

Report to the Community: Homelessness & Affordable Housing Initiatives

2011 – 2012



Presented by The City of Red Deer and the Red Deer & District Community Foundation



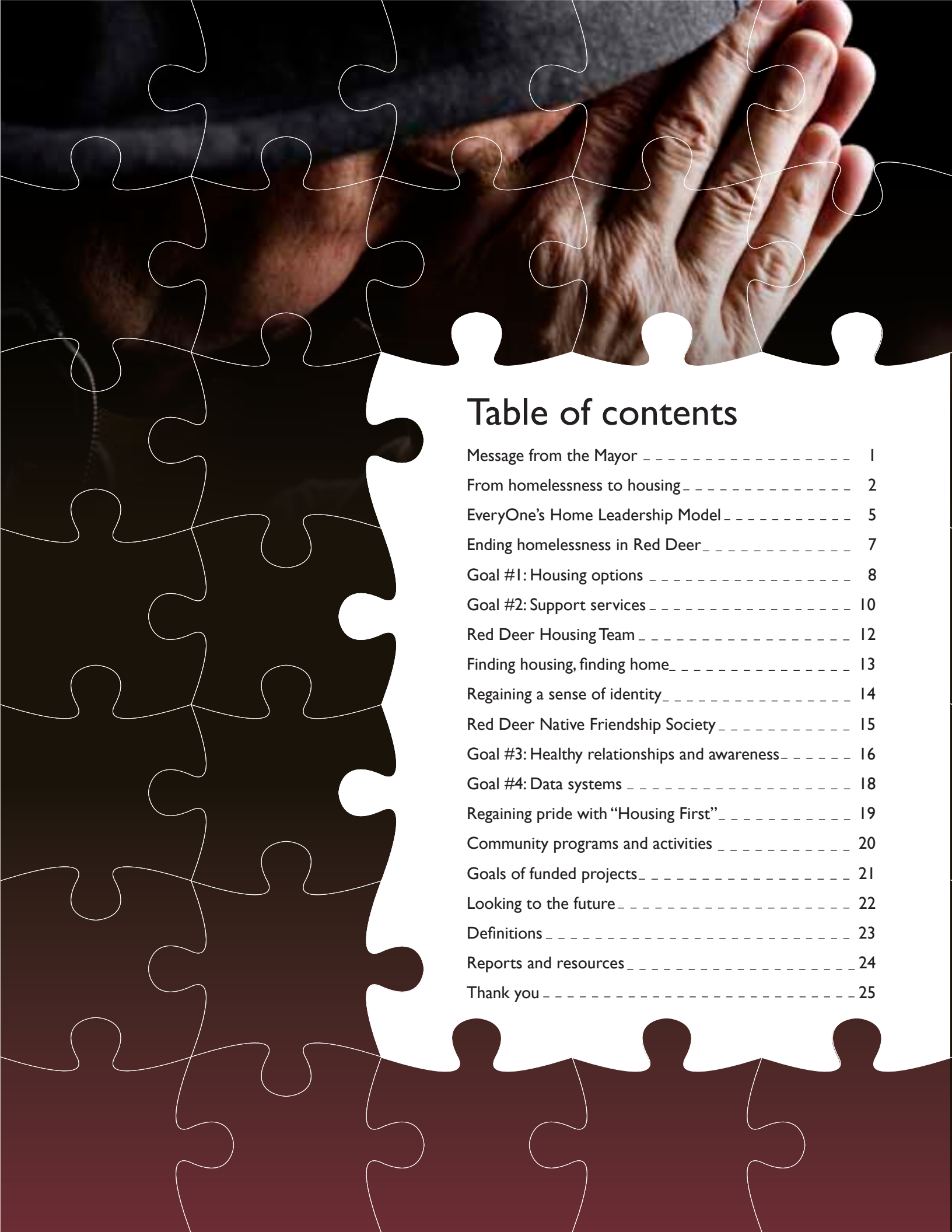


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Message from the Mayor

Mayor Morris Flewwelling on homelessness



It is a great pleasure to reflect each year on the progress we are making as a community in ending homelessness. This field has grown and changed so much over the past decade, and here we are, three years into our five year plan and four years following the launch of our original plan – *EveryOne's Home: Vision and Framework to End Homelessness in Red Deer by 2018*. A significant highlight for me over this past year has been the way in which our community continues to recalculate and adjust to meet changing demands. The EveryOne's Home Leadership Model is fully operational, after some changes in key staff over the past year, and it is providing the necessary framework that continues to bring all the right people to this important community discussion, opening the door for broad community participation in ending homelessness.

This annual report is a wonderful opportunity to share results, stories, and data from the field. We are indeed impacting the lives of those at risk of and those who have experienced homelessness. This is truly an example of what can happen when everyone sets their minds to working toward a common vision – from the frontline workers and staff in our dedicated agencies, the hardworking employees in our City administration, and the fine people supporting this initiative in the provincial and federal departments, to the decision makers on our boards, at Council, and at our senior levels of government. This annual report showcases the progress we're making on the four goals stated in our community five-year plan.

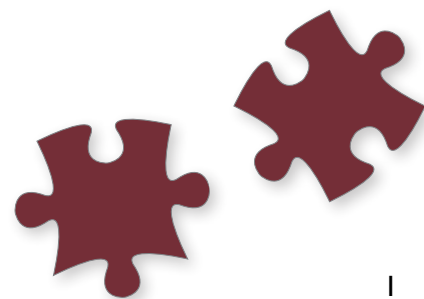
Ending homelessness is clearly a work in progress – and I am so pleased with the progress that we are making. Thank you to all those who roll up their sleeves to make Red Deer the caring place we know it to be – for all.

From April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2012:

133 new individuals were housed through the Outreach and Support Services Initiative (OSSI) grant.

