

# **A Local Organizing/Planning Body to Address Homelessness in York Region: York Region Homelessness Community Advisory Board (YRHCAB) - (Tentative Name)**

## **Terms of Reference**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Homelessness<sup>1</sup> is a complex issue that impacts all of us. The Regional Municipality of York, in its role as the Service System Manager for homelessness programs since 1998, has supported/undertaken a series of initiatives to understand and tackle the issue of homelessness in cooperation with service providers and other stakeholders. The initiatives and reports generated include *Out in the Cold: A Report on Outreach to the Homeless in York Region, Crosslinks Housing and Support Services* (1999), *From Awareness to Action* (2000) by the York Region Homeless Task Force, the *Community Plan to Address Homelessness* (2001, updated 2003 & 2008), *Preventing Homelessness in York Region: Taking the Next Steps* (2004), *New Vision and Related Operational Reforms to York Region's Emergency Shelter and Homelessness Prevention Services*, (Report to York Regional Council, 2012), and more recently the *Make Rental Happen* initiative of the York Region Human Services Planning Board and *Housing Solutions: A place for everyone – York Region 10 Year Housing Plan* (June 2014).

At the grassroots level, between 1999 and 2011, the York Region Alliance to End Homelessness (YRAEH), a coalition of community-based organizations, engaged in building capacity of the homelessness sector and improving local response to the issue of homelessness through research, public education, advocacy and facilitating partnerships/collaborations. *Hidden From Sight: Women's Shelter Needs Assessment* (2007), *Hidden in Plain Sight: Living Homeless in York Region Photovoice Project* (2008), *Needs Assessment: Transportation Access of the Homeless and Under-housed in York Region* (2008) and *Needs Assessment: Health and Access among Homeless and At-Risk People in York Region* (2010) are some examples of major research projects of the Alliance.

Significant gains have been made in our collective efforts to address homelessness. However, without a coordinated system of care and systems planning which includes prevention, emergency responses and appropriate accommodation/supports that keeps pace with the rapid growth and urbanization, and which meets the needs of York Region's increasingly diverse population, the number of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness will continue to grow.

As a local funder focusing on community impact and in its relatively new role as the Community Entity (CE) of the federally funded Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) program for York Region, United Way Toronto & York Region (UWTYR) works with the Regional Municipality of York and other partners to address the increasingly complex issue of homelessness in our region. The recent renewal of HPS program, which includes a shift to Housing First<sup>2</sup>, requires the re-convening of the Community Advisory

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<sup>1</sup> Homelessness describes the situation of an individual or family without stable, 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, behavioural or physical challenges, and/or racism and discrimination. Most people do not choose to be homeless, and the experience is generally negative, unpleasant, stressful and distressing (Canadian Homelessness Research Network 2012: 1).

<sup>2</sup> As an approach, Housing First under the HPS will involve moving primarily individuals who are chronically or episodically homeless from the streets or homeless shelters directly into permanent housing. Permanent housing is complemented by the provision of services to assist clients to sustain their housing and work towards recovery and reintegration into the community. The implementation of Housing First will be phased in, taking into account varying capacity and resources among communities.

Board (CAB), a local organizing committee which sets direction for the prevention and reduction of homelessness. The renewal of CAB provides an opportunity for the community to strengthen its infrastructure and capacity to not only fulfill the HPS funding mandate but also take a broader perspective and coordinated systems approach to end homelessness in communities across the region.

### **1.1. Mandate of the YRHCAB**

The YRHCAB provides a venue for community members to work collaboratively to end homelessness in communities across the region.

### **1.2 Purpose of the Terms of Reference**

The purpose of the Terms of Reference is to:

- Ensure participating members and community stakeholders have a clear understanding of the purpose and scope of YRHCAB;
- Ensure YRHCAB members have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities;
- Enhance the smooth functioning of YRHCAB and YRHCAB meetings.

