



Committee Report

To:	Chair McQueen and Members of Affordable Housing Task Force
Committee Date:	July 19, 2021
Subject / Report No:	HDR-AF-14-21
Title:	Update Transitional Units and Homelessness Response Table
Prepared by:	Anne Marie Shaw, Director of Housing
Reviewed by:	Kim Wingrove, CAO
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	
Status:	

Recommendation

- 1. That staff report HDR-AF-14-21 pertaining to an update on transitional units and the Homelessness Response Table be received for information.**

Executive Summary

Grey County has established a Homelessness Response Table (HRT) serving all of Grey County and Bruce County. The HRT is a multi-agency, coordinated response to homelessness that consists of prioritization based on need, vacancy matching, service coordination and housing retention. A By Name List has been established and active since February 2021. 87 people in Grey and Bruce Counties have been identified as homeless with 49 individuals considered chronically homeless. Nine individuals have been housed with supports so far. 11 units of transitional housing are under renovation and will be completed between August and December 2021. Funding is required for further possible units and another Outreach Worker.

Background and Discussion

In 2019, Grey County, Bruce County Canadian Mental Health Association Grey Bruce and Grey Bruce Health Services hired Centre for Organizational Effectiveness Inc to look at solutions to move those in Grey and Bruce Counties experiencing homelessness to housed. Consultation sessions were held with key community partners and services, best practices in other areas were explored and local resources were reimaged.

At the end of the sessions, participants had a shared understanding of the Housing First model, the current challenges of housing in Grey Bruce, worked through case studies and developed an action plan.

The consensus from the group was that a housing solutions group, cross-organizational be developed. The group would:

- Develop a common by name list of people experiencing homelessness and have a cross organization team find creative solutions to housing and supports
- Consider a coordinator with flex funds (provided by each organization)
- Focus on housing the hardest to house, housing stabilization and be proactive about decreasing evictions
- Develop a collective impact framework to measure progress and capture learnings.

Homelessness Response Table

In response to the findings a Homelessness Response Table and Steering Committee was created. The HRT Steering Committee is a group of partner agencies seeking to develop a more coordinated response to homelessness within Grey and Bruce Counties. This includes the design and implementation of a multi-agency response to homelessness and related supports across agencies that assist with prioritization, vacancy matching, service coordination and housing retention. The HRT was created in 2020 and has worked on a Terms of Reference, resource identification, staffing and the creation of a By-Name List.

By-Name List

The Grey Bruce By Name List is a real time list of people experiencing homelessness in our community. The list aims to connect people experiencing homelessness to available housing resources and support services based on their needs. It provides data and supports a common entry process and prioritization and the understanding of homeless inflow and outflow at a system level in our community.

A common entry process is an identified agency that has regular contact with individuals or families experiencing homelessness and are trained to access for needs. Member agencies identify those in need of services, provide initial intake information and refer to the Housing Navigator who can provide further assessment of the situation and update the By Name List. There are currently two staff associated with the By Name List, the Housing Navigator that works with those experiencing homelessness to determine needs and an Outreach Worker to assist with coordinating supports. Grey and Bruce Counties fund the Housing Navigator, Grey County funds the Outreach Worker and CMHA provides in kind services such as management of staff and office space.

Homeless vs Chronically Homeless

The By-Name List distinguishes between definitions for homeless, chronically homeless, and episodic homelessness. Any individual or family who falls under any one definition will be put on the By-Name List.

Canadian Definition of Homeless:

Homelessness describes the situation of an individual, family or community without stable, safe, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it. It is the result of systemic or societal barriers, a lack of affordable and appropriate housing, the

individual/household's financial, mental, cognitive, behavioral, or physical challenges, and/or racism and discrimination.

