Reaching Home:

Regional Municipality of Niagara Homelessness Plan

2019 – 2024

Note:

All communities receiving funding from Designated Communities stream are required to use this template in order to complete the community plan under Reaching Home. In completing this template, communities are encouraged to develop comprehensive community plans that reflect the contributions of all funding partners, including other orders of governments, not-for-profit organizations, and the for-profit sector.

Please note that in communities that receive funding from both the Designated Communities and Indigenous Homelessness streams, cross-stream collaboration is expected to promote the adoption of a community-wide planning process and support the achievement of community-level outcomes reflecting the needs of the whole community. To support communities in completing their community plans, a Reference Guide has been developed. It is recommended that this be reviewed prior to completing your community's homelessness plan to ensure understanding of the requirements and completeness.

The Community Plan for Reaching Home must be approved by the Community Advisory Board (CAB) of the Designated Community before it is submitted to Service Canada. If your community is developing a joint plan with the Indigenous Community Entity, both Community Advisory Boards must approve the community plan.

In addition to the core requirements provided in this template, communities may also wish to include other components that provide insight into the community's housing and homelessness context or contribute to community-level homelessness challenges, such as a map of the community's current homelessness services and/or gaps in homelessness services or infrastructure (e.g. housing stock). Communities have full flexibility in drafting these sections.

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1. Community Engagement

Please identify the steps taken to engage your community stakeholders in developing this plan.[1]

The engagement process for Reaching Home leveraged the engagement process for conducting the Five-Year review of Niagara's 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan. Staff conducted the review process throughout 2018 and the first half of 2019.

The review collected data and other information through engagement with:

- The *A Home For All* Task Force and its related community-led working groups, including the lived experience advisory
- Community organizations providing services as part of Niagara's homeless serving system
- Non-Profit Housing Providers and Co-operative Providers
- Other community groups, including the Niagara Poverty Reduction Network (NPRN), and the Age Friendly Niagara Network
- Indigenous Community and Providers through the Niagara Aboriginal Working Group on Homelessness (NAWG)
- Independent consultants, including Whitesell and Company Inc., and the Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis (CANCEA)
- Municipalities through municipal planners and municipal affordable housing action plan working groups
- Staff from Planning and Development Services, Community Services, Finance, and Niagara Regional Housing

The engagement of older adults was conducted through two sessions supported by the Age Friendly Niagara Network on February 13th and March 14th, 2019.

The engagement with the Indigenous Community was conducted as part of an Indigenous-led event on February 15th, 2019. The final content for the review based on the discussion at that event was provided to staff by NAWG in September 2019.

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[1] Engagement with local Indigenous organizations, and the Indigenous Community Entity and Community Advisory Board (if applicable) is expected in the development of this community plan.

2. Investment Plan

In the table below, please outline your planned allocation of Reaching Home funding from 2019-24 by investment area. Please note that it is acceptable that your community's funding priorities change over time. This investment plan is to demonstrate that your community has a vision moving forward for the allocation of Reaching Home funding. An example has been included in the Community Plan Reference Guide.

Annual Allocations:
2019-2020: $958,596
2020-2021: $941,096
2021-2022: $1,113,488
2022-2023: $1,106,358
2023-2024: $1,106,358

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Housing Services	37%	38%	39%	39%	39%
Prevention and shelter diversion	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Support Services	37%	38%	39%	39%	39%
Capital Investments					
Coordination of Resources and Data Collection	11%	9%	7%	7%	7%
Administration	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

3. Cost-Matching Requirement

In the table below, please outline all funding for homelessness initiatives your community plans to receive from external partners from 2019 to 2024. Please <u>do not</u> report Community Capacity and Innovation funding in the table. An example has been included in the Community Plan Reference Guide.

