Greater Sudbury's Roadmap to Ending Homelessness

May 2024

Homelessness Initiatives

Initiatives en matière de sans-abrisme

Homelessness Initiatives

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

On September 26, 2023, City Council passed a motion that directed Community Development staff to draft a strategy to provide a roadmap to end homelessness in Greater Sudbury by 2030, which includes financial and staffing requirements to transition services from temporary shelters to transitional and permanent housing. This report outlines the current homelessness system within Greater Sudbury and recommendations to reach functional zero homelessness by 2030, through a housing first approach.

In 2023, 146 individuals experiencing homelessness were housed through the By-Name List despite the current challenges in the rental market detailed in this report. A reduction of landlords participating in rent supplement agreements through social/community housing, a 36 per cent decrease in the number of people housed each year through urgent status from 2018, the lowest rental market vacancy rate the city has observed in the past 10 years, a two-fold increase in the length of time to become housed through urgent status since 2021, and the loss of various affordable housing units in the downtown core, among other factors, have amounted to significant challenges for individuals experiencing homelessness to obtain housing, even with significant efforts and supports provided through the homelessness-serving sector.

Over the past five years, there have been several short-term investments through provincial and federal funding in passive services, including warming centres, outreach services, emergency shelters and encampment strategies, that "manage" the homelessness situation rather than end it. In consultation with experts in the field across Canada and through local observations, the investment in passive services rather than active services (e.g., prevention services, provision of community housing, housing first supports, etc.) creates a bottleneck of persons entering homelessness with a lack of opportunities to become housed. Through the community consultation completed to inform the development of this report, persons with lived experience of homelessness highlighted the importance and need for additional investments in housing to end homelessness in Greater Sudbury.

> "To end homelessness by 2030, a key target should be to shift expenditure to active services – e.g., prevention services/provision of social housing/Housing First, etc. that effectively prevent homelessness in the first instance, ensuring that the use of emergency shelter accommodation is rare and brief, with the provision of secure affordable tenancies[i]."

However, the municipality cannot end homelessness on its own. Ending homelessness requires commitment and significant investment from all levels of government (i.e., federal, provincial and municipal) and coordination across ministries, including housing, health, corrections, income support and employment sectors. The continued support and collaboration from Indigenous partners and community agencies who work tirelessly to support our unhoused population is a significant factor in the success of achieving functional zero. Ending homelessness requires a complete system transformation to ensure there is access to housing for all citizens and adequate supports available to maintain housing when needed.

Throughout this report, there are several recommendations to increase access to housing for individuals experiencing homelessness, as evidence highlights that the provision of sufficient affordable and secure housing significantly decreases the number of households who will experience homelessness, and ensures the experience is brief for those who become homeless[i]. However, it is important to note that every individual experiencing homelessness has a right to choose and is not required to accept housing or support services, which may impact the success of functional zero. The homelessness-serving sector utilizes a recovery-oriented approach, that recovery is possible for everyone, and continues to engage with individuals until a time when they are ready to accept such services.

To meet a functional end to homelessness in Greater Sudbury, the estimated costs through federal, provincial and municipal investments are approximately $350M, including:

- $322M in capital and start-up costs
- $13.6M annually in operating costs
- $11M annually in additional rent supplements

A complete list of recommended investments and associated costs can be found in Appendix A.

Methodology

To inform the development of this report, a literature review of best practices to address homelessness across Canada and internationally was completed. An internal review of existing strategies and available data was completed across relevant departments (e.g., Homelessness, Housing, Planning Services). In addition, a community consultation was completed with community partners from various sectors and people with lived experience of homelessness.

Recommendations

Recommendations in this report are organized into four pillars:

PILLAR 1 - Homelessness is rare (prevention)

Ensuring homelessness is rare means that people have access to what they need to remain housed, including the ability to access housing that is affordable and the ability to receive the appropriate supports when an emergency occurs.

Recommendations include the development of deep-core and affordable housing with additional strategies to increase housing affordability; expansion to the current Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) program guidelines; establishing a rent bank program; an internal policy review of relevant services to ensure alignment across programs; developing a housing loss prevention strategy; establishing a partnership with the Community Legal Clinic to support eviction prevention; developing a communications strategy to address NIMBY-ism (Not-in-my-backyard); strengthening partnerships with provincial systems; and advocacy to increase social assistance rates, changes to rent-supplement regulations, and the continued development of supportive and affordable housing.

The estimated costs within this pillar through federal, provincial and municipal investments are $280M in capital costs and an additional $10.7M annually in operating costs. Further details are provided in Appendix A.

PILLAR 2 - Homelessness is brief (rapid re-housing/diversion)

When someone is experiencing homelessness, it should be for as short a time as possible. People who are new to homelessness are identified and supported back into housing within a short period of time.

Recommendations under this pillar include transitioning to a 24-hour emergency shelter/transitional housing model and establishing additional support programs, including an identification bank and a formalized rapid re-housing program.

There are no financial requests attached to this pillar. Recommended strategies can be completed with existing resources or achieved through pillar three recommendations.

PILLAR 3 - Homelessness is non-recurring (supportive housing and wrap-around services)

For homelessness to be non-recurring, people who experience homelessness require access to housing with supports that meet their needs. People should not experience multiple episodes of homelessness (i.e., individuals who are housed following an experience of homelessness should be supported to avoid returning to homelessness).

Recommendations within this pillar include investments in additional supportive housing programs, including programs for priority populations, converting emergency shelter programs to transitional housing, and strengthening community engagement in community housing programs.

The estimated costs within this pillar through federal, provincial and municipal investments are $42.8M in capital costs and an additional $14.04M annually in operating costs for support services. Further details are provided in Appendix A.

PILLAR 4 – System Level Recommendations

Recommendations to strengthen the existing system of services include establishing a Health, Homelessness, Housing Planning and Operations Table, increasing trauma-informed approaches within the provision of support services, the development of a workforce strategy and an advisory group for people with lived experience of homelessness, and the development of strategies to support the healing and well-being of Indigenous peoples experiencing homelessness and those at-risk. Recommended strategies within this pillar have minor costs associated and can be completed with existing resources.

Next Steps

Community Development staff will follow direction from City Council with respect to the recommendations included in this report. Subsequent reports will be presented semi-annually to the Community Services Committee on progress towards the implementation of these recommendations and functional zero targets.

BACKGROUND

On September 26, 2023, City Council passed a motion that directed Community Development staff to draft a strategy to provide a roadmap to end homelessness in Greater Sudbury by 2030, which includes financial and staffing requirements to transition services from temporary shelters to transitional and permanent housing. This report outlines the current homelessness system within Greater Sudbury and recommendations to reach functional zero homelessness by 2030.

Functional Zero

What does it mean to "end homelessness?" Functional zero is a definition referred to internationally to define a milestone of resolving homelessness in a community. Reaching functional zero means a homelessness system has been established where homelessness becomes rare, brief and non-recurring. In quantitative terms, functional zero means the number of people experiencing homelessness on a community's Quality By-Name List is three or less, and the community can sustain this number for three or more months. While the ultimate goal is absolute zero homelessness, functional zero takes into consideration that inflow into homelessness can be unpredictable despite a community's best efforts[ii].

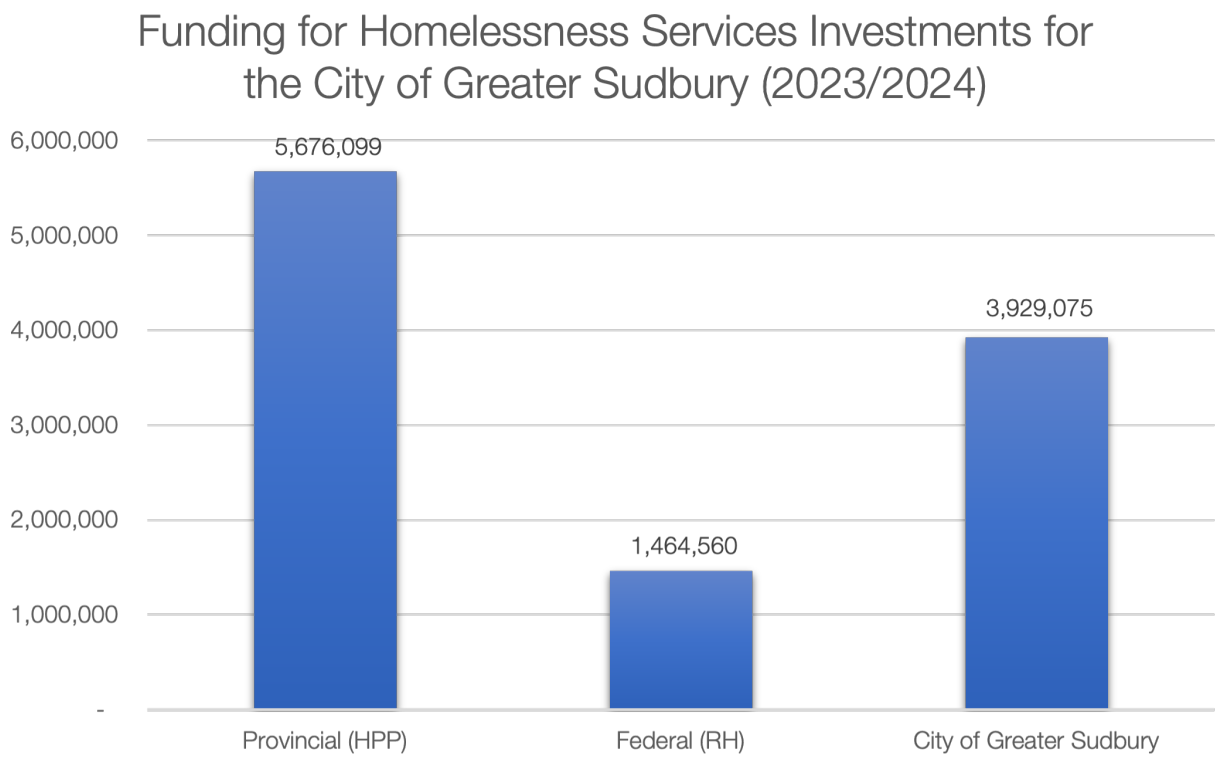
Role of the City of Greater Sudbury in Homelessness Response

Across Ontario, Service System Manager (SSM) is assigned to regional municipalities/districts through the provincial government to provide homelessness response within their communities. The role of the SSM is to plan the homelessness response system in collaboration with the community, develop policies related to homelessness services, and receive and allocate funding from all orders of government to align with local needs and best practices related to the prevention and reduction of homelessness. The SSM is also responsible for collecting data on services provided and reporting back to funders on program outcomes and funding allocation.

Within the City of Greater Sudbury, the Social Services Section leads the homelessness response as the SSM. Under the leadership of the SSM, there are 12 non-profit organizations who receive provincial funding through the Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) to deliver homelessness and housing support services. The Social Services Section is responsible for monitoring both the use of funds and the performance of organizations in delivering services.
Under HPP, communities are required to have a Coordinated Access System. In Greater Sudbury, the Coordinated Access System was developed and initiated in July 2021 and is overseen by the Housing First Steering Committee, which includes representatives from various stakeholders within the housing and homelessness-serving sector. Front-line staff members meet weekly through the Housing Assessment Review Team (HART) to match people experiencing homelessness with housing and supports that meet their level of need. A complete list of committees that collaborate to support system planning for the homelessness-serving sector can be found in Appendix B.

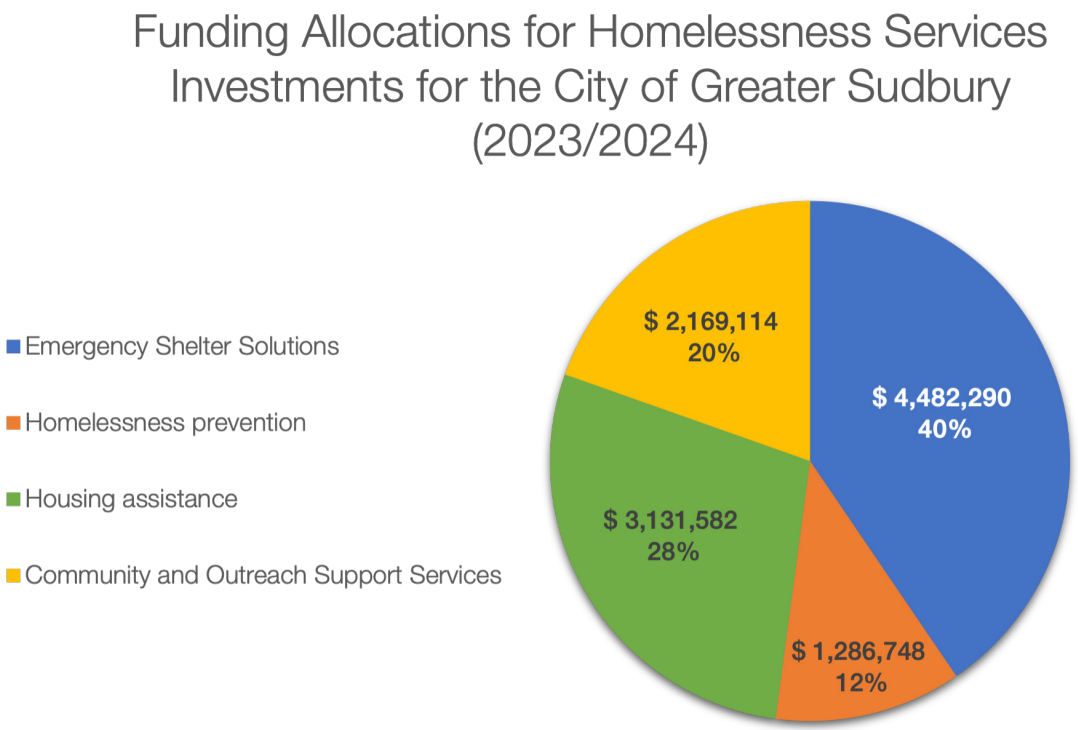
The City of Greater Sudbury also receives funding from the federal government under the Reaching Home program. Through this program, the City of Greater Sudbury is the Community Entity (CE), who is responsible for the administration of funding with recommendations from the Community Advisory Board on Homelessness (CAB); a committee formed of members who represent key community sectors related to homelessness, to support community planning and decision-making on the use of the funding.