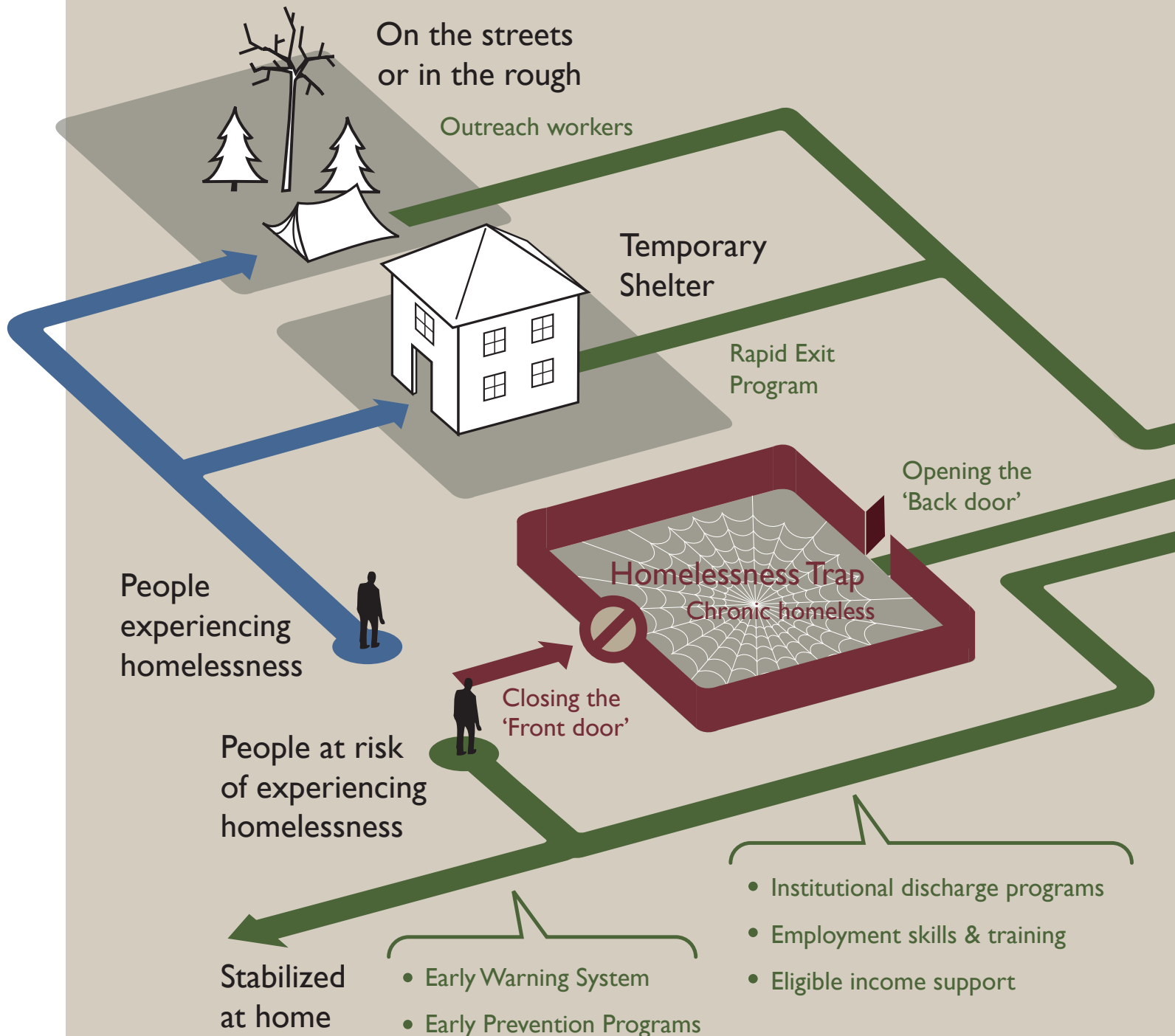
328 individuals and **35 children** were housed or were supported in their housing through the OSSI grant from the Province of Alberta and the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) fund from the Government of Canada.

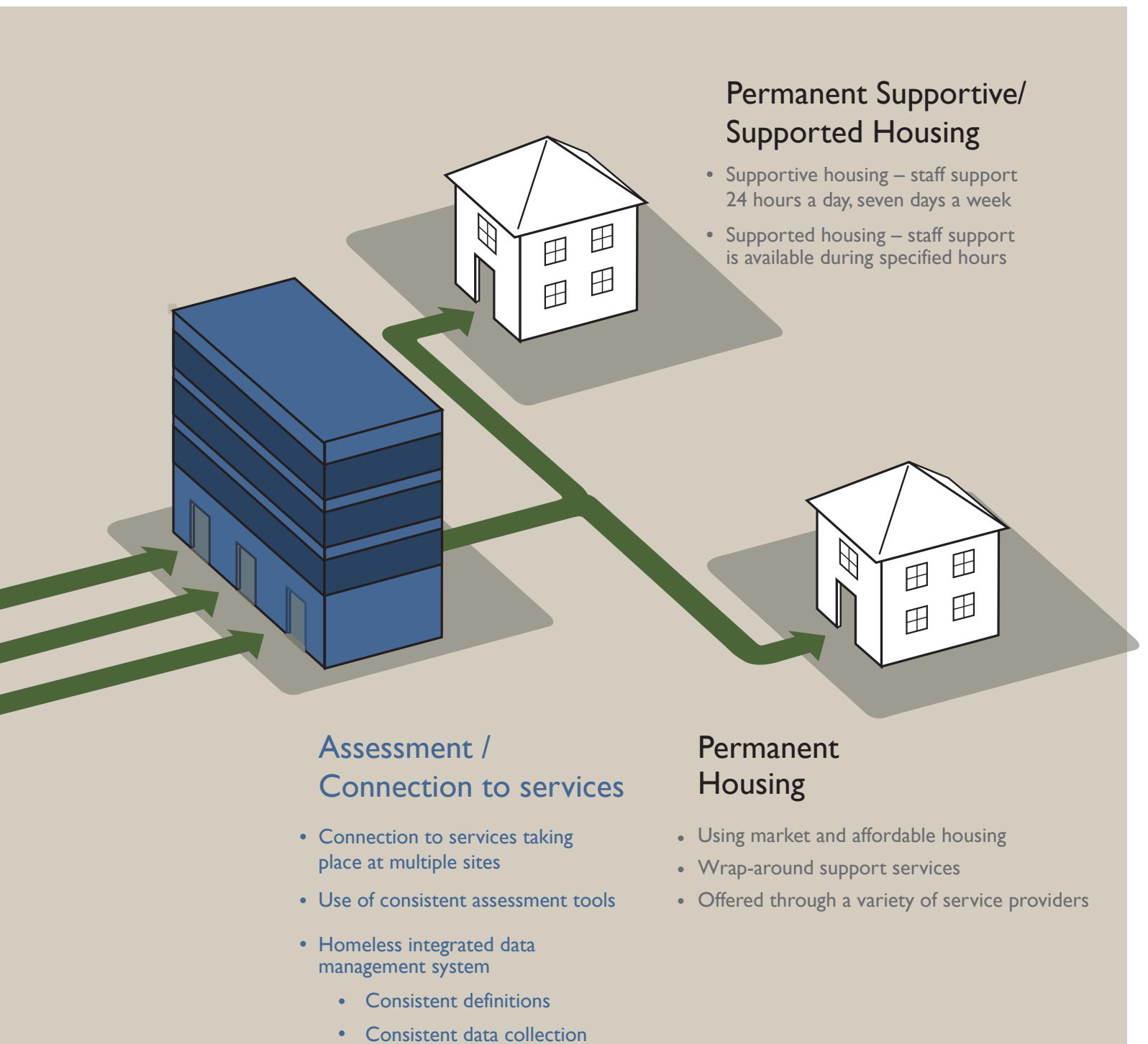
154 youth were sheltered and **4 youth** were supported into appropriate housing through the HPS grant



From homelessness to housing

This graphic was provided courtesy of the Edmonton Homeless Commission. It reflects the mapping processes and goals of the EveryOne's Home Working Groups in Red Deer, and it outlines the scope of our work in moving people from homelessness to safe and secure housing.





Ben is 16 years old, and he lives on the street, sometimes finding shelter in park bushes with other youth. He called Child and Family Services Authority and asked to be taken to the 49th Street Youth Shelter. The on-call social worker responded, and Ben stayed at the shelter for three nights before leaving again. Several weeks later, he returned to the shelter, having made an agreement with his social worker to work on his situation. This time, Ben stayed at the shelter for two nights and then was discharged for being under the influence, as the shelter has strict rules about sobriety. Ben stated that he has a hard time staying in one place and that he likes living on the streets. After several more weeks, he was readmitted to the shelter after he was found sleeping at McDonalds. Once again, this stay lasted for only a couple of nights.

