Community Plan
2011–2014

Homelessness Partnering Strategy

Annex B: Community Plan

Community: Nelson

Province or Territory: 10 - British Columbia

Delivery Model: Shared Delivery
(For HPS Designated Communities Funds)

Date of CAB approval:	Day	Month	Year
	30	03	2011

Date sent to Service Canada:	Day	Month	Year
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Canada

Contents

1. The Community Planning Process

1.1. Community Advisory Board (CAB)

<u>Purpose</u>
The purpose of this section is to identify how representative your CAB is of the stakeholders in your community. You will also consider the strengths of your CAB and any challenges you may face.

Your CAB should be representative of your community, including representation from:
- The Province/Territory
- Municipality/Regional government
- Aboriginal sector
- Private sector
- Not-for-profit/charitable sector
- Your client groups (homeless and at-risk individuals, including youth and Aboriginal people where appropriate)
- Service providers

It could also include other representatives important in your community, for example:
- Academic/research/policy group

Note: The Reference Guide includes an example for completing this section.

a.   Before answering this question, complete **Table A** (Community Advisory Board Membership) in the Data Tables.

Is there any sector or organization you would like to include in the future to make the CAB more representative of your community? **Table A** (Community Advisory Board Membership) in the Data Tables will help you to identify which sectors are already represented on your CAB.

☒   yes   ☐ no

If yes, please identify the sector or organization and describe how you will engage it.

Our local CAB, the Nelson Committee on Homelessness (NCOH), has a broad range of sectors represented, however, there are other sectors we would like to see more involved. The groups NCOH would like to increase participation from are as follows:
1. The Ministry of Social Development (Income Assistance office) - they have attended NCOH meetings at our special request, however, they are not a regular participant.

2. The Aboriginal Sector - this sector is very small in this area and finding appropriate representation is an ongoing challenge.
3. Employment Services Sector - They have just begun to increase their participation and some agencies have made commitments or are investigating possibilities for information sharing.
4. Public Health Sector - this sector has attended on special request but are not regular attendees. They do provide information to NCOH via other agencies.
5. Business community - a Chamber of Commerce representative has attended a few of NCOH's special events, such as Homelessness Action Week, but are not a regular part of information sharing or planning processes.

We intend to engage these groups to become involved in NCOH's regular meeting and planning processes through email, telephone calls, and targeted invitations to special planning events.

b. What are the strengths of your CAB?
The strengths of the Community Advisory Board (NCOH) are many:

1. Membership is very diverse and includes government, community social service agencies (adults, families, youth, seniors), law enforcement, people who have or are experiencing homelessness, women's groups, concerned citizens, emergency food organizations, and the health sector - most often Mental Health and Addictions.

2. Volunteer Hours - The participation of members at regular monthly committee meetings, Homelessness Action Week, Community Connect Day, public and media relations, amassing data for research, planning, and coordinating services is very high. Because of this commitment, the community maintains a high standard of service for people who are homeless and at-risk and a high level of awareness of the issues related to homelessness among citizens, service providers, and government.

3. Cooperation and collaboration between agencies - Agencies work collaboratively to determine how to best meet the needs of people who are homeless and at-risk. CAB members can count on each other to write letters of support required to obtain funding for worthy projects. CAB members offer suggestions to each other on how to improve their services and share relevant information openly.

4. Generally, one or two participants who are currently homeless, or have been in the past, attend NCOH meetings. They attend meetings, offer input into the community planning process, assist with Connect Day, and do other volunteer work for the committee. Their input has been of great benefit to NCOH.

5. Support from the City of Nelson - The City has assisted NCOH in acquiring a reduced rate of insurance for events, provides free monthly meeting space, has worked with NCOH on bylaw changes to preserve low-cost housing, regularly sends

a councillor to meetings and events, and the mayor has participated by speaking at an NCOH sponsored Community Forum.

    c.   What challenges, if any, are faced by your CAB?

1. In spite of a strong and committed CAB, homelessness and the demand for emergency food are increasing in our community. This is due to the high cost of housing in Nelson, vacancy rate that continues to hover at around 1%, the limited availability of jobs that pay a living wage and offer sufficient hours, and the recent downturn in the economy.

2. Accessing sufficient resources to adequately address the issues listed in #1.

1.2. Stakeholder Engagement

Purpose
The challenges of homelessness are complex and are best addressed through strong support and cooperation between all levels of government, as well as the private and voluntary sectors.

The purpose of this section is to describe the support and cooperation within your community for your homelessness strategy. It is expected that you will demonstrate broad support, representing all key sectors in your community.

    a.   Before answering this question, complete **Table B** (Partners and Their Involvement) in the Data Tables

How did you consult your community as you prepared this Community Plan? **Tables A** (Community Advisory Board Membership) and **B** (Partners and their Involvement) in the Data Tables may help you to identify who was involved in your community planning process. Please include information about the extent of your consultation.

In preparation of the development of this Community Plan, NCOH consulted with the community by holding a series of discussions at monthly NCOH meetings and by hosting a planning session in January 2011 of 23 stakeholders specifically invited to provide input into the Plan. We surveyed their opinions on how well NCOH has achieved its priorities to date, what changes we should be making, and what each stakeholder's commitment is to providing services to homeless and at-risk individuals over the next three years.

Participants included: clients and staff of ANKORS (AIDS Network Outreach and Support Society), Mental Health Clubhouse member, senior citizen volunteer, two

City councillors, the Women's Centre, Francophone Association, Our Daily Bread Soup Kitchen, Cicada Place (youth housing), Nelson Community Services Centre (Homeless Outreach Program), Nelson CARES Society (Stepping Stones Emergency Shelter and Transition Support Program), Interior Health Authority (Mental Health & Addictions Outreach), Nelson Food Cupboard (food bank), Kootenay Career Development Society (employment counsellor), and the NCOH Community Coordinator.

b. Are there stakeholders or potential partners other than those listed in Table B (Partners and their Involvement) that are critical to your community's homelessness strategy?

☒ yes   ☐ no

If yes, identify these stakeholders and describe the contribution they would make to your homelessness strategy.

The Aboriginal sector is critical to our community's homelessness strategy as we believe this is a sector in need of homelessness services yet the service community is not clear as to how to best meet their needs. Their involvement in NCOH would bring new information forward for planning purposes thereby making services more reflective of this sector.

The challenge to bringing this sector to the table is that the Aboriginal population in Nelson and area is quite small and there are no reserves or formal Aboriginal organizations in the the West Kootenay region. Consequently, there are very limited services for NCOH to engage with.

If yes, how will you engage these stakeholders?

We will continue to identify and target Aboriginal leaders as they emerge in the community for engagement around the issue of homelessness and related support services.

c. How is your CAB working with the Aboriginal sector to identify and implement Aboriginal priorities? Please note: Each Community Advisory Board is responsible for allocating a level of funding for Aboriginal homelessness that is representative of the percentage of the Aboriginal population in that community. Where feasible and appropriate, Aboriginal groups working with people who are homeless should be considered as the preferred funding recipients to deliver culturally relevant services to homeless or at-risk Aboriginal people.