In addition, the City of Greater Sudbury invests municipal funding to address homelessness and will approve homelessness projects, such as the Lorraine Street Affordable Housing project, that are not covered under existing funding programs.
The following is a breakdown of the funding provided from the various levels of government to deliver homelessness services in the community:



Note: Funding for homelessness programs is provided under the Provincial Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP), the Federal Reaching Home (RH) program, and the City of Greater Sudbury. The HPP program also provides funding for housing programs through Housing Services that is not included in this graph. Federal funding listed for the 2023/24 fiscal year is the base amount without any additional top-up. Enhanced HPP funding is committed only until the 2025/26 fiscal year. Federal funding is confirmed to decrease to pre-pandemic levels for the 2026/2027 fiscal year and is expected to be $528,224.

Funding provided by the levels of government support various efforts in the homelessness system, ranging from emergency shelter provision, homelessness prevention, housing assistance and community and outreach support services. The following is a breakdown of the funding provided to support the provision of these services:



Indigenous Homelessness in Greater Sudbury

Indigenous persons are consistently overrepresented in the homeless population in Greater Sudbury. On average, By-Name List data shows that 40 to 50 per cent of persons experiencing homelessness identify as Indigenous, even though only 11.3 per cent identify as Indigenous in the total population of Greater Sudbury[iii].

During the Homelessness Point in Time Count in October 2021, 42 per cent of respondents identified as Indigenous[iv]. As well, 52 per cent of people surveyed had their first experience of homelessness before the age of 25 years, 36 per cent had been in foster care, and 58 per cent of those in foster care had been homeless within one year of leaving foster care.

The 94 Calls to Action developed through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) provide a framework for enacting reconciliation in Canada[v]. The TRC has identified fundamental changes necessary to begin and continue the process of reconciliation in Canada, of which child welfare is a central focus, addressing the overrepresentation of Indigenous children and youth in the child welfare system.

A history of colonialism, intergenerational trauma and the Sixties Scoop have displaced Indigenous people from their home and culture, and homelessness is often felt in a broader context for Indigenous people.

Several recommendations in this report include strategies to respond to the Calls to Action within the homelessness-serving sector.

> Indigenous individuals who are without home and shelter have been symbolically, as in their lived experiences of homelessness, displaced from their relationships to land, water, place, family, kin, each other, animals, their cultures, languages, and identities[vi].

Homelessness and Health

Homelessness has a significant impact on the health of individuals, including increased morbidity and mortality and barriers to accessing health care services[vii]. Housing is often noted as an important social determinant of health due to the negative impacts on the health and well-being of individuals who lack housing or are housed in poor housing conditions[viii]. Those living in poverty and homelessness experience conditions that adversely affect their health, including exposure to the elements and temperatures, difficulty accessing nutritious foods, lack of access to washrooms and shower facilities, and difficulties maintaining regular medical appointments and prescribed medications. The psychological strain of living unhoused can lead to a range of chronic and acute health problems, including an increase in mental health and substance use issues[ix]. Providing stable housing is proven to increase health outcomes for people experiencing homelessness and reduce the burden on the health care system (e.g., emergency room visits, paramedic use)[x].

Over the winter months, additional warming centre hours were implemented in Greater Sudbury to provide a warm space for individuals to shelter from the elements and to prevent further negative impacts to their health and expenditures from the health care system.

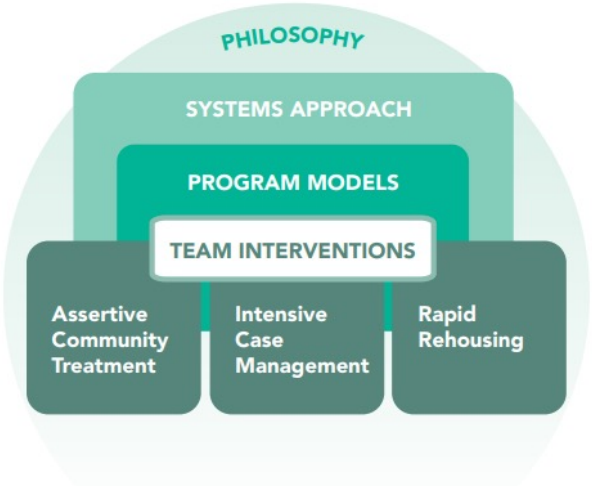
As of December 3, 2023, there were 118 individuals on the By-Name List who identified with tri-morbidity, comprising 50 per cent of the total population on the list. Tri-morbidity describes the complex co-morbidity of chronic physical illness, mental illness and substance abuse.

Housing First Philosophy

The Housing First Philosophy in Canada originates back to 1970s. The model is a recovery-oriented approach to homelessness that supports people experiencing homelessness to move into independent and permanent housing as quickly as possible with no preconditions, then providing additional supports and services as needed. Notably, the *At Home/Chez Soi* study completed by the Mental Health Commission of Canada is the world's largest and most in-depth evidence-based exploration of Housing First[xi]. The underlying principle of Housing First is that people will be more successful in their lives if they are first housed. The core principles of Housing First are:

1. Immediate access to permanent housing with no housing readiness requirements
2. Consumer choice and self-determination
3. Recovery orientation
4. Individualized and client-driven supports
5. Social and community integration[xii]

In Greater Sudbury, the Housing First philosophy was adopted by City Council and the homelessness-serving sector in 2008 and has achieved full fidelity to the model since 2018, indicating alignment with the core principles of Housing First outlined above. An evaluation of the Housing First program in Greater Sudbury was conducted by an external consultant in 2019 to determine further improvements to the program under the fidelity model[xiii].



Source: The Canadian Homelessness Research Network[xi].

Methodology

To inform the development of this report, a literature review was completed of best practices to addressing homelessness across Canada. An internal review of existing strategies and available data was completed across relevant City of Greater Sudbury departments. A community consultation was conducted with community partners from various sectors and people with lived experience of homelessness, resulting in the report, "A Summary of Community Consultations on a Plan to Reach Functional Zero Homelessness by 2030 in Greater Sudbury," included in Appendix C[xiv].

Through the consultation, the following core values, principles and foundations were developed to inform recommendations included in this report:

- Accountability to the people served
- Choice and self-determination
- Coordinated and collaborative
- Empathetic
- Empowered
- Equity
- Harm reducing
- Holistic
- Housing is a Human Right
- Inclusive
- Non-judgmental
- Respectful and dignified
- Services are easy to access and navigate
- Seven Grandfather Teachings
- Tailored to the unique needs of each household served
- Trauma-informed
- Transparent

Understanding the Need

"The community service sector can't solve the problem alone, homelessness is what happens when other service systems fail. It takes a whole of government, whole of sector, and whole of community effort to solve homelessness[xv]."

By-Name List Data

The City of Greater Sudbury implemented a By-Name List and Coordinated Access System in July 2021 as a requirement under Federal Reaching Home and Provincial Homelessness Prevention Program funding agreements. The By-Name List is a real-time list of people experiencing homelessness in Greater Sudbury, who have consented to add their name to the list. The By-Name List is a component of the Coordinated Access System. In March 2022, the City was recognized by Built for Zero Canada for achieving a Quality By-Name List (QBNL) for chronic homelessness through collecting and reporting reliable chronic By-Name List data, setting a baseline for active chronic homelessness in the community and meeting all ten requirements of the By-Name List under federal and provincial guidelines.

Individuals experiencing homelessness are added to the By-Name List through 13 community partner agencies that act as a "front door" to accessing supports to housing, and includes community outreach, emergency shelters, social services, Indigenous partners and health care services. Providing multiple access points to the By-Name List ensures a "no wrong door" approach and reduces the number of times individuals need to share their information with service providers to access programs.

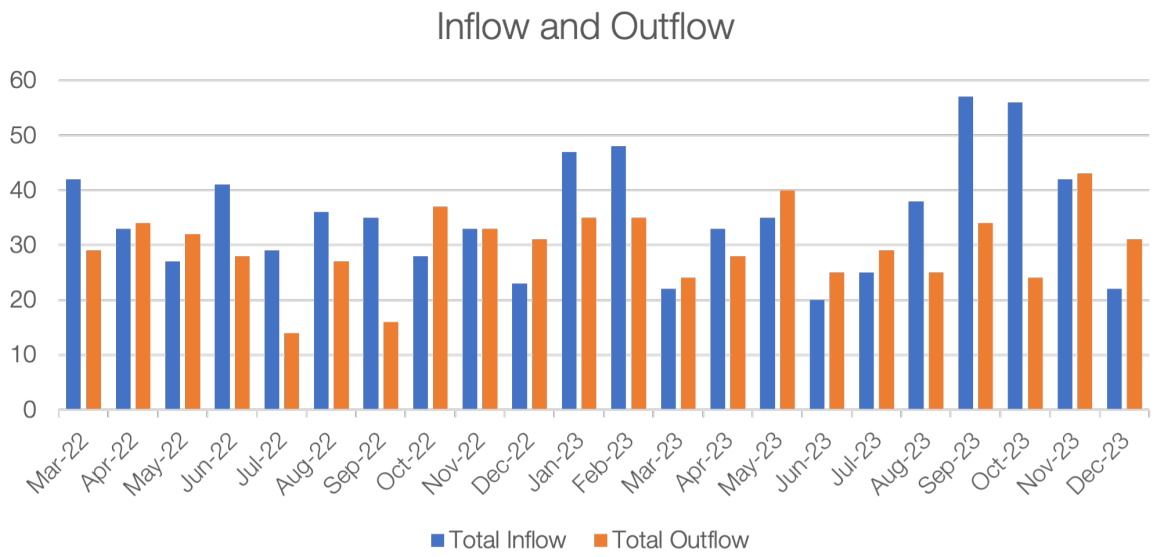
As of December 31, 2023, there were 237 individuals experiencing homelessness on the By-Name List.

Inflow and Outflow

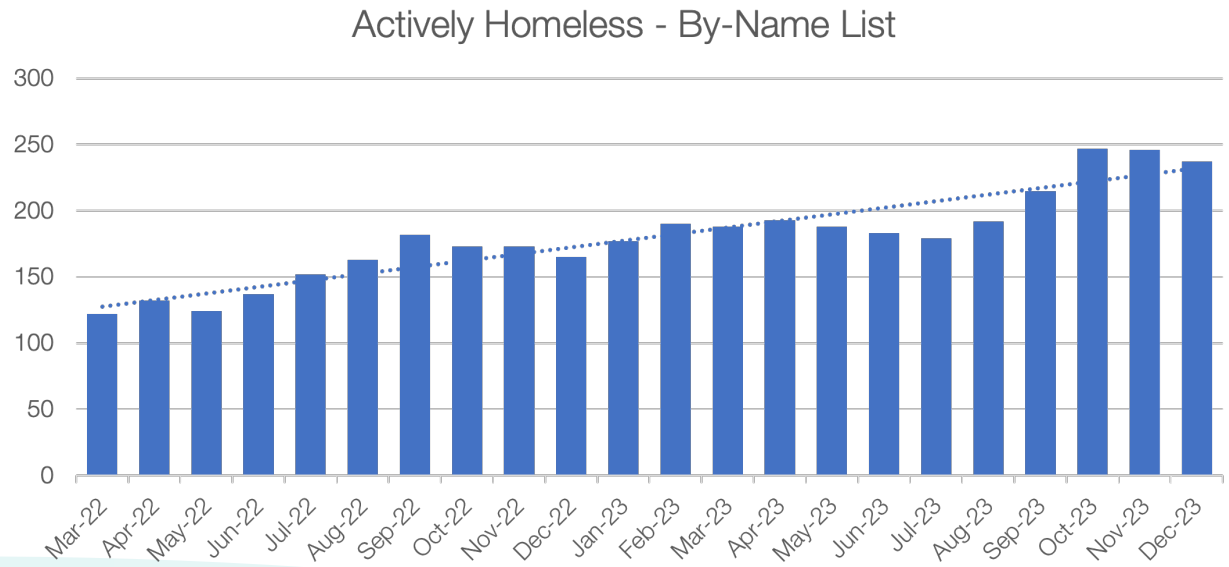
There is constant movement throughout the By-Name List system by individuals experiencing homelessness who are either new to the system, exit the system or return to the system. The entering and exiting of the system by individuals experiencing homelessness is referred to as "inflow" and "outflow." The inflow and outflow through the homelessness system contributes to the number of individuals currently experiencing homelessness on the By-Name List.

