National Housing Collaborative Homelessness Options Research Paper

Prepared by: Kelly Pasolli, Molly Doan, & Karen Myers

Social Research and Demonstration Corporation

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Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to identify and analyze federal policy options for preventing and reducing homelessness across Canada. The paper is one of a series of Options Papers developed for the National Housing Collaborative (NHC). The NHC is a multi-stakeholder initiative to generate and advocate for the inclusion of critical ideas and policies to guide the renewed federal role in affordable housing. In addition to homelessness, the NHC is pursuing analysis in three related areas:

- **Affordability** – Options for providing direct financial assistance to renters to address affordability

- **Supply** – Options for increasing new supply and ensuring maintenance of existing affordable rental housing

- **Social housing** – Options for supporting social housing providers in the context of operating agreement expiry

Recommendations from each area will be integrated into the NHC's final submission to the Federal government to inform the National Housing Strategy.

Background and context

The federal government has made considerable investments in learning what works to reduce homelessness and supporting communities as they implement and expand local services and supports. While much has been learned and accomplished through these investments, homelessness remains a significant issue in communities across Canada. Gaetz et al. (2014) estimate that approximately 235,000 Canadians experience homelessness each year, and over 35,000 are homeless on an average night. These numbers are only a rough estimate as there is no means in place today to enumerate and track homelessness.

The majority of Canadians who experience homelessness are homeless for a short period of time (less than one month). A smaller but significant proportion (between 13,000 and 33,000 Canadians) are chronically or episodically homeless, meaning that they have been without housing for an extended period or have moved in and out of homelessness multiple times. Many additional households are also at risk of becoming homeless due to a lack of affordable housing or other issues that affect housing security, such as sudden unemployment, eviction, the break-up of households due to violence or abuse, and mental illness.

The homeless population is diverse. Single adult males between ages 25 and 55 make up almost half of the homeless population in Canada, and youth make up approximately one-fifth. While exact numbers are not available, Indigenous Canadians are over-represented in the national homeless population.

Effectively preventing and reducing homelessness across Canada requires a systematic approach that addresses the diverse needs of the homeless and at-risk populations. Recognizing this, the Federal government has identified homelessness as a key priority for the National Housing Strategy. In envisioning the strategy, the Government of Canada reaffirmed their belief that "all Canadians deserve access to housing that meets their needs and that they can afford." In particular, the Federal government has stated the strategy "must improve the lives of those in greatest need," including those who are homeless.

The Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) is a key federal lever for ending homelessness. The HPS is a community-based program that provides direct support and funding to communities across Canada to prevent and reduce homelessness (see Box 1 for additional information). But while the HPS is an important support with presence in 61 communities across Canada (Londerville & Steele, 2014), it has not achieved a meaningful reduction in homelessness over the history of the program.

There is growing awareness that over the past decade, too much emphasis has been placed on managing homelessness by relying on emergency services and supports rather than developing coordinated prevention and rapid re-housing strategies. This reliance on remedial approaches is costly. Gaetz et al. (2014) estimate that more than $7 billion is spent annually on remedial services, such as homeless shelters and day programs, and a myriad of costs associated with long-term physical and mental health issues and justice system involvement.

While these costs are staggering, there is good reason to be hopeful. Several studies, most notably the Canadian *At Home/Chez Soi* project, have proven that the 'Housing First' approach is effective in reducing homelessness. We also know that ending homelessness is more cost-effective than allowing it to continue. Several recent, high-profile studies have demonstrated that connecting homeless individuals with housing and ongoing support services produces significant cost savings through the reduced need for emergency and other trauma-related services.

Building on this game-changing insight, several Canadian cities have begun to make significant, measurable progress toward reducing homelessness by implementing community system plans that ensure that local systems are working together and focused on ending homelessness.

Research objectives and scope

Given this context, this paper focuses on identifying opportunities to increase the effectiveness of investments to address homelessness by incorporating new evidence-based and promising approaches within the current framework of the HPS. Drawing on the work of the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, and other research and learnings on homelessness in Canada, we identify two avenues for preventing and reducing homelessness in Canada.

