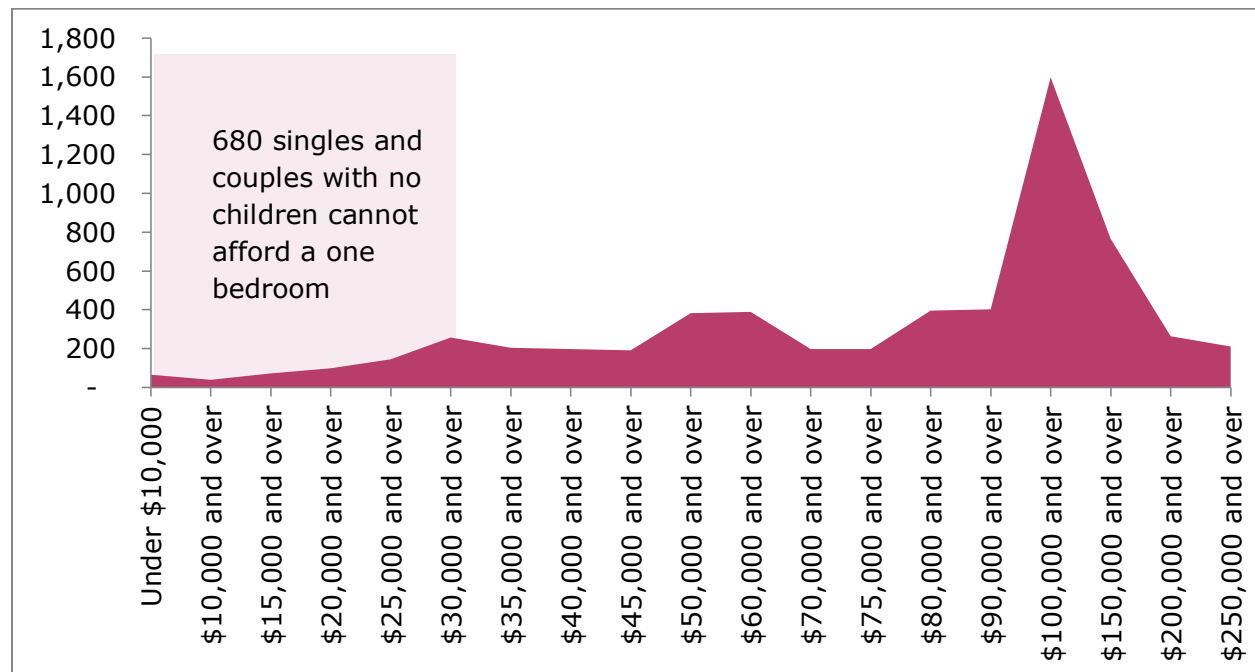


Figure 8 Income Distribution of Families with One Child

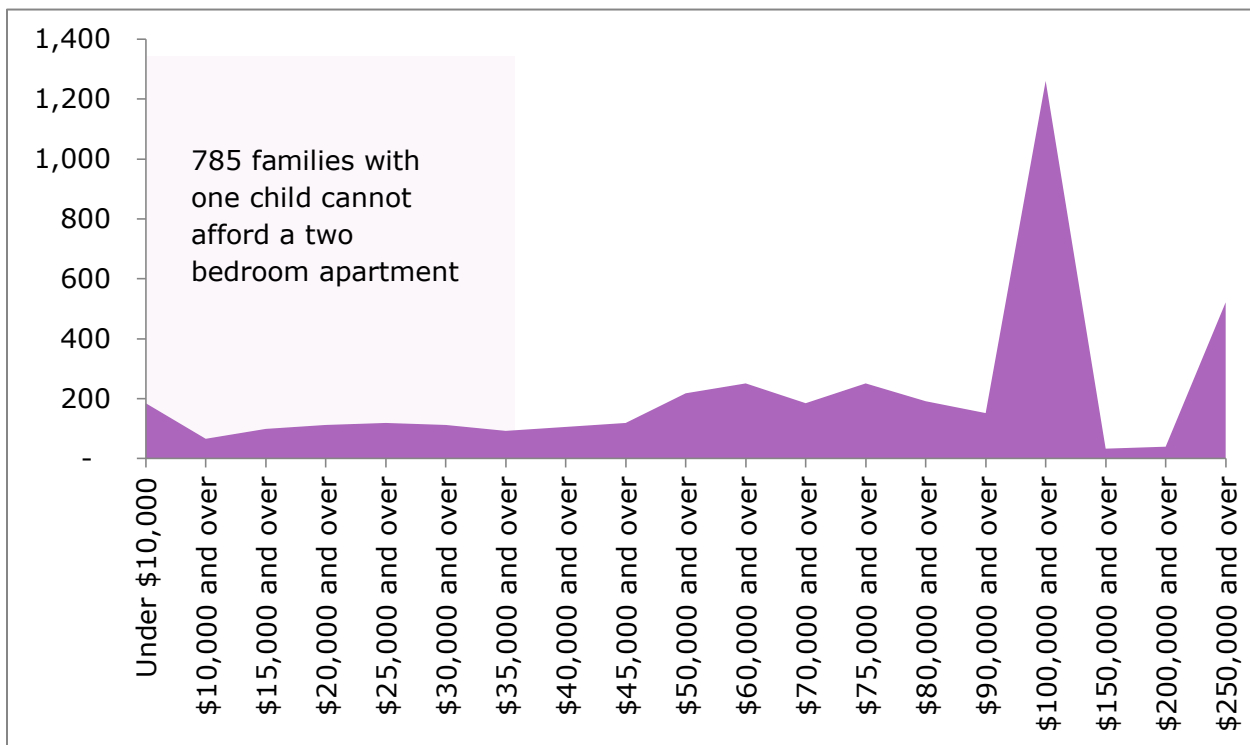
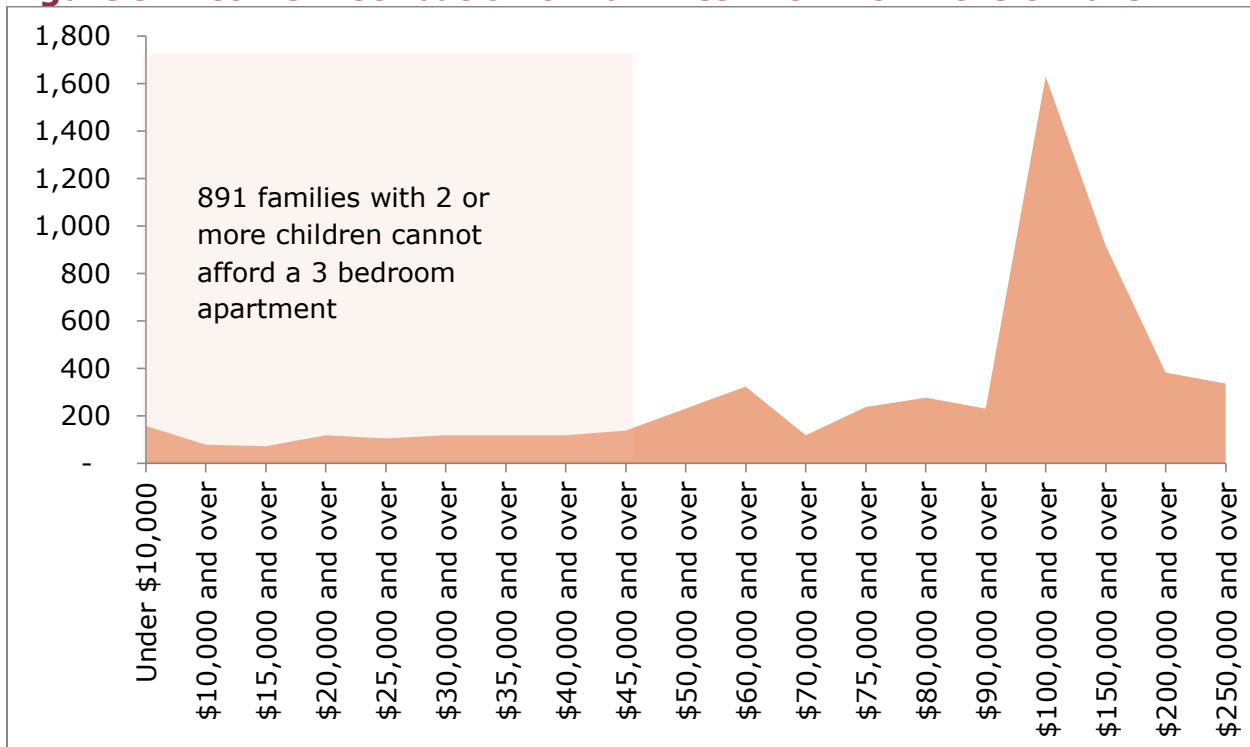


Figure 9 Income Distribution of Families with 2 or more children



There are 1782 families who are having financial difficulty maintaining their housing. Of those, 41 individuals are receiving rent geared to income (social housing) which ensures that they pay no more than 30% of their income on housing. Another 275 households are receiving rental supplements paid directly to their landlords (affordable housing). Another 146 are receiving rent subsidies in their private landlord/tenant agreements. This leaves 1320 people with continuing difficulties meeting their housing costs. Less than half of them are on a waiting list to receive some rental support.

