

Reaching Home:

City of Grande Prairie Homelessness Plan

2019 – 2024

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1. Community Engagement

In 2001, The City of Grande Prairie formed the First Community Advisory Board (CAB) to develop strategies to reduce and end homelessness. An Urban Aboriginal CAB was in existence from 2003-2006 and the two Boards chose to amalgamate in 2007 to be collaborative and to make joint funding decisions that would serve the entire community. The now named Community Advisory Board on Housing and Homelessness (CABH) has expanded to oversee the funding streams for both the Government of Canada and the Government of Alberta. Ending homelessness can be a challenge without sufficient affordable housing options and CABH is a strong advocate both nationally, provincially and locally for increased affordable housing.

CABH has sought out wide representation from the community. Current membership consists of seventeen members made up of five resource members from all levels of Government, three Indigenous members, and nine members representing different demographic groups. Each CABH member consults with community and brings the voice and perspective of community to the monthly meetings. CABH engages with community through community committees and boards:

- Community Action to End Poverty
- Seniors Outreach
- Voices for the Voiceless –Lived Experience
- Ministerial Association
- Grande Prairie Circle of Aboriginal Services
- Winter Emergency Response Committee
- Community Outreach Committee
- Complex Needs Review Committee
- Grande Prairie Local Immigration Partnership
- Annual memorial Event (for persons who have died as a result of homelessness)

In the fall of 2018, the CE and CABH supported Centerpoint Facilitation Inc. to engage Indigenous stakeholders to gain feedback for gaps in support services culturally, economically, and socially that contributes to housing instability or homelessness. Secondly, it was to evaluate the effectiveness of the Prevention and Diversion program, in which the Indigenous funding stream partners.

January-May 2019: A Business Case was developed through a hired Consultant for a Permanent Supportive Housing project to target chronically homeless individuals in a 24/7 supportive housing model. The conceptualisation and design of the PSH facility was led by a Project Committee chaired by the City of Grande Prairie and representation from local housing NGOs, the Grande Spirit Foundation Housing Management Body, Rotary House shelter, Alberta Health Services and members from CABH. Community consultations were included to determine needed services and supports for the new build.

In 2019 an Affordable Housing Strategy was developed by the City of Grande Prairie and engagement was undertaken with the public, people working in the housing industry and in the not-for-profit sector, to better understand unique local circumstances and personal experiences. Engagement included workshops, a public survey, an open house and meetings with stakeholders. CABH was engaged as a stakeholder.

June 2019: Presentation to CABH by the Community Entity on Reaching Home funding streams and current funding allocations.

Recommendation via CABH motion to have CABH remain as one CABH for both Indigenous and Designated community funding decisions. Motion carried.

June 2019: Grande Prairie Aboriginal Circle of Services (GPACOS) had a presentation by CE and CABH on role of CABH and current Housing Loss Prevention program. Feedback was gathered and reported back to CABH at the July meeting.

September 2019: CABH member presented to Saint Joes Walk-in Ministry (16 people) and Parish Staff (10 people) and provided info on community resources and provided information on Homelessness supports in the community. The Walk-in Ministry is one of many churches who have benevolent funds to assist people in financial crisis in the community.

October 2019: Grande Spirit Foundation (Housing Management Body) is conducting a Housing Needs Assessment for affordable housing. Community engagement sessions for feedback and input during the month of October, with one specific session for Indigenous organizations and one targeting stakeholders including CABH.

2. Investment Plan

Our community recognizes that Reaching Home is a service-based program that has limited capacity to support capital projects. Initiatives such as the National Housing Strategy and Alberta Seniors and Housing, have potential to be strong housing partners. Provincially the province of Alberta has been a strong supporter and funder of Housing First Initiatives and thus, the priority for our community funding for our Designated Community (DC) as well as Indigenous Homelessness (IH) streams is prevention and diversion activities. Community Capacity and Innovation (CCI) funding is going into increasing resources and data collection for Coordinated Access and a By Name List.

The following outlines the Investment from Reaching Home and includes Designated Community and Indigenous Homelessness funding (for the 2019-2020 year) as it is a joint plan. Community Capacity and Innovation funding is also included.

