

APPENDIX A – ONTARIO’S HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS SYSTEM

This appendix provides an overview of potential measures to advance solutions to end youth homelessness in Ontario and the role [Service Managers](#) play in the housing and homelessness system, which often intersects with other provincially funded and administered systems including mental and physical health, and corrections.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Ontario Ministry of Housing

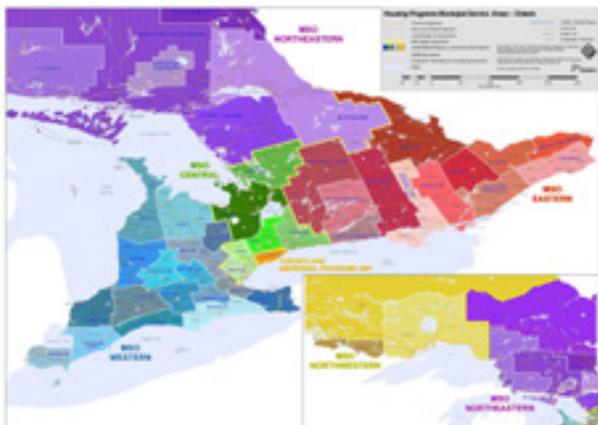
The Ministry of Housing leads the provincial government’s efforts to achieve its long-term goal to end homelessness, promotes a housing market that serves the full range of housing needs, protects tenants, and encourages private sector building.

The Province, through the Ministry of Housing, acts as a system steward and is responsible for: setting the overall vision, legislative and policy framework for housing; identifying common desired outcomes and reports on their achievement; developing strategies, policies and programs to measure, prevent, reduce and end homelessness; providing program funding to achieve desired outcomes; and, engaging with the federal government to establish national directions and negotiate federal contributions.

Service Managers

In Ontario, the delivery of housing and homelessness-related services is a local responsibility, administered by 47 Service Managers in collaboration with many frontline service delivery organizations. Service Managers include Consolidated Municipal Service Managers, which may be regional governments, counties or separated cities, and District Social Services Administration Boards, which are boards established in each of the 10 districts in Northern Ontario. The term “Service Manager” includes both Consolidated Municipal Service Managers and District Social Services Administration Boards in this appendix. The map on the following page outlines the 47 Municipal Service Areas.

Housing Programs Municipal Service Areas - Ontario



YOU CAN VIEW THE FULL SIZED MAP HERE:

www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/ONMunicipalServicesAreasMap.pdf

Ontario's 47 Service Managers are responsible for establishing policies that create an environment that promotes affordable housing development by: setting the local/district vision for housing through their Local Housing and Homelessness Plans; contributing to and coordinating housing funding; developing and administering housing and homelessness programs; managing their social housing portfolios; and, reporting on progress in addressing needs/producing outcomes. Service Managers also have responsibility for delivering Ontario Works and municipally-administered child care services. Some Service Managers are working towards integrating the delivery of human services.



This appendix offers some potential areas where Service Managers can use their strategic position in Ontario's housing and homelessness system to lead local youth plan development and implementation over the next two to three years.

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PROVINCIAL VISION, PRIORITIES AND TARGETS

Ontario's vision, as set out in the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy Update, is that every person has an affordable, suitable and adequate home to provide the foundation to secure employment, raise a family, and build strong communities.

In September 2014, the Ontario government announced its commitment to end homelessness as part of [Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy, Realizing Our Potential, 2014-2019](#). In response, the Expert Advisory Panel on Homelessness was established to give advice on how to: define and measure homelessness in Ontario; prioritize and set targets for ending homelessness; and build the evidence base and capacity to implement best practices throughout the province.

The Panel's report, [A Place to Call Home](#) (October 2015), recommended four priorities to guide provincial efforts to prevent, reduce, and end homelessness. The four priorities are: chronic homelessness, youth homelessness, Indigenous homelessness, and homelessness following transitions from provincially-funded institutions and service systems. Specific to youth homelessness, the Panel notes "all young people ought to be safe, healthy, and ready to take up opportunities – not vulnerable to violence, insecurity, and hopelessness on the streets."