Table 8 Families Needing Help with Housing^{xiv}

Families needing help with housing costs	1782
Less:	
Rent geared to income	41
Affordable housing set up with landlords	275
Rent subsidies for private landlord/tenant agreements	146
TOTAL FAMILIES BEING HELPED	462
FAMILIES STILL NEEDING HELP WITH HOUSING COSTS	1320
Average number on Grande Spirit waiting list	500

One of the options for those having difficulty maintaining their housing is to apply for assistance through the Grande Spirit Foundation. Grande Spirit maintains some social housing units that have rent geared to income. In these cases, the rent cannot exceed 30% of the household income. The other options are affordable housing which involve housing reduced by 20% of market rate. This is one of the rent subsidy programs Grande Spirit manages. The other involves direct rent subsidies to private landlord/tenant agreements. Only about half of the people who apply to Grande Spirit are helped with their housing. The remainder are on a waitlist that is managed based on need.

Figures 7 and 8 compare the family structure between those receiving assistance and those on the waitlist with Grande Spirit. It shows that the vast majority of those accessing and hoping to access services with Grande Spirit are single, often single parents.

Figure 10 Family Structure of Clients

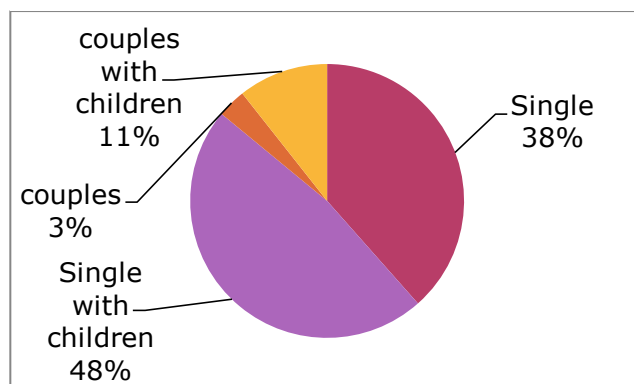
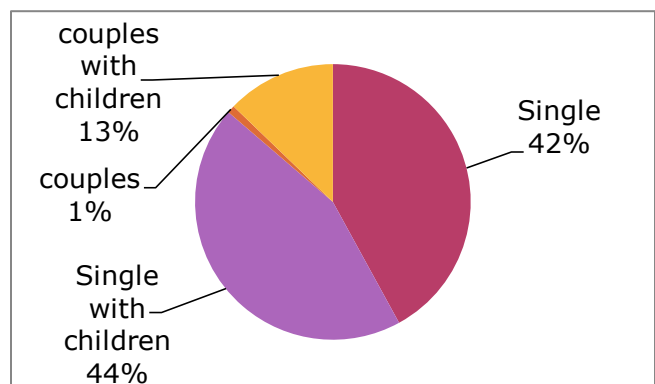


Figure 11 Family Structure of Waitlist



The income source of those needing help with housing is also interesting. Again, using statistics from Grande Spirit, Figures 9 and 10 contrast the source of income for those who are accessing housing supports and those who are on the waitlist. It shows the large number of working poor who are having trouble maintaining their housing.

Figure 12 Income Source of Clients

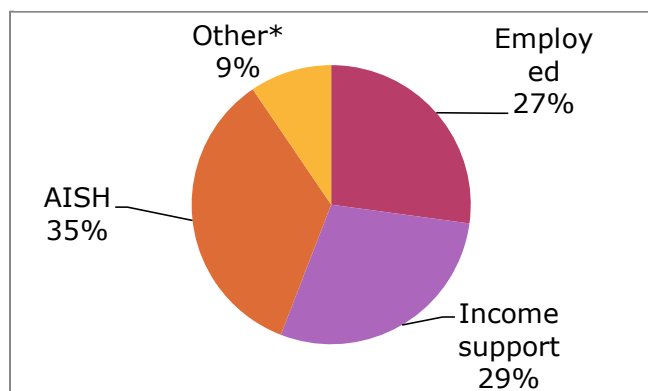
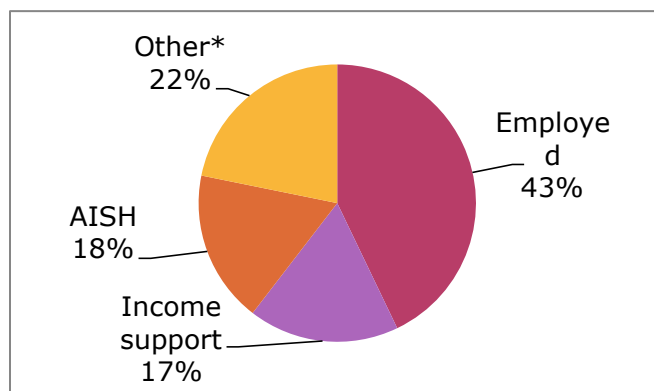