## **2. SCOPE**

### **2.1 Key Functions**

The roles and functions of YRHCAB include:

- Work collaboratively with partners to develop, make recommendations about the implementation of, evaluate and update the community plan to end homelessness in York Region;
- Learn from national and provincial networks and research to strengthen the capacity of stakeholders and service providers and to improve local response to homelessness;
- Monitor and analyze the status of homelessness in York Region and report to the community minimally on an annual basis, the progress towards ending homelessness;
- Build government, business, and public support for ending homelessness in the region through public education and advocacy;
- Provide advice to The Regional Municipality of York, the Service System Manager and other funders in the coordination and allocation of homelessness funding;
- Provide a forum for networking among and between government and community representatives engaged in issues of homelessness;
- Ensure an inclusive community planning process in which the diverse voices and experience of people with lived experience of homelessness are embedded;
- Evaluate the function and activities of the YRHCAB on an annual basis to ensure the mandate is being achieved ;
- Specific to HPS:
  - Work collaboratively with partners to implement, evaluate and update the Community Plan to end homelessness in York Region;
  - In collaboration with the CE, plan and develop a process and framework for decision making for HPS funding and make recommendations on HPS funding allocations to ensure Community Plan priorities which align with Service Canada guidelines are met.

### **2.2 Time Frame**

The YRHCAB will remain active throughout the HPS funding period of 2014-2019, or until the YRHCAB members decide to disband. As a living document, the Terms of Reference will be revisited annually or as needed at the discretion of the YRHCAB.

### 3. YRHCAB VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

**Responsive** – decisions regarding community priorities and related activities respond to real and relevant needs, typically identified through Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) data, point-in-time counts, project results, etc.

**Representative and inclusive** – decisions are seen as community-driven and representing the collective interest of community members, including individuals with lived experience, on how best to address issues.

**Connected** – decisions and activities are integrated within the broader scope of housing and homelessness initiatives (e.g. York Region 10-Year Housing Plan, York Region Human Services Planning Board's Make Rental Happen, UWTYR's Community Impact Strategies) in the community through relationship building.

**Results-based** – projects implemented demonstrate results based on evaluation, which, in the case of HPS Designated Communities, are related to the outcome indicators identified in the Community Plan.

**Professionalism** – By seeking participation on YRHCAB, members are making a general commitment to:

- Work together in an effective and professional manner;
- Use a level of reasonable care to fulfill their duties effectively;
- Avoid conflicts of interest;
- Consider the views of others equally;
- Maintain confidentiality;
- Adhere to a high standard of diligence and care in carrying out duties.

### 4. YRHCAB STRUCTURE

The YRHCAB structure is illustrated in Figure 1. A Terms of Reference will be developed for each YRHCAB Committee and Working Group.

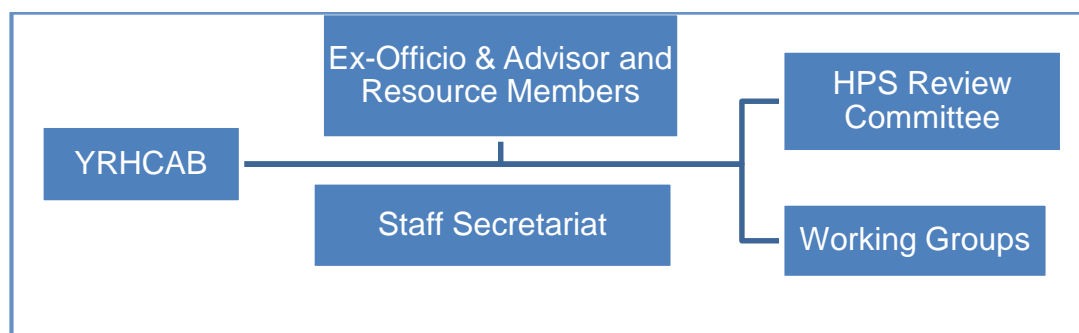


Fig. 1

#### 4.1 HPS Review Committee

Upon the launch of a community call for proposals, an ad-hoc Review Committee of YRHCAB will be established to select HPS projects and make allocation recommendations to the CE. The Committee will consist minimally of two YRHCAB members, one UWTYR Community Impact volunteer, one Service Canada ex-officio representative and additional people with specific areas of expertise, if required.