Chronic homelessness is an urgent problem. The Province has accepted the Panel's recommendation to set a target of ending chronic homelessness in 10 years. To begin to make progress in meeting this goal, the Province has undertaken a number of initiatives. The government's Long-Term Affordable Strategy Update announced a wide range of provincial policy changes and investments to help increase the supply of affordable housing and make the housing and homelessness system more responsive, accessible and client-centred. In addition, the 2016 Ontario Budget announced new investments in supportive housing so that people experiencing homelessness have better access to stable, secure housing with appropriate supports. Together, the initiatives have laid the foundation for ending chronic homelessness by 2025.

Ontario's priorities and targets in the [Expert Advisory Panel on Homelessness Report](#), the province's commitments made in response to the report and the [Service Manager Housing and Homelessness Plans Policy Statement](#), give sufficient strategic direction to contextualize local activities addressing youth homelessness. This allows Service Managers to flexibly establish their role in community planning and develop youth plans that fit within their local context. Referring back to and using similar language as these priorities and targets will ensure that individual youth plans align with the work being done at the provincial level.



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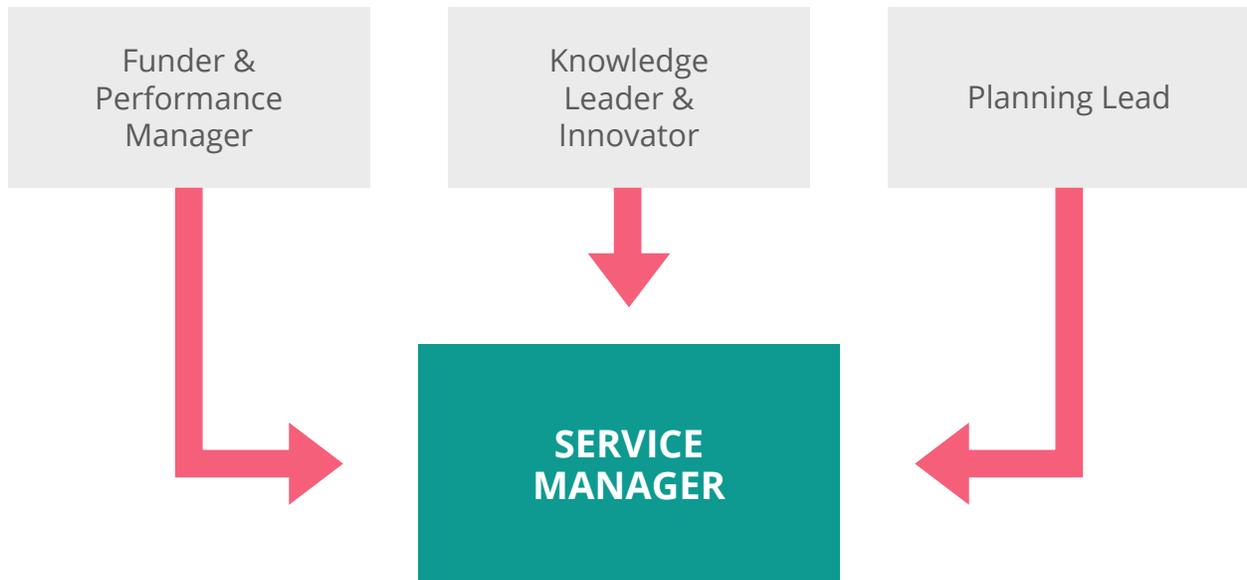
SERVICE MANAGERS ADVANCING YOUTH HOMELESSNESS OBJECTIVES LOCALLY

Service Managers take on different, yet vital roles in the youth plan development process. In some instances Service Managers lead planning, while in others their work is complementary to work with other organizations within the community. For instance, in some cases, United Ways or other community foundations have taken the lead in community planning on youth issues.