Although Ben struggles with stabilizing at the shelter, he continues to connect with his social worker and to return to the shelter seeking additional support. His stays at the shelter provide him with a safe, supportive environment and a chance to eat nutritious food, wash his clothes, and have a shower.

EveryOne's Home Leadership Model

The EveryOne's Home Leadership Model is not just a theoretical framework, it is a dedicated team of people who are sharing their expertise and working together to tackle the many facets of homelessness in Red Deer.

Throughout this report, you will read about the progress that has been made in the fields of housing and homelessness in the past year. Working groups from the EveryOne's Home Leadership Model have been an essential part of the community progress in these areas. As you read through the report, you will see that we have laid out how these working groups are involved, so you can get a more comprehensive picture of this Red Deer initiative.



The working groups focus on both prevention and response strategies, as indicated below.

Upstream (prevention)

Healthy Relationships: Works to strengthen relationships and build community capacity to support all individuals regardless of age or circumstances

Systems Prevention: Provides research and advocacy that informs policy

Early Intervention: Compiles preventative strategies to identify and support those at risk of homelessness

Downstream (response)

Emergency Assistance: Collaborates regarding crisis response services and frontline services

Housing Options: Supports a "Housing First" model and works to ensure sustainable, affordable housing options

Support: Provides strategies that focus on increasing the capacity of service providers through a collaborative case management model to support and promote quality of life

In addition to these groups, there are two other teams and a coordinator that contribute to the success of the model:

The Leadership Team: Consists of the lead of each working group and the Coordinator of the model. This team ensures efforts and strategies are coordinated and communication between groups is effective and on-going.

The Process Team: Consists of management staff from Red Deer & District Community Foundation and The City of Red Deer Social Planning department that are supporting the successful implementation of the model.

Coordinator: Works closely with all key stakeholders and provides ongoing support to coordinate the efforts of each of the working groups through administration, information sharing, resource identification, and overall capacity building related to the priority areas identified in each respective group.



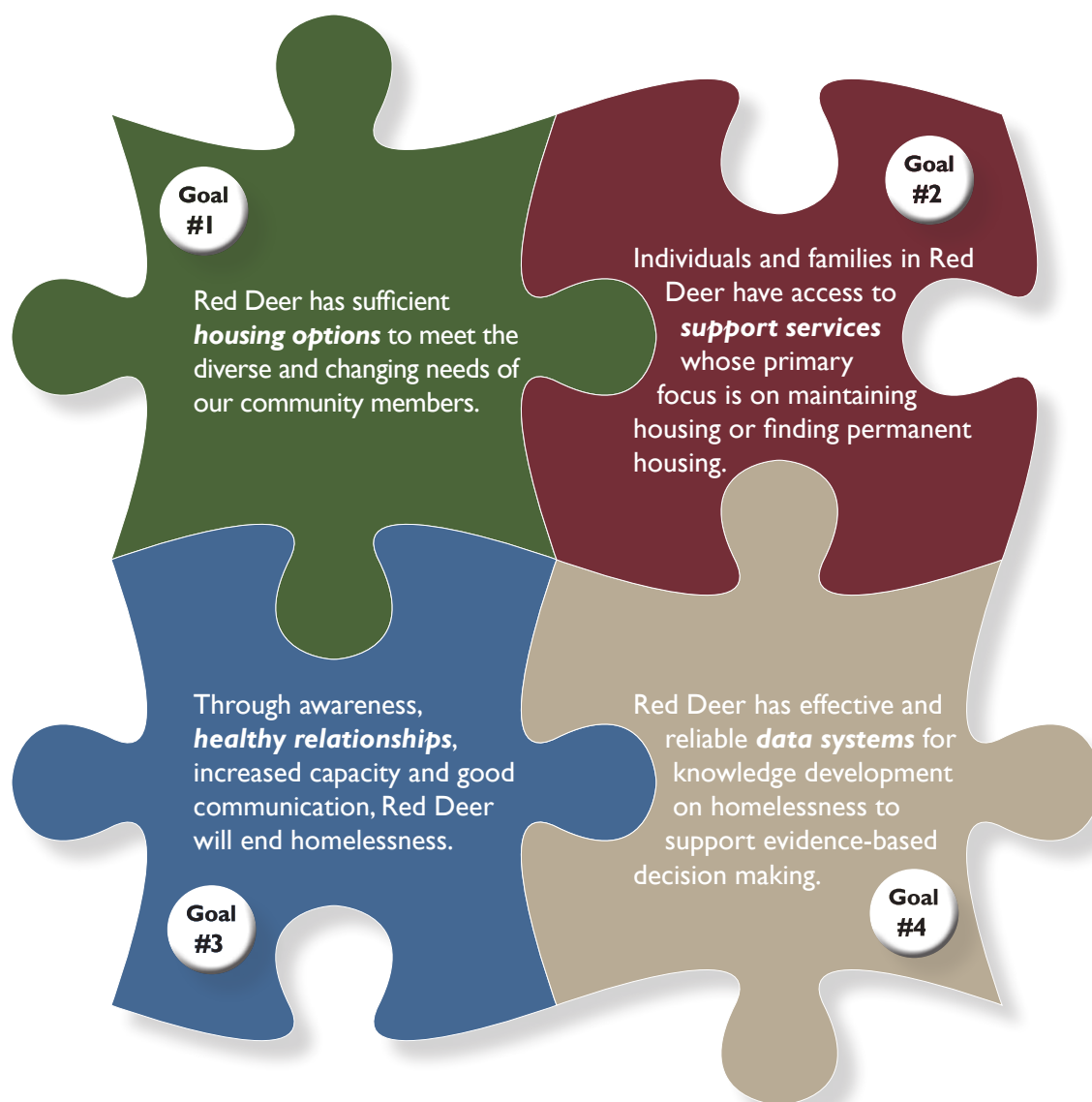
Anna made a brave decision when she decided to leave her partner of several years. It would be alright, she thought, because she and her daughter could sleep on a relative's couch. That solution didn't last long.

When Anna and her daughter left their temporary accommodations, they were just days away from homelessness. Anna had been a stay-at-home mom with few outside contacts, so she felt lost and alone – she didn't know where to turn for help. Then she heard about The Road Home Program.

Through The Road Home, Anna discovered a new support system and learned how to access community resources. She found affordable housing for herself and her daughter, connected with other parents, and returned to the work force. After a few short months, Anna was confident that she could provide a stable environment for her daughter.

Ending homelessness in Red Deer

Red Deer is one of the few communities across Canada that has a 10-year plan to end homelessness. From the broad vision in this major plan, a shorter-term working document is helping to guide the planning process in Red Deer. *Everyone's Home: Red Deer's Five Year Plan Towards Ending Homelessness* focuses on four encompassing goals to end homelessness in the community. Throughout this report, you will read about the progress that Red Deer has made on each of these goals.



“*Canadian cities with plans to end homelessness have already seen marked progress. The Province of Alberta has Canada’s first and only provincial commitment and plan to end homelessness.*”

The Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness

Goal #1 – Red Deer has sufficient housing options to meet the diverse and changing needs of our community members

Progress in the community

The following section describes the progress of the EveryOne's Home Leadership Model working group; this description focuses on the working group's tasks that address goal #1.