Figure 13 Income Source of Waitlist



About one in ten families in Grande Prairie do not have the core income needed to maintain an appropriate home living situation given their family size. The difficult housing market conditions, including high rents, low vacancies and climbing house prices, exasperate this situation. People are creative and find alternatives. Others are on waitlists hoping for some help. These are predominantly the working poor. The housing story in Grande Prairie is presenting challenges for many, not only the homeless.

DEMOGRAPHICS

There are many other demographics related to homelessness. Those explored here include family food security, health issues, the youth demographic and the Aboriginal demographic.

Concerning food security, 40% of lone parent families in Alberta experience food insecurity. This variable is based on a set of 18 questions and indicates whether households were able to afford the food they needed in the previous 12 months.^{xv} In Grande Prairie, there are approximately 2224 lone parent families^{xvi}. That would mean that 890 lone parent families were not able to afford food at some point in the last 12 months.

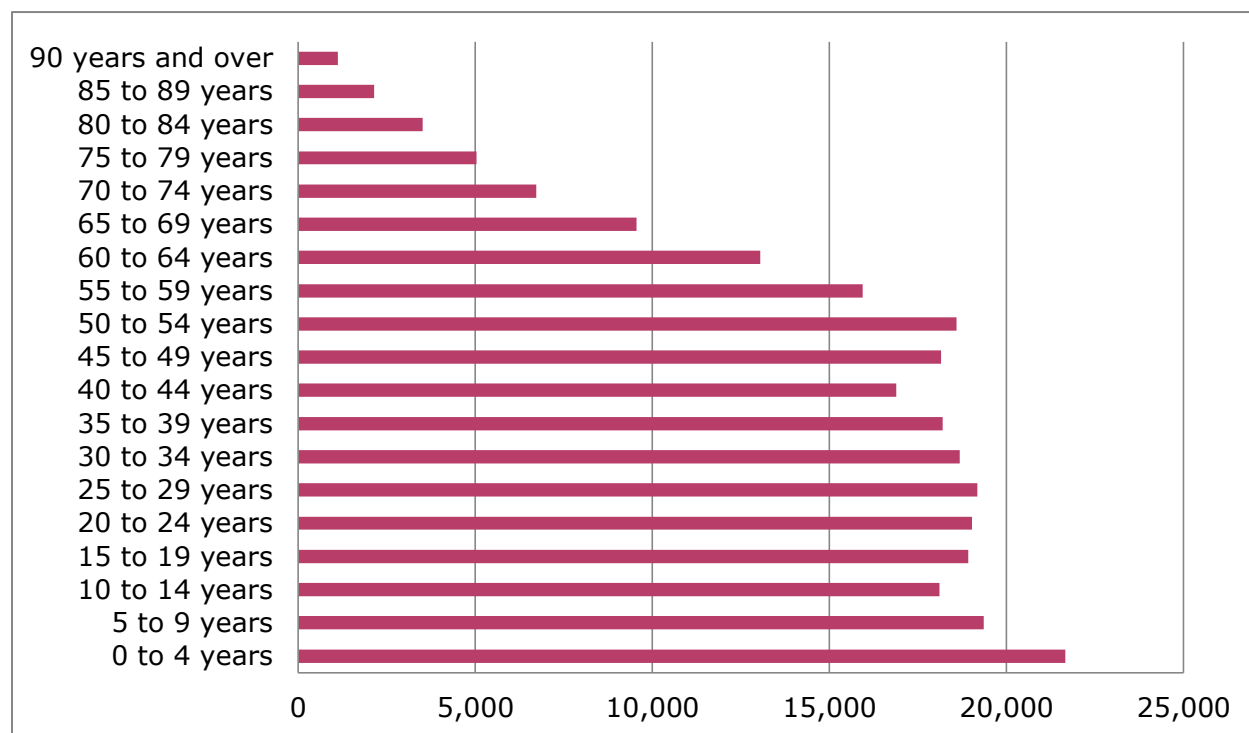
Health issues, particularly concerning chronic illnesses, mental health and addictions, contribute to the likelihood that someone falls into homelessness. Table 3^{xvii} uses data from either the northern region or the province to estimate numbers in Grande Prairie concerning these health issues.

