

Reaching Home:

**Barrie-Simcoe
Community Homelessness Plan**

2019 – 2024

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1. Community Engagement

Two sessions were provided to engage community stakeholders. On August 29, 2019 28 community stakeholders, representing a wide range of Indigenous and mainstream poverty and homelessness service providers across Simcoe County, gathered to provide their input into the Barrie-Simcoe Community Homelessness Plan. Among the organizations represented at this session were: the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres, the Georgian Bay Native Friendship Centre, South Simcoe Community Information Centre (CONTACT), the Guesthouse Shelter, Shelter Now, the Biminaawzogin Regional Aboriginal Women's Circle, the David Busby Centre, the Salvation Army (Barrie and Midland), LOFT Community Services, Wendat Community Programs, Catulpa Community Support Services, the Sharing Place, Youth Haven, and Huronia Native Housing. This session was a product of the collaborative planning of representatives of the Indigenous Community Advisory Board (CAB), the Georgian Bay Native Friendship Centre, the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres (the Indigenous Community Entity), the Barrie-Simcoe Designated CAB and the County of Simcoe (the Designated Community Entity). Hosted by the Georgian Bay Native Friendship Centre in Midland, this session engaged people in a café style format to recommend future Reaching Home investment allocations and programs and services for funding.

On September 10, 2019 a second session engaged a smaller, 14-person group representing a broader spectrum of community stakeholders who reviewed and prioritized the first group's investment and program recommendations and brought these recommendations into closer alignment with the Reaching Home priorities of preventing and reducing homelessness. The service provider agencies represented in this session were: Empower Simcoe (formerly Simcoe Community Services), South Simcoe Community Services (CONTACT) and Youth Haven. Other participating organizations involved in broader system planning were: United Way Simcoe Muskoka, Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, Barrie Police, Collaborate Barrie, Independent Living Services, Orillia Community Action Network, and Ontario Works.

A snowball method was used to broaden participation in both consultations, with invitees from County-funded organizations and both CABs asked to invite members of other identified stakeholder sectors. The targeted sectors were those that serve populations that are overrepresented among Simcoe County's homeless and imminently at risk of homelessness populations including: Indigenous Peoples, veterans, youth serving organizations, seniors, those with significant physical or mental health conditions or addiction issues, people with lived experience of homelessness, and newcomers. Invitations were also extended to representatives of housing provider organizations and to local institutions that serve people who are at risk of exiting the institutions to homelessness. While a few of the targeted sectors were not directly represented in the consultations, many of the participating organizations provide services to all of the targeted populations.

The purposes of the community engagement sessions were:

- to provide opportunities for all community stakeholders to inform the Community Plan,
- to better understand the needs of the homeless sector in Simcoe County,
- to identify priorities for Barrie-Simcoe's Community Homelessness Plan, and
- to determine what percentage of Reaching Home funding should be allocated to each of the Reaching Home investment areas over the next four years.

2. Investment Plan

Barrie-Simcoe recognizes that Reaching Home is a service-based program that has limited capacity to support capital projects and that investment of Reaching Home funds will have more impact across this engaged community if invested in system development and service projects that will prevent and reduce homelessness. For this reason, Reaching Home funding will not be used for capital investments in Simcoe County. Recognizing the importance of building the homeless service system's community infrastructure to coordinate resources, implement and support the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS), build and implement a Coordinated Access System and conduct homeless enumerations, a larger proportion of these investments is planned for the first few years of Reaching Home. Once the system's infrastructure is in place, investments in housing placements and supports and prevention of homelessness is expected to increase while the coordination of resources and data collection are expected to reduce to about a quarter of the annual allocations.