The **Housing Options Working Group** has met on a monthly basis to identify strategies and options to best support and increase the inventory of affordable housing stock in Red Deer. Key demographic groups, including single adults, seniors, and young families, have been identified as having the strongest need for affordable housing.

EveryOne's Home Leadership Model

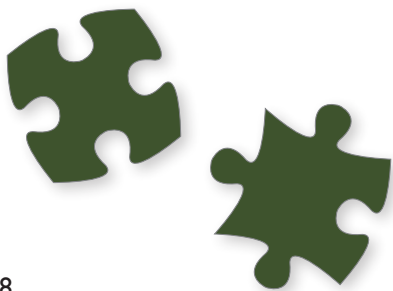
Housing
Options
Working
Group

The group has also been building partnerships with key stakeholders, such as Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). At a meeting in September, a representative from CMHC provided information on its Affordable Housing Initiative, which funds affordable housing projects. In most provinces, CMHC contributes funds to affordable housing, and this dollar amount is matched equally by the provincial governments. In Alberta, the provincial government contributes approximately \$3.50 for every dollar from CMHC, demonstrating the large monetary commitment that our province has made to housing.

In March of 2012, the Housing Options Working Group met with the City's Planning and Social Planning departments to learn more about land use and policies in Red Deer. At this informational session, the group learned about the *Strategic Implementation Design Charter*, with a specific focus on the "Outcomes, Land Use and Full Spectrum Affordable Housing" strategy. From the information gained at this meeting, the working group is better equipped to offer stakeholders and decision-makers advice on housing options for the future.

“An affordable and secure home provides a stable foundation from which individuals, communities, and Canada as a whole can prosper. Without an affordable, suitable home, individuals and families, especially youth, cannot hope to realize their full education and development potential.”

Canadian Housing and Renewal Association



Funded projects

The following projects are supported through grants that flow through The City of Red Deer from either the Province of Alberta's Outreach and Support Services Initiative (OSSI) grant or from the Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) grant.

Canadian Mental Health Association – Buffalo “Housing First” Program: A “housing first” program where sobriety is not a condition to accessing housing. The program is located in a 39-unit apartment complex in downtown Red Deer. The tenants are individuals who have lived on the streets and may have addictions, mental illness, or other disabilities: they have had trouble finding and maintaining housing in the past. Tenants have access to staff 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This housing is termed “permanent supportive housing.”

~ 49 adults received housing at the Buffalo from April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2012 ~

Central Alberta Safe Harbour Society for Health & Housing

- **Supported Housing Recovery Program:** Safe Harbour Society owns five housing units, with space for 20 individuals who have a history of homelessness and now have the goal of living a sober lifestyle. The use of drugs or alcohol in the homes is not allowed nor is returning to the housing unit while under the influence. Each tenant has a caseworker who supports the tenant with his or her individual housing plan. This housing is termed “permanent supported housing.”

~ 25 adults received housing/support through this program from April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2012 ~

- **Harbour House:** This “housing first” program is located in a residential area and sobriety is not a condition to accessing housing. Tenants at Harbour House have lived on the street for a period of time and, because of mental illness, addictions, or other disabilities, they have challenges with successfully living in mainstream and/or independent community housing. Tenants in the eight units share common areas and a kitchen, and they have access to staff assistance 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This housing is termed “permanent supportive housing.”

~ 11 adults received housing through this program from April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2012 ~

A look at the terminology:

Permanent supportive housing is an intensive model of housing and services. The support services are linked to the housing itself. The delivery model incorporates support services in the operations of the housing and staff members usually work in the facility to provide support to residents 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Permanent supported housing refers to regular housing with supports, where the supports are not linked to the housing itself. The delivery model allows for support services to be provided by one agency that is separate from the operations, that is serving the entire building, with no support service staff members on-site. In other instances, a range of support services specific to each tenant in the building is provided, without staffing on-site for eight or more hours per day.

(Definitions adapted from The Province of Alberta)

Goal #2 – Individuals and families in Red Deer have access to support services whose primary focus is on maintaining housing or finding permanent housing.

Progress in the community

The following sections describe the progress of the EveryOne's Home Leadership Model working groups; these descriptions focus on the working groups' tasks that address goal #2.

The initial meeting of the **Systems Prevention Working Group** led to a discussion on discharge planning, a critical element to ensure individuals are not discharged into homelessness. This planning focuses on discharge from all public systems, including hospitals, justice, and mental health facilities. Individuals who are discharged may have a wide range of ongoing needs, so it is essential to engage in systemic planning that involves health care, corrections, immigration, aboriginal agencies, police, probation services, and senior-serving agencies.

EveryOne's Home
Leadership Model

Systems
Prevention
Working
Group

In January, the group began a mapping process to examine key discharge points, including the strengths and gaps in services, which would help them to identify better coordination processes. Discussions have focused on facilities in Red Deer, Ponoka, and Bowden.

The group has been working with Alberta Human Services – Family Violence Prevention and Homeless Supports. Through this connection, the working group is striving to ensure the current structure gives local issues a formal line of communication to the provincial government; this will help to ensure shared accountability for these local topics, which relate to broader systemic issues.

The **Emergency Assistance Working Group** completed a mapping project of people's journeys from shelter to permanent housing. This project examined why people use shelters, identified programs and services currently in place, and looked at the challenges and gaps that prevent individuals from establishing and maintaining stable housing. The group also analyzed the types of shelters currently being used and the types still needed in the community.

EveryOne's Home
Leadership Model

Emergency
Assistance
Working
Group

The working group is striving to attain goals established in *A Plan for Alberta: Ending Homelessness in 10 Years*. One goal states that individuals should access emergency shelters for a maximum of 21 days; another goal is to provide the required supports to individuals and services agencies to ensure citizens are moved toward suitable and permanent housing. Family Violence Prevention and Homeless Supports has been liaising with the group to learn about local concerns and priorities. This collaboration will assist the working group to connect the priorities in Red Deer with the broader provincial goals to end homelessness.

Progress in the community (continued)

The **Early Intervention Working Group** has engaged in broad conversations around the large scope of early intervention and prevention opportunities. The group met with representatives from key identified groups and community stakeholders and reviewed the work happening in the other EveryOne's Home working groups. After this analysis, the working group decided to begin by collaborating with the school systems to ensure seamless access to supports and services; they also looked at ways to address the barriers and disputes that put people at risk of becoming homeless.

EveryOne's Home
Leadership Model

Early
Intervention
Working
Group

In the future, the group will continue to collaborate with organizations and agencies to address several areas, including gaps in services, building capacity to support individuals, and responding effectively to the risk factors individuals present.

Funded projects

The following projects are supported through grants that flow through The City of Red Deer from either the Province of Alberta's Outreach and Support Services Initiative (OSSI) grant or from the Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) grant.

Family Services of Central Alberta – The Road Home: This program supports parents who are expecting and/or have children under the age of six and who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The program offers group educational sessions, as well as one-on-one support and assistance through an outreach worker.