Table 9 Estimated Number of People in Grande Prairie with Addictions and Mental Health Issues

Addictions		
	Number of people abusing or dependant on alcohol in the last 12 months	1590
	Number of people abusing or dependant on cannabis in the last 12 months	495
	Number of people abusing or dependant on drugs other than cannabis in the last 12 months	434
Other Mental Illness		
	Number of people diagnosed with schizophrenia or psychosis	745
	Number of people diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder	772
	Number of people with a major depressive episode in the last 12 month	2032
	Number of people with bipolar disorders in the last 12 month	742

The population in Grande Prairie is very young. Half the population is under 35. The single largest population group is under four. Figure 11 shows this age distribution. This distribution is not directly related to homelessness however it speaks the number of dependents living within the city. It suggests that as with other issues in Grande Prairie, homelessness has a young face.

Figure 14 - Age Distribution



Aboriginal people have experienced historical trauma. Historical trauma is defined as the collective emotional and psychological injury both over the life span and across generations, resulting from a cataclysmic history^{xviii}. This phenomenon is used as a way of understanding why life for many Aboriginal people is riddled with social problems.

Statistics Canada reports that approximately 10% of Grande Prairie's population is Aboriginal^{xix}. The birth rate among Aboriginal people is double that of the rest of Canada^{xx}. The two largest school divisions (public and Catholic) report between 15% and 17% of their students are self-declared Aboriginal. The high birth rate in the Aboriginal population certainly might explain part of this discrepancy. Suffice to say, there is a significant Aboriginal population in Grande Prairie.

Given the historical trauma, social problems often converge with Aboriginal people. Homelessness is one.

The relative youth in Grande Prairie combines with the large number of single parent families that experience food insecurity. Add to this the high number of Aboriginal people which tend to be a younger demographic given their high birth rates. Another contributing factor is mental illness and addictions, some of which are more prevalent in the Aboriginal population due to historical trauma. This combination suggests that children are particularly at risk of poverty contributing to the risk of homelessness in Grande Prairie.

SUMMARY OF QUESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Throughout this report, questions are asked and recommendations are made. They are designed to provide some guidance in decisions moving forward around ending homelessness. They are summarized here.

QUESTIONS

1. Why are developers building so many more homes for ownership than units designed for rent?
2. How much continuity with clients is lost through the periodic retendering of agencies supporting homeless individuals?
3. Some people are successful in the program and for a period of follow-up time afterwards but end up returning to homelessness later. What additional support is needed in the long run?
4. What factors lead to more success? How can the information gathered be used to discover these factors? In particular, does having children make a difference? Why is this not currently tracked?
5. Why are Aboriginal clients so much more successful?
6. Why are there more small landlords involved in Housing First and the larger ones are staying away from the program?
7. What happens to people after they exit the Housing First program when the rent enhancement they have relied on to help them make ends meet is no longer available and other alternatives involve waitlists?
8. How can the approach to homelessness consider the complexity of the involvement of children both who are with their parents and in care with the province?
9. Once the Women's Shelter's Supportive Housing project is built, who will pay for ongoing operations of the wrap around services?
10. How can Alberta Works and the community stay responsive to changing demand as rents increase?

RECOMMENDATIONS

7. The plan needs to be revised to include S.M.A.R.T. goals (S.M.A.R.T. means specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely).
8. Creating affordable and social housing needs to be a high priority.
9. Responsive changes to the Housing First program need to be evaluated in terms of their cost on the stability of the program.

10. Communication with both the community and landlords needs to be enhanced.
11. Supportive housing for homeless youth need to be explored.
12. Investing in the data generated by the ETO software in terms of a designated ETO specialist to ensure clean data entry and customized reporting would allow for evidence based informed decision-making.

WHO'S WHO AND WHAT'S WHAT

PARTNERS

Accredited Supportive Living Services Ltd (ASLS) was established in 1969 as an accredited, not-for-profit, charitable agency which provides a wide range of services to community members in NW Alberta from disability services to employment services. It's vision is to be a proactive organization recognized for its commitment to excellence in providing inclusive and diverse services



Centerpoint Facilitation envisions a culture in which people have a voice that is respected. They do this by promoting, living and supporting person-centered culture that increases well being and quality of life.

Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) promotes the mental health of all and supports the resilience and recovery of people experiencing mental illness. The CMHA accomplishes this mission through advocacy, education, research and service. Their vision is mentally healthy people in a healthy society. Their mission is to facilitate access to the resources people require to maintain and improve mental health and community integration, build resilience, and support recovery from mental illness.