- Inflow – individuals who are newly identified to the By-Name List or return to homelessness after becoming housed

- Outflow – Individuals who become housed through the By-Name List or become inactive in the system (e.g., move out of the community, loss of contact, enter provincial facilities)



Since achieving Quality By-Name List status in March 2022, the homelessness system has observed a gradual increase in the number of individuals experiencing homelessness in the community.



Homelessness Initiatives

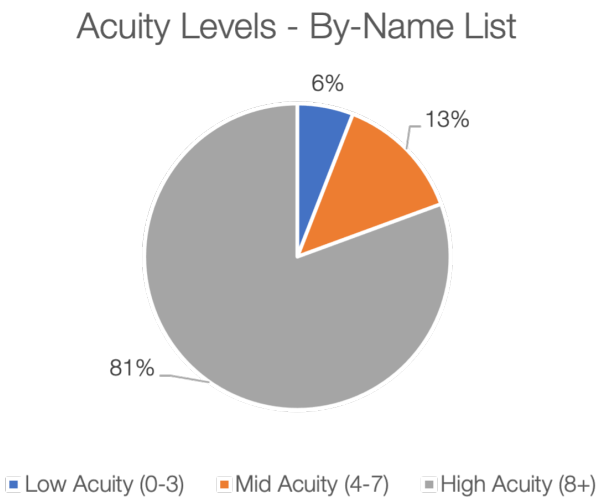
Acuity

When an individual experiencing homelessness is added to the By-Name List, their acuity score is determined through the VI-SPDAT (Vulnerability Index-Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool). This tool provides a score which indicates the level of support the person would require to obtain and maintain permanent housing and prioritizes the individual for the most appropriate support services:

- Low Acuity (score 0 to 3): does not require a housing intervention
- Mid Acuity (score 4 to 7): requires a rapid re-housing intervention or light touch supports
- High Acuity (score 8+): requires permanent supportive housing or a Housing First intervention

As of December 31, 2023, 81 per cent of individuals on the By-Name List were high acuity, indicating the majority of individuals on the By-Name List would require permanent supportive housing or a Housing First intervention to exit out of homelessness and remain housed long-term.

Based on a random sample of three Ontario communities, the acuity levels represented on Greater Sudbury's By-Name List is 10 to 15 per cent higher compared to these communities. (Comparator data is not publicly available.)



Chronic Homelessness

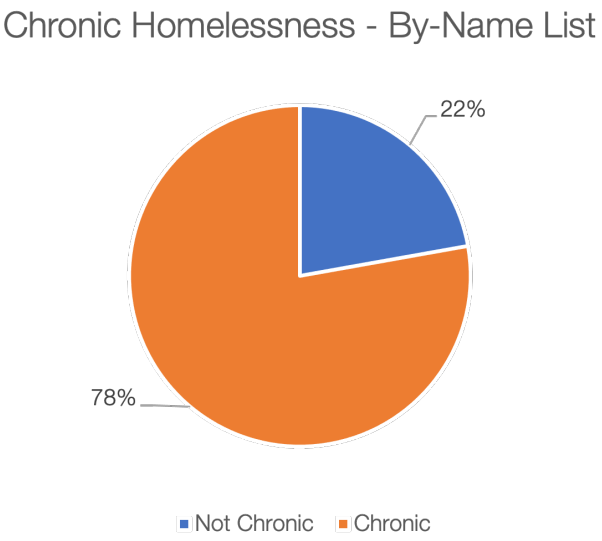
Chronic homelessness is defined on a federal level as "individuals who are currently experiencing homelessness AND who meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Have a total of at least six months (180 days) of homelessness over the past year,
- Have recurrent experiences of homelessness over the past three years, with a cumulative duration of at least 18 months (546 days)"

Research shows prioritizing reducing the chronic homeless population has the greatest impact on:

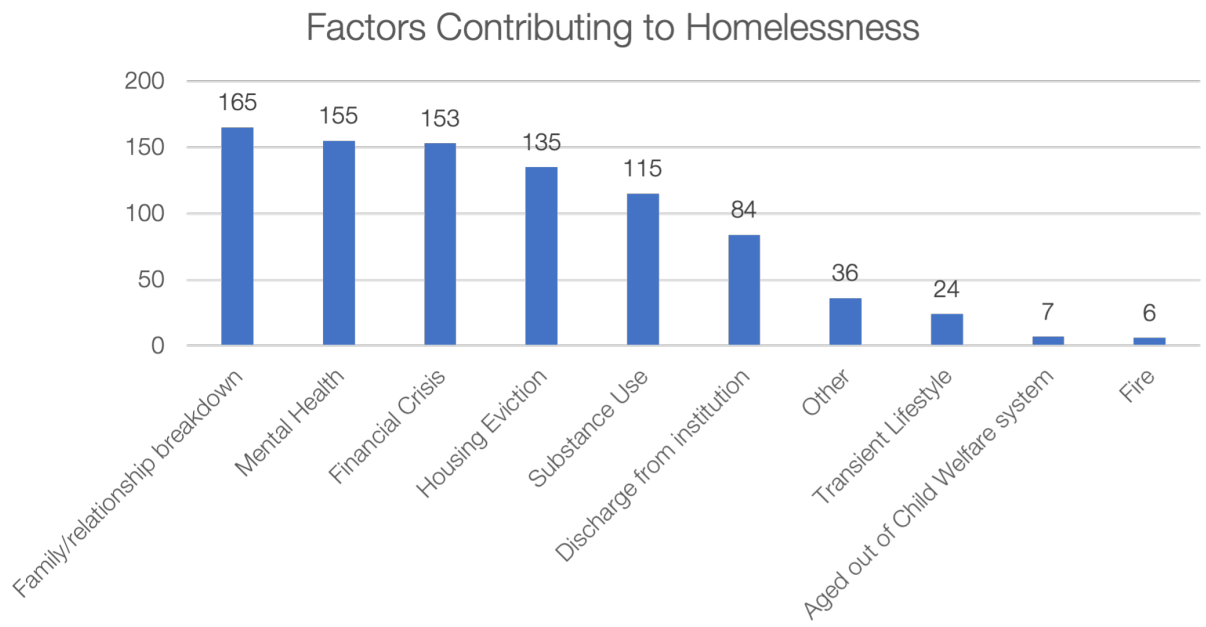
- Health – chronic health conditions, premature aging, injury, victimization and early death
- Homeless systems – relieves pressure in shelter systems and homelessness programs
- Emergency services – reduces pressure on ambulance, emergency rooms, police and corrections
- Taxpayers and donors – focusing resources on the highest financial and social return on investment[xvi]

As of December 31, 2023, 78 per cent of individuals on the By-Name List were experiencing chronic homelessness.



Contributing Factors to Homelessness

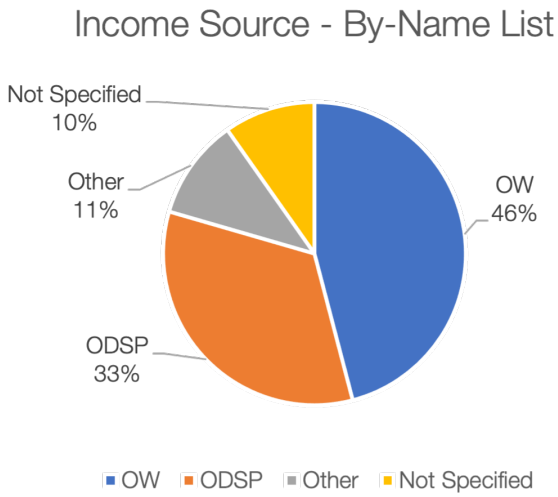
Contributing factors to the person's experience of homelessness is determined as part of the intake process to the By-Name List. In 2023, the main factors contributing to a person experiencing homelessness were family/relationship breakdown, mental health, financial crisis, housing eviction and substance use.



Note: Individuals may select more than one contributing factor when added to the By-Name List.

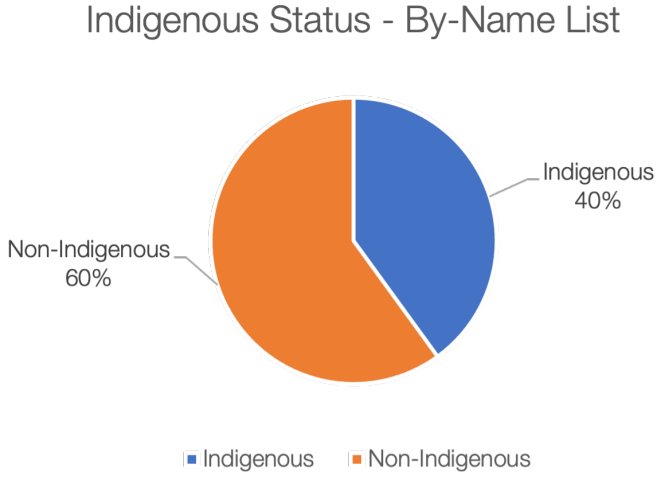
Income Source

When individuals are added to the By-Name List, their income source is recorded. For individuals added to the By-Name List in 2023, 46 per cent were in receipt of Ontario Works (OW), 33 per cent in receipt of Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), 11 per cent in receipt of another income source and 10 per cent did not specify.



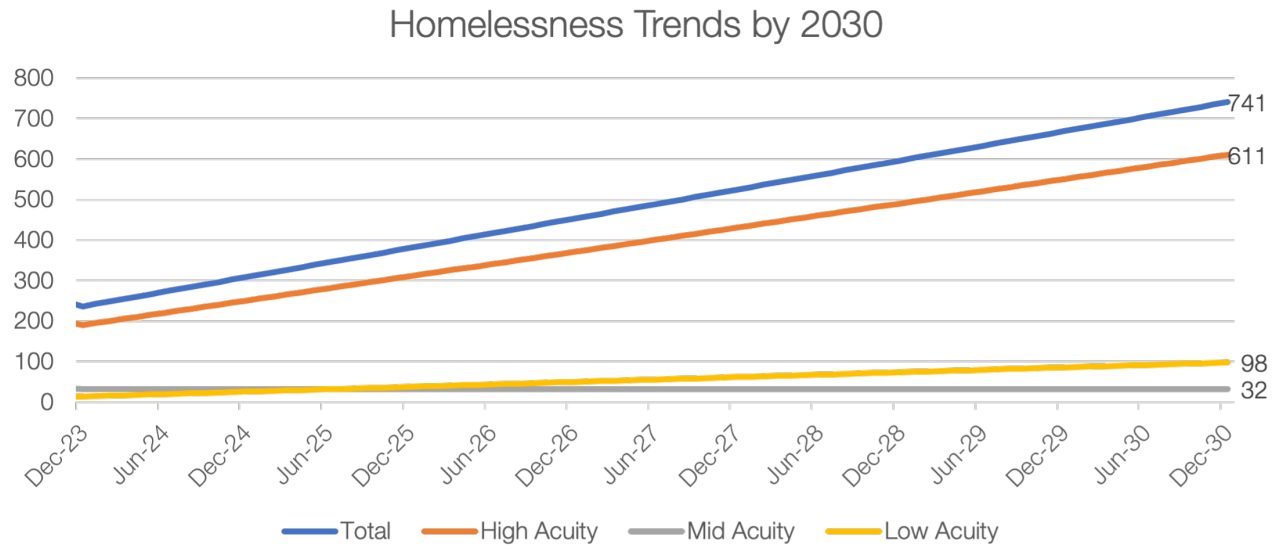
Indigenous Status

As of December 31, 2023, 40 per cent of individuals actively homeless on the By-Name List identified as Indigenous.



Trends – Homelessness in Greater Sudbury

To support the development of recommendations for investments to end homelessness in Greater Sudbury by 2030, trendlines were developed to determine the estimated number of individuals expected to be experiencing homelessness in Greater Sudbury by 2030 based on current trends.



The trendline for homelessness in Greater Sudbury estimates the homeless population will reach 741 individuals by 2030, a 205 per cent increase from December 2023.

Trendlines were also developed to determine the expected increase by each acuity level. The most significant increase is expected in the high acuity level, with total homelessness in this category estimated to reach 611 individuals by 2030.

Housing Continuum

The housing continuum is the range of housing options available within the community. While individuals are experiencing homelessness, the goal is to move the individual up the housing continuum with the support of community services.