~ 20 adults and 35 children were provided services from April 1, 2011 to September 30, 2011 ~

Red Deer Youth & Volunteer Centre – Youth Winter Inn & Community Supports:

This project has two components: 1) providing emergency accommodations for up to 10 youth aged 14 to 17 years old during the winter months, and 2) assisting youth who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless to develop a plan for housing stability. The project assists youth to reconnect with their families or to find stable housing. (Note: additional funding for the Winter Inn project was received through Child and Family Services Authority.)

~ 154 youth accessed Youth Winter Inn & Community Supports from April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2012
– four youth were supported into appropriate housing ~

“One third of Canada's homeless population is between 16 to 24 years old;
this equals approximately 65,000 young people without a place to call home.”

Raising the Roof

Red Deer Housing Team

Red Deer Housing Team (RDHT) incorporates a multi-faceted approach to ending homelessness in the community. The work done by RDHT aligns with Goal #2, described on the previous pages.

The chart to the right demonstrates the four main areas of focus for the team, starting with the Centralized Intake process.

Centralized Intake begins when staff engage individuals to determine if the programs are appropriate for their needs. If the individual or family does not meet the eligibility criteria, they are supported with a list of community resources, as well as a list of affordable accommodations, which is updated weekly. During Centralized Intake, staff also complete the initial Service Prioritization Determination Assessment Tool (SPDAT); individuals are then referred to the appropriate program, such as the RDHT Housing First Program or the RDHT Prevention Program. When there is a vacancy, individuals may also be referred to the Buffalo Housing First Program or to Harbour House.

RDHT Housing First Program assists individuals or families who have a history of chronic or episodic homelessness. The program supports clients to find appropriate housing, furniture, and household goods. As part of the program, the client will agree to work on being a good tenant, have regular visits from a case manager and, where possible, arrange direct rent payments from his or her income source. The case manager supports the client in maintaining housing and securing an income source.

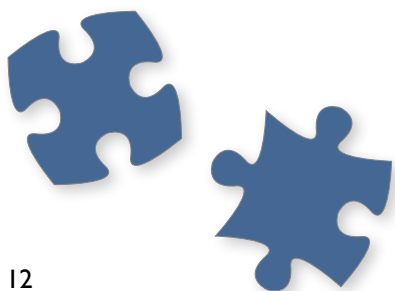
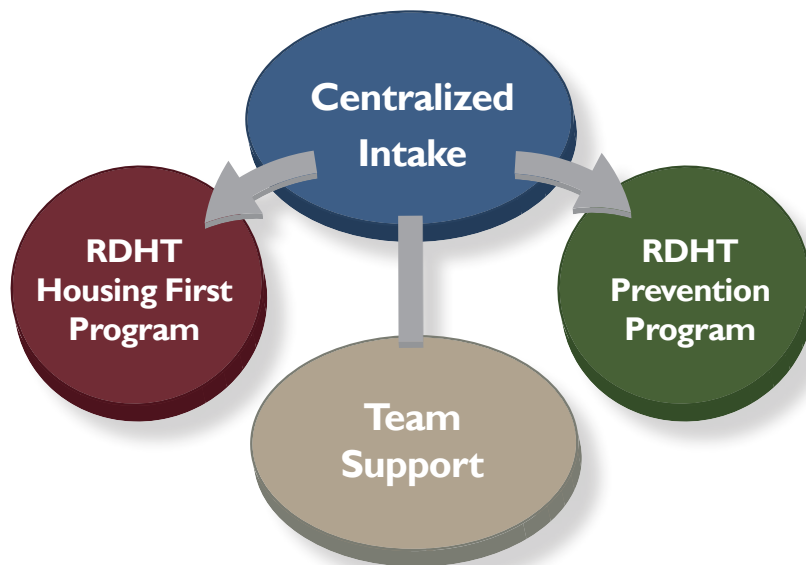
~ 175 adults were supported to find housing or to retain their housing from April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2012. ~
(Note: children are not included in this number.)

RDHT Prevention Program assists individuals or families who cannot access other services; they are helped to prevent an eviction or receive assistance to be rapidly re-housed. Through this program, staff negotiate with landlords to identify options, such as an orderly repayment of rent arrears, access funds for arrears, or access funds for extreme cleaning services. If individuals and families need assistance to retain accommodations once they are housed, case management could be provided for up to six months.

~ 18 adults received supports and either maintained their housing or moved into new housing from January 1, 2012 to March 31, 2012. ~
(Note: children are not included in this number.)

Team Support is essential for both programs and is possible through two staff positions.

- **Service Coordinator** is responsible for overseeing the team processes, ensuring the team is supporting the intended population, and providing high-quality service.
- **Housing Locator** is responsible for developing and nourishing relationships with landlords while also identifying affordable rental accommodations and assisting individuals/families with completing lease agreements. This individual is also responsible for developing a weekly list of affordable accommodations, which is shared with partner agencies and other interested organizations in the community.



Finding housing, finding home

Trina came to the Red Deer Housing Team after a roommate took all her money and left her with nothing. Two days before Christmas, through the help of the housing team, she was housed in her own apartment.

Trina had many barriers, including MS, multiple personality disorder, and more. She had many falls in her apartment and found herself outside a few times with no memory of what had happened. Trina and her case worker identified and worked toward several important goals, including reconnecting Trina with her family, connecting her with Life Line, and getting her on AISH. The case worker noted that Trina didn't seem to be doing very well on her own, so they did some investigating and found a group home that seemed suitable. When Trina went to look at it, she liked the people who ran it. She moved in immediately and was successfully exited from the housing program.

Recently, her former case worker called to see how she was doing and found that Trina had reconnected with her family – one of her original goals. She had moved out of the group home and was living with her family, due to her deteriorating health. Trina expressed that she's happy to be back at home, and she thanked her case worker for all of the hard work and support she provided.