As noted above, the Aboriginal sector in the Nelson area is very small, approximately 2% of the population. The challenges NCOH has in engaging an aboriginal group is that the one of the local Aboriginal groups is currently very engaged in a politial struggle for recognition of status and territorial rights, and the Aboriginal Family Support Program is regional in nature and not able to participate

in an initiative for only Nelson and area. Funding for Aboriginal services in this area if provided to non-aboriginal agencies by the Ministry of Child and Family Development. The Metis Association is becoming more organized and may be a new route of engagement by NCOH.

d. Please answer this question only if your community receives funding from the HPS Aboriginal Homelessness Funding Stream and your CAB manages this funding; otherwise, enter n/a in the box below.

Please describe how your community will ensure Aboriginal Homelessness funding will primarily target projects from Aboriginal service providers to address the specific needs of the off-reserve homeless Aboriginal population. Your answer should include how you will ensure that the activities undertaken will respect Aboriginal identity and practices, to ensure services are integrated and culturally appropriate.

1.3. Other Related Strategies, Programs and Community Plans

Purpose
It is important to take an integrated approach to addressing homelessness issues. In this section, you will demonstrate how your work on homelessness links to other strategies, programs and plans.

a. In the table provided below, please identify federal, provincial or territorial strategies or programs (other than HPS) which fund activities in your community related to your homelessness strategy (please see the Reference Guide for examples). If you are not aware of any relevant strategies or programs in your community, please put n/a in the first box under "Name of federal, provincial or territorial broad-based community strategies or programs".

- In the first column, please identify the strategy or program.
- In the second column, briefly describe how it complements your homelessness strategy.
- In the final column, please identify the primary focus of the strategy or program. From the drop-down menu in the final column, you can choose from Aboriginal, youth, children, seniors, women, people with disabilities, mental health, employment, crime prevention, and anti-drug.

Name of federal, provincial or territorial community strategies or programs	Briefly describe (max 250 characters)	Primary focus of strategy or program
Canada / British Columbia Labour Market Agreement	YERC - Youth Employment Resource Centre for those who are 15-30 years old. They collect data on how many	Youth

Name of federal, provincial or territorial community strategies or programs	Briefly describe (max 250 characters)	Primary focus of strategy or program
	youth job-seekers are homeless. Their data informs NCOH's housing strategy.	
Understanding the Early Years Community Action Plan funded by HRSDC	It coordinates service delivery for children and families, including the need for adequate housing. It complements NCOH's strategy by focussing on the needs of families.	Children
Status of Women Canada	Women in Sustainable Housing Project - assists 14 participants who are in need of affordable housing. Components include financial literacy, a matched savings program, and support for furthering education and improving finances for participants.	Women
HIV / AIDS Strategy, Hep C Strategy, and Blood Borne Pathogens Plan funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada & Interior Health Authority	Complements NCOH's Homelessness Strategy by funding -outreach support to homeless / at-risk clients -harm reduction services -housing support	Click to choose
BC Housing's Emergency Shelter Program	Complements NCOH's strategy by funding Stepping Stones Emergency Shelter, Extreme Weather Response Program, & the Homeless Outreach Program	Click to choose
BC Housing's Affordable and Transition Housing Program	Complements NCOH's strategy by funding Cicada Place Youth Housing, Nelson & District Housing Society, senior's housing projects, women's Transition House (provides emergency housing for women leaving violence)	Click to choose
Ministry of Social Development Employment Strategy	a) Canadian Mental Health Association is funded to provide the Community Assistance and ACHIEVE programs. They share stats on homelessness and employment with NCOH. b) Kootenay Career Development	Employment

Name of federal, provincial or territorial community strategies or programs	Briefly describe (max 250 characters)	Primary focus of strategy or program
	Society share data with NCOH.	
Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch of the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General	Funds the Nelson Food Cupboard Society's Food Bank. They complement NCOH's homelessness strategy by helping prevent loss of housing due to poverty.	Click to choose
Interior Health Authority	Mental Health & Substance Use, Public Health, Population Health. All of the above support NCOH's homelessness strategy by focussing on the social determinants of health.	Click to choose
Canada's Economic Action Plan	Partial funding for the renovation of the Selkirk College dorms, previously unused since 1998. It complements NCOH's strategy by providing 100 units of housing for students, taking pressure off the rental market for people with low income.	Youth

b.   In the table below, please identify any other plans developed by or in your community since April 1, 2007 to address issues related to homelessness. These plans may range from plans required by the Province or Territory to local plans intended to better integrate all the strategies undertaken in your community. If you are not aware of any other community plans related to homelessness in your community, please put n/a in the first box under "Title of plan". In the column "What issue was the plan designed to address?" please choose from the drop-down menu. Your choices are: homelessness, affordable housing, poverty, or mental health.

Title of plan	What is the main issue the plan was designed to address?
Nelson Affordable Housing Strategy by Cityspaces Consulting - Commissioned by the City of Nelson, June 2010	Affordable Housing
Community Sustainability Plan - Path to 2040 - Commissioned by the City of Nelson, 2010	Affordable Housing
Official Community Plan - City of Nelson	Affordable Housing
	Please choose one
	Please choose one
	Please choose one
	Please choose one
	Please choose one
	Please choose one

1. The Community Planning Process

Title of plan	What is the main issue the plan was designed to address?
	Please choose one

2. Community Plan Assessment

If you have no priorities in an activity area, type "n/a" into the box under "Please describe your success …" and proceed to the next activity area.

Use your information package:
- The *Community Plan Priorities (2007—2011)* lists the priorities you set for 2007—2011.
- The *HPS Projects and Priorities Report* identifies which priorities were implemented through projects in your community.
- The *HPS Investments and Results Report* identifies the results (outcomes) achieved by the HPS-funded projects in your community.

Before you begin this section, you must complete **Table C** (Assessing Community Plan Priorities 2007—2011) in the Data Tables. In this section, use this Table C to identify your level of success in implementing your priorities.

a.	Continuum of Housing and Supports Priorities

Please describe your success in implementing your Continuum of Housing and Supports priorities. Please make reference to your *HPS Investments and Results Report* to describe how you know that you have been successful.
From April 1, 2007 to November 12, 2010, three HPS-funded projects reported helping 128 individuals transition into more stable housing. After placing a client in more stable housing, projects are required to follow up after three months to see if the client

was able to maintain housing. Of the 128 homeless people placed in more stable housing, 89 (80%) were contacted for a follow-up; of those individuals, 71 maintained their housing. For the 17 transitioning from an institution, 15 (88%) were contacted for a follow-up and four had maintained housing after three months.

From April 1, 2007 to November 12, 2010, three HPS-funded projects have reported helping 75 maintain their housing through a housing loss prevention intervention. A three month follow-up is also required for clients who receive a direct intervention to assist them in maintaining their housing. Of the 75 at-risk individuals who received direct support to maintain housing, 56 (75%) were contacted for a follow-up and, of these individuals, 47 remained housed.

For the 272 clients who received services from HPS-funded projects many reported positive changes in their access to income, employment, volunteer work, and education. In total, 76 individuals saw improvements in their income, 128 saw improvements in their employment status, 52 made increases in the amount of volunteer work, and 30 increased their participation in education.

Transitional Accommodation Program (TAP): In 2010 NCOH decided to expand its TAP program by accessing $12,650 in "slippage" funds from Service Canada. Funds were used to pre-pay the lease on a 4-bed house for one year for clients with mental health and/or addictions issues who had long histories of homelessness and poor tenancy records.   In July of 2010, a member agency of NCOH opened the "TAP House". Since that time, six people have been part of the program receiving support from outreach workers from Mental Health and Substance Use, Residential Transition Support Program-Stepping Stones, and ANKORS. This project has been successful in assisting people in learning life skills, improving social skills, and improving their tenancy tenure. Two have since transitioned to stable, long-term housing and are continuing to use the services of the worker assigned to them.