Source: Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC[xvii]).

Current City of Greater Sudbury Strategies for Housing and Homelessness

10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan

The City of Greater Sudbury 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan is mandated by the provincial government to address provincial interests related to housing and homelessness and to guide municipalities in creating a flexible, community-centered housing and homelessness system. The plan addresses activities across seven priority areas:

- Improve housing options across the housing continuum
- Improve housing access and affordability for low-income individuals and families
- Strengthen approaches to preventing homelessness, increase the diversity of emergency shelter options and support individuals with multiple barriers in obtaining and maintaining housing
- Increase supportive services coupled with permanent housing options
- Improve coordination, collaboration, and partnerships among a broad range of stakeholders to address local needs
- Develop an Indigenous Housing and Homelessness Strategy in the community
- Monitor and report on progress towards meeting the community's housing and homelessness objectives and targets[xviii]

Progress on the seven priority areas is reported to City Council on an annual basis[xix]. An updated 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan is expected to be completed in 2024 (based on provincial policy direction). Recommendations included in this Roadmap will be used to inform the development of the next Housing and Homelessness Plan iteration.

Housing Supply Strategy

In February 2023, City Council passed a resolution directing staff to develop a Housing Supply Strategy that aims to ensure all current and future residents have access to housing options that meet their needs at all stages of life and that are attainable at all income levels[xviii]. The Strategy will take a holistic approach to identify actions along the housing continuum, from homelessness to transitional and supportive housing, to below market affordable housing, as well as market housing to increase the overall housing supply within Greater Sudbury to accommodate projected population growth[xx]. The Strategy sets a path forward to achieve housing targets within Greater Sudbury over the next 10 years and to fill key gaps in housing supply[xviii].

Under Bill 23, *The More Homes, Built Faster Act* ("MHBF Act"), the provincial government has identified a commitment to build 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years to address the housing supply shortage in Ontario[xviii]. Under this Act, the Ministry of Municipal Housing and Affairs (MMAH) has established a housing target for Greater Sudbury of 3,800 units by 2031[xviii]. The Housing Supply Strategy outlines strategies to reach this housing target.

Review of the City of Greater Sudbury Emergency Shelter System

In 2018, a review of the City of Greater Sudbury's Emergency Shelter System was conducted by Vink Consulting to identify a number of recommendations to reduce and prevent homelessness and increase the efficiency of the emergency shelter system[xix]. The review included best practices for emergency shelters, funding arrangements in other municipalities, identified service gaps and priority populations, strategies to ensure people experiencing homelessness receive the most appropriate service, a shelter rightsizing analysis and strategies to provide preventative/diversion supports and housing support services within an integrated system[xxi].

Given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the housing and homelessness system, the environment has changed significantly since the review was completed.

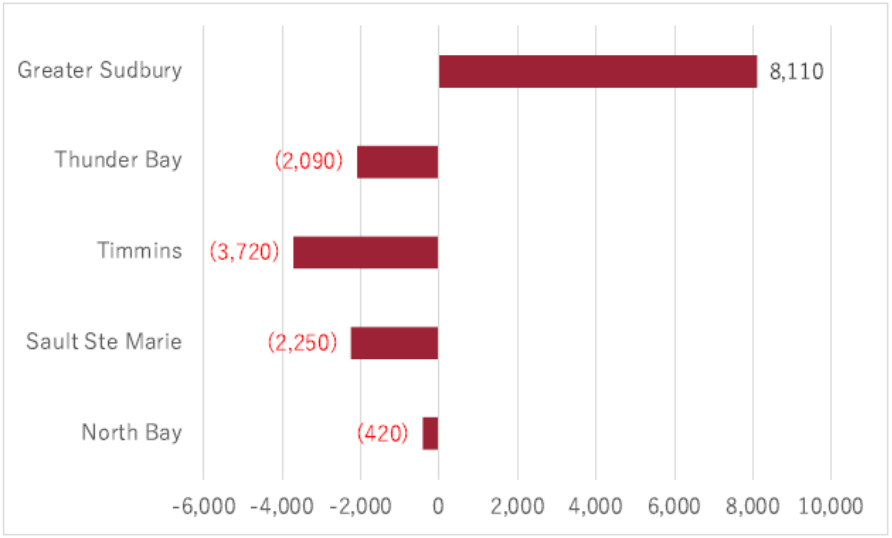
Social Housing Revitalization Plan

In 2018, the Social Housing Revitalization Plan was developed to identify best practices and potential strategies related to the renewal and revitalization of community housing supply in Greater Sudbury. Pressure points within the system and potential solutions for areas in need were identified. Actionable items included the sale of assets, establishing funding reserves for new housing, a re-development/pre-planning program, prioritization of capital needs and a Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) unit replacement strategy.

Greater Sudbury Population Growth

In 2021, the population of Greater Sudbury increased by 2.8 per cent from 2016 to 166,004 as per the latest census[xxi]. Currently, Greater Sudbury is the only major urban area in Northern Ontario with a growing population.

Figure 1: Change in Total Population between 2001 and 2021

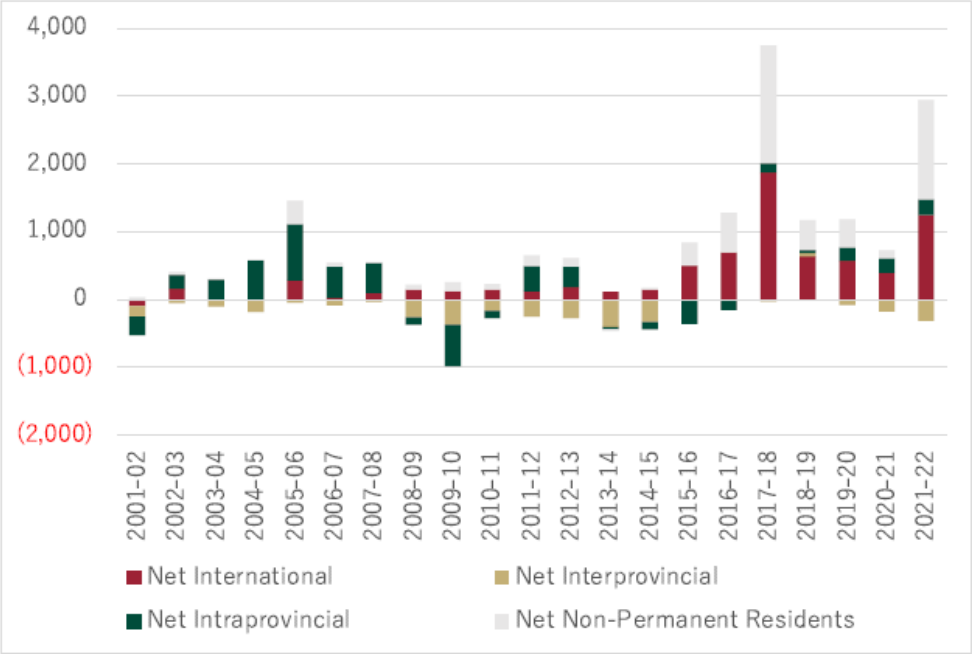


Source: Statistics Canada, Annual Demographic Estimates.

As of 2023, the current estimated population is 170,210 with projections to continue to increase in the following years. While it appears population growth is outpacing housing construction in Greater Sudbury, this is not the underlying cause of housing pressures in the city. The number of households growing at a faster rate than the population is due to the aging population. More empty nesters and single elderly people, and fewer families with children at home is leading to more housing required to house the same population, with a gradual decline in the average household size[xxiii].

Given the aging workforce, the importance of increasing migration to the city to contribute to the local economy and grow the city will be crucial. An increasing number of migrants are needed to continue to fill the gap between the aging community and the required workforce.

Figure 9: Historical Migration Pattern in the City of Greater Sudbury



The increasing number of migrants and international students expected in the community, places additional pressures on the current housing supply. New residents in Greater Sudbury will require housing that is affordable, available, situated close to municipal amenities and close to employment opportunities. The expected change in the population within Greater Sudbury also increases the need for housing across the housing continuum that is accessible to residents with varying income levels.

WHAT SERVICES DO WE HAVE NOW TO SUPPORT ENDING HOMELESSNESS?

Homelessness Prevention Initiatives

Affordable Housing

Within the City of Greater Sudbury, there are five programs available to increase affordability of housing units:

1. Community Housing Programs

The cost of community housing programs (also known as social housing) were downloaded from the province to municipalities in 2002. Applicants apply for a housing subsidy through the Housing Registry administered by City of Greater Sudbury Housing Services and are placed on a chronological waitlist. Successful applicants who are low-income earners or in receipt of social assistance pay 30 per cent of their income towards their rent. Housing Services tops up the difference between what the applicant pays and the actual cost of rent.

There are approximately 2,997 subsidized units (RGI), 729 Rent Supplement units through private landlords and 359 units that are considered low end of market rent units, which are market rent units in nonprofit and cooperative housing projects. All applicants for these units are selected off the community housing centralized wait list. As of December 2023, the waitlist held 1,050 households.

City of Greater Sudbury Housing Operations acts as the landlord for the Greater Sudbury Housing Corporation (GSHC) properties. The GSHC provides rent-geared-to-income housing to all household types, including families; seniors; singles; and to the best of our ability, people with special needs, including persons with mental illness. The housing portfolio consists of 1,848 units, which makes it the single largest landlord in Greater Sudbury. The portfolio accounts for 39 per cent of the purpose-built community housing stock.

The GSCH is also responsible for administering rent supplement agreements in 653 units owned by private landlords, which account for 14 per cent of the assisted housing portfolio in the city.

This program is under-utilized due to unwillingness of landlords to renew agreements as they expire. Since 2019, 109 rental units have been lost through these agreements. As of January 2024, 159 more agreements were terminated as the current tenants vacated these units. Private landlords have cited a rise in tenant mental health issues, crime, social issues and safety concerns for other tenants as factors for not renewing these agreements. In 2023, costs for rent supplements and subsidies for co-op and non-profit housing amounted to approximately $16M.

2. Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB)

The Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) provides households with a portable housing benefit to assist with rental costs in the private market. This benefit is tied to the household and can be used to pay rent anywhere in Ontario. The COHB pays the difference between 30 per cent of the household's income and the average market rent in the area. For recipients of social assistance, the COHB will pay the difference between the shelter allowance and the household's rent and utilities costs. To receive COHB in Greater Sudbury, applicants must reside

permanently in Ontario and be on, or eligible to be on, the City of Greater Sudbury Housing Registry. People experiencing homelessness are granted priority status for the COHB. City of Greater Sudbury Social Services Client Navigators support individuals experiencing homelessness to apply for the COHB. In 2023, seven people who were experiencing homelessness received the COHB rent supplement.

3. Affordable Housing Programs

Since 2002, affordable housing programs have led to the construction of over 20,000 rental units across the province with rents maintained at or below 80 per cent of CMHC's Average Market Rent (AMR). In Greater Sudbury, 324 affordable rental units have been constructed based on capital funding received through both the federal and provincial governments. The City of Greater Sudbury does not provide any operating or rent subsidy funding to these affordable housing units.

As per the service agreement between the City of Greater Sudbury and the provincial government, individuals who access affordable housing units are not removed from the centralized wait list operated by City of Greater Sudbury Housing Services. Private or nonprofit landlords manage their own waitlist for the affordable and market rent units within their building. To be eligible for an affordable housing unit, an applicant would need to earn less than the annual household income limit (HIL) as established by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing at the time of move in.

4. Homelessness Network Housing Allowances

The Homelessness Network provides housing allowances to participants of their Housing First program. The Housing First program provides housing case management to persons who are chronically homeless and require additional supports to maintain housing. Participants are supported to find housing either through community housing or in the private market. For individuals who are housed in private market accommodations, the program provides $600/month to supplement the cost of rent. As of December 31, 2023, 36 Housing First participants were supported with a housing allowance through the Homelessness Network.

5. Affordable Housing Community Improvement Plan (AHCIP)

The Affordable Housing Community Improvement Plan (AHCIP) program is administered by the City of Greater Sudbury Planning Services Section. The AHCIP was approved by Council on July 10, 2018, and provides incentive-based programs for the creation of affordable housing. The purpose of the AHCIP is to facilitate the development of more affordable housing units in locations where they will benefit from proximity to public and private facilities and services as well as maximize the use of existing infrastructure. For example, an application was approved in November 2021 to fund the development of secondary dwelling units in five scattered houses that were formerly part of the City's Community Housing portfolio, which resulted in the creation of five additional affordable units. Raising the Roof, a non-profit corporation, has renovated each house to include a three-bedroom main floor unit and two-bedroom secondary dwelling unit in the basement.

Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI)

The Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) program supports low-income individuals and families who are homeless, or who are at risk of homelessness, by providing funds to pay a last month's rent deposit, rental arrears or a utility deposit or arrears. The program is delivered by the City of Greater Sudbury Ontario Works program for individuals in receipt of Ontario Works (OW) or the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and is delivered by the Homelessness Network for individuals who have low income and are not in receipt of social assistance. In 2023, 58 per cent of allocations from the program were to support people who were at-risk of becoming homeless and 38 per cent were to support people who were experiencing homelessness to become housed.

