

REACHING HOME

WATERLOO REGION HOMELESSNESS PLAN 2019 – 2024

1. Community Engagement

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

The 2019-2024 Community Plan was developed in combination with the five-year update (herein after referred to as the Plan Update) of the 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan required by the Ontario Provincial Government. The Plan integrates changes resulting from the development of several service frameworks (Supportive Housing, Emergency Shelter, Prioritized Access to Housing Supports, Home Based Support) during the previous planning period. The Plan Update builds upon this foundational work and integrates insights from local data trends. It has also been streamlined to align with previous Strategic goals, Federal and Provincial policy directions, and action items from our local Housing Services Strategic Plan.

As part of the work associated with the development of the Plan Update, the Region of Waterloo conducted a series of consultations with stakeholders over the course of 2018 and into early 2019. During these consultations, participants were provided with an overview of local trends/data and draft strategic outcomes and related actions. These sessions provided participants with the opportunity for input and feedback on whether the proposed actions address current and emerging issues. Participant groups included local service providers (e.g., the Housing Stability System Planning Table), program-specific working groups (Emergency Shelters, Families to Homes, Street Outreach), an advocacy group of people with lived experience (People's Action Group), Community Housing Providers, and other Region of Waterloo Community Services Program Areas (Children's Services, Seniors Services, Employment and Income Support). Opportunities for input were provided at focus group sessions, through a follow-up online survey and through direct communication with stakeholders.

At the same time as Region of Waterloo staff were conducting consultations with the stakeholders mentioned above, [Wellbeing Waterloo Region](#) (WWR) - a community-led initiative working together across sectors to improve the wellbeing of residents - was conducting consultations with our local Indigenous community through individual and group meetings with Indigenous leaders and allies. The purpose of these consultations was to gain a better understanding of how to support wellbeing for Indigenous communities, how to build strong and meaningful relationships with Indigenous communities, to identify effective methods and strategies to engage and work with Indigenous communities, and to identify barriers to participation in the WWR initiative. The key issues and calls to action identified as part of these consultations, summarized in the Indigenous Community Consultations Report (http://www.wellbeingwaterloo.ca/blog/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/WWR_Indigenous_Community_Consultations.pdf), helped inform the Plan Update.

We recognize that the consultations held with our Indigenous communities through WWR are just the beginning and that efforts to strengthen relationships and act on issues identified must be ongoing. As such, we have included a specific action in our Plan Update to “Engage with Indigenous communities in Waterloo Region to develop a shared strategy for culturally accessible and appropriate housing programming”.

The final draft of the Plan Update of the 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan was approved by Regional Council in November 2019.

2. Investment Plan

In the table below, please outline your planned allocation of Reaching Home funding (including funding from the Designated Community stream and Community Capacity and Innovation stream) 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.

Through the Designated Communities and Community Capacity and Innovation funding streams, Waterloo Region will receive a total of \$5,185,985 over a five-year period, broken down annually as shown here:

Fiscal Year	Original RH Allocation	Additional CCI Funding	Total
2019/20	\$809,041	\$121,420	\$930,461
2020/21	\$809,041	\$103,920	\$912,961
2021/22	\$1,015,021	\$103,920	\$1,118,941
2022/23	\$1,015,021	\$96,790	\$1,111,811
2023/24	\$1,015,021	\$96,790	\$1,111,811
TOTAL	\$4,663,145	\$522,840	\$5,185,985

Reaching Home funding will provide support to two sub-projects in Waterloo Region’s existing coordinated access system in 2019/20 (Year 1). The sub-project in the Housing Services category focuses on housing placement of participants on our Prioritized Access to Housing Support (PATHS) List, and the sub-project in the Support Services category provides ongoing supports to participants once housed to ensure housing is retained. Both of these sub-projects also receive funding through provincial and regional funding sources.

Community Capacity and Innovation (CCI) funding will support our investments in the Coordination of Resources and Data Collection category, as we continue to enhance our coordinated access system and address any existing gaps (e.g. HIFIS enhancements, training, consulting, Point-in-Time Count, etc.).

It should be noted that Waterloo Region invests in the Prevention and Shelter Diversion as well as Capital Investment categories through other funding sources. It should also be noted that no project funding decisions have been made beyond the 2019/20 Transition Year. So, although we anticipate that we will continue to focus our investments in the Housing Services and Support Services categories, our priorities may change over time in order to continuously align with community needs.

Category	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Housing Services	35%	37%	39%	39%	39%
Prevention and Shelter Diversion	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Support Services	37%	39%	41%	41%	41%
Capital Investments	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Coordination of Resources and Data Collection	13%	11%	9%	9%	9%
Administration	15%	13%	11%	11%	11%
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. This includes both financial and in-kind contributions. If your anticipated community contributions do not project to cost-match funding from both the Designated Community stream and Community Capacity and Innovation stream for each year, explain the circumstances below the table and include a description of the steps you will take to meet the requirement. An example has been included in the Community Plan Reference Guide.