Please describe any challenges faced by your community in implementing your Continuum of Housing and Supports priorities and how you addressed them. (If your community did not face challenges, please enter n/a.)

1.   Lack of available low-cost housing - The most pressing issue is that the supply of housing clients can afford is far below the demand. The portion of BC's Income Assistance and Disability benefits allotted for Shelter is inadequate to be able to secure and maintain housing over the long term. Homelessness has increased in our community by 28% over the past four years, resulting in an increased caseload for the Transition Suppport Worker (TSW) and more competition for the cheapest housing in Nelson. In addition, there has been an increase in shelter residents with serious mental illness, which presents challenges to providing support to them and assisting them in finding housing. This reported increase in homeless numbers

reflects only those homeless individuals who accessed public services and not those who may be couch surfing or in other irregular /temporary shelter arrangements. Research funded by the Homelessness Partnering Secretariat in Vancouver found that for every individual identified by the official homeless count there were roughly three hidden homeless individuals.

2. Low Vacancy Rate and Limited Public Transportation - the vacancy rate in Nelson has hovered around 1% for the past 3 years and this has encouraged discrimination by landlords against tenants they view as less desireable, for eg. those receiving income assistance, single parents, youth, people with mental illness or disabilities. More supported living options for clients with mental illness, physical health, and/or addictions issues are needed. In addition, more affordable housing in rural areas outside of Nelson is often out of reach for those who are homeless or at risk as the availability of public transportation is very limited.

3. Limited Youth Services - Youth in our community have been identified by NCOH as particularly vulnerable to homelessness and have fewer options available to them if they do become homeless. There are no emergency shelter options in Nelson for youth who become homeless as the minimum age requirement at Stepping Stones Shelter is 19.

4. Loss of Affordable Housing Units in the past 5 years - a) The Kerr building was destroyed by fire on January 6, 2011. It was one of this community's low-income housing buildings with 38 units housing a total of approximately 80 residents and numerous "couch surfing" homeless individuals. The owners stated that, "due to the cost of rebuilding, it is unlikely the structure will be used for low income housing in the future."
b) The Royal Hotel's recent renovations for fire code compliance have effectively eliminated 9 Single Room Occupancy units. Units were converted to more profitable commercial space and high-end rental units far beyond the financial reach of the previous tenants.
c) The Queens' Hotel converted its 14 SRO's into a tourist hostel in 2008.

5. Second Stage Housing for Women Leaving Violence - Second Stage housing does not exist in Nelson for this group, and many women are forced to return to abusive relationships due to an inability to secure affordable or 2nd stage housing.

6. Lack of Affordable Housing for Low-Income Women - According to the recent Need and Demand Study commissioned by the City of Nelson (June 2010), many low income women are paying 50-80% of their income on housing, face discrimination from landlords if they have children or are receiving Income Assistance, and that the condition of the housing they can secure is almost always poor and unhealthy - mould, rodents, dust, insecure locks, and poor heating.

Study authors found that some women continue to live in abusive relationships for fear that if they become homeless or live in substandard housing, child welfare authorities will remove their children from their care.

7. Lack of Affordable Housing for Seniors on Fixed Incomes - There are quite a few options available for seniors with assets and high incomes, however, options for those on fixed incomes are few, especially if they have supportive care needs. A local senior's housing complex recently added 103 units, however, only 10 of them have their rents geared to income.

8. Lack of Youth Support and Outreach Services - there are no youth outreach services available at this time. Youth under 19 who are homeless have no access to emergency shelter or help in finding housing. This leaves them very vulnerable to exploitative or abusive situations. It also increases the possibility that youth, once losing home, will spend more time on the street and become "street entrenched".

9. Limited Sustainable Employment - the rate of unemployment in Nelson is the second highest in the province. The minimum wage in BC is the lowest in the country. Many jobs are unsustainable with part-time/seasonal being the norm.

10. Limited Food Security - In the Community Plan Update for 2007-2009 one objective identified was to "Improve food security for homeless and at-risk individuals by working to created progressive food policy and decreasing reliance on charitable food services." Discussions have continued at NCOH about the increasing numbers of people requiring emergency assistance with food and the need for a community kitchen in Nelson. Several parties indicated interest, including the director of the Nelson Food Cupboard. This is still a priority for NCOH and we are continuing to seek potential participants, partnerships, and funding.

11. Lack of Health Supports for Homeless and At-Risk Individuals - In the Community Plan Update for 2007-2009 it was identified that we need to "Create opportunities for homeless and at-risk individuals to gain supports and skills necessary to attaining overall health and self-sufficiency". The Selkirk College Nursing Program offers Street Nurse practicum students which have proved to be highly effective in reaching people on the street and addressing health concerns. In 2009, NCOH advocated for an ongoing street nursing position with Interior Health Authority but to no avail. In 2010, several community groups applied for a grant from IHA for a street nurse for one year, but it was not granted. NCOH responded to the rejection by soliciting feedback from the funders as to why the proposal was not selected. This information will be incorporated into any future applications to the same organization.

b.   Knowledge and Communication Priorities

Please describe your success in implementing your Knowledge and Communication priorities. Please make reference to your HPS Investments and Results Report to describe how you know that you have been successful.

Number of information sharing tools/activities (e.g. fact sheets, newsletters) - 7

1. NCOH Community Coordinator analysed report from AFKO on Transient Francophone Youth in Nelson and followed up with director of AFKO on potential solutions for accommodating youth in the community to minimize impact on homelessness services.

2-6. NCOH Community Coordinator prepared five fact sheets for both Homelessness Action Weeks. Currently, there are 2 updated fact sheets available for distribution at public events, to media, and service agencies working with homeless individuals.

7. NCOH Community Coordinator prepared and distributed a full colour pamphlet outlining the work of NCOH in the community.

Number of tools developed for data collection, storage or analysis - 3

1. NCOH Community Coordinator researched CMHC's Average Market Rents and found them to be inaccurate for the City of Nelson.   There is a 36% discrepancy between CMHC average rents and the rental data complied by NCOH. NCOH Community Coordinator met with MP Alex Atamanenko's office to inform him of this issue and the policy implications and to request action.

2. NCOH compiles local rental statistics on prices listed in a bi-annual survey of the rental listings in the newspaper and online. The Community Coordinator is currently in negotiation with the local newspaper to report on them biannually.

3. NCOH Community Coordinator compiled statistics on rental costs for the clients of the local homeless outreach workers. These are currently being analysed, compared to CMHC rents and NCOH averages, will be used in communication with the media & community to raise awareness on affordability for homeless/at risk clients.

Number of local research projects, studies, or surveys conducted - 9

1. NCOH Community Coordinator acted as a key informant for the research of the Associacion Francophone de Kootenay Ouest on transient francophone youth in the area on their issues, needs, and impact on the community.

2. NCOH Community Coordinator conducted research on solutions to homelessness with three groups - Diners at Thanksgiving Dinner at Our Daily Bread (172 people) and two Rotary Clubs (approx. 80 people). Compiled and analysed results to help determine NCOH priorities for the upcoming year.