Over the past five years, the CHPI program allocated the most amount of funds towards (1) the purchasing of furniture, household goods, and repairs, (2) last month's rent deposit and (3) rental arrears.

Over the course of the pandemic, the CHPI program guidelines were expanded to provide additional support for individuals to stay housed throughout the pandemic (i.e., increasing the maximum amount of funding provided through the program to households for the payment of housing arrears).

Program cost: In the 2023/24 fiscal year, $1.4M was allocated to homelessness prevention through the CHPI program.

Housing Loss Prevention – City of Greater Sudbury Housing Services Units

In partnership with Greater Sudbury Housing Operations staff, Social Services Client Navigators engage with tenants who are identified as having a higher level of need to maintain their housing. Client Navigators work with individuals and families who may require support to complete documentation for their annual review to maintain their housing subsidy; those who may be facing or dealing with a loss of subsidy; are in housing arrears; and/or are struggling with mental health, social, or cleanliness issues. Twice per week at various Housing sites, a team of Client Navigators complete door knocks for these tenants and offer support to mitigate the risk of eviction.

In addition, Client Navigators facilitate weekly drop-ins in common rooms in Greater Sudbury Housing buildings where tenants can meet with Client Navigators and request support and referrals for various issues, including housing loss prevention, support with OW/ODSP and housing first goals. Client Navigators also invite other community agencies to attend to give presentations or hold information sessions around topic such as filing taxes, completing annual review paperwork and tenant rights and responsibilities. In 2023, 114 evictions were mitigated through Client Navigators, 87 per cent of which were from Sudbury Housing units.

Action Research Project on Chronic Homelessness (ARCH)

In 2023, Greater Sudbury was selected as one of eight communities across Canada to participate in an Action Research Project on Chronic Homelessness (ARCH) funded by the federal government. Greater Sudbury was selected as we present a unique opportunity considering our existing partnerships with Indigenous lead agencies and interest in exploring the intersection of homelessness, child welfare and population prioritization. This project, in partnership with N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre, explores opportunities to support and empower Indigenous youth transitioning out of care into adult independence.

Upcoming Initiatives

Peace Tower Housing Development

An affordable housing development with 38 one-bedroom units is expected to be completed by December 2024. Tenants will be provided with a rent supplement through City of Greater Sudbury Housing Services. The development is in the process of being constructed near the Pearl Street water tower.

Supports for Brief Experiences of Homelessness

Client Navigators

The City of Greater Sudbury Social Services section, through Client Navigators, support individuals experiencing homelessness and at risk of homelessness obtain and maintain their housing. Client Navigators meet with individuals staying in emergency shelter programs, outdoors and in temporary accommodations to complete referrals to community programs and provide support to complete documentation required for housing.

Program cost: 2023/24 fiscal year - $211,645 and 2024/25 fiscal year - $756,000 (additional staffing requirement to provide the service).

Emergency Shelters

Emergency shelters are intended to be temporary short-term accommodations for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. There are four emergency shelters in Greater Sudbury; the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) – Sudbury Manitoulin Off the Street Shelter (35 beds), Salvation Army Cedar Place Women and Families Shelter (28 beds), Sudbury Action Centre for Youth – Youth Shelter (four beds)*, and the Elizabeth Fry Society Safe Harbour House (10 beds)**. In total, the emergency shelter system is comprised of 77 year-round shelter beds. The emergency shelter system provides diversion supports and support to obtain housing for individuals accessing shelter. In 2023, 827 people accessed an emergency shelter program. Currently, the only shelter that operates 24/7 is the Salvation Army Cedar Place Women and Families Shelter. The remaining three programs operate overnight from 10 p.m. to 8 a.m.

*The Sudbury Action Centre for Youth closed their agency effective March 18, 2024.

**Elizabeth Fry Safe Harbour House was implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic as a temporary measure and has been extended through the 2024 budget process for the next three years.

Program cost: 2023/24 fiscal year - $3,183,993

Flex Funds

The City of Greater Sudbury Social Services section provides flex funding intended to provide quick and easy access to funds for front-line service providers to find creative solutions to barriers in accessing or returning to permanent housing. The funding is commonly used to facilitate transportation for people to return home to family or home communities or to access ID required for housing applications. In 2023, 83 individuals were supported through the flex fund program to reduce barriers to obtain housing.

Program Cost: 2023/24 fiscal year - $170,789

Bridge Housing

The City of Greater Sudbury Social Services section provides funding for the use of local motel rooms to bridge individuals between homelessness and permanent housing. The bridge program is intended to relieve capacity within the emergency shelter system and stabilize persons who are homeless and have an imminent offer of permanent housing. In 2023, 25 people were supported to become housed through bridge housing.

Program Cost: 2023/24 fiscal year - $111,089

Urgent Status – RGI Waitlist

Through the City of Greater Sudbury Housing Registry, applicants who are experiencing homelessness can qualify for Urgent Status to be prioritized on the waitlist for an RGI unit. Over the past four years, the number of people housed through Urgent Status on the waitlist has declined due to low-turnover rates and the loss of subsidized units to private market rents (e.g., when an individual no longer qualifies for RGI status and continues to pay private market rates for the unit). Since 2018, the number of people housed each year through urgent status has decreased by 36 per cent.

Supports for Non-Recurring Experiences of Homelessness

Housing First Program

In Greater Sudbury, the Homelessness Network, led by Le Centre de santé communautaire du Grand Sudbury, administers a Housing First program. The primary goal of the Housing First program is to assist people experiencing homelessness to secure housing that is safe, affordable and appropriate, as quickly as possible. Once housed, individuals are provided with additional supports and services as needed to help them maintain their housing and avoid returning to homelessness. The Homelessness Network Housing First program has 7.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) case managers with a maximum caseload for 75 high acuity individuals with weighted caseloads based on the acuity levels of the individual.

Program Cost: 2023/24 fiscal year - $996,767

Lorraine Street Affordable Housing

A transitional supportive housing pilot project for individuals experiencing homelessness with complex needs began in January 2022 at a temporary location. The building, with 40 one-bedroom units, is expected to be completed by fall 2024. The program provides intensive supports to achieve housing stability through an Assertive Community Treatment Team (ACTT) comprised of registered nurses, mental health and addictions workers and social workers, with access to psychiatry and primary care physicians. Care is provided within the program 16 hours per day, seven days a week. Participants are supported to stabilize and develop life skills to successfully transition into community housing or private market. Evidence highlights that Assertive Community Treatment is a highly intensive service that has "consistently been found to be effective in preventing homelessness[xxiv]."

Program Cost: 2023/24 fiscal year - $1,866,896

Healing with Hope Home – Managed Alcohol Program

The Canadian Mental Health Association – Sudbury/Manitoulin operates the Healing with Hope Managed Alcohol Program which provides 15 beds and supports individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and are impacted by alcohol dependence. Following a harm reduction model and philosophy, the program provides wraparound services and supports, including shelter, meals, primary care, mental health and supportive counselling, housing support and case management services. Individuals who become residents of the Healing with Hope Home live in a safe and secure residence and receive a specific amount of alcohol daily within the facility.

Program Cost: 2023/24 fiscal year - $375,236 (funded for four program staff - the program receives funding from other provincial programs for operations)

Coordinated Access

The City of Greater Sudbury Coordinated Access System consists of a network of agencies who work together to support people experiencing homelessness, find and maintain permanent housing. People who are experiencing homelessness are prioritized for supports and services based on their level of need.

Program Cost: 2023/24 fiscal year - $80,850 for staffing allocation (dedicated federal funding to support data collection and coordination of the By-Name List)

Upcoming Initiatives

Veteran Homelessness Program

The City recently received approval for a funding proposal submitted under the federal government's Veteran's Homelessness Program and is currently negotiating the funding agreement. The program will support Veterans who are experiencing homelessness.

More details about the program will be announced at a later date.

WHAT DO WE NEED TO END HOMELESSNESS BY 2030?

Recommendations in this report are organized into four pillars to reach functional zero in Greater Sudbury by 2030:

- **Pillar 1 – Homelessness is rare (prevention)**
- **Pillar 2 – Homelessness is brief (rapid re-housing/diversion)**
- **Pillar 3 – Homelessness is non-recurring (supportive housing and wrap-around services)**
- **Pillar 4 – System-level recommendations**

A summary of costs associated with each of these recommendations is included in Appendix A.

"Ending homelessness will require resources in the form of targeted prevention services, development of affordable housing and a variety of housing and support programs such as Housing First, in which homeless people are offered immediate access to permanent housing together with long-term, individualized support[xxv]."

PILLAR 1: PREVENTION - What do we need to ensure homelessness is rare?

Within this pillar, strategies are recommended to ensure homelessness is rare, which includes upstream interventions to prevent homelessness from occurring. Ensuring homelessness is rare means ensuring people have access to what they need to remain housed, including the ability to access housing that is affordable and to receive the appropriate supports when an emergency occurs.

The estimated costs within this pillar through federal, provincial and municipal investments are $280M in capital costs and an additional $10.7M annually in operating costs. Further details are provided in Appendix A.

1.1 Deep Core Housing/Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI)

Across the housing continuum, there is a need for new housing developments.

An immediate investment in the development of additional housing that meets Deep Core Housing need is required. Deep Core Housing, also known as, Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI), is the most affordable type of housing available as it is calculated to be 30 per cent of a person's income. For individuals receiving social assistance, which is 79 per cent of individuals on the By-Name List, this is often the only affordable option.

As of July 11, 2022, Greater Sudbury had a community housing stock of 3,356 units – 359 LEM units and 2,997 RGI units. As of September 2022, over 70 per cent of the waitlist was seeking a one-bedroom unit. Due to the size of the waitlist (1,050 households in December 2023), it can take over four years for a household to be housed in an RGI unit.

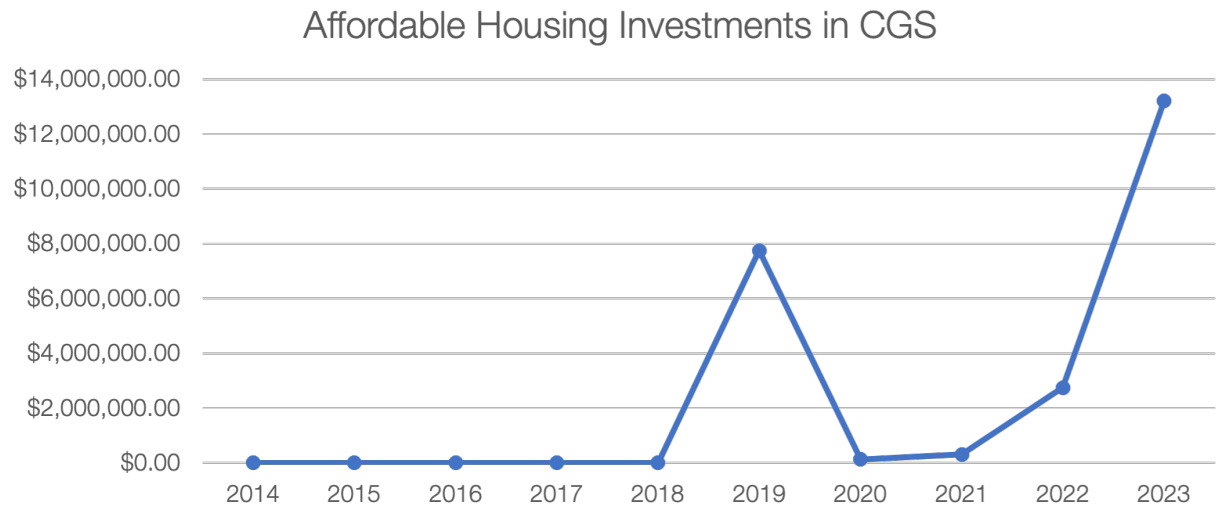
A Housing Supply and Demand Analysis report completed by City of Greater Sudbury Planning Services showed Greater Sudbury's supply of Low-End of Market (LEM - 60 per cent of Average Market Rent) and Rent-Geared-to-Income units (RGI) falls short of demand – a minimum of 301 LEM units and 655 RGI additional units are needed[xxvii]. The demand for RGI housing is expected to continue to focus on one-bedroom units.

> "Investing in building deeply affordable housing is critically important to ending homelessness in Canada. You're not going to solve or begin to even think about ending homelessness unless you think about housing and providing that housing[xxvi]."

In Finland, where significant reductions in the homeless population have been demonstrated, the supply of community housing is more widespread compared to North America, comprising 13 per cent of total housing supply[xxviii]. In Greater Sudbury, the percentage of community housing to total housing supply is 6 per cent. Additionally, Finland's model included housing developments with opportunities for mixed-income rentals (e.g., community housing, affordable, and private market). Therefore, it is recommended new housing developments in Greater Sudbury also include mixed options whenever possible to further contribute to fostering a healthy community[xxix].