Annual Allocations:

2019-2020: \$436,406

2020-2021: \$423,906

2021-2022: \$607,932

2022-2023: \$601,782

2023-2024: \$601,782

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
	%	%	%	%	%
Housing Services	23%	19%	30%	30%	30%
Prevention and Shelter Diversion	4%	18%	19%	19%	19%
Support Services	28%	11%	13%	13%	13%
Capital Investments	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Coordination of Resources and Data Collection	33%	40%	26%	26%	26%
Community Entity Administration	12%	12%	12%	12%	12%
TOTAL Percentage Reaching Home Funds Allocated	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Community Recommendations for Reaching Home Investments Results from Community Consultation, August 29, 2019

In addition to developing targets for allocations of funds in the Reaching Home investment areas, participants in community engagement sessions identified program gaps and recommended programs that if expanded would prevent and reduce homelessness in Simcoe County. The prioritization of recommended programs was conducted in the second community consultation meeting to align with Reaching Home and Simcoe County priorities. The program recommendations are presented below in three categories: high priority, medium priority and those that will inform broader community service planning initiatives in Simcoe County.

The following Housing Services were identified as **high priority** Reaching Home new or expanded investment program areas:

- Appropriate and affordable Indigenous and mainstream housing and housing supports (including housing first) for the following priority populations: people experiencing chronic homelessness and who have high acuity assessment scores or tri-morbidity (i.e., have physical health, mental health have significant housing barriers), Indigenous peoples, LGBTQ, youth, and seniors (age 60+)
- Indigenous specific supportive housing and housing supports
- Discharge planning to reduce exits from institutions directly to homelessness including from physical health, mental health, addictions, correctional facilities and child protective sectors
- Wrap around services (e.g., post-housing placement supports)
- System navigation services to reduce barriers to accessing needed services
- Discretionary funds to support navigation to housing (e.g., transportation to services) and to support and retain landlords (e.g., through a damage & repair fund)

- Prevention and diversion services (including in schools)
 - Mediation and family reunification services (youth-specific)
- Outreach services (to cover all five regions of the county)
- Front-line service provider training (investment priorities informed by local data)

The following Housing Services and Client Support Services were identified as **medium priority** Reaching Home new or expanded investment program areas:

- Expanded RentSmart tenant lifeskills and landlord education program (including financial literacy and tenant education, and the Residential Tenancies Act)
- Connecting individuals to education, training and employment services to increase self-sufficiency and long-term sustainability of housing (with life skills and essential skills development and employment supports)

The following additional program recommendations will **inform broader community service planning** initiatives in Simcoe County:

- Light touch follow-up services and support
- Care and healing to address trauma
- More follow-up support to tenants after they move into housing
- Mobile case worker to provide services in multiple institutions community hubs (including 211 as virtual hub)

Investment Considerations

- Projected percentage allocations are estimates only and can be adjusted for any year/s
- Each year there will be a need to review community investments to reduce/eliminate duplication
- Reaching Home investments should be aligned with Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing's Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) investments
- The need for funds for homeless enumerations varies from year to year because they are conducted every two years
- Coordination of resources and data collection investments will reduce once the system-wide infrastructure including HIFIS, By-Name Lists, and a Coordinated Access System are fully implemented
- There is a need to:
 - better understand and integrate homeless services within the housing system
 - break down service/sector silos through enhanced collaboration
 - have a common language/ understanding of terms within the Simcoe County Homeless Services and Supports System

3. Cost-Matching Requirement

Through Reaching Home's Designated Community funding stream, the Barrie-Simcoe community will receive a total of \$673,812 in 2019-20 and 2020-21, and total of \$1,562,796 from 2021-22 through to 2023-24. We will exceed our matching requirement of funds from external sources that will be expended on activities that prevent and reduce homelessness across the county through this period, with \$11 million in 2019-20 and 2020-21 and \$33.4 million projected for 2021-22 through 2023-24.