Please refer to the table below for an annual breakdown of funding expected from other sources of funding in order to cost-match Reaching Home Designated Communities and Community Capacity and Innovation stream funding.

Funder	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	Total
Provincial Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI)	\$10,225,029	\$10,682,886	\$10,682,886	\$10,682,886	\$10,682,886	\$52,956,573
Provincial Home for Good (HFG)	\$1,554,840	\$1,554,840	\$1,554,840	\$1,554,840	\$1,554,840	\$7,774,200
Region of Waterloo	\$2,141,994	\$2,465,994	\$2,465,994	\$2,465,994	\$2,465,994	\$12,005,970
TOTAL	\$13,921,863	\$14,703,720	\$14,703,720	\$14,703,720	\$14,703,720	\$72,736,743

The annual funding received through Reaching Home represents approx. six per cent of Waterloo Region’s overall budget for homelessness initiatives, which means our community has surpassed the cost-matching requirement.

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. Note: Please also ensure you discuss how Indigenous Organizations have been engaged on the design of Coordinated Access, or how they will be engaged.

Waterloo Region has a coordinated access system in place. The Waterloo Region Housing Stability System (HSS) is a connected network of programs that work together to provide supports for people experiencing housing challenges. All Region-funded Service Providers providing services and supports to households experiencing homelessness are using the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) for shared service planning. This allows for shared case management across Waterloo Region and real-time data collection, allowing for evidence-informed service planning.

In addition, all Service Providers use the common Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (SPDAT). SPDAT training is coordinated by a single agency for all direct service staff within Waterloo Region to ensure consistency of application.

The Prioritized Access to Housing Supports (PATHS) process was launched in June 2016 to coordinate access to all housing supports (Supportive Housing and home-based support) for people experiencing homelessness in Waterloo Region. This includes the cities of Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo, and the townships of North Dumfries, Wellesley, Wilmot and Woolwich. Through the PATHS process, households with medium and high depths of need are matched to the most appropriate housing once a spot becomes available. Prioritization criteria include acuity, chronicity, tri-morbidity, elevated risk, critical safety list, and length of time living without permanent housing. Unit matching includes client needs and preferences.

In addition to the PATHS process, the Region has had a quality By-Name List since 2014. In July of 2019, the Region implemented the quality By-Name List in HIFIS. This list allows for the collection of all vital client data, prioritization, and matching based on client needs and preferences.

Waterloo Region's coordinated access system is still reasonably new and not without its challenges. As part of our work to enhance our existing system and address gaps, we plan to take a closer look at the integrity of our data and make improvements where needed. We will also work to identify and address barriers that may be experienced by some when trying to access our coordinated access system, in collaboration with local service providers.

We are also committed to gaining a better understanding of the culturally specific barriers faced by members of our Indigenous community when trying to access housing, make improvements to our PATHS process to help break down those barriers, and to ensure that working groups related to our coordinated access system include representation from our Indigenous community. Consultations with our Indigenous community have highlighted that local data on the Indigenous population overall and on those who are experiencing homelessness is far below reality. The reasons for the inaccuracies are varied and complex, but need to be better understood and addressed as we work to enhance our system.

Coordinated Access Governance Structure

The Region of Waterloo contracts with Lutherwood to oversee the PATHS process and provide coordinated access in Waterloo Region. The service agreement with Lutherwood for the provision of coordinated access is renewed annually, with funding provided through various funding sources.

Lutherwood's PATHS team consists of one program manager, one program supervisor, four Service Navigators, four Housing Liaisons, and one Trustee. The PATHS process also receives support from a Regional program lead, who oversees monitoring and compliance for housing supports. The Region is exploring the potential of implementing case

conferencing to support prioritization and decision making for each newly available unit, expanding this governance structure to other agency leads. This will help inform fit for each unit.

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.

Waterloo Region will measure progress on the Federally mandated outcomes only, which are:

- Chronic homelessness in the community is reduced (by 50% by 2027-28);
- Homelessness in the community is reduced overall, and for priority populations (i.e. individuals who identify as Indigenous). When applicable, communities may report on other priority populations;
- New inflows into homelessness are reduced; and
- Returns to homelessness from housing are reduced.

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.

According to 2016 Census data, approx. one per cent of the total population in Waterloo Region identify as members of the OLMCs. That percentage is even lower for individuals experiencing homelessness, who are participating in programs and services funded under Reaching Home. Nevertheless, we are committed to ensuring that we are prepared to serve individuals who need our services and supports in the minority official language.

At the Region of Waterloo (the Community Entity for Waterloo Region), we have identified staff who speak the minority official language and are available to assist, as needed. In addition, we have the ability to access Language Line and web-based translation tools, and partner with our Creative Multimedia Services Division to create written marketing materials and/or forms in other languages.

The Agency we have partnered with in 2019/20 to deliver two sub-projects that serve individuals experiencing homelessness also has staff on hand who speak the minority official language, access web-based translation tools as needed, and work with the Kitchener-Waterloo Multicultural Centre for any written translation needs.

We will continue to monitor demand for services in the official minority language and adapt our processes, as needed, to support the OLMCs.

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.