Projected Funding towards Homelessness Initiatives						
Funder	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2019-24
Ministry of Housing – CHPI	$7,536,433	$7,847,786	$7,847,786	$7,847,786	$7,847,786	$38,927,577
Ministry of Housing – Home For Good	$750,490	$750,490	$750,490	$750,490	$750,490	$3,752,450
Regional Municipality of Niagara	$1,703,561	$1,737,632	$1,772,385	$1,807,833	$1,843,989	$8,865,400
TOTAL	$9,990,484	$10,335,908	$10,370,661	$10,406,109	$10,442,265	$51,545,427

4. Coordinated Access

Please discuss the steps you will take to implement a coordinated access system in your community. If your community has a coordinated access system in place, please describe how it presently functions.

Niagara Region does not currently have a coordinated access system in place, but will develop a coordinated access system that covers all of the region's geographic area through the following steps and actions.

1. A Coordinated Access Program Analyst was hired in July 2019 to lead several initiatives related to coordinated access, including implementation and maintenance support as per the governance requirements in the directives.
2. Training and support for agency use of HIFIS 4 is underway, with an ambitious target to fully implement and integrate HIFIS by March 2020.
3. The Coordinated Access Lead is scheduling community roadshows with partners across the homelessness system to provide information on coordinated access, what this means for their operations, and how they can provide input into the development of coordinated access over the next few years.
4. The Coordinated Access Lead and HIFIS Lead will attend the HIFIS Ontario Regional Workshop in October 2019 to learn more about how HIFIS 4 can support coordinated access implementation and other associated linkages.
5. In July 2019, Niagara Region was accepted as a participating community in the Built for Zero Canada (BFZ-C) 2019/2020 Collaborative. Niagara Region will receive support to work toward a "Quality" By-Name List and Priority List - key tools in achieving and operationalizing coordinated access.
6. In Fall 2019, Niagara Region will build an appropriate governance operating model to exercise proper leadership for the planning, implementation, and ongoing management of the Coordinated Access System. Niagara Region is currently identified as the lead organization to manage the implementation and operationalization of coordinated access, but internal working groups and steering committee (mentioned below) will liaise with the local team on any further governance needs, implementation, and operationalization.
7. In Fall 2019, Niagara Region will establish a HIFIS Working Group to continue the implementation of HIFIS 4, a Coordinated Access Working Group to implement a By-Name List and Coordinated Access, and a Steering Committee with regional senior leadership. Many of the same members will participate in both Working Groups to ensure alignment. These groups will also develop policies and procedures outlining how Coordinated Access operates.
8. In Fall 2019, Niagara Region will create and lead a local team of community stakeholders, including Indigenous community representation and representation

from municipalities across the region, to liaise with relevant sectors on the development of coordinated access and provide advice to internal working groups. This local team will also provide input on the Region's participation in the BFZ-C 2019/2020 Collaborative, including the development of Action Cycle Plans.

9. In Fall 2019, the Coordinated Access Lead will inform both Community Advisory Boards (CAB) of coordinated access development and identify linkages between the local team and CAB members to ensure a consistent flow of information and appropriate avenues to engage both CABs on coordinated access planning and implementation on an ongoing basis, in addition to engagement through regularly scheduled meetings.

10. In Fall 2019, Niagara Region will work with internal I.T. professionals that are able to assist the Homelessness Services team with the extraction of HIFIS data for the purposes of creating a By-Name List and Priority List. If I.T. support is available, the Coordinated Access and HIFIS Lead will align this work with Reaching Home's upcoming plans to create By-Name List capabilities in HIFIS, expected to be released early 2020.

11. In January 2020, a sub-section of the local team will attend a BFZ-C Learning Session to create an Action Cycle Plan based off the BFZ-C By-Name List scorecard. As part of BFZ-C, Niagara Region plans to work through BFZ-C's By-Name List Scorecard as a first step toward coordinated access (target of February 2020 – June 2020), before working through BFZ-C's Coordinated Access System Scorecard (target of July 2020 – December 2020). More specifically, Niagara Region will start by developing the data infrastructure and supporting policy and process to create a By-Name List that works best for the community, aligned with the Reaching Home directives.

12. Throughout the completion of both scorecards (target of February 2020 – December 2020), the local team and both working groups will lead rapid test cycles to pilot and action various aspects of coordinated access development as per Action Cycle Plans, including a model of access that spans the geography of the region, standardized intake, consent, assessment, referral, and prioritization processes.