<i>Projected Funding Towards Homelessness Initiatives</i>						
Funder	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2019 - 24
County of Simcoe – community projects	\$1,727,508	\$1,226,254	\$1,226,254	\$1,226,254	\$1,226,254	\$6,632,524
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing – Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative	\$7,546,112	\$8,097,053	\$8,097,053	\$8,097,053	\$8,097,053	\$39,934,324
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing – Home for Good	\$1,684,208	\$1,684,208	\$1,684,208	\$1,684,208	\$1,684,208	\$8,421,040
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care – Seniors at Home	\$122,600	\$122,600	\$122,600	\$122,600	\$122,600	\$613,000
Total	\$11,080,428	\$11,130,115	\$11,130,115	\$11,130,115	\$11,130,115	\$55,600,888

4. Coordinated Access

Three phases of implementing Coordinated Access are building awareness, implementation and maintenance, and improvement. Initial steps to implement a Coordinated Access System (CAS) in Simcoe County fall mostly in the awareness phase. Our community has made some progress in several of the following core components of Coordinated Access:

1. Establish a Coordinated Access governance structure – the CAB’s nomination committee is in the process of finalizing expansion of our membership with representation from:
 - a. VAW/women’s services
 - b. Public institutions (corrections, health, mental health, addictions, child protection)
 - c. Health
 - d. We continue to seek one or two people with lived experience of homelessness and a representative of French language homeless service providers (or another mechanism to engage the French language designated communities – Tiny, Penetanguishene, and Essa)
 - e. Non-funded partners
2. Choose desired community-level outcomes (several are identified in this Plan)
3. Implement HIFIS (implementation is underway)
4. Design access points to service
5. Develop a triage and assessment process (have selected the VI SPDAT)
6. Choose prioritization criteria (have had an operating prioritization table for over a year and are in the process of confirming/revising criteria for a by-name list)
7. Develop a vacancy matching and referral process

Several steps that are complete or in progress include:

1. Implementing the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS)

- Current status: Implemented across 18 service provider agencies with over 100 users
- A HIFIS Leadership Group/Steering Committee with representation from the system provider’s Information Technology leadership and business leadership (Children and Community Services) meets regularly to oversee the planning implementation, and ongoing monitoring of HIFIS
- A HIFIS Working Group advises the HIFIS Steering Committee and develops policies and protocols
- A HIFIS application programmer analyst with help desk IT support from the host organization provides operational and administrative support, and provides set up, implementation and maintenance support
- Have developed three progressively technical levels of support for users and protocols for their use
- Currently the second level of support is engaged in troubleshooting issues experienced by users

- Next steps:
 - Providing HIFIS quality assurance support to users
 - Providing training and implementing HIFIS in transitional housing and domiciliary care programs (15 additional service provider agencies) by the end of 2019
 - Developing local customized reports in 2019 and 2020 to track performance in preventing and ending homelessness and communicating results to the community and funders
 - Developing a quality By-Name List in HIFIS to be implemented by June 2020
 - Configuring the HIFIS Point-in-Time Count Module to be used in the April 2020 Homeless Enumeration
 - Engaging the community in conducting the 2020 Homeless enumeration
 - Developing Homeless Enumeration reports and increasing community awareness of the issues related to homelessness

2. Developing Key Common Coordinated Access System Tools

- Current status: Developed Common Intake Form and Common Consent Form mandated to be used by funded service providers through funding agreements between the County of Simcoe and homeless service providers
- Next Steps:
 - Communicating the requirement of using the Common Intake and Consent Forms by November, 2019
 - Developing an assessment process by December 2019
 - Gathering Simcoe County homeless services program descriptions and eligibility criteria and mapping services by February 2020
 - Developing a triage tool to ensure at risk and homeless persons seeking services are referred to the right service at the right time
 - Developing a process for CAS providing real-time availability of resources (e.g., housing units, available beds, case management openings, housing access services appointment booking)
 - Developing CAS policies and procedures that is integrated with HIFIS outlining how the Coordinated Access process operates

3. Engaging the Community in the Coordinated Access System

- Current Status: On June 25, 2019 the Simcoe County Built for Zero Team hosted a Community Session to develop county-wide CAS shared principles. The session, lead by a Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness improvement advisor/coach and a consultant from OrgCode Inc., was attended by 30 leaders from homeless services

organizations across the county. The group developed six key principles for the county's CAS.