Faith Communities – too many to name them all

Grande Prairie Friendship Center is part of a network of Friendship Centers throughout the province whose goal is to improve the quality of life for Aboriginal people in urban areas by supporting self-determined activities that encourage: the development of human and community resources; the improvement of socio-economic and physical conditions; better understanding and relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal citizens; and the enhancement of Aboriginal culture among Aboriginal people and the communities they reside in.

Grande Spirit Foundation provides reasonably priced housing, quality care and dignity to seniors and families in the Grande Prairie area. In addition to the senior facilities, the Grande Spirit Foundation's mandate expanded in 1993 to include housing services for low income families and individuals. Four housing options are available:

- Direct rentals of publicly owned buildings
- Private Landlord Rent Supplement Program
- Direct Rent Supplement Assistance
- Affordable Housing Program



Landlords too many to name them all



Odyssey House (Grande Prairie Women's Residence Association) - Founded in 1979, Grande Prairie Women's Residence Association has been committed to helping survivors of domestic violence in Grande Prairie by:



- Providing emergency shelter for women and children in need
- Supporting families affected by violence
- Raising awareness and educating our community about family violence

Rising Above - Rising Above was a dream of Pastor Mel Siggelkow from North Country Community Church (NCCC). It started running a program that housed 10 men in the upper level of the church. The men were provided with a safe place to live and were offered some programming to help learn how to stay off the street. Through many trials and learning situations, Rising Above has grown to what it is today. The ultimate goal of rising above is that each participant is able to maintain their housing when they leave the program. That they are able to remain clean and sober, hold down jobs and live self-sufficiently. We hope to give them enough tools, resources and support that they will be able to deal with life in the "real" world.

Rotary House (Wapiti Community Dorm Society) offers 24/7/365 accommodation to a wide range of clients. Primary services include single-night emergency beds and mats, short-term housing, and permanent supportive bachelor suites. The majority of our clients are single men – many of whom arrive in Grande Prairie from other provinces for work. We also accommodate families, the working poor, and newly landed immigrants.



Salvation Army - The Salvation Army exists to share the love of Jesus Christ, meet human needs and be a transforming influence in the communities of our world. They do this by practicing these seven core operational values:

- Compassion: We reach out to others and care for them.
- Respect: We promote the dignity of all persons
- Excellence: We strive to be the best at what we do and a model for others to emulate.
- Integrity: We are honest, trustworthy, and accountable.
- Relevance: We are committed to the pursuit of innovation and effectiveness.
- Co-operation: We encourage and foster teamwork and partnerships
- Celebration: We give thanks by marking milestones and successes.



Sunrise House (Grande Prairie Youth Emergency Shelter Society) envisions every family having the resources and the means to resolve family conflict with youth and maintaining positive respectful relationships with the youth in their lives. They do this by providing safe, temporary emergency shelter for youth ages 12-17.

United Way Alberta Northwest gives individuals and families the opportunity to reach their potential and improve their quality of life. Whether we fund programs that teach conflict-resolution skills to a high-risk family, enable a senior to live independently or help a high school student stay in



school, United Way's impact is local, tangible and meaningful. We rely on a diverse group to achieve positive outcomes in our community.

Elders Caring Shelter

Alberta Government

Government of Canada

GLOSSARY AND ACRONYMS

Adequate Housing - is reported by residents as not requiring any major repairs. Housing that is inadequate may have excessive mold, inadequate heating or water supply, significant damage, etc.

Affordable Housing – is housing that is 20% less than the market rate. Social housing is when dwellings cost less than 30 per cent of total before-tax household income. Those in extreme housing need pay 50 per cent or more of their income for housing accommodations. Costs for renters include: rent, electricity, fuel, water and other municipal services. For owners, costs include: mortgage payments (principal and interest), property taxes, and any condominium fees, along with payments for electricity, fuel, water and other municipal services.

At risk of homelessness - Individuals or families who are at imminent risk of eviction from their current housing, who pay too high a proportion of their income for housing or who live in unacceptable housing or housing circumstances. At risk of homelessness also includes those who will be discharged from the criminal justice system, those who are leaving a health facility after an extended stay, as well as youth exiting the child protection system, and who do not have suitable housing in place prior to their discharge.

CBO - Community Based Organization. In Grande Prairie this is the City of Grande Prairie. The CBO receives funding from the provincial government to help fulfill its role. The CBO channels this funding to Housing First service providers.

CE –Community Entity. In Grande Prairie this is the City of Grande Prairie. The CE receives funding from the Government of Canada, Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) to end homelessness.