3. NCOH Community Coordinator acted as a key informant for the building of new Selkirk College Student Residences. Provided advice to the consultant on the Nelson housing market and how it relates to student housing; what types of residence designs are appropriate for students, what types of residences could be converted to usage by other tenants, price considerations, and provided him with housing market research compiled on rental averages in town.

4. NCOH Community Coordinator researched methods for municipalities to regulate and improve substandard housing; compiled a file of sample Standards of Maintenance Bylaws to be shared with the City.

5. NCOH Community Coordinator provided raw data and prepared tables for the Need and Demand Study by Cityspaces Consulting. This document was commissioned by the City to inform their affordable housing strategy.

6. NCOH Community Coordinator successfully negotiated with the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation and Whitewater Ski Hill to ensure that for every 10 units of condominiums they build in the future, they create one unit of employee housing.

7. NCOH Community Coordinator put together a package for the City entitled Bylaw and Other Policy Mechanisms to Preserve Low-Cost Housing. The paper was endorsed by the Nelson Housing Forum chaired by a City Councillor. In it were examples of bylaws from over 10 other communities across Canada and recommendations for actions the City can take to preserve low-cost housing in Nelson and area.

8. NCOH Community Coordinator produced the 2008 and 2009 Report Cards on Homelessness, with vital statistics on homelessness numbers, demographics, trends, vacancy rates, employment and income trends, as well as the demand for emergency food services.

9. In April 2009 the Community Coordinator published "Addresses for the Rural Homeless: Ending Homelessness by Building Peace and Human Security". This is a study on homelessness that included focus groups with homeless key informants, analysis of raw data, and interviews with service providers. The text was widely distributed to the community partners in Nelson and regionally and released to the media.

Knowledge building and communication activities - 8

1. NCOH Community Coordinator met with local author, Cindi Sandeveland, who published a youth novel about a homeless child and her mother. Provided her with facts, background information on local homelessness, and distributed her request for a reader with homelessness experience for her final copy prior to publication.

2,3. Homelessness Action Weeks 2008, 2009 & 2010: NCOH Community Coordinator organized awareness activities and made media appearances including coverage in three local newspapers, four radio stations including an interview program in French.

4. NCOH Community Coordinator met with the City of Nelson's senior city planner to discuss barriers to regional cooperation on housing, how to promote affordable garden suites when municipal legislation changes, inclusionary zoning, secondary suites' utility fees, and bylaw changes to promote affordable housing.

5. NCOH Community Coordinator spoke with CMHC on mechanisms to promote affordability of Garden Suites in Nelson when bylaws change to allow them.

6. NCOH Community Coordinator held a press conference attended by 10 members of the media as well as local MLA and numerous service providers upon the release of the 2009 Report Card.

7. NCOH Community Coordinator submitted a joint press release with Whitewater Ski Hill to highlight the successful inclusion of employee housing in Whitewater's new Master Development Plan.

8. NCOH Community Coordinator developed a powerpoint presentation on homelessness entitled Betty's Story (of homelessness) and showed it at various community groups, including the Nelson business association and the School Board.

9.NCOH Community Coordinator facilitated conversations between homelessness service providers by hosting working lunches for frontline staff. Discussion topics range from general need for support, best practices, problem-identification and solutions, and most recently, how to achieve more consistent and efficient data collection for inclusion in the annual Report Cards on Homelessness.

Number of information sessions - 4

Public Appearances and Events:

1. NCOH Community Coordinator appeared before City Council to speak in favour of changes in bylaws to allow for more secondary suites to be built. Advocated for less expensive utility fees to lower prices for new units.

2. NCOH Community Coordinator made a presentation with Dr. Nelson Ames to the Rotary Club luncheon on homelessness and affordable housing using the international café model.

3. NCOH Community Coordinator went to Our Daily Bread Soup Kitchen to report to diners on how NCOH had responded to their suggested solutions to homelessness in the previous year.

4. NCOH hosted 2 widely attended community forums (approx. 60 people) in 2009 and 2010. Topics included Street Health Nursing, the 2009 Report Card on Homelessness, the success of the TAP House, what is changing in the homelessness picture in Nelson, and what are the best practices for ending homelessness used in other communities.

5.The Community Coordinator brought other innovative low-cost housing ideas to the communities from other regions in the province. NCOH and Social Planning Action Network (SPAN) facilitated a tele-meeting with the board and executive director of the Community Land Trust in Vernon, BC.

Due to the above Knowledge and Communications activities, the public profile of NCOH has increased significantly. The local media requests information from NCOH when they write stories on housing or homelessness, and have quoted from the 2009 Annual Report Card on more than one occasion.

Please describe any challenges faced by your community in implementing your Knowledge and Communications priorities and how you addressed them. (If your community did not face challenges, please enter n/a.)

Reliable and consistent data collection for the annual Report Cards has been the most challenging area as each agency applies their own criteria and systems for collecting data. A more systematic approach to collecting data will give a more accurate picture of homelessness numbers and related services. NCOH has made efforts recently, as noted above, to have service providers adopt similar data collection methods.

c.   Community Development Priorities

Please describe your success in implementing your Community Development priorities. Please make reference to your HPS Investments and Results Report to describe how you know that you have been successful.

Key to the success of homelessness initiatives in Nelson is coordination. Without staff support, the Nelson Committee on Homelessness (NCOH) is challenged to ensure that its work can proceed effectively, and risks losing the sustained interest and commitment of its members. The NCOH's current and emerging goals (e.g. improved harmonization of services, effective research, data collection, reporting and awareness efforts, sustainable funding for homelessness initiatives, increased stakeholder representation, efficient sharing of information, development of regional homelessness strategies, etc.) would not be feasible if pursued off the side of volunteer committee members' desks.

The work of the Community Coordinator has supported the Nelson Committee on Homelessness and key housing/service providers to collect consistent data on specific homeless and at-risk populations, and to report progress to homelessness stakeholders and the general community.

The Community Coordinator has researched promising approaches for addressing homelessness and share information with local and regional stakeholders. Significant progress has been made in both of these objectives. In addition, service providers and volunteers are participating more in the community planning process and responding to homelessness – for eg. the Mental Health Clubhouse (staff and clients) and the Employment sector.

Number of community development activities from September 2009-present - 7

1. NCOH Community Coordinator attended, reported at, took and distributed minutes for 17 NCOH meetings.

2. NCOH Community Coordinator attended, took and distributed minutes for 10 SPAN meetings.

3. NCOH Community Coordinator organised 3 Homelessness Action Weeks in 2008, 2009 & 2010. The weeks all included successful community forums, participation from the community, business, Mayor and Council, homeless individuals, and multiple service agencies. The events of the week also attracted significant radio and print coverage in the media.

4. NCOH Community Coordinator organised the inaugural luncheon for SPAN to celebrate its achievement of Society status. At this luncheon, attendees identified

three priority issues impacting the health and well-being of this community - Affordable Housing, Addictions /Mental Health, and Poverty/Exclusion. SPAN followed up by seeking funding to host community forums around these issues.

5. NCOH Community Coordinator organised a successful forum for SPAN entitled Innovative Low Cost Housing Solutions. Participants included the planning department of the City of Nelson, municipal councillors, agencies from across the Kootenay region, architects, designers, the CMHC, BC Housing, the Vernon & District Community Land Trust, and landowners.