1.2 Affordable Housing

A strategy to increase the development of affordable housing units across the community is needed. This strategy should include methods to increase participation from private developers in affordable housing incentives through the Canada Housing and Mortgage Corporation (CMHC). Affordable housing is defined as housing with rents maintained at or below 80 per cent of CMHC's Average Market Rent (AMR). In the City of Greater Sudbury, there has been limited investments in affordable housing over the past 10 years.



*Projects include Lorraine Street Affordable Housing program, Sparks Street, Peace Tower, 1381 Paris St., 200 Larch St., and March of Dimes.

"The evidence highlights that the single most important public policy response [to ending homelessness] is the provision of an adequate supply of affordable and secure housing[i]."

There is a growing need for affordable housing supply in Greater Sudbury as the average market rent continues to increase and vacancy rates
continue to decline. In addition, the Homelessness Network has reported there have been several low-cost units lost in the downtown core over the past few years.

In Ontario, the current monthly shelter costs for individuals receiving social assistance are $390 (Ontario Works) and $556 (Ontario Disability Support Program). In 2023, the average market rent in Greater Sudbury for a one-bedroom apartment was $1,043.

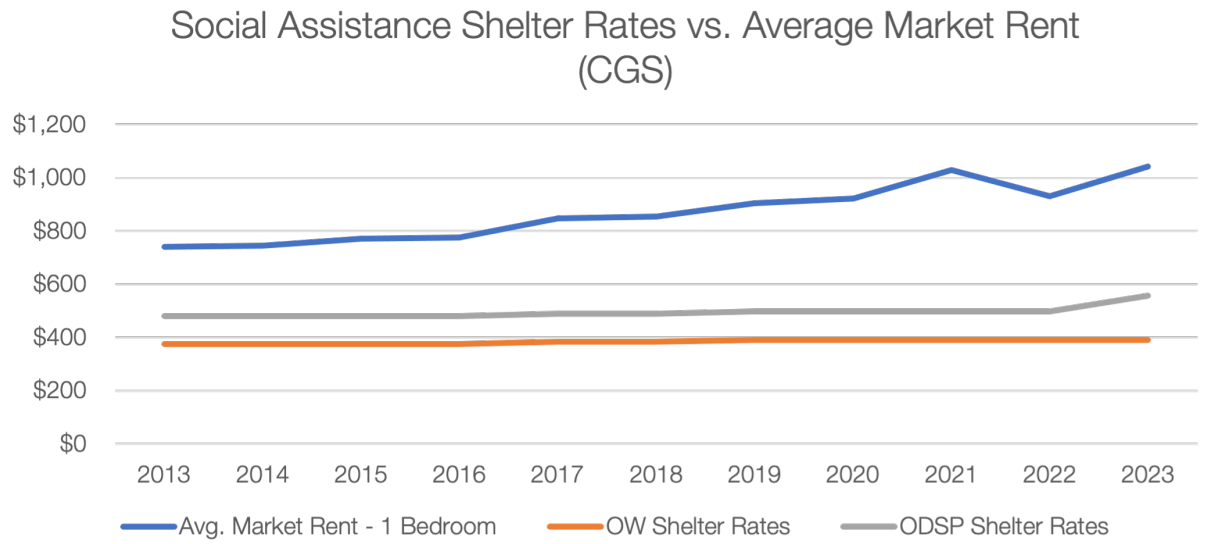
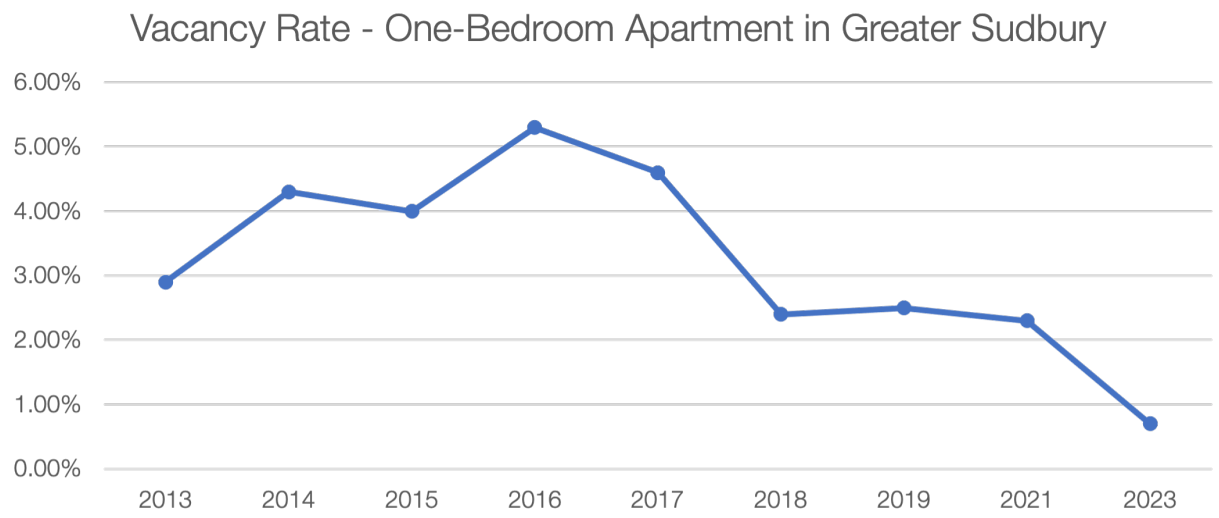


Figure 1: Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program shelter rates for a single person compared to the average market rent in Greater Sudbury for a one-bedroom apartment.



Note: Values for 2020 and 2022 were omitted due to poor data quality (CMHC)[xxx].
Figure 2: Vacancy rates in Greater Sudbury for a one-bedroom apartment.

The City of Greater Sudbury Housing Supply Strategy recommends the following to increase affordable housing development:

a. Development Charge Updates

As part of the current review and update of the Development Charges bylaw, there is a focus on incentivizing the development of housing through exemptions and reductions in strategic locations and targeting certain forms of housing. The current reduction for multi-residential development along corridors is proposed to be amended to remove the requirement for property to have frontage on the corridor, and the requirements that reductions apply only to that portion of the building within the 100m setback in alignment with the Strategic Core Areas CIP multi-residential TIEG program. The Affordable Housing exemption is proposed to be amended for more flexibility for projects that are subject to a funding agreement with the City or CMHC.

b. Land Banking Phase Two

Implement Phase Two of the Land Banking Strategy which was adopted by City Council in 2020. Phase Two will involve site preparation, including rezoning where required and de-risking sites that have been identified as suitable for the development of affordable

housing in conjunction with the Affordable Housing Community Improvement Plan. These infill projects will maximize the use of existing infrastructure and contribute to vibrancy in existing neighbourhoods, while increasing the financial viability of affordable housing projects.

C. Updates to the Affordable Housing Community Improvement Plan (CIP)

Update the Affordable Housing CIP to include considerations for mixed-use buildings and tiering of incentives based on the percentage of affordable units provided.

The City of Greater Sudbury Social Services and Housing Services sections will continue to work collaboratively with Planning Services to implement recommendations included in this report in alignment with the Housing Supply Strategy.

1.3 Rental Market

Over the past 10 years, the average vacancy rate in Greater Sudbury has been maintained below 5 per cent, indicating strong demand for rental housing with available supply not keeping pace with demand[xxvi]. In 2023, the average vacancy rate in Greater Sudbury declined to 1.1 per cent, reaching its lowest point in 10 years. A housing supply and demand analysis completed in March 2023, identified an immediate need for 470 additional rental units to achieve a healthy vacancy rate of 5 per cent in the rental market, with an average of 66 additional rental units per year for the next 30 years.

1.4 Advocacy – Investment in Affordable Housing

Given the immediate need for additional affordable housing, develop an advocacy strategy to advocate to the provincial and federal governments to increase investments in the continued development of affordable housing.

Through the federal budget released in April 2024, the federal government announced "Solving the Housing Crisis: Canada's Housing Plan," with plans to increase the attainment and affordability of housing across Canada[xxxi]. Staff are awaiting further details announced through the budget process.

1.5 Expand CHPI Program Guidelines for Homelessness Prevention

The current Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) program guidelines and funding limits do not adequately meet the current demand. An expansion to CHPI program guidelines is needed to meet the needs of current market trends to better reflect market conditions with additional flexibility, to pay off community housing debts and arrears to ensure low-income households can maintain their housing. The program requires immediate access to funds for all eligible households. The expansion of guidelines would allow further discretionary ability from staff based on cost-benefit analysis compared to accessing the emergency shelter system. Evidence shows the most cost-effective way to end homelessness is to stop it before it begins with effective prevention[xxxii].

> "Homeless people with mental illness generate very high costs for society. Programs are needed to reorient this spending toward more effectively preventing homelessness and toward meeting the health, housing, and social needs of homeless people[xxiii]."

1.6 Rent Bank

Rent bank loans are intended to help renters experiencing a temporary and unplanned financial crisis with their expenses directly linked to staying housed. To provide support to a wider population in emergency situations, opportunities should be explored to establish a Rent Bank program for low- to mid-income earners as a repayable loan to support housing loss prevention for a short-time period.

1.7 Internal Policy Review

A review of policies across relevant internal departments is needed to ensure policy alignment to best support individuals within the housing and homelessness system. Preliminary work for this recommendation has been completed by an external consultant with recommendations outlined in the report entitled "Think Big, Act Together" included in Appendix D.

1.8 Housing Loss Prevention Strategy

The development of a Housing Loss Prevention Strategy is needed in collaboration with Housing Services, Housing Operations and Social Services departments, to remove barriers and implement processes that support easier access to housing and increase support to tenants within these units.

1.9 Legal Clinic – Eviction Prevention

Increase collaboration with the Community Legal Clinic to support information exchange and eviction prevention within community housing and private market rental accommodations. Evidence demonstrates that establishing partnerships for tenant supports and mediation is effective in homelessness prevention[xxxiii].

1.10 Strengthen Partnerships with Provincial Systems

Develop strategies to reduce discharges from institutions directly into homelessness. Continue to build partnerships with other sectors, including health care, corrections and child welfare, to support pathways into housing and the prevention of homelessness, as well as advocate with federal and provincial levels of government to increase pathways into housing (i.e., increased supports for discharge planning). While these programs are under provincial jurisdiction and outside the scope of the municipality, opportunities exist to strengthen these partnerships.

> "[in order to end homelessness], preventive measures must be prioritized with a focus on improved systems alignment and discharge planning between institutions[xxiv]."

Examples of current partnerships with provincial systems include the ACTT-3 Transitional Housing program in partnership with the health care system, and the Action Research on Chronic Homelessness project in partnership with the Indigenous child welfare system.

"Individuals experiencing homelessness are typically in receipt of financial assistance through Ontario Works (OW) or Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). Shelter portions for OW are $390, and ODSP it is $ 497. With the average market rent in Sudbury being $ 900, how is someone supposed to be able to afford housing and the necessities to live?" – service provider (Homelessness Consultation 2021)

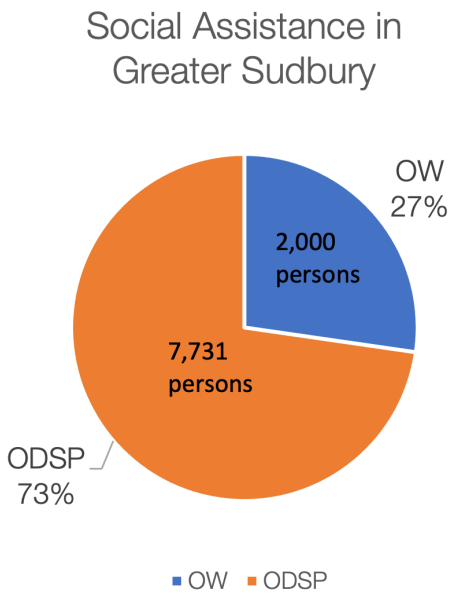
1.11 Communications Strategy - NIMBY-ism (Not in my Back Yard)

Develop a communications campaign to increase public awareness of the benefits of supportive and transitional housing and address the stigma associated with these programs.

1.12 Advocacy - Social Assistance Rates

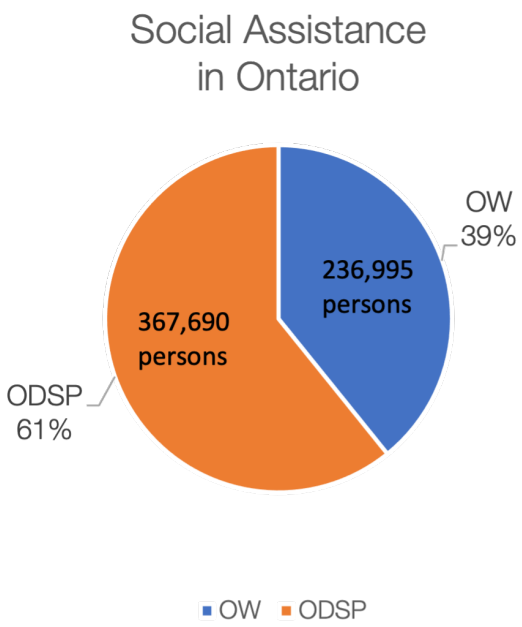
From the community consultation (Appendix C), community partners strongly recommended advocacy to the provincial government for improvements to income supports (OW and ODSP) to keep pace with inflation across the province. Therefore, it is recommended an advocacy strategy be developed to advocate to the provincial government to increase social assistance rates.