13. Starting in early 2020, both Community Advisory Boards, funded partners, and other stakeholders throughout the community will receive an Action Bulletin on a regular basis with information on current status of coordinated access implementation, next steps, how they can provide input, challenges, and successes.

5. Community-Wide Outcomes

If you would like your community to measure progress on additional outcomes beyond the [federally mandated outcomes](#), please identify those outcomes. Please provide your proposed indicators, targets, and methodology for each of the additional identified outcomes.

The mandatory community-level outcomes Niagara Region, as a Designated Community, is required to work towards are:
- Chronic homelessness in the community is reduced (specifically, a reduction of 50% in chronic homelessness by 2027/28);
- Homelessness in the community is reduced overall and for specific populations, including Indigenous homelessness;
- New inflows into homelessness are reduced; and
- Returns to homelessness are reduced.

The following twelve outcomes reflect the feedback from the community that was received through the five-year review of Niagara's 10-year housing and homelessness action plan. These outcomes will be adopted for Niagara's work on housing and homelessness for the next five years, pending Council and Ministry approval. Key performance indicators and time-bound targets to measure and track community progress related to these outcomes are in development.

1. Improve access to shelter and housing for those experiencing unsheltered homelessness.
2. Reduce the time spent in emergency shelter before successful exit.
3. Improve the housing situation for those exiting emergency shelter.
4. Reduce the time it takes for those who are at risk of homelessness to access prevention services.
5. Improve long-term housing stability for households at risk of homelessness.
6. Improve long-term housing stability for households that have graduated from housing with support programs.
7. Increase the supply of higher-density housing forms, including townhouse and apartments.
8. Increase the number of new community housing units developed, and the proportion of new community housing units that are bachelor/1-bedroom units or four or more bedroom units.
9. Prevent the loss of current community housing stock.
10. Increase the use of best practices in all funded homeless services programs.
11. Increase the number of new initiatives created in partnership with Indigenous, health, corrections, or child welfare systems.

12. Increase the number of policies and services revised to better serve Indigenous people, older adults, youth, women, persons with a disability, Franco-Canadians, and newcomers and refugees.

Additional community-wide outcomes may being developed as informed by the following processes:

- Homelessness Services System Review by Whitesell and Company Inc. (January 2019)
- Homelessness System Review: Development of Performance Targets by Niagara Region's Internal Control and Organization Performance Division (June 2019)
- Built for Zero Canada participation, which began August 2019
- Niagara Housing Statement by the Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis (CANCEA)

6. Official Language Minority Communities

The Government of Canada has a responsibility under the Official Languages Act to ensure that programs and services meet the needs of [Official Language Minority Communities (OLMCs)](). Please describe the steps that you will take to ensure that the services funded under the Reaching Home take the needs of the [OLMCs]() into consideration where applicable.

As the Service Manager and Community Entity in Niagara delivering homeless-serving programs through third-party agencies, all contracts include a "Compliance with Laws" clause that requires funded organizations to comply with all laws, rules and regulations. The Federal Official Languages Act will be specifically cited within this clause. As part of reporting, agencies provide status updates on progress in a form acceptable to Niagara Region.

Niagara Region has committed to addressing the needs of people experiencing homelessness in both official languages and to working with Niagara Region's Homeless-Serving System to offer inclusive services. As such, Niagara Region has included in its upcoming Negotiated Request for Proposals (NRFP) the requirement to report evidence of compliance to the various relevant provincial and federal policies. The NRFP for Reaching Home sub-projects as well as the resulting sub-project agreements with community agencies will specify the Federal Official Languages Act. In addition, for the upcoming NRFP we plan to offer French translation of documents, upon request.

Niagara Region is in the process of developing System Key Performance Indicators that aim to reduce barriers to service for specific populations by increasing the number of policies, practices or services provided to better serve equity-seeking groups within Niagara. Franco-Canadians have been identified as a population.

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.