First, we recommend that the Federal government set a national goal of ending homelessness and use data to monitor progress towards that goal. Given the strength of the knowledge base and the effectiveness of the HPS as a vehicle for addressing

homelessness across Canada, there is an opportunity for the Federal government to outline a clear commitment to national progress on homelessness. Second, we recommend that the Federal government renew, refocus and expand the HPS with a commitment to implementing evidence-based and promising approaches and establishing the necessary elements to facilitate the success of Housing First across homeless-serving systems in Canada.

We recognize that to end homelessness in the long term, a multi-system approach is needed. The goal of ending homelessness is closely linked to broader poverty reduction efforts and social policy reforms. Preventing and reducing homelessness also requires a significant investment to increase the supply of affordable housing, as well as financial assistance to individuals and households who are in housing need. These measures will help both to prevent homelessness, and ensure that those who are currently homelessness have access to affordable housing solutions. Specific policy options in these areas are addressed in the Affordability, Supply, and Social Housing Options Papers.

Organization of this paper

This paper is organized into two sections:

1. **Recommendations and analysis** – Describes the recommendations and the supporting research and analysis

2. **Additional considerations** – Identifies important additional considerations for implementing the recommendations

Box 1   Homelessness Partnering Strategy

The Homelessness Partnering Strategy was launched in 2006 to support 61 designated communities across Canada to invest in proven approaches to reduce homelessness. In addition to the 61 designated communities, the HPS also provides targeted funding to organizations focused on addressing Indigenous homelessness and to other rural and remote communities. The HPS is designed to strengthen community capacity to implement long-term solutions to homelessness.

HPS funds flow directly to local communities. Each community identifies local priorities through a comprehensive planning process involving multiple stakeholders, and submits a plan identifying how funds will be used to prevent and reduce homelessness. Local Community Advisory Boards in each community allocate the funds according to this plan.

In 2013, the federal government committed almost $600 million for the renewal of the HPS for five years (2014-19). The renewed strategy identified Housing First as a key priority, ensuring that HPS activities are focused on providing direct access to permanent housing for the chronically and episodically homeless.

Recommendations and analysis

We identify two recommendations for addressing homelessness at the national level, drawing from the recommendations developed by the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness in their forthcoming *State of Homelessness 2016* report (CAEH, forthcoming). These options are designed as complementary approaches that work together to strengthen the national response to homelessness.

Recommendation 1 - Adopt a national goal of ending homelessness

The federal government should adopt a national goal of ending homelessness with clear and measurable outcomes, and track progress towards this goal. The Federal government has made substantial investments in learning what works to prevent and reduce homelessness in Canada. Findings and lessons learned from projects such as the *At Home/Chez Soi* demonstration have informed the Homeless Partnering Strategy to help ensure that communities are moving forward with effective, innovative solutions that lead to meaningful progress towards ending homelessness.

To demonstrate the difference that investments in homelessness prevention and reduction have made in communities across Canada, the National Housing Strategy (and renewed Homelessness Partnering Strategy) should include a measurable, time-bound goal of ending homelessness in Canada with clear milestones and indicators to track progress. The National Housing Strategy should set clear criteria with respect to how the goal and milestones are defined and how outcomes are measured[1]. Given the strength of our knowledge of what works and the government's renewed commitment to ensuring all Canadians have access to housing, now is the right time for the Federal government to adopt a national goal of ending homelessness.

Many provinces and local jurisdictions have already moved ahead with their own plans to end homelessness with clearly defined goals and targets. For example, Ontario recently set an aggressive target to end chronic homelessness within 10 years. Calgary also implemented a 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness that set clear milestones with respect to annual decreases in the total homeless population and the length of time between an individual visiting a shelter and being moved into permanent housing. Similarly, Medicine Hat successfully implemented a 5 year plan to decrease the amount of time individuals spend in the emergency shelter system before obtaining housing. There are also plans to end homelessness in place in Victoria, Calgary, Edmonton, Red Deer, Lethbridge, Grande Prairie, Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, the Province of Alberta, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Montreal, St. John's, and Fredericton.

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[1] The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (COH), the University of Calgary School of Public Policy (SPP), and the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH) have begun a collaborative process to develop a national definition of an end to homelessness. Through this process, these organizations are aiming to outline critical measures needed to confirm an end to homelessness and propose a set of indicators based on an international review of targets and on-the-ground experience of communities working in this direction. See http://www.homelesshub.ca/functionalzero for additional information

The Federal government could leverage insights from the experience of these communities to develop ambitious, actionable goals and strategies for preventing and reducing homelessness at the national level.