6. NCOH Community Coordinator organised a tele-conference between the Vernon Community Land Trust board members and interested potential board members in Nelson BC. This event attracted 18 individuals from the banking, real estate, non-profit, legal, environmental, and community development sectors.

Number of partnerships developed - 4

1. Nelson Food Cupboard Society, Nelson CARES Society, and the Kootenay Co-op Country grocery store explored the idea of starting up a community kitchen in Nelson. The Nelson Food Cupboard decided not to pursue the idea at the time, but NCOH continues toseek other partners for this project.

2. NCOH created subgroup of multi-agency service providers to decide on how best to use "slippage" funds available from Service Canada. NCOH created a partnership with Nelson CARES Society to pre-pay the lease for one year on a 4-bed house owned by that Society for use as a Transitional Accommodation Program.

3. After discussion with NCOH and the Community Coordinator, the Salvation Army applied for and received funds to run a cooking program tailored to low-income food bank residents with limited cooking facilities (i.e., a hot plate or microwave). They are partnering with the two other food banks to recruit clients for this program.

4. NCOH partnered with Touchstones Museum for their Shelter Exhibit. Part of the exhibit focussed on homelessness and the Community Coordinator produced three written first person accounts of homeless people for display. The Community Coordinator also supervised the production of a film that was included in the exhibit. On opening night, the Community Coordinator gave a speech to attendees. The partnership extended to co-producing the SPAN Low-Cost Housing Forum in the space of the Shelter Exhibit.

Please describe any challenges faced by your community in implementing your Community Development priorities and how you addressed them. (If your community did not face challenges, please enter n/a.)

In 2010 NCOH did not receive any additional funding to assist with Homelessness Action Week (HAW) activities. NCOH responded to the challenge by scaling back some of the events. At Connect Day, warm socks, toques, and sleeping bags were not purchased for distributing to the homeless as they were the previous year. However, NCOH solicited and received a donation of some used winter clothing that was made available to participants.

NCOH also solicited and received some donations from local politicians, community agencies, and individuals, so this was sufficient to host HAW on a smaller scale than previously.

In the 2007 Community Plan Update, the objective was identitfied to "develop targeted strategies according to housing situations (e.g. for transient homeless, individuals cycling through shelter, 'squatters', etc…). The challenge in achieving this objective is that after the strategies are developed, the resources to implement the solutions are frequently lacking. For example, NCOH provided support to the Associacion Francophone de Kootenays Ouest in proposing housing solutions for transient youth in the summertime in the form of a low-cost camping option. AFKO pursued funding opportunities with the Regional District and other bodies, however, they did not obtain any money to pursue their recommendations.

3. Good Practices

Purpose
The purpose of this section is to highlight HPS-funded projects implemented in your community since April 1, 2007 that have been particularly successful.

a. Please describe the HPS-funded projects implemented in your community which you consider to be good practices in preventing and reducing homelessness (maximum of three, maximum length 1500 characters).

Please consult your HPS Projects and Priorities Report for a list of HPS-funded projects implemented in your community.

1. Youth Outreach 2008-2009 - For 14 months Service Canada funded a Youth Outreach Worker position that was successful in not only preventing homelessness and reducing homelessness, it protected vulnerable youth from abuse and exploitation. The worker was successful in connecting with youth that had recently left home or been kicked out and quickly connecting them with supports and housing. As a result, youth on the street did not spend weeks or months on the street and become "street-entrenched" and thereby becoming more difficult to help along the continuum of housing towards stability. Youth in sexually, emotionally, or financially exploitative relationships were identified early by the worker and she was able to bring them to a place of safety. Since the position was terminated the gap is being felt by youth in our community and NCOH is exploring options to re-instate it.

There are distinct windows of opportunity for youth to transition out of homelessness. Best practices indicate that a significant number of youth leave the street in three months making this a critical period for rehousing and a key opportunity to intervene to support youth.

2. Transition Support Program 2008-2011

This program has two components - the Transition Support Worker and the Transition Accommodation Program.

The Transition Support Worker works with clients leaving the Stepping Stones Emergency Shelter and helps with both securing housing and maintaining that housing. The worker helps clients access income, make appointments to see rentals, and accompanies them on visits to potential landlords. Once clients secure housing,

the worker provides them with support and education to help them maintain their housing over the long term. The worker helps clients access resources, learn new life skills, mediates conflict with landlords/roommates, neighbours, teaches conflict resolution skills and the obligations and rights of tenants in rental accommodations.

The Transitional Accommodation Program (TAP) was created in June 2008 and now consists of 8 beds in total. The goal of TAP is to help particularly challenged clients transition from the emergency shelter and from typically long histories of homelessness to long-term housing by giving them a stable, affordable unit for up to one year along with more intensive support services of the Transition Support Worker. TAP clients meet weekly or bi-weekly with the Support Worker and work on goals related to education, employment, budgeting, or any other goal that will contribute to their long-term stability. This support is crucial to clients who face multiple barriers to housing stability.

Best practices indicate that providing 'housing plus support' is more successful at re-integrating long-term homeless individuals into the housing market than just providing housing.

3. Community Coordination 2007 - 2011

The Community Coordinator facilitates the harmonization of services, the efficient sharing of information, conducts effective research, data collection, reporting and awareness efforts, and promotes stakeholder representation for NCOH.

The Community Coordinator organises Homelessness Action Week and Connect Day activities each year. These events are to engage the entire community in action around homelessnes, recruit volunteers, and raise awareness of the issues in the through the media. Community Connect Day (Homeless Connect Day in other communities) has been held once a year for the past three years and attended by 80 plus individuals each time. This highly successfuly one-stop service fair is designed to connect individuals not normally engaged with community services to services such as housing help, foot care, legal help, info on banking and credit, health care, dental information, haircuts, massage, art, mental health support, employment (mainstream, youth, and people with disabilities), women's outreach, counselling, information on sexual health and substance use, harm reduction kits, and how to obtain identification.

b.   The HP Secretariat is committed to learning about and sharing good practices across Canada and may wish to follow up to learn more about the successful HPS-funded projects in your community. For each of the good practices you have described,

please indicate your preferences by filling in the appropriate fields in the table below.

Good Practice	May the HP Secretariat contact someone about the good practice described above?	If yes, please provide contact information in the space(s) below (name, organization, telephone, e-mail)	May the HP Secretariat share this good practice with others?
1.	Yes	Joyce Dahms-Whiffen, Cicada Place 250-352-9595, ncscyouth@netidea.com	Yes
2.	Yes	Klee Hunter 250-352-2851 khunter@nelsoncares.ca	Yes
3.	Yes	Celeste LeDuigou 250-352-6011 x. 19 ncoh@nelsoncares.ca	Yes

4.Current Situation

4.1. Demographic and Socio-economic Trends

Purpose
The purpose of this section is to identify the changes or trends you have seen in your community as a whole and in the homeless and at-risk populations within your community. This information should help you to identify any changes in the needs of the homeless and at-risk populations in your community.

✎ **Note**: The Reference Guide includes an example for completing this section.

a. Please identify any population, housing or income changes or trends in your community since 2007 and explain how these changes or trends have affected your community. Please refer to the Census and housing data included in your information package and any other recent environmental scan produced in your community.

1. Rental Market and Vacancy Rate:

Nelson has a very difficult housing market for renters at all income levels due to a very low vacancy rate and availability of rental stock compared to the number of people who want to live here. Individuals on the lower end of the income scale are especially challenged to find accommodation that is affordable enough to keep it and meet their needs for food and other necessities.

