

Reaching Home:

[Brantford-Brant] 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

a) Community Profile

In 2016 and 2018, Brantford Native Housing, Brantford Aboriginal Homelessness Alliance (BAHA), in partnership with the City of Brantford and the Community Advisory Board, conducted the Brantford-Brant Point in Time (PiT) Counts.ⁱ The results of the 2018 PiT count included 134 completed PiT surveys, 74 completed VI-SPDAT surveys, 186 individuals at Minimum Homelessness, and 52 other individuals Observed Homeless. Highlights from the 2018 PiT Count found that:

- 54% of individuals were temporarily living in system supported housing (i.e. shelters and transitional housing)
- 69% were in receipt of OW or ODSP
- 35% of participants were Indigenous
- 75% were single (no family members or dependents)
- 11% were youth
- 8% were seniors

Reported reasons for housing loss included:

- Family conflict (30%)
- Fleeing domestic violence (16%)
- Housing affordability (16%)
- Unsafe housing conditions (14%)
- Illness/medical conditions (10%)
- Job loss (7%)

The lack of affordable housing across Brantford-Brant has been credited as one major driver of homelessness and precarious housing arrangements. As of June 2019, the affordable housing wait list stands at an all-time high of approximately 1,700 households. Individuals under the age of 60 who require a one-bedroom unit can wait between 9-12 years. This is due to the combination of high demand and a shortage of one-bedroom units under the various social housing programs.ⁱⁱ The current Rent Geared to Income demographic statistics are made up of seniors (28.8%), families (29.8%), and singles/couples under 60 (41.4%). The monthly allowances for low income households have also narrowly increased since 2014,

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.

requiring individuals to use their entire monthly allowance on rent alone.ⁱⁱⁱ Overall, the number of recorded individuals experiencing homelessness has doubled from 2016 to 2018 and the number of homeless individuals accessing housing services has decreased from 76% to 54%.^{iv}

b) Community Engagement

The Brantford-Brant Community Homelessness Plan was developed through extensive stakeholder engagement. The local Community Advisory Board on Homelessness (CAB) in partnership with the Indigenous Community Advisory Board (ICAB) identified appropriate programs and services where targeted community homelessness consultations would take place. These organizations included emergency shelters, at-risk youth groups, senior's social housing programs, and urban Indigenous organizations. The CAB and ICAB also determined what information was needed from service providers and program participants to inform the development of the Community Plan.

The organizations identified by the CAB and ICAB were engaged in the planning processes of these place-based homelessness consultations. It was communicated that the purpose of these consultations was to tell a more comprehensive story about how homelessness and housing challenges are experienced across Brantford-Brant. Service providers and consultation participants were given the preamble that the information collected from these consultations would inform the priorities set within Brantford-Brant's Reaching Home Community Plan. Service and program providers were also welcomed to express their interest to participate as members on the CAB as a callout for new members would happen in the early fall, with the information that a Coordinated and Homelessness Individuals and Families Information System 4 (HIFIS 4) Advisory Committee will be initiated Fall 2019.

Over July and August 2019, 12 group consultations were held throughout Brantford, with 124 participants. The consultations target groups that have their own unique needs as it relates to homelessness and groups that are overrepresented in the homelessness population. Over this period, 36 youth, 45 seniors, 14 urban Indigenous individuals, and 21 individuals currently accessing emergency shelter were consulted. An additional 13 individuals accessing social housing were also consulted. Throughout these consultations, participants were asked to reflect upon their current and past housing situations. This included details regarding what was "in the picture" of their housing situation, such as family members, roommates, pets, etc. Participants were asked to identify any challenges or barriers experienced when accessing necessary housing services and related supports. After discussing housing situations and challenges, participants were asked to identify three top priorities to guide the development of future homelessness prevention and response

services across Brantford-Brant. These priorities helped inform the focus and discussion topics for the larger community conversation and drove the development of the Community Plan's Additional Outcomes.

