Definition of the Prevention of Homelessness

Homelessness prevention refers to policies, practices, and interventions that reduce the likelihood that someone will experience homelessness. It also means providing those who have been homeless with the necessary resources and supports to stabilize their housing, enhance integration and social inclusion, and ultimately reduce the risk of the recurrence of homelessness.

The causes of homelessness include individual and relational factors, broader population-based structural factors, and the failure of many public institutions to protect people from homelessness. This suggests that homelessness prevention must not only include interventions targeted at individuals, but broader structural reforms directed at addressing the drivers of homelessness. That not only communities but all orders of government, and most departments within have a responsibility to contribute to the prevention of homelessness is in keeping with a human rights perspective.

TYPOLOGY

**Structural prevention**
Legislation, policy, and investment that builds assets, and increases social inclusion and equality.

**Examples:** Increase the affordable housing stock, anti-discrimination policy, practice, and training, poverty reduction strategies, and income supports.

**Systems prevention**
Addressing institutional and systems failures that contribute to the risk of homelessness.

**Examples:** Barriers to accessing supports, such as transportation challenges, disability, linguistic barriers, cost, citizenship requirements, difficulty with system navigation, etc.
Early intervention
Policies and practices to support individuals and families at imminent risk of homelessness or who have recently become homeless.

Examples: Family mediation, shelter diversion, and case management

Evictions prevention
Programs and strategies designed to keep people at risk of eviction in their home and avoid homelessness.

Examples: Landlord/tenant legislation, rent supplements, emergency funds, legal advice, and representation

Housing stability
Initiatives and support for people who have experienced homelessness that allows them to exit homelessness quickly and never experience it again.

Examples: Housing First, help obtaining and retaining housing, supports for health and well-being, education and employment, and enhancing social inclusion

PREVENTION SURVEY RESULTS

89% agree it’s possible to prevent homelessness

98% agree that homelessness prevention should be a bigger priority (in terms of policy, investment, and programs)

1. A total of 633 individuals answered the survey. The largest percentage of respondents identified themselves as service providers. Eleven percent of the respondents were people with lived experience of homelessness.

Download A New Direction: A Framework for Homelessness Prevention at: www.homelesshub.ca/ANewDirection