In 2010 the vacancies in Nelson were still very low, at 1.8%. This rate is consistently among the lowest in the Kootenays. Demand has increased due to population growth, and there have been few additions to the stock of purpose built rental accommodations. The rate has not deviated since 2007.

An NCOH-conducted survey of available local rental units during a one-week period in September 2009 found the following average prices: 1 Bachelor Apartment - $880.00, 11 one bedroom apartments - $765.27, 9 two bedroom apartments - 1,224.44, and 3 three bedroom apartments - $1,383.00. In April 2010, Cityspaces Consulting conducted a similar survey and found that during a two-week period, for every three listings advertising a place to rent, there were two listings by individuals seeking rental accommodation ("rentals wanted"). In total, there were 35 classified listings advertised by renters seeking housing — 51% by families or couples, 34% by singles and the rest by students (11%) and one senior. According to the Average Market Rental Rates provided by the CMHC in 2010, rents in Nelson are the most

expensive in the West Kootenay area followed by Rossland, Trail, Castlegar, and Grand Forks.

A local realtor and active NCOH participant has noted that in Nelson, people at all income levels find there is very, very little to rent. Non-residents have turned down offers of employment because they cannot find housing. Rents have gone up significantly in the past five years, as rent controls apply only to existing tenants and not after a unit becomes vacant. When units are vacant, landlords raise the rents as much as 10%. In the category of detached single family homes, average rents have gone up by about 15% over the past three or four years. Source: The 2009 Annual Report Card on Homelessness.

2. Wait Lists for Subsidized Housing:

The demand for subsidized housing has increased greatly as witnessed by the large increases in waiting lists from 2007 to 2010:

Nelson & District Housing Society   +59%
2007 - 86 people
2010 - 137 people

Cicada Place Youth Housing   +58%
2007 - 19 youth
2010 - 30 youth

Kiwanis Projects Society Senior's Housing   +150%
2008 - 12 people
2010 - 30 people

The Links Housing Cooperative has closed their waitlist, which sits currently at 42 individuals or families waiting for affordable housing. The coop has found that turnover is so low in the units that it would be unrealistic to add any more potential tenants to their list.

3. Population Trends and Household Composition:

Population data compiled by Census Canada suggests the population in Nelson under the age of 45 is decreasing, and over the age of 45 is increasing. The Interior Health Authority projects that in the Nelson Local Health Area (which includes Salmo to the south and up the Slocan Valley to Slocan City in the North) that from 2006 to 2026 there will be an increase of approximately 3800 seniors.

As the population ages there are, on average, fewer people living in each household. As children grow into adults and move out of a three bedroom house that continues

to be occupied by their parents, the house now shelters only one person. This means that even though the population has remained relatively stable from 1996-2006, as have the number of occupied dwellings, the vacancy rates have decreased to 1%.

Rental prices have risen with demand, outpacing wage increases, and the instance of homelessness is increasing. With fewer persons per household, there are simply fewer options available, especially at the lower priced end of the spectrum.

For Nelson in 1996 one and two person households comprised 62% of all households and in 2006 that number rose to 70%. From 1996-2006 households of 3 persons or more declined from 38% to 30%.

This trend in Nelson is outpacing the rest of British Columbia and Canada. Consider that the average household size from 1996-2006 in Nelson decreased from 2.4 persons per household to 2.2, and in the rest of British Columbia and Canada from 2.6 to 2.5. The decline in household size from 1996-2006 is 8.6% smaller in Nelson versus 3.8% smaller for the rest of British Columbia and Canada.

Demographic trends regarding the aging of the population are similar in Nelson to the rest of Canada. From 1996-2006 the cohort of persons aged 45-64 increased by 10% - from 23% of the population to 33%. During this time period, children and youth under 19 have decreased from 28% of the population to 23%, and adults aged 20-44 have decreased from 36% of the population to 30%.

What this means is that the trend towards fewer persons per household will continue as the "Boomer" generation ages. At a certain point, they will downsize to smaller dwellings or seniors' housing, of which we will be needing more of in the next 20 years.

Nelson has a greater proportion of renters to owners than the rest of the Kootenay region – 25% compared to 22%. The quality of the rental stock is not high, with up to 13% requiring major repairs. Frequently tenants request help from the Advocacy Centre to help them address substandard conditions in their apartments – issues include mice, mould, holes in the walls, electrical safety, no functioning smoke alarms, etc. Tenants have also sought help with illegal rent increases and evictions. In a market with such a low vacancy rate, landlords have less incentive to keep their apartments in good repair to attract tenants.

4. The Economy and Recession:
The recession that began in October 2008 has contributed to the increase in homelessness and those who are at risk of homelessness. There is less employment available and much of it is temporary, part-time, and low-paying. Wages are not keeping pace with inflation and the cost of housing, and social assistance rates are

not sufficient to purchase both housing and food. The food bank statistics illustrate the growing need in the community.   From 2004-2009 the demand for food at the Nelson Food Cupboard increased by 56%. From 2008 to 2009 alone, the increase was 28%. From 2007-2009 Salvation Army Food Bank reported usage increasing by 21%. Emergency food supply from the Anglican Church has remained steady. To visualize how many people needed emergency food in 2010, picture a lineup of roughly 110 visitors a day four days of the week. This does not include statistics from the Women's Centre who also operate a smaller food bank.

The Nelson Food Cupboard has seen a specific increase in young families and single men who are struggling to make ends meet. The rest of the clients represent a wide spectrum of social categories including people with disabilities, mental health issues, seniors, children, single parents, families, those who have been recently laid off, are receiving social assistance or EI benefits, employed part time, full time, or even working 2 jobs.

Unemployment in the Kootenay Development region is consistently above the provincial average.   In 2007 the unemployment rate was 5.5%, compared to a provincial average of 4.5%. In 2010 the unemployment rate rose to 9.2%, compared to a provincial average of 7.6%. (BC Stats). The actual rate in the Kootenay region may in fact be much higher as in 2007 the participation rate in employment for the region was 66.8% compared to only 61.1% in 2010. It is unknown roughly what percentage of this decrease are people who are unemployed and decided to give up looking for work.

5. Youth:
The current BC youth unemployment rate sits at 16%, a number that is more than double that of adults aged 25 and over [6.9%] (BC Stats November 2009). Even before the recession, youth employment rates in the past 10 years have been roughly double that of the general population (Statscan 2009), making the path to economic independence a difficult one for young people trying to attach themselves to the labour market.

Youth are dramatically over-represented at both the emergency shelter and at the soup kitchen in Nelson. In 2009 youth (18-24) represented 43% of clients of Stepping Stones Emergency Shelter despite being only 10% of the population in the West Kootenay region (Penfold, BC Stats 2008).

Obtaining housing and employment with wages sufficient to support themselves independently is the biggest challenge youth are facing today. Most youth who are homeless and at-risk of homelessness report high levels of motivation to achieve sustainable employment and are frustrated by the realities of the economy in the region.

Our Daily Bread, the local soup kitchen, defines youth as persons aged 16-29. The percentage of their clientele that is youth stands at 39%. The above numbers suggest the recession in Canada is having a disproportionate effect on young people in the region, and the services available to help them are struggling to meet the demand.