## **4.2 Working Groups**

YRHCAB Working Groups will be organized around the priorities identified by YRHCAB. The primary function of the Working Group is to carry out assigned tasks that have been identified in a work plan that has been developed and approved by YRHCAB and report back to YRHCAB on progress and outcomes.

## **5. MEMBERSHIP**

### **5.1 Membership Composition and Size**

The YRHCAB membership shall consist of a maximum of sixteen voting members as well as Ex-Officio and various Advisor and Resource Members.

Ensuring a broad geographical representation from across the region, the YRHCAB will strive to achieve the following membership composition:

One representative from each of the following organizations or sectors: UWTYR in its role as CE, the Regional Municipality of York in its role as the Service System Manager for homelessness programs, York Regional Police, York Region Paramedic and Seniors Services, Landlord or Landlord Associations, Health Services, and Business.

Minimum two individuals who experience/have experienced homelessness or are directly impacted by homelessness.

Up to seven community representatives who are from or who have experience or expertise in the following with priorities given to specific groups/sectors based on the community plan and findings identified through York Region homelessness data and/or research:

- Ethno-cultural communities and faith groups;
- Service sectors which include housing and outreach, emergency shelter, drop-ins, food security, mental health, addictions, legal, youth, criminal justice, employment, and education; or
- Priority populations which include youth, people with mental illness, people who are homeless, people with addictions, people with disabilities, women, seniors, newcomers, families, LGBTQ, Francophones, Aboriginals, and veterans.

Senior Vice President, Community Impact of UWTYR and a Senior Development Officer from Service Canada as Ex-Officio.

Advisor and Resource Members shall include key representatives from a cross section of federal, provincial and municipal ministries/offices, local funders and research institutions who will contribute to achieving the mandate of YRHCAB and its identified priorities.

### **5.2 Membership Review and Selection**

Members of the inaugural YRHCAB will be selected by the CAB Renewal Advisory Group. Chair will be decided by YRHCAB membership.

Should an YRHCAB Member(s) resign during the term, an ad-hoc Membership Review Working Group will be struck to recruit and select new Member(s) for YRHCAB.

### 5.3 Member Participation

If an YRHCAB Member misses three consecutive meetings, he or she or the organization he or she represents will be asked to reconsider his or her membership. Replacements or new applications are to be made in writing and approved by YRHCAB.

Substitute or alternate individuals for Members is not permitted.

#### 5.3.1 Ex-officio, Advisor and Resource Members and Guests

Ex-officio:	Senior Vice President, Community Impact, UWTYR Senior Development Officer, Service Canada
Advisor and Resource Members:	Government officials, local funders and researchers may attend meetings from time to time to share their expertise but are not part of the decision making process.
Guests:	Individuals or groups that are invited by the YRHCAB membership to make a presentation or share their expertise on various YRHCAB topics or homelessness issues.

#### 5.3.2 Reimbursement of Expenses

Members of YRHCAB shall serve without remuneration.

Where appropriate, Members and Guests will be reimbursed for their travel expenses in attending YRHCAB meetings as per UWYR mileage reimbursement policy if, for example, their time to attend is not paid by their organizations or groups.

#### 5.3.3 Term

Membership will be a two-year term, with the option of two additional one-year terms which aligns with the HPS renewal timeline.

For the role of Chair, term will be two years.

## 6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### 6.1 Member

Members are accountable to the community they serve and/or represent and their general roles and responsibilities include:

- Work actively with other YRHCAB members to develop a community plan;
- Advance the goals of the community plan within individual member's capacity and resources;
- Sustain a collaborative and consultative relationship with other members of the YRHCAB to advance solutions to homelessness and specific projects that address homelessness;
- Maintain an awareness of current issues and government policies impacting persons in various stages of homelessness;
- Regularly attend YRHCAB meetings and actively participate in discussions and contribute to the consensus process at the meetings;

- Represent the views of their constituents and have authority to speak on their behalf, clearly distinguishing when they are speaking on behalf of their constituents, for the public, or presenting their own point of view;
- Participate in Working Group(s) when required and where possible;
- Actively share leadership, expertise, information and experience;
- Where applicable and appropriate, obtain formal endorsement from their organization/agency/network for a specific initiative/action of the YRHCAB;
- Where required, assist the Staff Secretariat with communications;
- Adhere to the Confidentiality Agreement;
- Adhere to the Conflict of Interest Guidelines.