2019-2020: \$548,090 (of which \$204,554 is from the IH stream)

2020-2021: \$333,536

2021-2022: \$357,849

2022-2023: \$353,349

2023-2024: \$353,349

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Housing Services					
Prevention and shelter diversion	74%	69%	70%	71%	71%
Support Services	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Capital Investments	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Coordination of Resources and Data Collection	13%	18%	17%	16%	16%
Administration	13%	13%	13%	13%	13%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

3. Cost-Matching Requirement

We are on track to show matching funding in our community in 2019-24 by a contribution of \$19,649,370 in external funding sources. Agreements provincially have been in place long-term, but are not multi-year agreements. Our community continues to leverage support municipally and through private donors and has a wide range of cost matching initiatives.

Municipally a full-time City position is cost-shared to provide support to Reaching Home and two part-time administrative positions are cost-shared as well. In 2020 and beyond a new initiative is coming on stream with a city owned building to provide a designated location for some funded projects involved in ending homelessness.

Projected Funding towards Homelessness Initiatives						
Funder	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2019 - 24
Provincial Outreach and Support Services Initiative	\$3,410,250	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$15,410,250
City of Grande Prairie	\$239,120	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$4,239,120
TOTAL	\$3,649,370	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$19,649,370

4. Coordinated Access

The current system in Grande Prairie since 2010 is a Centralized Assessment model, where a single provincially funded team assesses prospective housing first participants, and makes appropriate referrals to housing teams.

The purpose of the assessment team is 1) to ensure appropriate referrals to Housing teams by using the SPDAT (service prioritization decision assistance tool); 2) to assess acuity and history of homelessness and 3) to close side doors to program access, contributing to integrity of prioritization efforts and operation of a system of care. After referral from Centralized Assessment to a Housing Team, the participant begins the housing search and then the case management portion of the Housing First program.

Grande Prairie currently operates a Centralized Access system, where a single team is responsible and has a high level of decision-making power to:

1. Access: Provide fixed and mobile Intake locations/opportunities and ensure community awareness of the service,
2. Assessment: Conduct standard assessment using SPDAT,
3. Prioritization: Prioritize participants on wait list,
4. Referral: Remain up to date on program vacancies, make referrals based on standards, available space and participant choice, and organize transfers,
5. Maintain relationships with partner organizations,
6. Enter data into a shared Homelessness Information Management System (HIMS)

The primary feature of a Decentralized Coordinated Access system is that multiple organizations provide fixed and mobile intake opportunities.

Internal work began on this project in the spring of 2019 including comparison of current access systems across Alberta cities, development of a preliminary local "By Name List" and simplification of the local Centralized Assessment process to reduce barriers. Grande Prairie will use the Reaching Home CCI funding to hire a qualified consultant team in the fall of 2019. The consultant will lead an evaluation of the current housing access system and develop an enhanced model that better meets community needs, with multiple site access points including Indigenous organizations, as the Point in Time Count 2018 shows 44% of the number of homeless on the night of the count identified as Indigenous. Once this is completed, the next step is to implement the enhanced model, ensure a system for data input and tracking of a comprehensive By Name List, provide agency training, and develop service user agreements for multiple user access to the Homelessness Information Management System. Indigenous Organizations will be consulted on best systems for data collection into a centralized By Name List.

It is expected that by the end of 2020-2021 a uniform set of procedures regarding a common Data Collection tool, multiple assessment locations, prioritization matching and a streamlined referral process will be established and approved by the local Community Advisory Board under the Designated Community and Indigenous Homelessness streams. Part of this process will be making a decision to either stay with the Alberta data collection system called Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) or move to the HIFIS4 model introduced nationally. By the end of 2021-2022, uniform practices will be implemented across service providers.

5. Community-Wide Outcomes

The following four core outcomes will have Key Performance Indicators developed for tracking, but no additional outcomes are being added:

1. Chronic homelessness in the community is reduced (by 50% by 2027-28);
2. Homelessness in the community is reduced overall, and for priority populations (i.e. individuals who identify as Indigenous);
3. New inflows into homelessness are reduced; and,
4. Returns to homelessness from housing are reduced.

6. Official Language Minority Communities

To ensure services under Reaching Home take the needs of the OLMC's into consideration in Grande Prairie, a member of L'Association de Tous Les Francophones de L'Alberta (ACFA) Régionale Grande Prairie is a CABH member and gives recommendations for inclusivity and support needs for people experiencing homelessness. When the need arises, services will be offered in the official minority language. We include a clause in all sub-projects agreements to ensure that service providers are prepared to offer services in the minority official language, should there be a request.

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.