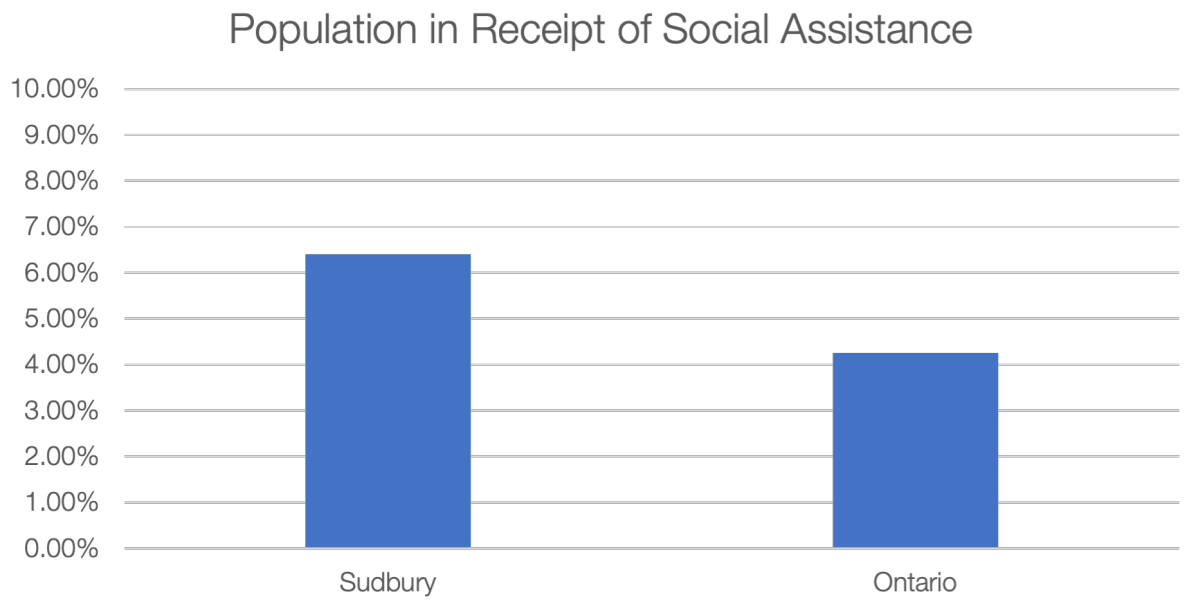
In Greater Sudbury, a greater percentage of individuals receiving social assistance were in receipt of ODSP (73 per cent) than OW (27 per cent) in 2023. Within Ontario, 61 per cent of individuals received ODSP and 39 per cent of individuals received Ontario Works.



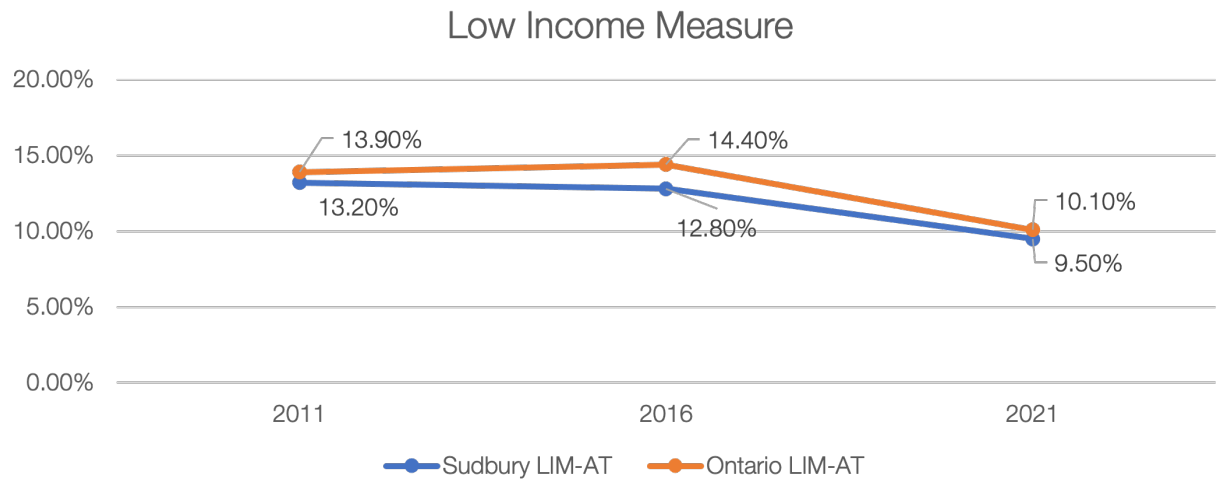
Homelessness Initiatives

In 2023, a greater percentage of the population in Greater Sudbury were receiving social assistance (6.4 per cent), in comparison to the province (4.3 per cent).





From the latest census data in 2021, 9.5 per cent of the Greater Sudbury population is identified as low-income under the Low-Income Measure (after tax), which is lower than the provincial percentage (10.1 per cent).



1.13 Strengthen Partnerships with Other Sectors to Improve Housing Conditions

Increase collaboration with law enforcement, By-law, and Public Health to address issues such as hoarding, pest control and poor building conditions to increase housing retention.

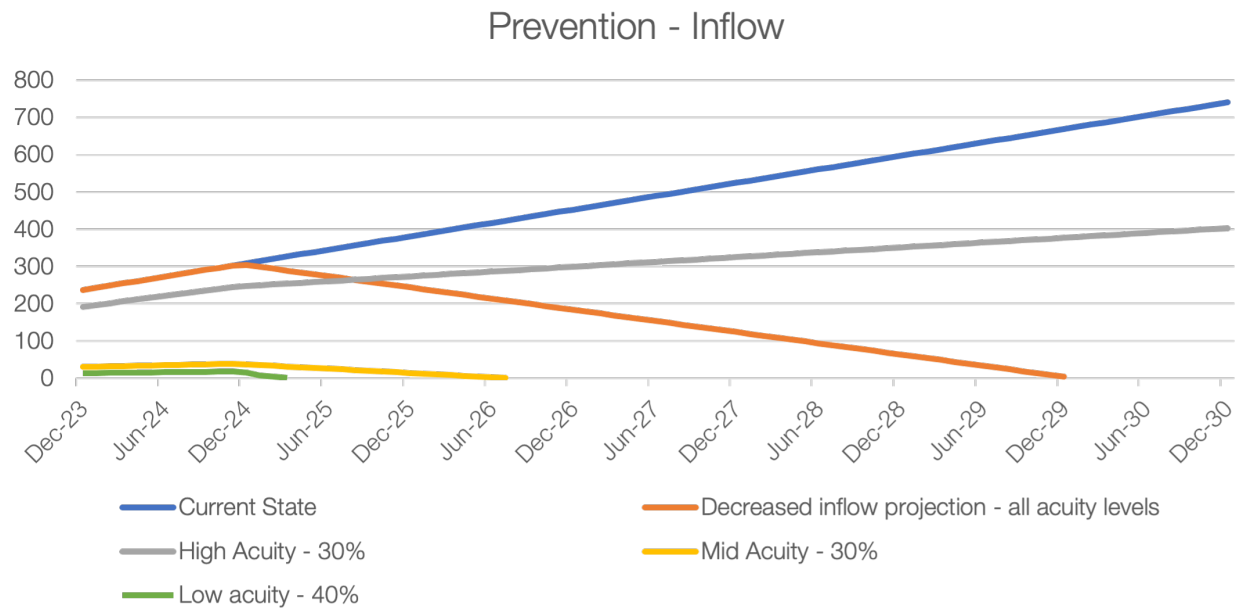
1.14 Advocacy – Regulation Changes for Rent Supplements

Advocate to the provincial government for regulation changes to rent supplement policies. The current policy outlines that rent supplements provided to individuals cannot exceed the average market rent as determined by CMHC. The current average market rate for a one-bedroom apartment in Greater Sudbury is $1,043 with a vacancy rate of 0.7 per cent. With the current market in Greater Sudbury, it is extremely difficult for an individual receiving social assistance to find an affordable housing unit.

A legal review is also recommended to determine whether additional rent supplements can be provided to meet current trends in the rental market.

1.15 Trend Line – Reduction in Homelessness Inflow (Prevention)

With the activities recommended above, it is estimated these interventions will decrease inflow into homelessness and support the overall reduction of homelessness in Greater Sudbury, as shown below for each acuity level:



Key Performance Indicators

Current:

- Number of individuals newly identified to the By-Name List
- Number of individuals supported with housing loss prevention through the CHPI program
- Number of individuals housed through community housing
- Number of individuals housed through the COHB benefit
- Number of individuals housed receiving a housing allowance through the Housing First program
- Number of individuals supported with housing loss prevention through City of Greater Sudbury Client Navigators

New:

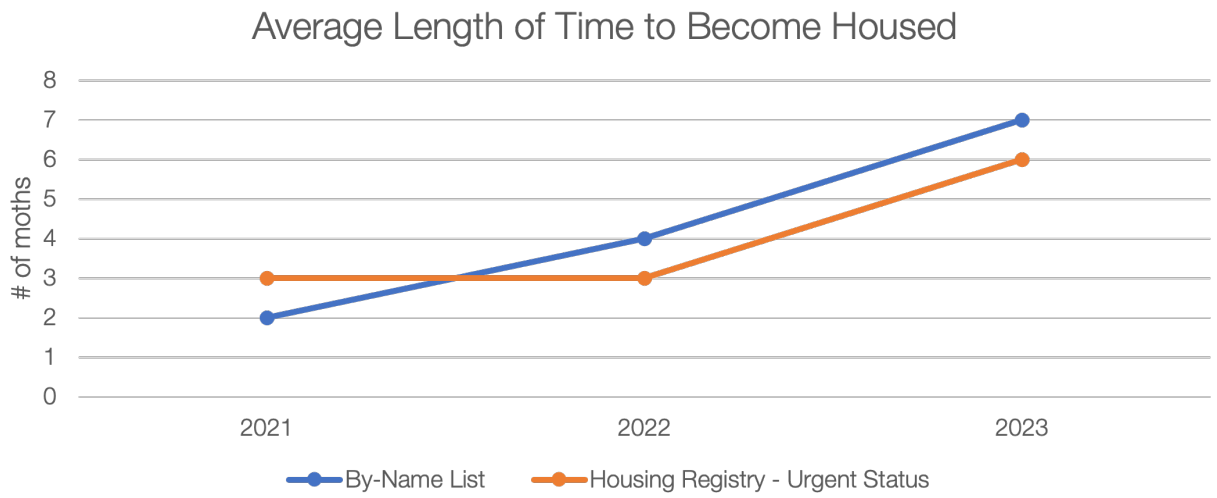
- Number of new affordable housing units developed
- Number of new deep core/RGI units developed
- Number of communications materials developed to address NIMBY-ism
- Number of individuals at risk of homelessness accessing the rent bank program
- Number of tenancies saved through homelessness prevention with the Community Legal Clinic

PILLAR 2: RAPID RE-HOUSING - What do we need to ensure homelessness is brief?

Within this pillar, implement strategies to identify people who are new to homelessness and re-house these individuals as quickly as possible.

There are no financial requests attached to this pillar. Recommended strategies can be completed with existing resources or achieved through Pillar Three recommendations.

As of December 31, 2023, the average time to become housed on the By-Name List was seven months. Similarly, the average time to become housed through the City of Greater Sudbury's Urgent Status waitlist was six months. Over the past few years, the length of time to become housed through these lists has increased significantly.



2.1 24-hour Emergency Shelter Models

Through the community consultation, community partners and individuals with lived experience were strongly supportive of a 24/7/365 emergency shelter model.
As mentioned above, three out of the four emergency shelter programs in Greater Sudbury operate overnight from 10 p.m. to 8 a.m. Due to the current operating hours of these shelters, partners who provide supports to individuals accessing shelters have difficulty connecting with these individuals to provide services when the shelter closes. Individuals accessing shelters also often have medical conditions and/or disabilities and face challenges during the day when shelters are closed.
There may be opportunities to integrate emergency shelter beds with transitional housing beds to increase access to more supportive housing models.

2.2 Strategy to Reduce Racism and Discrimination

A recommendation from the community consultation, is that a strategy to reduce racism and discrimination among the Black, Indigenous, and Other People of Colour (BIPOC) community is needed. Several

organizations noted concerns about members of the BIPOC community facing racism and discrimination when seeking to rent housing or access other services. This strategy should also include a focus on opportunities to increase "for Indigenous, by Indigenous" approaches to respond to homelessness and housing supports.