## **6.2 Chair**

A Chair will be selected by the voting members of YRHCAB and perform the following roles:

- Facilitate YRHCAB meetings;
- Build group consensus around key issues and decisions;
- Represent the YRHCAB where required.

## **6.3 Advisor and Resource Members**

Advisor and Resource Members are non-voting members. They generally serve in an advisory role and provide advice to YRHCAB on funding opportunities and policy developments from the office, ministries and/or institutions they represent.

Advisor and Resource Members will be invited to attend YRHCAB meetings but it is not a requirement. YRHCAB meeting agendas and minutes will be shared with the Advisor and Resources Members.

## **6.4 CE**

The CE is directly accountable to the Government of Canada for administering the HPS Designated Communities funding. In addition to the general responsibilities as an YRHCAB Member, the CE will perform the following roles specific to HPS:

- Ensure implementation of the Community Plan as established by the YRHCAB and approved by Service Canada;
- Provide support and guidance to the YRHCAB regarding program delivery and administration and assisting to establish the terms of reference for the HPS project selection and recommendation processes;
- Responsible for the management of HPS sub-project funding agreements and inform the YRHCAB about the status and results of the sub-projects;
- Conduct point-in-time counts to assess the prevalence of homelessness in York.

To support the YRHCAB in fulfilling their mandate, the CE will also serve as Staff Secretariat which will:

- Provide general administrative and logistical support for the YRHCAB;
- Provide general administrative and logistical support for the Review Committee and Working Groups;
- Coordinate media relations.

## **7. MEETINGS**

### **7.1 Communication**

Members of the YRHCAB, Advisor and Resource Members, Guests and Ex-Officio agree to follow the Rules of Engagement during their participation in YRHCAB meetings. The Rules of Engagement are set out to:

- Challenge ideas, not people, be positive, open and solution oriented;
- Participate and listen generously, ensuring that everyone gets heard;
- Stay focused and in the process, holding one conversation at a time;
- Encourage new ideas and build on the ideas of others; be willing to see situations from a perspective other than your own;
- Observe time limits; stick to the agenda.

### **7.2 Decision Making**

Aside from approval of HPS funding recommendation, decisions shall generally be made using the principles of group consensus.

If a consensus cannot be attained, the Chair, at his or her discretion, may put a question before the YRHCAB to a vote, when required and if appropriate. Decisions will be reached by majority. In the case of a tie vote, the Chair of YRHCAB shall have the casting vote.

Advisor and Resource Members, Guests and Ex-Officio are not entitled to vote.

### **7.3 Quorum**

A quorum is a simple majority (9 members) of total YRHCAB members.

Advisor and Resource Members, Guests and Ex-Officio will not be counted for quorum purposes.

### **7.4 Frequency/Logistics**

The YRHCAB shall hold a minimum of four meetings per year. Additional meetings may be called by the Chair in consultation with the CE.

Every effort will be made to accommodate schedules by ensuring that meetings are scheduled well in advance.

## **8. DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

YRHCAB Members, Advisor and Resource Members, Guests and Ex-Officio agree to resolve disputes in the following manner:

- Adhere to Rules of Engagement;
- Maintain YRHCAB Values and Principles;
- Keep track of issues as they arise and commit to working toward solution;
- Use empathy and genuineness;
- Seek common ground;
- Provide venue for individual members to resolve disputes away from the group;
- In the event a dispute cannot be resolved, members may agree to disagree and provide a written rationale on their viewpoint which will form part of the meeting record.

## **9. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Members of YRHCAB will not disclose any information that may cause unfair advantage to one group over another during a call for proposal process. Members shall not discuss any HPS proposals or funding recommendations made by the HPS Review Committee outside the YRHCAB committee structure and YRHCAB meetings.