A Way Home and the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness offer a repository for effective program models and innovations and are working with national partners to develop resources and mobilize knowledge. This allows communities to adapt programs to their local context in ways that preserve the integrity of the intervention, but meet local needs and circumstances. This information can be leveraged to further support the development of program innovation and capacity building among Service Managers.

Key examples of program models available include:

- » School-based interventions.
- » Family Reconnection supports.
- » Youth Reconnect – early intervention programs.
- » Shelter diversion strategies such as “Host Homes”.
- » Interventions and supports to meet the needs of LGBTQ, Indigenous and Newcomer Youth.
- » Support for young people transitioning from care.
- » Harm reduction.
- » Employment, training and education.
- » Youth-focused models of accommodation and supports, including Transitional Housing (such as Foyers) and Housing First for Youth.



Service Managers as Planning Leads

Assess community readiness for community planning and/or implementation of a range of best practice program models;

- » Play a leadership role at convening and supporting steering committee tables locally to develop and implement Youth Plans;
- » Consult and engage with diverse stakeholders to support youth plan development and implementation;
- » Support and/lead the implementation of local youth plans, including annual strategic reviews, updates, and business planning;
- » Monitor and report on progress of the youth plan;
- » Design, implement, and coordinate the local youth homeless-serving system;
- » Implement and operate the community's integrated information system, or support its development; and
- » Support alignment of youth plans with other plans to end homelessness and poverty reduction strategies at the local level.

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Service Managers as Funders and Performance Managers

- » **Align resources** around these program models and strategies advancing the objectives of provincial and local Youth Plans;
- » **Manage diverse funding streams** to meet community priorities and targets, compliance, monitoring, and reporting requirements to funders;
- » Ensure comprehensive outcomes measurement, **program monitoring and quality assurance** processes are in place;
- » Implement and support the uptake of **service standards** for programs within the system.

Service Managers as Knowledge Leaders and Innovators

- » **Promote promising practices** and innovative solutions locally, including effective community planning approaches;
- » **Implement innovative programs** and adaptations to meet local needs leveraging existing and new resources;
- » Ensure **research** supports the implementation of the youth plan, and refines approaches in real-time;
- » **Share promising practices** at regional, provincial and national levels;
- » Participate in a Service Manager **community of practice** around best practice program models and community planning and implementation;
- » **Champion youth homelessness** issues in the local community, provincially, nationally and internationally;
- » Implement **capacity building initiatives**, including training and technical assistance across the homelessness-serving sector to advance the objectives of the Plan.

REGIONAL RESPONSES

Service Managers should consider partnerships with other Service Manager Areas that would bolster their efforts to address youth homelessness. Existing regional planning bodies that work across Service Manager Areas can be tapped into as a resource to coordinate service delivery and make planning more effective by utilizing the natural linkages between communities.

The following are some examples of current collaborations in Ontario:

- » The [OMSSA Service Manager Housing Network](#) is open to all municipal housing and human services staff to network and discuss issues and ideas, as well as acting as a platform for joint planning and delivery.
- » The [OMSSA Homelessness Prevention Network](#) brings together municipal staff working in homelessness services at the middle- and frontline levels to network and share ideas.
- » The [Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association](#) (NOSDA) was formed to develop a co-operative and collaborative approach with municipalities and municipal organizations, and to facilitate consolidated municipal delivery of services in Northern Ontario. NOSDA is intended to create a political forum for reviewing and developing both policies and program delivery issues from a Northern perspective.

Collaborating with other Service Managers can improve the planning process ensuring that efforts are not being duplicated, that youth are able to access services within their communities, and that programs and resources are being appropriately targeted to maximize their impact on youth. If formal partnerships do not already exist, Service Managers can seek to form new regional ties in areas of overlapping/transitory populations. [A list of Service Managers and their contact information can be found here.](#)



OMSSA prioritizes the advancement of human services integration, supporting transformational change, member capacity building and influencing policy.

Having Service Managers use their strategic position in Ontario's housing and homelessness system to improve community planning aligns with the direction of the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA), a non-profit organization whose members are the Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) and District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs) across Ontario. OMSSA prioritizes the advancement of human services integration, supporting transformational change, member capacity building and influencing policy.