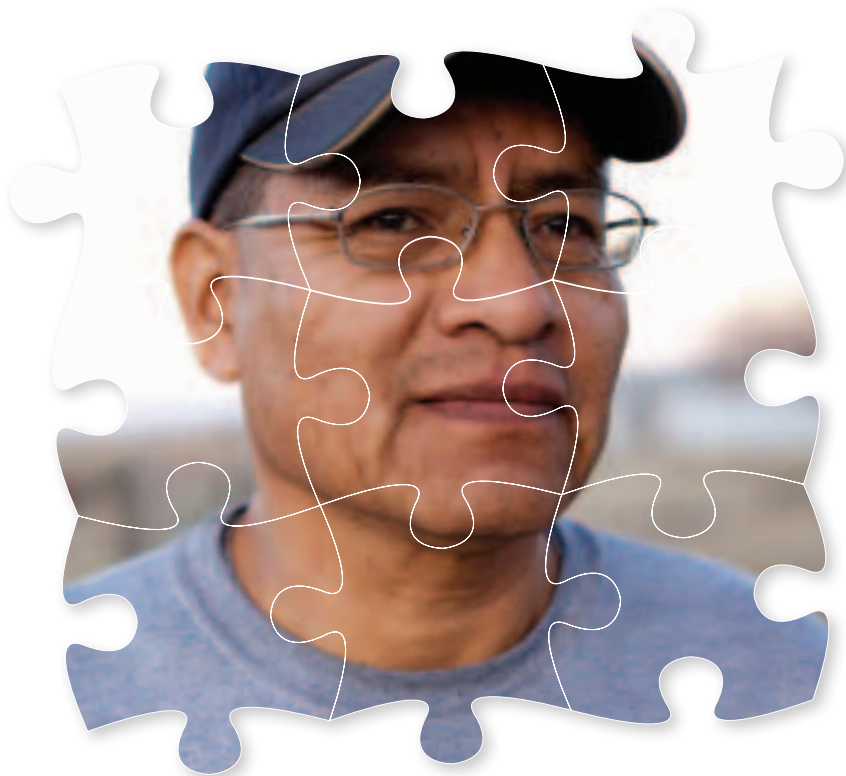


Regaining a sense of identity

When Thomas, an Aboriginal man in his early 50s, was released from Bowden Institution after five years, he had no identification, no income, and nowhere to stay. Thomas ended up in a shelter – in this case, People's Place. A few days after coming to Red Deer, Thomas walked into the Red Deer Native Friendship Centre and he and the housing outreach worker began working together. Thomas identified his first priority as getting some ID, followed by finding a job and a place to live. For the first two weeks after his release from prison, Thomas spent every day at the Friendship Centre, telling the staff there that being there grounded him. The case worker had conversations with him about what success would look like for him, and helped him to identify his stressors and how he would deal with them. With the help of the program, Thomas had acquired a birth certificate within two weeks.

Thomas was motivated to find a job; within three weeks he had found full-time work. He continued to stay at the shelter until, through conversations with other individuals, he found a lead on a place to live. The Aboriginal Housing Outreach Project was able to help him with the damage deposit.

Thomas is still housed and employed full-time, and continues to attend the Wellbriety group; he will be starting in September with the men's drum group at the Native Friendship Centre. He stated that getting his birth certificate was the key to helping him move forward.



Red Deer Native Friendship Society

Red Deer Native Friendship Society has a holistic approach to ending homelessness for Aboriginal people in the community. The approach is centred on the Medicine Wheel teachings and involves access to Elder support, both of which address all aspects of a person's mind, body, spirit, and heart.



The following two funded projects incorporate all four components of well-being based on the Medicine Wheel; the projects also align with goal #2, which states that individuals and families in Red Deer have access to support services whose primary focus is on maintaining housing or finding permanent housing. People are referred to these projects based on their specific needs, as determined by the intake assessment.



New Beginnings Aboriginal Housing Project

works with individuals or families who have a history of episodic homelessness and want to engage in a sober lifestyle. The SPDAT tool is used in the assessment process; the project then supports clients to find appropriate housing. The project expectations are that the client will agree to work on being a good tenant, have regular visits from a case manager and, where possible, arrange direct rent payments from his or her income source. An Elder also supports the client in obtaining their goals.

~ 9 adults were supported to find housing or retain their housing from April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2012. ~
(Note: children are not counted in this number.)

Aboriginal Outreach Housing Project

provides support to individuals who are at risk of becoming homeless or who have recently become homeless. The project completes a cultural and holistic assessment to identify specific needs, ensuring the person or family receives resources and support that address their root causes of homelessness. The SPDAT tool is used in the assessment process. The outreach worker then designs a housing plan with each client; the Aboriginal resource worker provides culturally relevant awareness and education to the client. The project provides weekly half-day sessions on Aboriginal transition life skills.

~ 21 adults received supports and either maintained their housing or moved into new housing from January 1, 2012 to March 31, 2012. ~
(Note: children are not counted in this number.)

“From an Indigenous perspective, housing stability of formerly homeless people is a starting point from which Indigenous people can get onto the path of *miyo pimâtisiwin*, the good life – a journey of healing into balance between physical, emotional, mental and spiritual aspects of self in relationship with other beings.”

Blue Quills First Nations College



Goal #3 – Through awareness, healthy relationships, increased capacity, and good communication, Red Deer will end homelessness.

Progress in the community

The following section describes the progress of the EveryOne's Home Leadership Model working group; this description focuses on the working group's tasks that address goal #3.

The **Healthy Relationships Group** desires to put a face to homelessness in our community, to reduce the stigma associated with homelessness, and to improve the public perception of those who are experiencing homelessness. The ultimate goal is to increase caring and awareness of local citizens; community engagement has been identified as an essential vehicle to reach this goal.

EveryOne's Home
Leadership Model

Healthy
Relationships
Working
Group

Over the past year, community engagement has been achieved using the Poverty Awareness Wheel, which uses a game format and a variety of scenarios to educate the general public on topics pertaining to homelessness. In the future, the working group is planning to organize larger-scale events, with tentative plans for a public awareness event in the fall of 2012.

To provide information and build community, a new website, Facebook page, and Twitter account have been developed. A Google map with an inventory tool has also been established for the public to access local services.

The group explored the possibility of a 24 x 7 phone line for homeless individuals but, since the province has expressed a commitment to set up and launch a 2-1-1 line in the spring of 2013, a local phone line will not be established in Red Deer.

“A good home is critical to allow people to fully participate in the economic, social, and cultural lives of their community and their country.”

Precarious Housing in Canada Strategy

Funded projects

The following project is supported through a grant from the Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) grant.

Red Deer & District Community Foundation – Working Together Towards Ending Homelessness – EveryOne's Home Leadership Model: The coordinator position within the leadership model serves as an internal resource to the six working groups described throughout this report. The coordinator also strives to raise awareness among the larger community through provision and distribution of documents, electronic media, and presentations.

This project received Government of Canada funding starting on January 1, 2012; the model was operating with a different funding source prior to that date.

Help to fund a solution

The Stephen & Laura Laird Fund or the "Lasal Social Housing Field of Interest Fund" was established in 2006 with the objective of housing human beings in a decent, respectful, and dignified way. Stephen, himself, is a formerly homeless person, and he and his wife wanted to give something meaningful back to others in the community.

The Lairds established the fund and now it's up to the community to keep it going and growing. Donations to the fund will help to support housing initiatives, qualified organizations, and programs. The fund may also support other facets of housing, including property ownership/management, land banks/trusts, housing co-operatives, or any other appropriate means to help alleviate the housing shortage in Red Deer.

If you are interested in donating to this fund, please visit Red Deer & District Community Foundation.

“Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age, or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.”

Article 25(1), United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, 1948

Goal #4 – Red Deer has effective and reliable data systems for knowledge development on homelessness to support evidence-based decision making.

Progress in the community

The following section describes the data collection processes, as well as the consultations and evaluations undertaken within the scope of goal #4.

The Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) database is used by all programs that receive funding from The City of Red Deer Community Housing Advisory Board through the Provincial Outreach and Support Services Initiative (OSSI) grant. Four agencies currently employ this system for all data collection. This database contains a case management function; significant work occurred in the spring of 2012 to customize this function to the needs and purposes of the local agencies. A system was set up based on “The Model of Change” to record the client’s growth as they work through their own goals.

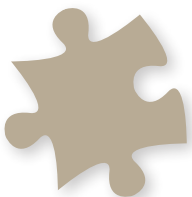
The consistent use of one database was identified as a priority to enhance client service, whether a client is best-served by Provincial OSSI funding or by Federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) funding. As such, The City of Red Deer received permission to add a “Prevention” component to the ETO database. This component protects the privacy of clients while allowing case workers to search the database to see if clients are already involved in other programs. This new, streamlined process effectively utilizes the database to provide more client-centred services.