2.3 Identification Bank

Identification is required to access many housing and income support programs. Many people who are experiencing homelessness have lost their identification, and re-applying for ID can delay the return to permanent housing. A partnership with the Community Legal Clinic should be established to create an Identification Bank where individuals can safely store their ID to complete applications required for housing and other provincially funded supports.

2.4 Develop a Formalized Rapid Re-Housing Program

A more formalized Rapid Re-Housing program should be implemented to connect with individuals as soon as they enter the homelessness system and provide them with rapid re-housing supports. This type of program reduces the likelihood of the individual continuing to be homeless for six months or more and entering chronic homelessness, which often increases their complexity of needs. A dedicated rapid re-housing team in Greater Sudbury does not currently exist, however some of these supports are provided by City of Greater Sudbury Client Navigators. Through this recommendation, the existing use of bridge housing as part of the rapid re-housing response should be examined.

On an international level, the Critical Time Intervention (CTI) model for Rapid Re-Housing has proven to be effective in supporting individuals to return to housing[xxxiv]. The model is time-limited; the individual is supported with case management, housing identification and move-in assistance (pre-CTI phase), and supports are provided for six months following move in (phases 1, 2, and 3). The goal of CTI is to reduce the likelihood of individuals returning to homelessness following the intervention by connecting the individual with the community supports they require and focusing on improving factors that will help them maintain housing stability, including child care, financial benefits, employment, healthcare and education[xxxiv].

> "It is often observed that when people first present to shelter they are doing well, but as time passes and housing is not available, they start to decline… we often see the same people back again after they are housed due to being evicted due to lack of life skills these individuals are lacking such as how to handle their finances or how to properly take care of their apartment with proper cleanliness." – Shelter Staff (Homelessness Consultation 2021)

Key Performance Indicators

Current:

- Length of time to become housed on the By-Name List
- Length of time to become housed in community housing through Urgent Status
- Number of people supported to become housed through Client Navigators
- Number of people supported to become housed through flex funds
- Number of people supported to become housed through diversion supports
- Number of people supported to become housed through Bridge Housing
- Number of people accessing emergency shelter programs

New:

- Per cent of emergency shelters transitioned to a 24/7/365 model
- Number of individuals experiencing homelessness utilizing the identification bank program
- Number of individuals supported to become housed through rapid re-housing efforts

PILLAR 3: SUPPORTS - What do we need to ensure homelessness is non-recurring?

Within this pillar, strategies are recommended to ensure people who experience homelessness have access to housing with supports that meet their needs. People should not experience multiple episodes of homelessness. Individuals who are housed after an experience of homelessness should be supported to avoid returning to homelessness.

The estimated costs within this pillar through federal, provincial and municipal investments are $42.8M in capital costs and an additional $14.04M annually in operating costs for support services. Further details are provided in Appendix A.

3.1 Supportive Housing

The current data shows that most people experiencing homelessness in our community are experiencing chronic homelessness and have identified as high acuity, requiring additional supports to obtain and maintain their housing. There is a need to have housing that is permanent, with 24/7 supports on site and deeply affordable for individuals' experiencing homelessness with the most complex and often co-occurring needs. The collaboration between housing and health care services needs to be strengthened to plan, develop and invest in housing with the right level of supports.

The development of two 40-unit supportive housing builds is recommended to meet the current need of individuals experiencing homelessness with high acuity on the By-Name List. Evidence highlights that "permanent supportive housing is an effective intervention for stably housing most people experiencing homelessness and mental illness who have complex support needs"[xxxv].

3.2 Advocacy – Investment in Supportive Housing

Given the high acuity of individuals experiencing homelessness in the community, develop an advocacy strategy to advocate to the provincial government to increase investments in supportive housing programs to support individuals with complex needs to maintain their housing and receive the supports they require.

3.3 Transitioning Emergency Shelter Models

Opportunities should be explored to transition some existing emergency shelter models into 24-hour transitional housing units, wherever possible. Evidence suggests there are no additional benefits to the provision of emergency accommodation besides "temporary, generally unpleasant, sometimes unsafe, respite from the elements and the provision of basic sustenance for people experiencing homelessness"[i].

In Finland, an eight-year project focused on ending long-term homelessness through a large investment in housing for the homeless (2,500 new units) and staff to support the population within these units (350 new staff) [xxxvi]. Within this project, emergency shelters were replaced by modern housing units, favouring "Housing First" principles over emergency shelters, and the quality and safety of housing units were improved. Through this project, long-term homelessness has significantly decreased in the country by 71 per cent between 2008 and 2020[xxxvii].

3.4 Strengthen Community Engagement Approaches within Greater Sudbury's Community Housing units.

Following recommendations from the community housing report entitled, "Think Big, Act Together" (Appendix D), strategies for community engagement approaches that will allow community housing residents to thrive should be implemented.

3.5 Transitional Housing for Priority Populations:

a. Indigenous-Led Housing

Through the community consultation, recommendations included the development of culturally appropriate and safe Indigenous-led housing, including transitional and supportive housing. Evidence suggests that Indigenous-led programming improves holistic outcomes for Indigenous peoples and increases the uptake of programs among this population[xxxviii].

The development of a 40-unit supportive transitional housing program in partnership with an Indigenous-led program is recommended to meet the current need.

b. Youth Housing

The community consultation recommended the development of transitional housing programs for youth. There are currently no transitional housing programs for youth available in Greater Sudbury. From the Point-in-Time Count in 2021, 52 per cent of respondents reported they experienced homelessness before the age of 25, indicating the importance of preventing youth homelessness and supports to exit out of homelessness to support their life-long trajectory[iv].

The purchase of a purpose-built building to develop a 24-hour youth transitional housing program with emergency shelter beds for youth aged 16 to 24 is recommended, as evidence highlights transitional housing programs are linked with an increase in housing stability for youth experiencing homelessness[xxxix].

c. Other Priority Populations

There are several other priority populations that would benefit from purpose-built transitional or supportive housing, including seniors, women fleeing violence and newcomers. The City should continue to seek opportunities to partner with community groups to increase housing supply for priority populations.

3.6 Projections – Outflow (Exits out of Homelessness)

With the Lorraine Street and the Peace Tower projects becoming available later this year, outflow out of the homelessness system is expected to increase by 78 persons by December 2024. With the implementation of the additional recommendations above, it is projected these interventions will increase outflow out of homelessness and contribute to reaching functional zero homelessness.

Key Performance Indicators

Current:

- Number of people housed in the ACTT-3 Transitional Housing program
- Number of people who successfully transition to community housing/private market following participation in the ACTT-3 program
- Number of people supported to become housed through the Housing First program
- Number of people who successfully transition out of the Housing First program
- Number of people who return to homelessness on the By-Name List
- Number of people housed in Healing with Hope

New:

- Per cent of emergency shelter spaces converted to transitional housing units
- Number of engagement opportunities created for community housing tenants
- Number of new transitional housing units developed
- Number of new supportive housing units developed

PILLAR 4: SYSTEM LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS

Within this pillar, strategies are recommended to ensure the housing and homeless system is working in collaboration with key stakeholders to meets the needs of the community.

Recommended strategies within this pillar have minor costs associated and can be completed with existing resources.

4.1 Health, Homelessness and Housing Integrated Planning and Operations Table

Recommendations from the community consultation included the development of a Health, Homelessness and Housing Integrated Planning and Operations table, including representatives from the homelessness, housing and health sectors. The Planning and Operations table will support integrated system planning, advocate to the federal and provincial levels of government on priority areas, collaborate on system level recommendations, increase understanding of respective systems and limitations and develop and deliver complementary activities when engaging with the same population. The table will provide advice and guidance on expenditures for capital and operating costs resulting from federal, provincial and municipal contributions related to this plan. The development of an Integrated Planning and Operations table maximizes collective impact to achieve population and systems level change across the community.

4.2 Lived Experience Advisory Group ("Nothing About Us Without Us")

The development of an advisory group of people with lived experience to advise on homelessness system planning was recommended through the community consultation. The ability to include perspectives from individuals with lived experience in multi-sectoral collaboration has been identified as a core principle to effective practices within the social services sector[xl]. By including perspectives of individuals with lived experience, systems are better able to understand the conditions effecting the homeless population, develop solutions that are most appropriate and consider unintended harmful impacts by proposed interventions[xli].

4.3 Support Indigenous Healing and Well Being

Under the lens of homelessness, Indigenous partners require support to promote healing and wellness within their community. This includes increased awareness, building trusting partnerships and supporting Indigenous-led agencies to develop their solutions. Examples of recommended strategies include supporting Indigenous-led agencies in their homelessness planning, investing in Indigenous-led housing programs, providing on-site cultural programming within the homelessness serving sector, hiring elders and/or other knowledge keepers within programs, requiring staff training on Indigenous awareness for all services providers and strengthening partnerships with Indigenous-led agencies.

4.4 Workforce Strategy

As recommended in the community consultation, a workforce strategy is needed to attract and retain skilled staff within the homelessness and housing sector. The ability to recruit and retain staff within the sector has been an ongoing challenge to program delivery in Greater Sudbury since the pandemic. Opportunities can be explored to provide required training for people with lived experience to acquire job readiness skills to enter the workforce.

4.5 Trauma-informed Approach

There are a number of individuals experiencing homelessness within Greater Sudbury with high acuity with whom service providers face difficulty building trust in order to provide housing support services, including intake to the By-Name List. For example, as of February 21, 2024, there were 99 individuals residing in encampments across the community, 44 per cent of whom have not consented to be added to the By-Name List for housing supports. A trauma-informed response is required to service provision to build relationships with these individuals to support them to obtain and maintain their housing. To provide a trauma-informed response, training opportunities should be available to internal staff and service delivery partners whenever possible to increase engagement with individuals experiencing homelessness and those who are at-risk.

Key Performance Indicators

New:

- Number of training sessions provided to staff on trauma-informed approaches
- Per cent of staff within the sector participating in training on trauma informed approaches
- Number of individuals with lived experiencing participating in the advisory group
- Number of agencies reporting increased recruitment/retention of staff within their agency
- Number of Indigenous-led housing programs developed
- Per cent of staff who have received cultural competency training

Risk Management

The recommendations outlined in this plan include a number of investments in funding for priority areas that are outside the control of the municipality and lie with the federal and provincial levels of government. Though this plan includes recommendations for advocacy efforts, there is a risk that the required funding will not be received to meet the demand within the provided timeline. A commitment from all levels of government is required to ensure success of this plan.

The failure to invest in housing options presents a significant risk to the overall health of the community. The physical and mental health of unhoused individuals significantly decreases the longer they experience homelessness. Individuals experiencing homelessness use significantly more emergency resources, including emergency management services, police calls, emergency department visits, longer hospital stays, increased stays in corrections and fire safety calls. There is also a risk of increased calls to police and by-law services from concerned citizens on the increase of visible encampments and social issues within their neighbourhoods.

To mitigate these risks, the City will need to advocate to higher levels of government to obtain the required commitments and long-term investments to achieve functional zero homelessness by 2030 and create a healthy community for all. The City will also need to invest in this plan by supporting with financial commitments and in-kind assets, seeking out and pursuing funding opportunities as they become available, collaborating with community partners and other sectors, supporting flexibility within legislative requirements and measuring and reporting progress transparently and frequently.

Outcomes

Through the achievement of recommendations detailed in this report, it is expected these strategies will achieve desired outcomes as supported by corresponding evidence. Key performance indicators, as well as short-, intermediate-, and long-term outcomes will continuously be monitored, evaluated and reported throughout the implementation of this plan. Key outcomes for this plan include:

Reduction in the Number of People Experiencing Homelessness

- Number of people who become homeless each month (newly identified) is reduced to functional zero
- Number of people who return to homelessness each month is reduced to functional zero
- Number of people actively homeless is reduced to functional zero

Housing Stability

- Per cent of individuals who remain housed after 12 months
- Per cent of individuals who successfully transition from supportive housing programs to independent living (e.g., Housing First, ACTT)

Employment Rates

- Per cent of individuals participating in supportive housing programs who are enrolled in job training programs or achieve employment

Health Outcomes

- Improved health outcomes among population (e.g., reduced emergency department visits by individuals with no fixed address, improved mental health assessments within supportive housing programs)

Program Utilization and Efficiency

- Length of time to become housed is reduced
- Per cent of successful housing placements in supportive housing programs is increased

Further outcomes are detailed in a Logic Model in Appendix E.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Following the presentation of this report to City Council, Community Development staff will follow direction from Council to implement the recommendations included in this report. A progress report will be presented semi-annually to the Community Services Committee on progress towards implementing these recommendations and reaching functional zero homelessness.

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Homelessness Initiatives

Initiatives en matière de sans-abrisme

Greater Sudbury's Roadmap to Ending Homelessness

greatersudbury.ca/homelessness