On September 23rd, 2019, the Brantford-Brant Community Conversation on Homelessness took place to provide an opportunity for members of the public to become engaged in the Community Plan process. This public engagement event was attended by 200 people, including local service providers, people with lived and living experience, advocates, students, and other interested members of the public. These participants were able to learn from experts in the field, as well as participate in structured breakout working groups. Participants were led by a facilitator with enhanced knowledge of the topic to define specific issues related to homelessness in Brantford and identify actionable priorities to address these issues moving forward. The topics that were covered through the breakout groups included:

- Meeting the Complex Needs of our Unsheltered Neighbours;
- Exploring Youth Homelessness;
- Identifying Future Community Priorities: Driving Change;
- Exploring Housing Needs in the LGBTQ2S+ Community
- From Crisis Supports to Prevention: Opportunities for Early Intervention and Diversion;
- Exploring Seniors Homelessness;
- Promoting Community Health and Wellbeing to Prevent Chronic Homelessness;
- Innovation Station: Creating New Opportunities for Affordable and Supportive Housing Projects;
- Lessons From the Voices of Lived Experience: Examining Barriers to Accessing Services and Retaining Housing;
- Exploring the Dimensions of Indigenous Homelessness

C) Indigenous Engagement

For the planning phase of the place-based consultations, the Indigenous Community Entity (Brantford Native Housing) was actively involved in identifying the local programs and services where the consultations would take place, as well as determining the questions that would be asked of participants. The discussion questions developed for consultations at Indigenous service providing organizations emphasized experiences with racism and impacts of colonialism, as well as what needs to change to make public and private housing sectors more culturally safe. Local Indigenous health and social service providers collaborated to support a Talking Circle-style consultation at the local Aboriginal Health Centre.

The challenges identified and priorities determined through this consultation determined the need for further public engagement opportunities surrounding Indigenous homelessness in Brantford-Brant. Partners from the Aboriginal Health Centre were engaged in the planning and facilitation of a specific breakout working group topic on Indigenous Homelessness at the Brantford-Brant Community Conversation on Homelessness event. This breakout group provided members of the public, including Indigenous people and service providers, the opportunity to address racism and stigma surrounding Indigenous homelessness, work through culturally appropriate definitions of homelessness, home, and community, as well as identify actionable priorities for change. The Community Entity will continue to work with the Indigenous Community Entity through the development of Brantford-Brant's Coordinated Access System, which will include the configuration and implementation of HIFIS4. A representative from the ICAB will continue to attend all CAB meetings and will participate in the Coordinated Access/HIFIS 4 Advisory Committee. The Indigenous Community Entity will also be engaged as a partner in the planning and rollout of the 2020 PiT Count.

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.

Our community recognizes that the implementation of Coordinated Access including HIFIS 4 will provide the foundation needed for the Brantford-Brant Homelessness System of Care to best serve the most at risk and marginalized individuals in our community. As such, the bulk of our community funding will be dedicated towards the Coordination of Resources and Data Collection during the first few years of Reaching Home. Following this our community has determined that there is a deep need for Support Services for the low to moderate acuity homeless population. Additional resources are needed to facilitate connections for individuals and families with the supports needed to overcome barriers related to mental health, addictions, and primary care in order to increase the likelihood of successful tenancies. Rapid-Rehousing represents a significant gap in the Brantford-Brant Homelessness System of Care due to the lack of affordable housing and Support Services for the low to moderate acuity homeless population.