This is the first step in establishing a central, integrated data management system linking agencies that provide housing and supports. In the future, the goal is to link more agencies into this system – even agencies and supports that do not receive funding through The City of Red Deer.

As part of The City of Red Deer’s best practices, an evaluation process is built into the funded programs. A consultant was hired to conduct evaluations on projects that are funded through the Community Housing Advisory Board. The following evaluations were completed by September of 2011.

- Buffalo “Housing First”
- Coordinated Community Outreach Team

Due to the tremendous growth and changes that have occurred with Red Deer Housing Team, The City of Red Deer has hired a consultant to complete a process evaluation on this project in the fall of 2012.



“Fifty percent of street youth come from middle and upper-class homes.”

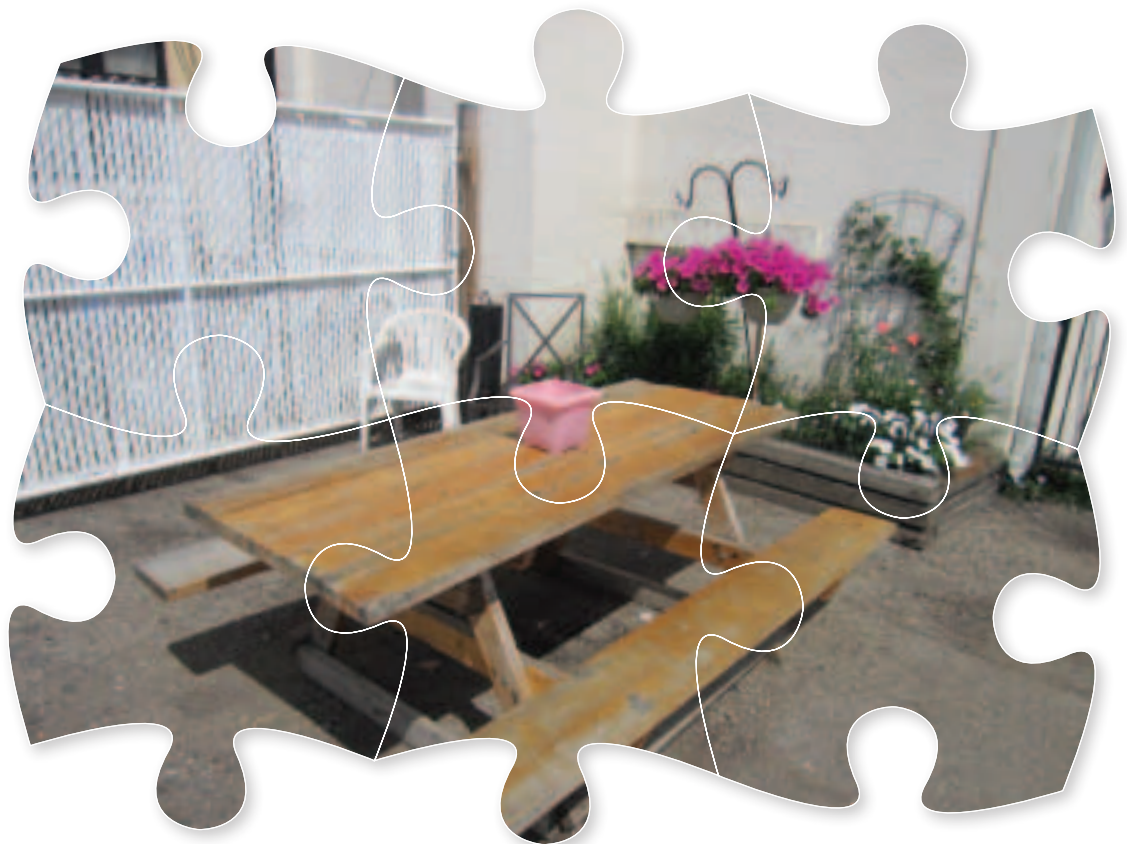
Raising the Roof

Regaining pride with “Housing First”

When the Buffalo “Housing First” program began, a picnic table was placed in the graveled courtyard outside the back door. Although flowers were planted in an attempt to make the space inviting, the flowerbeds were mistreated and the area quickly became unkempt with litter. For a time, the picnic table had to be replaced about every two weeks: it was lit on fire, carved on, and broken.

As residents adjusted to their new living quarters, however, behaviours began to shift. The place they were staying had become a home and, with that, the outdoor area became a place they congregated, a place they felt responsible for. Now, the picnic table gets worn out through use. The flowers are lovingly tended by residents, and the bed is adorned with a plaque that says “Welcome to our garden.”

The Buffalo picnic table area is a testament to how the same human behaviours and needs apply to everyone – once the formerly homeless residents of the Buffalo had stable housing, their desire bloomed to make it a home, to make it a place they could take pride of ownership in.



Community programs and activities

Working groups that support goals from the five year plan

Goal
#1

Housing Options Working Group

Goal
#2

Systems Prevention, Emergency Assistance & Early Intervention Working Groups

Goal
#3

Healthy Relationships Working Group

Community organizations, programs and activities that support housing, homelessness initiatives and vulnerable populations

- Abundant Safe Living House
- Art from the Streets
- CAANS – Night Reach
- Catholic Social Services – Settlement Services
- High Risk Youth Coalition
- Loaves & Fishes
- Parkland Youth Homes – P.O.W.E.R. Youth Initiative
- Parkland Youth Homes – Street Ties
- Police & Crisis Team (PACT)
- Potter's Hands Ministries – Soup Kitchen & Housing
- Primary Care Network – Street Nurse Clinic
- Red Deer Food Bank
- Schizophrenia Society
- Shining Mountains Living Community Services

Note: This list includes organizations, programs and activities not previously mentioned in this report.

A recap of the goals:

Goal
#1

Red Deer has sufficient housing options to meet the diverse and changing needs of our community members.

Goal
#2

Individuals and families in Red Deer have access to support services whose primary focus is on maintaining housing or finding permanent housing.

Goal
#3

Through awareness, healthy relationships, increased capacity and good communication Red Deer will end homelessness.

Goal
#4

Red Deer has effective and reliable data systems for knowledge development on homelessness to support evidence-based decision making.

Goals of funded projects

Achieving goals from the five year plan

Canadian Mental Health Association – Buffalo “Housing First”	\$653,361 – OSSI	Goal #1
Central Alberta Safe Harbour Society for Health & Housing – Harbour House	\$433,277 – OSSI	Goal #1
Central Alberta Safe Harbour Society for Health & Housing – Supported Recovery Housing	\$38,334 – HPS/ \$128,263 – OSSI	Goal #1 Goal #2
Central Alberta Safe Harbour Society for Health & Housing – Winter Inn	\$110,000 – OSSI	Goal #2 Goal #3
Central Alberta Women’s Outreach Society & the Red Deer Housing Team	\$32,843 – HPS/ \$908,398 – OSSI	Goal #1 Goal #2
Family Services of Central Alberta – “The Road Home”	\$20,608 – HPS	Goal #2
Red Deer & District Community Foundation: EveryOne’s Home Leadership Model Coordinator	\$19,489 – HPS	Goal #1 Goal #2 Goal #3 Goal #4
Red Deer Native Friendship Society – Aboriginal Housing Outreach Project – New Beginnings Aboriginal Housing	\$32,087 – HPS/ \$88,457 – OSSI	Goal #2
Red Deer Youth & Volunteer Centre	\$59,946 – HPS	Goal #2

From April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2012, The City of Red Deer allocated:

\$2,316,756 through the Outreach and Support Services Initiative (OSSI) grant from the Province of Alberta.