## **10. CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Any behaviour by YRHCAB Members which is, or could reasonably be considered as a conflict of interest is prohibited and may be subject to a request by the Chair for the YRHCAB Member and/or associated organization to resign.

YRHCAB Members are ultimately responsible and accountable for using good judgement in the course of exercising duties.

Members shall declare any actual or potential conflict of interest and shall excuse themselves from, and not take part in, deliberations and votes relating to any matter that gives rise to a conflict of interest.

To prevent instances of conflict of interest during a funding review process, the following guidelines will be followed:

- It is recognized that in determining the membership of the HPS Review Committee there will be a need to retain expertise and reflect diversity of YRHCAB while preventing instances of conflict of interest.
- The HPS Review Committee is to be briefed about the potential for real, perceived, and potential future conflicts within the membership of the YRHCAB and be directed to attend to any concerns raised regarding conflict of interest during the review process. YRHCAB Members may alert the CE to any situation where real, perceived, or potential future conflict of interest may occur.
- YRHCAB Members are not permitted to participate in any aspect of the HPS funding review and approval process in the event that the organizations which the Members are associated with have submitted a proposal for funding.
- For persons representing a coalition or network, members of the coalition could vote on the proposal only if the coalition as a whole was not benefiting. That is, if a particular organization on the coalition put in their own proposal, there is not a conflict for the other members. However, if the coalition puts in the proposal on behalf of the entire coalition, all members will be considered to be in conflict and must abstain from voting.

*Last Updated September 2015*



## **Glossary of Terms**

### **Service System Manager (Consolidated Municipal Service System Manager – CMSM)**

CMSMs were established fifteen years ago when the then provincial government decided that a number of programs were best funded and delivered at the local level. These included social housing, child care, social assistance, public health, land ambulance, long term care, and homelessness prevention. It was believed the bodies best positioned to manage these programs in an organized and coordinated manner would be CMSMs. Service system management has evolved to a core function in determining, leading and organizing services and resources in local communities. Today, CMSMs plan, manage, fund, and deliver human services including early learning and child care, employment and income supports, affordable housing and homelessness prevention programs.

For more information on CMSMs please visit:

<http://omssa.com/public-affairs/communications/position-papers-reports/defining-SSM-May2014.pdf>

### **York Region Alliance to End Homelessness (YRAEH)**

From 1999-2011, YRAEH was the collaborative voice of community efforts to address homelessness in York Region. Membership of YRAEH was from multiple sectors including emergency shelters, housing and support, legal services, education, mental health and addiction, health, child and youth services, transportation, food security, and developmental services. YRAEH's role involved public education/awareness raising, capacity building, research/dissemination, facilitation and incubation of collaborative community initiatives, advocacy and partnership building. Collaborations included an 11 agency management group, the HOTS (Housing Outreach and Transitional Support) Network, Capacity Building Working Group, Transportation Working Group, Women's Shelter Community Team, acting as umbrella for the York Region Harm Reduction Coalition. YRAEH was an active participant in the development of previous community plans to Address Homelessness. YRAEH was staffed through project funding/donations from 2006-2011, but was unable to sustain the organization beyond March 2011. The website is still available with details of projects, research and reports.

To access reports please visit:

[www.yraeh.ca](http://www.yraeh.ca)

### **Community Entity (CE)**

Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) through the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) funds projects in 61 designated communities, primarily major urban centres, identified as having a significant problem with homelessness. HPS funds are targeted to local priorities identified by the community, and must be cost-matched (directly or in-kind) by other funding partners contributing to the Community Plan. York Region is one of the 61 designated communities.

Based on recommendation from the Community Advisory Board (CAB), Canada entrusts a community body, often the community's municipal government or a not for profit local community organization, such as United Way, with the ability to select and manage HPS projects in their area. A CE is normally an incorporated organization that is responsible for the implementation of a community plan, in whole or in part. At a minimum the CE is responsible for

implementing the HPS portion of the Community Plan. Under the CE model, all requests for funding under HPS must go through the CE, which is responsible for publishing solicitation of proposals; approving sub-projects based on recommendations by the CAB; contracting and monitoring all sub-agreements; reporting on its activities and disbursements; data and information collection and sharing; and reporting on the results and outcomes for their sub-projects.