Annual Allocations:

2019-20: \$307,287
 2020-21: \$297,287
 2021-22: \$348,941
 2022-23: \$344,441
 2023-24: \$344,441

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Housing Services	-	-	-	-	-
Prevention and shelter diversion	-	-	-	-	-
Support Services	-	-	51%	50%	50%
Capital Investments	-	-	-	-	-
Coordination of Resources and Data Collection	85%	85%	34%	35%	35%
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. 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
Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative	\$3,018,368	\$3,018,368*	\$3,018,368*	\$3,018,368*	\$3,018,368*	\$15,091,840*
Municipal Contribution to Homelessness	\$1,025,000	\$1,025,000*	\$1,025,000*	\$1,025,000*	\$1,025,000*	\$5,125,000*
Homes for Good	\$1,256,420	\$1,256,420*	\$1,256,420*	\$1,256,420*	\$1,256,420*	\$6,282,100*
Total	\$5,299,788	\$5,299,788*	\$5,299,788*	\$5,299,788*	\$5,299,788*	\$26,498,940*
*Amounts are estimates as confirmation has not yet been received by the proper funding authorities						

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.

Initial steps to implement Coordinated Access have been taken through collaboration between the Community Entity and local housing and homelessness service providers^v. From Monday-Friday (8:30am-4:30pm), the Social Services Support Centre at 220 Colborne Street functions as the main access point. All emergency shelters can admit individuals if they are approached directly after-hours, with City staff following up and connecting with the individual at the shelter the next day. The Salvation Army on 187 Dalhousie Street is the main point of after-hours access for homeless individuals and will coordinate admission to the most suitable shelter option for that night. Current Coordinated Access activities have been categorized across four steps: Prevention, Diversion, Assessment, and Referral.

- 1) Prevention: The City's Housing Resource Centre (HRC) provides:
 - Services for tenants and landlords to assist in coordinating affordable housing matches,
 - Outreach to assist homeless individuals in securing emergency and long-term housing,
 - An Identification (ID) Clinic to assist individuals in securing Birth Certificates, SIN Cards, and Health Cards,
 - A Trustee Program to assist vulnerable individuals in managing their finances
 - Brantford-Brant Homelessness Prevention Assistance program which offers financial supports to those facing eviction or establishing a new residence
- 2) Diversion: Service providers collaborate to re-direct individuals away from emergency response and homelessness services, looking for any other short-term living situation available that would prevent the individual from entering a shelter, while efforts are made to locate alternative housing. Individuals requiring financial assistance in returning to communities where social and familial ties already exist are supported as well.
- 3) Assessment: Assessments are completed when individuals and families face barriers to exiting homelessness on their own. City staff complete a standard assessment using the VI-SPDAT with an individual after spending seven or more days in a shelter. The intervention is matched to the individual or family's

assessed level of acuity, the resources and supports that will be needed for the individual or family to be successfully housed.

- 4) Referral: Intensive Case Management and Supportive Housing programs are determined by an individual's level of need, as identified through the VI-SPDAT score and other factors surrounding their current living situation.
- Wesley Live Well provides Intensive Case Management and Supportive Housing,
 - Other local organizations such as the Canadian Mental Health Association, St. Leonard's Community Services, and the Grand River Community Health Centre also offer supports that can assist individuals in overcoming barriers to housing retention.

The Brantford-Brant Community Conversation on Homelessness also served as the catalyst to engaging local stakeholders in the formation of a joined Coordinated Access and HIFIS4 Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee will work closely with the CAB and ICAB to undertake the following responsibilities:

- a) To advise on options for carrying out responsibilities related to the operation of Coordinated Access and HIFIS4.
- b) To facilitate increased shelter and housing provider, service user, stakeholder, and general public understanding regarding the Brantford-Brant Coordinated Access system and requirements.
- c) To support the development and implementation of the required policies and protocols, including Participant Consent, Standard Assessment, Prioritization, and Matching and Referral.
- d) To ensure the alignment of business processes for assessing and prioritizing clients, as well as engaging with Brant Native Housing and the ICAB to ensure that the above business processes are culturally safe and sensitive.
- e) To provide a vehicle for the Community Entity, shelter and housing service providers, and broader community stakeholders to identify and address issues arising from the ongoing administration of Coordinated Access in Brantford-Brant.

