

Toronto Housing and Homelessness Service Provider (THHSP) Forum

Date: March 9, 2022

Agenda & Minutes

ITEM

10:00 Introduction and Housekeeping

10:05 1 Welcome and Land Recognition

- Land recognition
- Agenda review

10:10 2 Toronto's Shelter System Flow Data – Focus on Young People

A joint community/SSHA review of current data dashboard with **Dr. Amanda Noble**, Manager, Research & Evaluation, Covenant Housing Toronto and **Stephanie Malcher**, Manager, Coordinated Access, Service Planning and Integrity, SSHA

Discussion

Q: Should the return to housing data have some parameters added to it (e.g., returned from housing within 6 months of being housed)?

- This is something the City has been thinking about - we are working through which parameters could be added without overcomplicating the data.
- Adding a parameter could give the sector an indicator of the efficacy of a housing solution, which would be helpful.

Q: Is the assumption that all youth housed moved to permanent and affordable (RGI) housing?

- In the data there is no assumption about what type of permanent housing people move to. Family reunification is considered within this outcome for youth.

Q: Can you unpack what 'automatic discharge' means in terms of where this cohort is discharged to?

Comment: Some organizations do not have access to SMIS.

- The City is working specifically to expand data to capture those staying outside who may not be captured through SMIS.

Q: Do we know where youth are coming from prior to appearing as homeless? For example, is there a significant % coming from the child welfare system? If we had data, we may be able to identify areas to focus on.

- Some of this data is tracked through SMIS categories that track inflow into shelter categories.

Q: Question on the returning to housing data: 18% return rate – are we doing a qualitative component to ask those who returned? What are some of the reasons for recidivism? Is there an opportunity there?

- This is a great idea - Covenant House will add to their research agenda.

Comment: We saw many refugee youth arriving in the youth system. It made up almost 30% of shelter beds. We need data collected on housing outcomes for BIPOC youth. We need rapid rehousing for youth as well.

Comment: We don't have a good understanding of how many people are bridging from the youth and the adult system. This is crucial. In particular, we need to know how people are experiencing homelessness in a longitudinal way. We also need to look at how youth are experiencing a 'soft handover' to adult systems especially as it pertains to housing support and case management.

Comment: We also need to pay attention to youth homelessness prevention – factors such as home takeovers and mental health, which pushed youth into homelessness in the first place.

Comment: Need to gain an understanding of the demographics of the young people returning from housing to the shelter systems in that qualitative analysis

Comment: The disproportionate impact on 2SLGBTQIA youth is incredibly important to consider - as has been noted, along with the stereotypes that are pervasive about the challenges of housing youth.

Comment: Also wondering what may be in the works to potentially receive people who may be fleeing Ukraine and coming to Canada.

Comment: We need to consider age vs. developmentally-appropriate age in terms of chronicity and prioritization for housing. Transitional housing for youth should be considered as well as this is part of a housing-first approach as well.

10:40

3

Impacts of COVID-19 on employment for youth experiencing homelessness

Presentation and discussion with **Mardi Daley**, Founder, Lived Experience Lab

Discussion

Youth Homelessness, Employment and COVID-19 in Toronto

Link to report:

[v2 ENGLISH CCYP 8.5x11 HOMELESSNESS MARDI MAY2021.indd \(wildapricot.org\)](https://www.wildapricot.org/2021/05/21/v2-ENGLISH-CCYP-8.5x11-HOMELESSNESS-MARDI-MAY2021-INDIGENITY-AND-RACIALIZATION-AND-EMPLOYMENT-ACCESS/)

Q: Do you have the demographics of youth? Do we have data on racialization and Indigeneity? These intersectional identities have additional impact on employment access.

Q: For the call to action around geography, how do we bring employment opportunities closer to where youth live? Especially in the outer regions of the city needing to travel into the City-center. The

lower quality transportation in the outer regions does not enable this either.

Q: Can the city organize a group to oversee the implementation of the Calls for Action summarized in Mardi's report? Angela Robertson will participate and/or lead.

Action: SSHA to look into points of intersection at the City of Toronto for the Calls for Action from report and discuss with THHSP Forum, such as with Toronto Employment and Social Services.

11:00 5

SSHA Items and Updates

Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit – Year 3 with **Maria Varlokostas**, Manager, and Katherine Lis, Housing Consultant, Housing Stability Services, SSHA

- SSHA/Housing Secretariat Transition
- Others TBD

Discussion

Q: With regards to the priority groups for COHB, is there a requirement that people with disabilities need a modified unit?

Q: Someone I know was sent a letter for this benefit but no one explained it to her and she was afraid if she came off the housing list the housing benefit would run out or stop and her waiting list for RGI would bump her off and she would be in bad situation again in few years. She is a 55 year old couch surfer. I hope workers work with folks better. Can she still apply again for this benefit as she now understands but has been told she never used the benefit so lost the opportunity?

11:20 6

Housing Secretariat Updates

Some parts of SSHA, including Housing Stability Services and the Eviction Prevention and the Community (EPIC) program, will be moving over to Housing Secretariat on March 23rd. SSHA and the Housing Secretariat will continue to coordinate and collaborate with the housing and homelessness sector. A letter is being prepared and will be shared out to TAEH through Kira.

Q: What will the impact on the community be from this shift?

- This change will clearly delineate all housing services to sit within the Housing Secretariat whereas shelter and homelessness will continue to be managed by SSHA. We will continue to work closely on areas such as how to help people to exit homelessness into supportive housing. In terms of how we work with community groups, there may be a few things to figure out in terms of meeting logistics and shifts as those items come through.

Q: Shouldn't the Secretariat be playing a bigger role in TAEH in the future?

- Future involvement of Housing Secretariat at TSSF meetings.

Comment: Something to address at a future meeting.

- MyAccessstoHousingTO and the problem that people without access to technology or who have good technological literacy aren't going to be able to register/apply and then participate in the choice based process and access subsidized housing without a lot of help from service providers, and service providers aren't set up or funded to provide the help that's needed. Interesting that there's recognition that paper applications are required for some housed people in receipt of COHB, but no recognition of accommodations people who are currently unhoused or precariously housed will need.

Action: To invite Access to Housing Manager to attend future TSSF meeting to discuss issues with MyAccessstoHousingTO and how to address problems/accommodations to support people.

11:45 7

Emerging issues/priorities

Environmental scan with Forum attendees to identify emerging issues and priorities from the community to inform future agendas.

11:55 8

Other business/close

Q: Toronto Public Library – what role could TPL have to support this group? Fees have been eliminated so that should not be a barrier to accessing. Contact afrench@tpl.ca for any library-related questions.

Comment: Re libraries: would be great to increase # of hotspots as a youth initiative to help with employment/shelter.... and access to internet

Comment: The other issue along with virtual accessibility is the ability to keep track of log-in particulars, confirming identity, and being able to save documents etc. let alone the issue of identity theft and increasing exploitation by hackers...this is a huge issue of moving access on-line and the reality of those who cannot participate due to economic factors.

Comment: The City should offer free wi-fi.

Q: Just wondering if the structural changes at SSHA and the Housing Secretariat are connected to the MMHA announcement this week? The new homelessness prevention program.

- The City had begun planning this change in structure early last year – it is not connected.

Action: City and TAEH to provide an update at future THHSP Forum on the new provincial homelessness prevention program announcement and the impacts on the City and homelessness services sector.

Next meeting: April 13, 2022 @ 10am – 12pm @
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87187078031>