### **Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS)**

HPS is a community-based program aimed at preventing and reducing homelessness by providing direct support and funding to communities across Canada. The Government of Canada's Economic Action Plan 2013 announced nearly \$600 million over five years (2014-2019) starting in April 2014 to renew and refocus the HPS using a Housing First approach.

For more information about HPS please visit:

<http://www.esdc.gc.ca/eng/communities/homelessness/understanding.shtml>

### **Housing First (HF)**

As an approach, HF under the HPS will involve moving primarily individuals who are chronically or episodically homeless from the streets or homeless shelters directly into permanent housing. Permanent housing is complemented by the provision of services to assist clients to sustain their housing and work towards recovery and reintegration into the community. The implementation of Housing First will be phased in, taking into account varying capacity and resources among communities.

The implementation of a HF approach builds on the outcomes of the Mental Health Commission of Canada's (MHCC) *At Home/Chez Soi* demonstration research project, as well as outcomes in several other Canadian communities. The project—the largest of its kind—ended in March 2013 and provides strong evidence that HF is an effective way to reduce homelessness.

Read the [National At Home/Chez Soi Final Report](#) for more information.

### **Community Advisory Board (CAB)**

The federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) requires those communities receiving dollars to address the issue of homelessness to have a CAB. It is the local organizing committee responsible for setting direction for addressing homelessness in the community or region. Although there are several different types of Advisory Boards, every CAB has certain elements in common. It encourages partnership building. It goes beyond simply funding organizations - it is involved in aligning efforts to end and prevent homelessness throughout the community. It identifies priorities through a planning process, determines which projects should be implemented to address those priorities and reports back to the larger community on the efforts made and results achieved in preventing and reducing homelessness. During meetings, all members should have the opportunity to bring forth their views; decisions are based on the collective understanding of the best way to move forward.

## **HPS - Community Plan (CP)**

A community plan is a comprehensive document which identifies local needs, existing responses and funding priorities to prevent, reduce and/or end homelessness. It can be used by multi stakeholders to inform systems thinking and funding decisions.

Specific to the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) it demonstrates how the community will implement and develop a Housing First model to meet the required targets set by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) Community Plans, developed and endorsed through the local organizing/planning body (i.e. Community Advisory Board). The HPS Community Plan ensures a coordinated response to address the needs of people who are homeless or those at imminent risk of homelessness. The funding priorities for the HPS are submitted to Canada for review and approval by the appropriate authority, and are to provide a long-term vision to respond to these identified needs. Projects funded through the Designated Communities stream must address one or more priorities identified in the Community Plan.

The HPS Community Plan is expected to identify the percentage of the HPS allocation the CAB intends to devote to specific priorities. This may result in caps on project amounts to ensure funds are available to address other priorities.

CABs in designated communities are required to assess and update their Community Plans to ensure that investments are tracked, and that the plan continues to address the community's needs.

## **Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS)**

The National Homelessness Information System (NHIS) is a federal data development initiative designed to collect and analyze baseline data on the use of shelters in Canada. NHIS supports the implementation and deployment of the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) software, HIFIS training at the community level, and projects related to community shelter data coordination.

The HIFIS software is a free, community-driven application. As a client management tool, the HIFIS software enhances services providers' ability to manage their operations and collect information about the population using shelters, such as: client bookings, provision of goods and services, housing placement, and case management.

Service Providers that collect data using HIFIS also share some of their data with the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) through a Data Provision Agreement

For more information on HIFIS please visit:

<http://hifis.hrsdc.gc.ca/depliant-brochure/index-eng.shtml>

## **Point in Time Count (PiT Count)**

PiT Count is a tally of who is homeless on a given night and provides a snapshot of who experiences homeless throughout the year. The PiT Count is a one-evening, statistically reliable, unduplicated count of sheltered and unsheltered homeless individuals and families in a given community, city, municipality and/or region. Many PiT Counts also include a needs assessment to help identify needs and issues and inform programming and funding priorities.