The City of Brantford, as the Community Entity, plans to take the following steps towards the full implementation of a Coordinated Access System for Brantford-Brant:

- a) The Community Entity will continue to work with the CAB and ICAB to host stakeholder and community engagement sessions to establish and refine actionable priorities that will guide the implementation of Coordinated Access. A joined Coordinated Access and HIFIS4 Advisory Committee will be formed to engage local emergency shelter, affordable housing, and outreach providers in the development of shared policies and protocols for consent, assessment, prioritization, and referral.
- b) The Community Entity and Coordinated Access Advisory Committee will establish a strong-leader governance structure that will oversee the management of the Coordinated Access System. This will include setting the terms of reference, establishing management and accountability policies and procedures.
- c) The Coordinated Access Advisory Committee will establish a Centralized Entry Access Model, as well as assessment tools, prioritization criteria, and referral process throughout 2019-2020.
- d) The CAB will approve the proposed policies and procedures established by the end of 2020. These policies and procedures will work to enhance client experience, reducing the amount of time it takes to process a client and allowing service providers more time to support the client directly.
- e) Training and technical assistance for HIFIS4 will be offered to front-line service providers beginning in 2020-2021. Training will include how service providers can collect and track common indicators, as well as how to measure progress on federally mandated and community-driven outcomes.
- f) The HIFIS4 Advisory Committee and Project Manager will oversee the implementation of HIFIS4.
- g) HIFIS4 is expected to be fully implemented with defined users by 2021.
- h) Coordinated Access is expected to be fully implemented by March 2022.
- i) At full maturity, individuals experiencing or at imminent risk of homelessness will have the option to access service from any member of the Homelessness Service System (no wrong door) according to the established Centralized Entry Access Model and data captured in HIFIS4.

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.

a) Federally Mandated Outcomes

- **Chronic homelessness in Brantford-Brant is reduced by 50% by 2027-28** – To support the desired outcome of a 50% reduction in chronic homelessness; a Quality By-Name List will be developed and implemented to gather real-time and person-specific data on homelessness. Implementing a By-Name List will allow service providers to collaboratively find and prioritize individuals experiencing the greatest need, match individuals to appropriate and preferable housing options, and improve timely access to services.
- **Homelessness in the community is reduced overall, and for priority populations** – To support a desired outcome of 50% reduction in homelessness overall, the 2020 PiT Count will be conducted by the Community Entity in partnership with Brant Native Housing. The 2020 PiT Count will take specific measures to ensure an enhanced focus is given to the Indigenous, LGBTQ2S+, and other groups who experience disproportionate rates of homelessness that have historically not been accurately represented.
- **New inflows into homelessness are reduced** – To support a desired outcome of a 50% reduction of new flows into homelessness, standard assessment, prioritization, and matching and referrals tools will be implemented across all homelessness service providers (including the SPDAT and VAT).
- **Returns to homelessness are reduced** – To support a desired outcome of a 50% reduction of returns to homelessness, the Coordinated Access Sub-Committee will support the integration of necessary health and social services to help individuals retain permanent housing.

b) Additional Outcomes

Through Community Engagement, a number of additional outcomes were identified and prioritized by service providers and individuals with lived and living experience with homelessness and precarious housing. The following outcomes will be included in the annual reporting.

- 1) **More affordable housing options are created and maintained**
 - i. The total number of affordable housing units in Brantford-Brant; - [baseline established from 2019 actuals](#)

- ii. The current number of affordable housing units owned by the City of Brantford; - [baseline established from 2019 actuals](#)
- iii. The number of new affordable housing units created in Brantford-Brant [annually](#);
- iv. The number of new affordable housing units created by and owned by the City of Brantford [annually](#);
- v. The number of individuals and families on the affordable housing waitlist; - [baseline established from 2019 actuals](#)
- vi. The average length of wait time by priority group on the affordable housing waitlist. - [baseline established from 2019 actuals](#)