\$203,307 through the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) fund from the Government of Canada.

Looking to the future

Staying the course

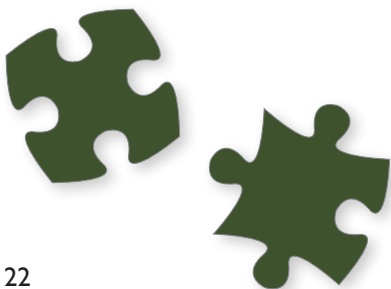
The community of Red Deer will continue to address homelessness and to develop affordable housing units.

A few of the 2012 – 2013 initiatives:

- The City of Red Deer and Red Deer & District Community Foundation plan to hire a consultant to organize a Point in Time Homelessness Count in the fall of 2012
- More services will be created to support youth to access appropriate housing and services
- A shelter triage project will be funded and established
- Urban Aboriginal Voices Initiative is establishing a housing working circle
- Connections to the newly established Provincial Interagency Council on Homelessness will be formed
- Housing First programs will continue in the community through the following initiatives:
 - Buffalo “Housing First”
 - Harbour House
 - Supportive Housing Recovery Program
 - The Red Deer Housing Team
 - New Beginnings Aboriginal Housing Project
- Each of the EveryOne’s Home Working Groups will continue their work to address housing and homelessness in Red Deer
- The City of Red Deer plans to develop an affordable housing strategy document
- New affordable housing units are being built on the former Coronation Hotel Site
- New affordable housing units are being built through the Piper Creek Foundation
- The City of Red Deer received four acres of land from the Province of Alberta; this land is intended for affordable Aboriginal housing

“Don’t ever forget that you’re a citizen of this world, and there are things you can do to lift the human spirit; things that are easy, things that are free, things you can do every day. Civility, respect, kindness, character.”

Aaron Sorkin



Definitions

Understanding homelessness

Affordable Housing: Housing is considered affordable when the cost of adequate and suitable shelter does not exceed 30% of the household income (before taxes). Citizens who pay more than this amount are spending too much on housing – they may be unable to afford their other needs.

Chronic Homelessness: Those who have either been continuously homeless for a year or more, or have had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years. In order to be considered chronically homeless, a person must have been sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation (e.g., living on the streets) and/or in an emergency homeless shelter.

Episodic Homelessness: A person who is homeless for less than a year and has fewer than four episodes of homelessness in the past three years.

Homelessness (excerpt of Canadian Definition of Homelessness): Homelessness describes a range of housing and shelter circumstances, with people being absolutely homeless at one end, and experiencing housing exclusion (being precariously or inadequately housed) at the other. Homelessness encompasses a range of physical living situations, organized here in a **typology** that includes:

- 1) **Unsheltered**, or absolutely homeless and living on the streets or in places not intended for human habitation;
- 2) **Emergency Sheltered**, including those staying in overnight shelters for people who are homeless, as well as Violence Against Women shelters;
- 3) **Provisionally Accommodated**, referring to those whose accommodation is temporary and who do not have their own home or security of tenure, and finally,
- 4) **At risk of homelessness**, referring to people who are 'at risk' of homelessness, and whose current economic and/or housing situation is precarious or does not meet public health and safety standards. It should be noted that for many people homelessness is not a static state but rather a fluid experience, where one's shelter circumstances and options may shift and change quite dramatically and with frequency.

(For the complete definition, visit: www.homelesshub.ca/CHRNhomelessdefinition.)

Housing First: Housing First is a client-centred approach that holds to the belief that before someone can break the cycle of homelessness, a safe and secure home is necessary with support services readily available. Housing First places priority on providing affordable, safe, and permanent housing quickly, with minimal requirements beyond a standard lease agreement. Services, such as medication support, drug or alcohol treatment, and counselling are available as needed, but are not pre-requisites for Housing First.

Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (SPDAT): SPDAT uses 15 dimensions to determine an acuity score that will help inform professionals about the following:

- People who will benefit most from Housing First or Rapid Re-Housing programs
- People who are most likely to end their own homelessness with little to no intervention
- Which areas of the person's life can be the initial focus of attention in the case management relationship to improve housing stability
- How individuals and families are changing over time as a result of the case management process

Reports and resources on housing and homelessness

Reports & plans

All research reports, past community reports, and plans relating to housing and homelessness in Red Deer are available at:

- www.reddeer.ca/City+Government/City+Services+and+Departments/Social+Planning/Reports+and+Publications/default.htm
- <http://reddeeranddistrictcommunityfoundation.ca/initiatives/ending-homelessness-initiative/>

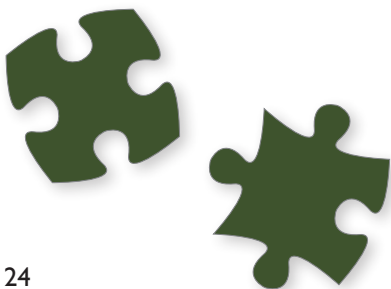
A Plan for Alberta: Ending Homelessness in 10 Years, prepared by the Alberta Secretariat for Action on Homelessness, may be found at:

- <http://alberta.ca/albertacode/images/AlbertaPlantoEndHomelessness.pdf>

Additional resources

Further resources on housing and homelessness are available at:

- Alberta Municipal Affairs – <http://municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca/housing.cfm>
- Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness – <http://www.caeh.ca/>
- Canadian Definition of Homelessness – www.homelesshub.ca/CHRNhomelessnessdefinition
- Canadian Housing & Renewal Association (CHRA) – <http://www.chra-achru.ca/en>
- EveryOne's Home – <http://www.everyoneshome.ca/>
- Habitat for Humanity Red Deer – <http://www.habitatreddeer.ca>
- National Aboriginal Housing Association – <http://www.aboriginalhousing.org>
- Raising the Roof – <http://www.raisingtheroof.org>
- The 7 Cities on Housing and Homelessness – <http://www.7cities.ca/#!/home/mainPage>
- The Homeless Hub – www.homelesshub.ca
- United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues – <http://social.un.org/index/IndigenousPeoples.aspx>



Thank you

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Early Intervention Working Group

Gordon Wright, John Howard Society
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Red Deer Housing Team

Red Deer & District Community Foundation

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Downtown Red Deer Business Association
Walter Lidster, Family Services of Central Alberta
The Generations Project
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Red Deer Loaves and Fishes
Red Deer Housing Authority

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Red Deer Advocate	Red Deer Express
Big 105.5	CKGY

Please note: All efforts have been made to acknowledge everyone in the community who has supported this work. Please accept our sincere apologies if any individuals have been missed.

For more information on The City of Red Deer housing and homelessness initiatives, visit www.reddeer.ab.ca/socialplanning.

Additional information on Red Deer & District Community Foundation is available at <http://reddeeranddistrictcommunityfoundation.ca>.

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