OMSSA could be a partner in advancing the proposed youth community-planning model, which aligns with their focus on supporting leadership in integrated human services through strong local service system management across Ontario municipalities. OMSSA proposes to advance best practices, support knowledge mobilization among members and enhance linkages to provincial and local planning and decision making, which align with the activities noted above.⁹

9. OMSSA Strategic Plan, 2014-17, [Available online at http://www.omssa.com/about-us/strategic-plan/2007-2012-plan-moving-forward-together/](http://www.omssa.com/about-us/strategic-plan/2007-2012-plan-moving-forward-together/)

CASE STUDY EXAMPLE: SERVICE MANAGERS AS COLLABORATORS IN ENDING YOUTH HOMELESSNESS - KINGSTON'S YOUTH HOMELESSNESS PLAN

To illustrate an example of Ontario Service Managers engaging in local youth homelessness planning and implementation, the following case study example from Kingston is briefly outlined. Further details can be found on the [United Way KFLA](#) website.

Background

Kingston has one of the country's highest proportions of youth in its city shelters; one out of three shelter users in Kingston are youth: the national average is one in five. To take action on this issue, Kingston and area became one of six communities in Canada to participate in A Way Home Canada's "Mobilizing Local Capacity to End Youth Homelessness" (MLC) pilot project. MLC supports small- and medium-sized communities to develop local plans that prevent, reduce and end youth homelessness. The United Way of Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington led the planning and implementation processes. The end result of the initiative in Kingston was "[Youth Out Loud: Taking Action to End Youth Homelessness in Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington](#)", The Plan contains 13 actions nested under three goals: 1) A System of Care is Established; 2) There is an Integrated Homelessness Prevention Framework in Kingston and Area; 3) Housing Options Match Youths' Transition to Adulthood.

Involvement of the Service Manager in Planning and Implementation Phases

Success resulted from the stewardship provided by broad cross-sectoral stakeholder involvement, meaningful engagement of young people, and building on existing collaborations with the City of Kingston who acts as the Service Manager locally.

The local United Way and the City of Kingston built on a successful history of collaboration to address housing and homelessness and poverty in the development and implementation of 'Youth Out Loud'. As the Service Manager, the City contributed by:

- » Participating in the 'Youth Out Loud' Steering Committee and Working Groups.
- » Ensuring youth homelessness coordinated access was integrated into the homelessness data management system, HIFIS.
- » Supporting alignment of 'Youth Out Loud' with Kingston's 10 Year Municipal Housing and Homeless Plan and the Poverty Reduction Initiative.
- » Aligning diverse funding streams to meet community priorities and targets, outlined in Youth Out Loud and the Implementation Update March 2016.

Implementation Progress to Date

Implementation of the “Youth Out Loud” Plan goals and actions began in October 2014 and will continue over time, adapting to the changing needs of Kingston and its young people.

The achievements outlined below are highlights as of [August 2016](#):

Goal 1: System of Care

- » 211 protocol adopted as the local Coordinated Access system
- » Youth data integrated into HIFIS
- » Youth Case Managers and Housing First workers supported by City of Kingston
- » [Kingston Wide Youth Employment Strategy launched](#)

Goal 2: Integrated Homelessness Prevention

- » [Kingston City Council Proclamation](#) - May 3 2016 Youth Homelessness Awareness Day
- » Youth Homelessness Awareness Campaign in schools and in the community, with real local stories, aligned with Youth Out Loud goals and targeted areas
- » Pilots launched, funded by United Way
- » Mobile Youth Mental Health Worker and Protocol
- » Family Mediation Worker - Family Reconnection

Goal 3: Increased Housing Options for Youth

- » A transitional supported house for youth
- » Transformational Gift - 1.2 Million for another new Transitional Housing through United Way
- » The Ministry of Children & Youth is offering funding through the Stepping Up stream towards the Kingston Youth Shelter, Transitional Housing, Prevention/eviction workers, Housing First with case management, Youth Counselling and a Youth Trustee program.