2) On-the-ground outreach efforts to support community-wide safety and wellbeing

- i. The number of individuals contacted [annually](#) by the Brantford Downtown Outreach Team; - [baseline established from 2019 actuals](#)
- ii. The number of individuals connected [annually](#) to services by the Brantford Downtown Outreach Team. - [baseline established from 2019 actuals](#)

3) Necessary supports are seamlessly integrated into affordable housing options

- i. The number of permanently housed individuals connected [annually](#) to mental health and/or addictions supports; - [baseline established from 2019 actuals](#)
- ii. The number of affordable housing units that are supported [annually](#) by onsite mental health, addictions, and/or primary care services. - [baseline established from 2019 actuals](#)

4) Drive systems-level change for populations who are disproportionately affected by homelessness and precarious housing

- i. The number of system staff and management who have received cultural [training relevant](#) for responding to Indigenous homelessness [annually](#) and providing culturally safe and appropriate services for Indigenous people; [baseline to be set by 2019 actuals](#)
- ii. The number of system staff and management who have received trainings [annually](#) for responding to LGBTQ2S+ homelessness and providing safe and appropriate services for LGBTQ2S+ people; - [baseline to be set by 2019 actuals](#)
- iii. The number of staff trained [annually](#) to provide services for marginalized populations; - [baseline to be set by 2019 actuals](#)
- iv. The number of staff trained [annually](#) in trauma informed approaches to service provision; - [baseline to be set by 2019 actuals](#)
- v. The number of individuals who receive Rent Smart training - [baseline unavailable as the program has not yet been launched – planned launch for 2020.](#)

5) Provide comprehensive systems navigation support

- i. The number and types of methods to communicate housing services and related programs information;
- ii. The existence of a centralized point of access for all housing service and program information [by Q4 2020](#);

- iii. The number of individuals connected [annually](#) to mental health, addictions, primary care, and social support services by the Housing Resource Centre; - [baseline to be set by 2019 actuals](#)
- iv. The number of service providers participating on the Coordinated Access Advisory Committee [by Q1 2020](#).

Overall, there are many intersecting factors impacting homelessness that must be addressed to reduce and end homelessness across Brantford-Brant. Community members have voiced concerns and experiences with record high waitlists, rapidly increasing rents and costs of living, and the increasingly unattainable cost of owning a family home. While the cost and availability of housing represents the root of the need, neighbourhood safety and community wellbeing, timely access to health and social supports, and a better understanding of how to navigate these systems were identified as imperative to reducing homelessness.

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.

The City of Brantford is committed to ensuring that we address the needs of homeless persons in both official languages. According to the 2016 Census Profile, only 1% of community members identify as a member of the OLMCs. However, we will include a clause in the all sub-project agreements to ensure that service providers are prepared to offer services in French, should there be a request. As the Community Entity, the City of Brantford already has policies in place to ensure that identical services can be provided in both Official Languages, as needed. We will continue to monitor the demand for services in the official minority language, to ensure that the needs of Official OLMCs are met across all programs and services delivered through the Brantford-Brant Community Plan.

Designated Community – Community Advisory Board

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.

Indigenous Homelessness – Community Advisory Board

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ⁱ Results of the Brantford/Brant Joint Point in Time (PiT) & Registry Week Counts. (2018).

<https://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/attachments/Brantford.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (2019). Brantford: Primary Rental Market Vacancy Rates. Retrieved from [https://www03.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/hmip-](https://www03.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/hmip-pimh/en/TableMapChart/Table?TableId=2.1.31.3&GeographyId=0125&GeographyTypeId=3&DisplayAs=Table&GeographyName=Brantford)

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ⁱⁱⁱ Ontario Works AND ODSP Rates 2003-2016 . Retrieved from <https://pub-london.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=34005>

^{iv} Results of the Brantford/Brant Joint Point in Time (PiT) & Registry Week Counts. (2018).

<https://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/attachments/Brantford.pdf>

^v Emergency Shelter System Transition Update and New Federal Homelessness Funding Agreement. (2019).

Retrieved from : <https://pub-brantford.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=383>