This is broken into three categories:

1. Unsheltered
 - a. Living outside (sidewalks, parks, forests, etc.)
 - b. Living in places not intended for permanent human habitation (cars, garages, out buildings, shacks, tents, etc.)
2. Emergency Sheltered
 - a. Emergency overnight shelters (Motels*) for people who are homeless
 - b. Shelters for individuals/families affected by family violence
 - c. Shelters for people affected by a natural disaster (fire, flood, etc.)
3. Provisionally Accommodated
 - a. Interim housing for people who are homeless (short-term motel stay etc.)
 - b. Temporary living with other people (couch surfing, staying with family, etc.)
 - c. Short-term rental accommodation without security of tenancy
 - d. People in institutional care with no guarantee of permanent housing upon release (hospital, corrections facilities, treatment facilities, etc.)
 - e. Reception centers for recently arrived immigrants and refugees

Chronic Homelessness:

Chronic homelessness refers to people, often with disabling conditions (e.g. chronic physical or mental illness, substance abuse problems), who are currently homeless and have been homeless for **six months or more in the past year** or have recurrent experiences of homelessness over the past three years, with a cumulative duration of at least 18 months (546 days).

Episodic Homelessness: (Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness)

Episodically homeless refers to individuals, often with disabling conditions, who are currently homeless and have experienced three or more episodes of homelessness in the past year (of note, episodes are defined as periods when a person would be in a shelter or place not fit for human habitation, and after at least 30 days, would be back in the shelter or inhabitable location)

Moving from a List to Housing

When a dedicated housing or support resource becomes available the following steps are taken:

1. The housing provider will contact the housing navigator and make them aware of the unit.
2. The Housing Navigator will filter the By-Name Priority List in accordance with the prioritization chart and type of accommodation offered to find a suitable individual or family.
3. All the appropriate partnering agencies (Homelessness Response Table) will meet depending on what kind of unit is available and what type of support is required.

4. At this meeting it will be discussed if the individual is the most appropriate for the vacancy and wants to be housed / supported.
5. A housing offer will be presented to one person once the decision is made. Should the individual / family refuse the offer, they will remain on the List without penalty and the housing navigator will select another individual or family from the original list to offer the housing and/or supports.
6. Once an individual has been notified of a unit, they must respond within a reasonable time frame. This timeframe will be fluid and based on individual circumstance.
 - Landlords will have vacancy length restrictions which will need to be considered and respected.

Current Progress

The By Name List process started in February 2021, since that time 87 in Grey and Bruce County people have been identified as experiencing homelessness, 49 are assessed as experiencing chronic homelessness. 77 people are from or currently located in Grey County.

In total 11 have been housed with supports, 9 of which are considered chronically homeless, 3 Indigenous and 1 youth.

Of the 49 individuals considered chronically homeless, 21 are female and 28 are male, 16 are Indigenous.

Supports

For individuals to remain successfully housed, multi-agency supports are required. These supports, level of need and frequency are determined at the Homelessness Response Table. Currently, Grey County is funding an Outreach Worker through CMHA that organizes supports and fills in gaps until permanent supports are secured through CMHA and other community organizations. As transitional units become available a second Outreach Worker/Mental Health Worker will be required to assist with the caseload. People that are on the list waiting for housing with supports are assisted with services such as identification clinics, food security, income security, emergency housing, referrals to mental health services and primary care services.

Transitional Units

The County is looking at ways to create transitional units for people experiencing chronic homelessness to access, wrap around with supports and assist with finding permanent housing. Transitional units can be accessed for up to one year, longer if required. Once a person is successfully housed a permanent unit will be found. Others may be supported in a permanent unit from the beginning.

Grey County Housing currently furnished one rent geared to income unit into a transitional unit. Grey County is looking to furnish 5 units into transitional units total.

There are currently 11 units being renovated into new transitional units by the end of 2021.

- Maam Wiim Wim Housing will have three transitional units completed by August 2021.

- Lutheran Social Services will have four transitional units completed by December 2021.
- Women's Centre Grey Bruce will have four transitional units completed by November 2021.

Grey County staff are also exploring other opportunities with the leasing a City of Owen Sound property and working with local motel owners for more permanent arrangements in Hanover, Chatsworth and Flesherton.

Legal and Legislated Requirements

None

Financial and Resource Implications

\$115,000 in annual staffing funding from the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) funding. \$80,000 for an Outreach Worker and \$35,000 towards a Housing Navigator

\$80,000 in funding will be required for a second Outreach worker. Funding source to be determined.

Renovation costs from the Social Services Relief Fund Phase 2 in the amount of \$715,000 for the three projects

County funds will be required for further transitional units through motels and leasing of properties. A report will come forward at the next Affordable Housing Task Force meeting

Relevant Consultation

- Internal (list)
- External (list) Homelessness Response Table

Appendices and Attachments

None.