The Youth Employment Resource Centre has recorded an average of 165 visits from homeless youth each year. Cicada Place, a transitional housing programme for youth, has seen wait lists for their units increase from 19 in 2007 to 30 in 2010. Support staff report that youth leaving Cicada Place are facing great difficulty in securing appropriate housing in the private market due to low availability, high cost, and a preference by landlords to rent to older individuals.

6. Increased Strain on Social Service Agencies:

From 2007 to 2009, all service agencies have seen their numbers increase significantly, and the funding they receive has not matched the increased demand. The following increases have been tabulated based on numbers collected by the agencies:

Nelson Food Cupboard – 35%
Salvation Army Food Bank – 21%
Salvation Army Coffee Time – 57%
Stepping Stones Emergency Shelter – 29%
Our Daily Bread – 42%

Some agencies are having to consider cut-backs in the level of service they provide, others have instituted new policies such as Our Daily Bread charging a fee for meals that used to be provided for free.

b. Before answering this question, complete **Table D.1** (Homeless and At-risk Populations) in the Data Tables.

How have the homeless and at-risk populations in your community changed since 2007?

According to Data Table D.1 the last formal count on long-term homeless individuals was done in 2007 indicating 40 individuals. The homeless shelter and Transitional Housing count have increased from 241 in 2007 to 308 in 2010. This number does not take into account the number of homeless individuals who are couch surfing, staying at hostels, or with family members. Currently there is a research project being conducted by SPARC BC (The Social Planning and Research

Council) attempting to find out the number of hidden homeless persons currently residing in the community.

From 2009 (384) to 2010 (308) there were 76 fewer clients served at Stepping Stones Emergency Shelter as a result of reduced bed availability due to needed renovations at the shelter during the summer of 2010. Even with less bed availability in 2010, the the number of bednights increased from 4,443 in 2008 to 5,206 in 2010. Stepping Stones was 98% full in 2010. Turnaways were higher in 2010 as well with 456 people compared to 152 in 2009. Of the 456 people turned away in 2010, 105 of them were due to the shelter being full. Other reasons for turnaways were unsafe behaviour, ineligibility, or being underage. These numbers from Stepping Stones indicate there are fewer unique clients that are having longer stays and more repeat visits - cycling in and out of homelessness.

The percentage of people staying at Stepping Stones who have employment has steadily decreased from 22% in 2006 to 10% in 2010. The lack of employment or a sustainable income is one of the the greatest barriers to clients trying to enter into the housing market.

During this period Stepping Stones also saw an increase in the number of clients with mental health and addictions issues - from 36% to 42%. This represents ONLY clients who have seen a psychiatrist or therapist through the Mental Health and Addictions branch of Interior Health Authority and not those who have not sought treatment for these issues. Stepping Stones staff estimate that 80% or more of their clients are suffering from a mental illness or addiction.

Youth in Nelson and area are more vulnerable in the housing market due to the loss of many low-cost housing options previously available to them. The Homelessness Outreach Worker who has clients from Cicada Place Youth Housing has noticed an increase in their difficulty in securing housing on the private market after leaving.

Staff at the women's Transition House report that women with children are having a slightly easier time finding housing due to policies at Nelson and District Housing Society that place them at the top of the waitlist. However, women without children, especially those who are 50 and older or who have mental health issues or disabilities are often returning to abusive situations due to the lack of options.

4.2. Support Services

Purpose

The purpose of this section is to describe any changes needed to services in your community because of changes in the characteristics of the homeless and at-risk populations.

Note: The Reference Guide includes an example for completing this section.

a. How have changes in the needs of the homeless and at-risk populations since April 1, 2007, affected the type of support services needed in your community?

1. Youth - There are more youth in need and fewer outreach support services during this period.

2. Mental Health and Addictions - the steady increase in number of mental health and addiction clients has not been reflected in amount of support services available for them. More support is often required to help clients remain in financially unsustainable situations if they are living in private rental accommodation without a subsidy attached. For example, the stress of not having any money left for food can lead to worsening mental illness and more crises. In addition, the support worker spends more energy on helping the client fulfill their basic needs for food and clothing and not on building the relationship and discussing issues more directly related to their illness. There is also more need for rapid-entry supportive housing options for people leaving the hospital with mental health issues or physical illnesses.

3. Second Stage Housing - with fewer affordable housing options available, women are returning to abusive situations in order to find housing.

4. Employment Programs - many homeless people, as documented by Stepping Stones, are able to work but have less access to available training programs, skill development programs, and work subsidies.

5. Income Assistance - with fewer employment options, more people are having to access Income Assistance which, in BC, has become increasingly more difficult due to recent ministry policy changes. BC has the lowest income assistance rates in Canada and one of the highest costs of living. Across the board, the inadequacy of the shelter portion ($375 per month) of Disability and Income Assistance benefits creates homelessness.

4.3. Shelter and Housing

Purpose
The purpose of this section is to describe any changes needed in emergency shelter or transitional or supportive housing in your community because of changes in the homeless and at-risk populations in your community.

Note: The Reference Guide includes an example for completing this section.

a. Before answering this question, complete **Table E** (Shelter Verification Form) and **Table F** (Residential Facilities for Homeless People) in the Data Tables.

How have changes in the needs of the homeless and at-risk populations since April 1, 2007, affected the need in your community for emergency shelter, transitional or supportive housing?

Youth:

Youth 16-24 are in need of emergency and transitional shelter options. The operating agreement that Stepping Stones has in place restricts the shelter to adults who are aged 19 and over. In addition, when youth graduate from transitional housing at Cicada Place there needs to be more options on the rental market for them.

Mental Health and Addictions:

CMHA's 35-unit Anderson St. development will begin construction in 2011, and it will contribute somewhat to meeting the need for supportive housing for people with mental health and addictions issues. The Need and Demand Study commissioned by the city in 2010 found that there are approximately 200 people in Nelson and area with serious mental illness and up to 100 of them with "severe and persistent mental illness and need to access regular outreach support as part of their individual care plan." More housing with supports is required for this population, especially upon discharge from hospital. On average, Stepping Stones receives 2-4 clients a month that are discharged directly into homelessness from the Daly Pavillion, the regional psychiatric ward at the hospital in Trail, BC.

Women Leaving Abusive Relationships:

There is currently no second stage housing for women leaving the Transition House. Groups that are facing increased difficulty in securing housing are women over 50 and those with physical disabilities or mental health issues. Women are continuing to return to abusive relationships from the Transition House as there are few housing options available to them.

People with Physical Disabilities:

The Stepping Stones emergency shelter is not wheelchair accessible. It is located down a flight of stairs which also presents challenges to those who have impaired mobility or who are frail, elderly, or ill. Nelson CARES Society has applied for

funding to convert one of the units at Ward St. Place to an emergency shelter unit that is suitable for those using wheelchairs or who have mobility impairments.

4.4. Collection of Emergency Shelter Data

Purpose

The purpose of this section is to identify:

- the current situation in your community regarding the collection and export of emergency shelter data;
- how your community will prepare to export shelter data.

The answers will help you to prepare to meet the National Homeless Information System requirements. Note: The Reference Guide includes details on the requirements for HPS reporting over the period 2011−2014.

As you answer the questions in this section, please start thinking about how you will use this data once collected. For example:

- You can use this data to do reliable analysis of admission trends, and profiles of the homeless population in your community (well-organized data coordination activities amongst service providers allow whole communities/provinces to collect similar information, defined in the same way).
- You can use this data to identify: the average length of shelter stays; the number of chronically homeless individuals; the progress you are making on implementing your priorities; and trends in the homeless populations in your community.
- You will be able to track movement of individuals between service providers.