- Next Steps:
 - Built for Zero Team will host two additional CAS principles sessions in the fall of 2019, one with front-line workers and one with people at risk of and who have experienced homelessness in Simcoe County. These sessions will: engage participants in finalizing the CAS principles, educate and engage the community about CASs, and will strive to create community buy-in to participate in the county's CAS.
 - Rolling-out the Coordinated Access System Barrie-Simcoe principles and next steps to the broad community, scheduled for December 2019/ January 2020 through widely circulated CAS communiques, social media and various community presentations.
 - Simcoe County Alliance to End Homelessness' Steering Committee, continuing to build the Barrie-Simcoe CAB membership to include representation from more of the key sectors recommended by Employment and Social Development Canada (prioritizing: people with lived experience of homelessness, Indigenous Peoples/organizations; mental health, physical health, addictions, corrections, and child protection institutions)
 - Developing standing advisory committees that can be called upon to review and provide input on policies and procedures and CAS related issues from the perspective of vulnerable populations who are overrepresented among people experiencing homelessness (for example Indigenous Peoples, youth, LGBTQ, women/families fleeing violence, veterans, seniors, newcomers)

4. Implementing Simcoe County's Coordinated Access System

- Current Status: The August 29, 2019 and September 10, 2019 Community Plan consultations included discussions related to implementing a quality and culturally appropriate Coordinated Access System that will cover all of the county including rural areas.
- Next Steps:
 - Community Plan consultation participants and the Built for Zero Team have identified several next steps including:
 - Developing requirements for access points (such as ensuring coverage throughout the county; extended hours of service; including walk-in service provision and immediate assistance when required; locations in areas/organizations with high client traffic; easily accessible, accessible by public transportation, virtual phone points of contact at all agencies (for 'no wrong door'), include intake, support and

assessment, provide individualized – ‘not one size fits all’ – services)

- Determining access points by July, 2020 (suggestions: emergency shelters, housing resource centres, institutions, Salvation Armies, food banks, drop-in centres, libraries, friendship centres, Indigenous agencies, Metis Nations of Ontario offices, OW/ODSP offices, YMCAs, school boards, transitional housing, virtual locations in rural areas wherever appropriate, 211 – 24 hours/day/7 days/week)
- Disseminating/communicating county-wide CAS policies and procedures
- Piloting implementation of the CAS system in several agencies across the regions of the county by June, 2020
- Assessing the pilot implementation and making required modifications to ensure a quality and culturally accessible CAS
- Scaling up, providing training and implementing the CAS across the county by April 1, 2022
- Requiring all projects receiving funding from the Designated Community stream to participate in the Coordinated Access system
- Assessing the implementation and making modifications as required

5. Steps to Create a Culturally Appropriate Coordinated Access System:

- Create standing advisory committees of vulnerable sub-groups to authentically engage
- Include cultural sensitivity training, involving elders
- Respect those who are different; be curious
- Must incorporate continuous open dialogue (all overrepresented/vulnerable populations)
- Must be culturally accessible and be willing to adapt to cultural needs
- Meet annually before submitting annual reviews

5. Community-Wide Outcomes

Among the community-wide outcomes that will be tracked are:

1. Increased Housing Retention
 - 85% of households provided homelessness prevention assistance will retain their housing for at least three months after assistance is provided. Housing Access workers will follow-up with households at three, six and nine months after assistance is provided.
 - 80% of homeless households who are provided Housing First Case Management assistance and move into stable housing, retain their housing for at least six months. Housing Case Managers will follow-up with households at three, six, nine and twelve months after move in date.
2. Reductions in Returns to Homelessness*
 - There will be a 25% reduction of people who return to homelessness after being stably housed by 2024. The baseline for this measure will be established using the By-Name List when it becomes operational and has quality data.
3. Reduction in New Inflows into Homelessness*
 - There will be a 25% reduction in people who enter homelessness by 2024. The baseline for this measure will be established using the By-Name List when it becomes operational and has quality data.
4. Reduction in Chronic Homelessness*
 - There will be a 25% reduction in chronic homelessness from 2018 to 2023 and a 50% reduction in chronic homelessness from 2018 to 2028. The baseline for this measure will be established using the By-Name List when it becomes operational and has quality data.
5. Reduction in Seniors Homelessness
 - There will be a 25% reduction in seniors (age 60+) homelessness from 2018 to 2024 as measured against a baseline determined in the 2018 homeless enumeration and subsequently through HIFIS and subsequent homeless enumerations.
6. Reduction in Indigenous Homelessness*
 - There will be a 25% reduction in Indigenous homelessness from 2018 to 2024. The baseline for this measure will be established using the By-Name List when it becomes operational and has quality data.