Chronically Homeless - A person or family is considered chronically homeless if they have either been continuously homeless for a year or more, or have had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years (Alberta Plan to End Homelessness, 2008).

Chronically Living on the Street - Sub-population within the living-on-the-street homeless population. The term refers to those individuals or families who, because of a lack of secured housing, live on the street for a predominant period of time over the course of a year(s). Many individuals chronically living on the street have challenges forming long-term connections to services because of personal life issues or unsuccessful histories with the "system."

CMHC - Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation – is Canada's national housing agency. CMHC is a provider for mortgage loans insurance, mortgage-back securities, housing policies, as well as programs and housing research.

Core Need Income Thresholds (CNIT's) - are established on an annual basis by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and Alberta Housing and Urban Affairs. Households with annual incomes equal to or less than CNIT are said to have insufficient income to afford the on-going costs of suitable and adequate rental units in their area. Incomes below this level may be eligible for rental subsidies.

Emergency Shelter - Temporary accommodations for individuals experiencing homelessness.

Episodically Sheltered - Individuals or families who access shelters multiple times through the year seeking assistance, but who are not necessarily able or ready to form the long-term connections necessary to move to housing stability. This inability could be due to a number of reasons, including longer duration accessibility of the sheltering facilities, lifestyle choices, etc. Note: Not sure if you want to talk about episodically homeless instead. And move it up under Chronic as this is the second criteria to access housing first.

Efforts to Outcomes (ETO)– is a comprehensive case management and data collection software system that ensures community needs, impacts and detailed information on homeless citizens' experiences are captured. The purpose of this data collection system is for performance management and to use the data to track progress.

Hidden Homeless - Individuals or families living in locations not intended for human habitation (e.g. abandoned buildings) and/or continuously moving among temporary arrangements provided by stranger, friends or family.

HPS - Homelessness Partnering Strategy – a federal government community-based program aimed at preventing and reducing homelessness by providing direct support and funding to 61 designated communities across Canada.

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

- Moving people into housing directly from streets and shelters without preconditions of treatment acceptance or compliance
- Establishing the lease in the client's name and, whenever possible, arranging for the landlord to be paid directly from the client's income source
- The client agreeing to have ongoing visits from a support worker

Establishing the goal of moving clients toward the highest level of self-reliance possible: support services are not intended to continue indefinitely

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

- **High intensity case management** is a model to assist people who are experiencing homelessness with major barriers to obtain and retain permanent housing. The focus is on stabilization, with an emphasis on greater independence over time.
- **Low intensity case management** provides temporary assistance to obtain housing and retain it for people who were experiencing homelessness without any major barriers and who have lived independently in the past. This is most often called Rapid-Rehousing.

Intervention Program – support is intended for individuals/families who are recently homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless.

Living on the Street or Living Rough - Individuals or families living on the street who lack secured housing.

Market Housing - Housing based on the free market economy.

Mat Program - A shelter program that operates in cold weather months by Rotary House and accommodates those under the influence of drugs and alcohol.

NIMBY (Not In My Backyard) – used to describe when individuals object to the establishment of certain neighbourhood projects, such as homeless shelters, which they perceive to be dangerous, unsightly, or otherwise undesirable. A person may agree that a community or neighbourhood needs such an institution or service, but would want the location to be far away from his/her place of residence.

OSSI - Outreach and Support Services Initiative – a provincial government program to assist cities with permanent supportive housing and support services to help address homelessness.

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

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

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

Rapid Re-housing - Ensure individuals are assessed quickly to determine housing needs and the support services required. Moving the homeless from the streets and shelters into permanent housing.

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

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

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

Short-Term or Crisis Sheltered - Individuals or families who are in and out of emergency and/or transitional housing and do not return once they secure stable housing (one or two-time users).

SPDAT Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool - launched in 2011, improves intake processes using existing resources. The tool is designed to assist service providers. The provider can help individuals and families by accessing programs and services best aligned to end client's homelessness. The 15 components of SPDAT measure a range of factors, such as self-care and daily living skills, mental health and wellness, substance use, and history of homelessness and housing.

SROI Social Return on Investment – also known as social benefit cost ratio, is a method for understanding, measuring, and reporting on both the social and financial value being generated by an organization, program or community plan, relative to investments.

Supportive Housing - Housing facilities that provide services beyond basic needs and that, while not permanent, generally require a longer length of stay than emergency housing facilities (up to three years). These facilities offer more privacy to residents than emergency housing, and place a greater emphasis on case management supports.

Transitional Housing - A secure living environment where an individual can receive assistance and practice life skills before living independently.