The use of a common data collection tool (HIFIS or non-HIFIS data collection system) will provide you with accurate, reliable data that will assist in your reporting requirements for HPS.

When you send this information to the HP Secretariat, it will help us to:

- determine the scope of homelessness in Canada;
- demonstrate how the face of homelessness is changing;
- create policy that better responds to these changes, taking an evidence-based approach to policy options and decision-making.

Note: The Reference Guide includes an example for completing this section.

    a.   Is shelter data compiled at the community level?

☒ yes   ☐ no

If yes, by whom? Do they produce regular reports?

Shelter data from Stepping Stones Emergency Shelter is shared with the Nelson Committee on Homelessness to be included in its Annual Report Card. This document, which is shared with the community, service providers, and media outlines multi-year data and trends in homelessness that are occurring. The shelter records data on in-house Excel spreadsheets and also uses the BC Housing Online Database. Stepping Stones will have information on clients' date of birth, gender, book-in date and book-out date, however, they do not assign a Unique Record Identifier Number, but rather use first and last names. BC Housing, however, does assign unique numbers to protect the anonymity of shelter clients in their databases.

b. Before answering this question, complete **Table D.2** (Data Sources for Homeless and At-risk Populations) in the Data Tables.

What actions will your community have to take to collect emergency shelter use data to share with the Homelessness Partnering Secretariat? What additional resources will you require? Please refer to **Table D.2** (Data Sources for Homeless and At-risk Populations) and **Table E** (Shelter Verification Form) in the Data Tables to help you assess your current situation.

During a Service Canada Adobe Connect Session on December 14, 2010, NCOH was informed that Service Canada is currently in negotiations with BC Housing to obtain shelter data directly. We would request that Service Canada obtain the desired information from BC Housing directly as their summaries are anonymized while ours are not.

5. Issues

a. Please identify and describe the most important or pressing issues related to homelessness in your community.
- Please consider the facilities, services and supports which the homeless and at-risk populations in your community need or will need in the next three years.
- Please also consider any improvements needed in community coordination, partnership development and data management by your community.

You should identify only those issues that are of a high enough priority that you intend to address them in the next three years. The issues could either become a priority for funding through HPS or another source of funding. In section 6 (Priorities 2011-2014), you will have the opportunity to identify your priorities for HPS funding. In **Table G** (Community Contribution) in the Data Tables, you will identify your community contribution, which includes funding to address any of the issues you have identified.

(You can include a maximum of ten issues)

1. Affordable Housing - this community has been working at addressing this issue for the past ten years at least, and partnerships and collaboration has been a strategy used by both the non-profit and faith communities. NCOH will continue to support all initiatives that plan to develop SRO-type housing and advocate for the creation of a federal housing plan.

2. Coordination of Homelessness Services / Community Development - coordination of services and community development are critical for continuing to raise awareness of the issue of homelessness in our community, for gathering accurate data on the scope of the issue, and for ensuring that all services are meeting actual needs of the homeless and at-risk population.

3. Youth Services - NCOH will continue meeting with Ministry of Child and Family Development to address need for emergency housing for youth and outreach supports that focus on early intervention.

4. Seniors - NCOH intends to build more partnerships and coordination with seniors groups to address specific homelessness needs within this senior population.

5. Employment - NCOH will continue building relationships with employment agencies and try to integrate employment services with other support services to address specific employment needs of the homeless and at risk populations.

6. Addiction / Mental Health - NCOH will continue to support the need for street nursing and actively involve people with mental health/addiction issues in NCOH activities. NCOH will continue to support the Supported Housing Independence Program (SHIP) partnership between Interior Health Authority and Nelson CARES Society as a good practice and will continue to advocate with IHA for increased mental health/addictions community outreach services.

7. Poverty - NCOH will support the Social Planning Action Network (SPAN) Society of Nelson in its pursuit of a living wage policy for Nelson and other poverty reduction strategies. BC has the highest poverty rate in Canada.

8. Transitional supports for People who are Homeless or At-Risk - NCOH will continue to prioritize the Transition Support Worker Program for HPS funding and continue to support the existence, and expansion if possible, of the Homelessness Outreach Program (BC Housing funded). NCOH will continue to work collaboratively with other related outreach service providers in the community such as Mental Health/Addictions and ANKORS and will continue to support the value of developing transitional accommodation units that assist people leaving the shelter to access and maintain longer-term housing.

9. Food Security- NCOH will continue to support the community's soup kitchen and food bank and to encourage the development of a community kitchen program to serve this population.

10. Second Stage Housing for Women Leaving the Transition House - NCOH will encourage and support the development of second stage housing units and programming in the community.

b. Before answering this question, complete **Table G** (Community Contribution) in the Data Tools.

How will the funds you receive from your other funders (your community contribution) add to your homelessness strategy?

NCOH's homelessness strategy will be complemented by the financial contribution of many different governmental and non-governmental organizations.

The largest contributor is BC Housing, which funds options for housing along the continuum - from emergency beds to permanent supportive housing.

BC Housing contributes funds to the operation of the Homelessness Outreach Program, Stepping Stones Emergency Shelter, the Extreme Weather Response Program, Cicada Place Youth Transitional Housing, and CMHA's Anderson St. Project for 35 mental health/addictions clients, and many units of subsidized housing for seniors, families, and single individuals with mental health issues.

BC Gaming Funds support the Nelson Food Cupboard Society, which also helps prevent people from becoming homeless due to poverty.

The faith community has been consistent in its support of food security and housing for the homeless. They are regular participants in Connect Day and two groups are exploring options for converting some of their real estate to supported housing.

NCOH will continue to involve non-profits and the business community in our strategy, and will attempt to leverage a greater contribution from the City of Nelson and/or the Columbia Basin Trust around the development of a land trust, more affordable housing, etc.

6. Priorities (2011—2014)

a. Please copy and paste each Priority from Section P-1 in your Community Plan Annex C: Priorities (2011—2014) (maximum of ten) into the table below. Then enter the percentage of your community's total HPS Designated Communities funding allocation you plan to use for each priority. Please complete the column on Aboriginal Homelessness funding only if your community receives Aboriginal Homelessness funding and your CAB is responsible for managing these funds. When you have completed all priorities, please add these numbers up; the total percentage should equal 100%.

Priority Number	Priority from P-1	Percent of Designated Communities Funding	Percent of Aboriginal Homelessness Funding
1	Coordination of Homelessness Services / Community Development	35%	%
2	Supports for People who are Homeless or At-Risk	65%	%
3		%	%
4		%	%
5		%	%
6		%	%
7		%	%
8		%	%
9		%	%
10		%	%
Total percentage of Designated Community allocation and Aboriginal Homeless funding (if applicable): (this must equal 100%)		100%	%

b. In your Community Plan Annex C: Priorities (2011—2014) you identified at least one outcome indicator or *Coordination and Data Management* activity for each priority (section P-5 to P-7). How will you communicate these indicators and outcomes to project sponsors?

6. Priorities (2011-2014)

We will communicate the indicators through:

1. Written instructions (including copies of the Agreement, Schedule A, budgets, etc.)
2. Verbal instructions (at monthly CAB meetings).
3. Contract monitoring by CAB Advisory Committee.