*These four outcomes are core community-level outcomes that will be reported in the Barrie-Simcoe Community Progress Reports.

7. Reduction in Youth Homelessness

- There will be a 25% reduction in youth homelessness from 2018 to 2024 as measured against a baseline determined in the 2018 homeless enumeration and subsequently through HIFIS and subsequent homeless enumerations.

8. Reduction in LGBTQ Homelessness

- There will be a 25% reduction in homelessness among LGBTQ populations from 2018 to 2024 as measured against a baseline determined in the 2018 homeless enumeration and subsequently through HIFIS and subsequent homeless enumerations.

9. Reduction in Institutional Discharges to Homelessness

- There will be a 25% reduction in discharges directly to homelessness after discharges from correctional facilities from 2018 to 2024 as measured against a baseline determined in the 2018 homeless enumeration and subsequently through HIFIS and homeless enumerations.
- There will be a 25% reduction in discharges directly to homelessness after discharges from mental health facilities from 2018 to 2024 as measured against a baseline determined in the 2018 homeless enumeration and subsequently through HIFIS and homeless enumerations.

10. Reduction in Extended Stays in Emergency Shelters

- There will be a 25% reduction in the number of people who receive extensions for over 30 day shelter stays from 204 in 2018 as measured through the Shelter Management System to 102 or fewer in 2024 as measured in HIFIS.

11. Reduction in Long-Term Emergency Shelter Stays

- There will be a 25% reduction in long-term (81+ days) stays in emergency shelters from 57 stays of 81+ days as measured through the Shelter Management System to 29 or fewer such stays as measured in HIFIS.

12. Reduction in Extended Stays in Motels

- There will be a 25% reduction in the number of people who receive extensions for (over 7 day) motel voucher stays from 204 in 2018 as measured through the Shelter Management System to 102 or fewer in 2024 as measured in HIFIS.

13. Reduction in Emergency Services Use

- There will be a 25% reduction in emergency services utilization by people experiencing homelessness from 2018 as measured in the 2018 homelessness enumeration to 2024 as measured in HIFIS and homeless enumerations.

6. Official Language Minority Communities

The Barrie-Simcoe CAB, the Indigenous CAB and the County of Simcoe will take the following steps to ensure that appropriate services and supports are available to the three designated French Language communities in Simcoe County. All projects and services funded under the Reaching Home Program will take the needs of the Official Language Minority Communities (OLMCs) in Simcoe County into consideration.

While Penetanguishene, Tiny and Essa are designated as French Language Communities, their residents typically access services in nearby larger communities. Residents of Penetanguishene and Tiny access services in Midland and residents of Essa tend to access services in Alliston and Barrie.

Key priorities to strengthen French language services and supports include:

- Exploring options to re-establish a French language services collaborative in Simcoe County
- Exploring the option of front counter bilingual staff or designated resources who can assist
- Using the existing resources of 211 to enhance French Language Services
- Using the current service mapping tool developed by the County of Simcoe and 211 to enhance the service providers' referral capacity
- Expand and coordinate how an "active offer of French language is provided for homeless services"
- Develop a complaints and appeal process specific to access to French language services
- Enhance translation of common key documents (e.g., consent form and intake form) and websites
- Continue the Francophone access for upcoming homeless enumeration surveys
- The Designated CAB and County of Simcoe will develop a plan to ensure that needs are appropriately addressed
- The Community Entity will develop a plan to actively offer project related services in both English and French

Note: ESDC has removed all personal and identifying information for members of the Community Advisory Board(s) from this document. To validate or change this information, please contact your Service Canada representative.