Vulnerable Persons - Persons who because of age, disability, or other circumstances are in a position of dependence on others or are otherwise at a greater risk than the general population, whether permanent or temporary.

Zero Tolerance Policy - A policy in shelters that imposes automatic consequences or eviction for infractions of a stated rule, with the intention of eliminating undesirable conduct (i.e., substance abuse).

Glossary Sources:

- Calgary's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness 2008-2018 (2008) available at <http://calgaryhomeless.com/assets/10-Year-Plan/10-year-plan-FINALweb.pdf> Accessed January 12, 2014
- Canadian Homelessness Report by Charity Intelligence Canada (2009) available at <http://www.charityintelligence.ca/images/Ci-Homeless-in-Canada.pdf> Accessed January 18, 2014
- A Progress Report on Wood Buffalo's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness (2013) available at <http://www.woodbuffalo.ab.ca/Assets/00assets/living/social+support+services/pdfs/A+Progress+Report+on+Wood+Buffalo%e2%80%99s+10+Year+Plan+to+End+Homelessness.pdf> Accessed January 14, 2014
- Red Deer's Report to the Community on Affordable Housing and Homelessness 2012-13 (2013) available at: <http://www.reddeer.ca/NR/rdonlyres/548285D6-0324-4804-A717-6F69AD373CEE/0/ReporttotheCommunityHousingAnnualReportJune2013.pdf> Accessed January 9, 2014
- 7-Cities on Housing and Homelessness Evaluation, September 2009, by: Irene Hoffart and Kathy Cairns

ⁱ The data is not monitored, audited or cleaned by the CBO due to a lack of resources. The contract team leads. Often case managers, who are extremely talented with the people-focused portion of their work, are less focused on the paperwork associated with tracking their progress. For these reasons, any numbers about Grande Prairie should be read with caution.

ⁱⁱ Data comes from a provincial report shared with cities for the 2012-13 year.

ⁱⁱⁱ National Household Survey 2011

^{iv} The data to calculate the reduction in the number of children in care once people are housed is gleaned from numbers reported by Housing First agencies. They have just started tracking children with temporary guardianship orders attached to clients in outreach and those in the Housing First program. These are initial estimates. The numbers used in the calculation of the amounts come from Human Services.

^v <http://www.dailyheraldtribune.com/2013/05/13/fletcher-building-to-be-vacated-by-months-end>

^{vi} Three year progress report on provincial 10 year plan to end homelessness – January 2013 By Alberta Secretariat for Action on Homelessness
<http://humanservices.alberta.ca/documents/homelessness-3-year-progress-report.pdf>

^{vii} National Household Survey, Statistics Canada 2011, <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/dp-prod/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CSD&Code1=4819012&Data=Count&SearchText=Grande%20Prairie&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&A1=All&B1=All&TABID=1>

^{viii} Grande Prairie Housing Market at Five Year High by Graham Bruce in the Daily Herald Tribune March 2012 <http://www.dailyheraldtribune.com/2012/03/04/grande-prairie-housing-market-at-a-five-year-high> Accessed January 19, 2014

^{ix} The Canadian Real Estate Association <http://creastats.crea.ca/gran/>

^x Grande Prairie Home Sales set November record <http://creastats.crea.ca/gran/> Accessed January 19, 2014

^{xi} National Household Survey, Statistics Canada 2011, <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/dp-prod/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CSD&Code1=4819012&Data=Count&SearchText=Grande%20Prairie&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&A1=All&B1=All&TABID=1>

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^{xii} Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation Rental Market Report Alberta Highlights – Fall 2013 and 2012 http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/odpub/esub/64483/64483_2013_B02.pdf?fr=1390142876666 Accessed January 19, 2014

^{xiii} Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation <http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/hoficlincl/homain/stda/index.cfm>

^{xiv} Grande Spirit January 2014 numbers along with Statistics Canada and CORE Needs threshold data

^{xv} Statistics Canada Household food insecurity measures, by living arrangement, Canada, provinces and territories, Table 105-0545
<http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/cansim/a29?lang=eng&groupid=101&p2=17#n105>

^{xvi} Statistics Canada Neighbourhood Income and Demographics Summary Table # 111-0004
<http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/cansim/a26>

^{xvii} Mental Health Profile from the Canadian Community Health Survey by Province 2012 Table 105-1101 available at
<http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/cansim/a29?lang=eng&groupid=101&p2=17#n105>

^{xviii} Historical Trauma website <http://historicaltrauma.com/>

^{xix} National Household Survey 2011

^{xx} Statistics Canada Daily <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/050628/dq050628d-eng.htm>