System-wide data collection, measurement, and management is critically important within the context of a National Housing Strategy because it will enable the government to track progress towards goals and milestones. Without accurate data and measurement, the federal government will be making significant investments without the information necessary to target these investments and understand their impact. System-wide data is also crucial for understanding how many people are homeless in Canada, who they are, where they are, what their needs are, and how they move through different systems.

The renewed Homelessness Partnering Strategy should include a national measurement strategy for the collection of *real-time, person specific information*. Real-time data will provide stakeholders and all levels of government with a much more accurate understanding of the outcomes achieved as a result of Homeless Partnering Strategy and National Housing Strategy investments.

The collection, measurement, and management strategy should include the following:

- Clear definitions and criteria for real-time reporting on the number of people who are homeless, their demographic characteristics and needs, and the duration and causes of their homelessness to build common language among providers and stakeholders

- Capacity to track the services individuals in the homeless-serving system receive over time and capture the differences that these services make. Stakeholders should be able to use this data locally to improve service delivery and ensure individuals who are homeless receive the services they need and are connected to supports to help them maintain permanent housing.

- Capacity to report and analyze nation-wide data to identify promising approaches and share best practices with jurisdictions across Canada

- Ability to aggregate local data to track process towards ending homelessness

The Homelessness Partnering Strategy has made some important first steps towards developing a system-wide data strategy, but more can be done to strengthen efforts across Canada. The HPS currently promotes data collection through biennial national Point-in-Time (PiT) counts and the National Homelessness Information System initiative, with the first national PiT count planned for 2018. PiT counts provide a snapshot of homelessness in a given community, but they are limited in their ability to measure progress over time and provide information about the depth of need. To iterate towards real-time data collection, the government could expand and adapt the National Homeless Information System, build on the example of Calgary's Homelessness Management Information System or leverage initiatives like the 20,000 Homes Campaign where 38 communities from coast to coast are implementing 'By Name Lists' – processes for real-time, person-specific data collection.

Recommendation 2 – Renew, refocus and expand the HPS

To make progress towards the goal of ending homelessness, the Federal government should renew, refocus and expand the HPS. Building on the significant investments made over the last ten years, the Federal government has an opportunity to more closely align the HPS with a growing body of international evidence on what works to prevent and reduce homelessness.

We highlight five areas of focus for a renewed HPS: funding, continued commitment to Housing First, a community systems planning approach, a focus on homelessness prevention, and using data and research. These five areas have been identified by the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness as key strategies for strengthening the HPS in their forthcoming *State of Homelessness 2016* report (CAEH, forthcoming).

Funding

The current HPS was renewed in 2014 for a five year period until 2019. The 2016 federal budget announced a time-limited 40% increase in annual HPS funding of $55.9 million for a period of two years. Prior to this increase, funding for the Homelessness Partnering Strategy had stagnated relative to inflation. More funding is needed to accelerate progress in preventing and reducing homelessness. Long-term funding commitments are vital to ensuring that the most vulnerable Canadians - those experiencing chronic and episodic homelessness – continue to receive high-quality services and supports needed to maintain stable housing.

Maintain commitment to Housing First

Housing First is an approach to addressing homelessness that focuses on providing direct access, without pre-conditions, to permanent, safe, appropriate and affordable housing for individuals facing homelessness, and providing them with additional services and supports as needed. Box 2 outlines the principles that underpin the Housing First approach.

Several studies have demonstrated that Housing First is effective in reducing homelessness. The most extensive study of the effects of Housing First, the *At Home/Chez Soi* project, was funded by the Mental Health Commission of Canada. The project used a randomized control trial design to assess the effectiveness of a Housing First approach by comparing the outcomes of participants in Housing First programs to other individuals who received "treatment as usual." Over 2,000 participants in five cities (Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal and Moncton) participated in the project. The results demonstrated that those participating in Housing First were much more likely to be in housing after one year than those who received treatment as usual. These results were consistent across all five cities (Goering et al., 2014). In addition to successful housing outcomes, participants in Housing First experienced greater increases in quality of life and community functioning than those receiving treatment as usual. The increased security and well-being of Housing First participants resulted in significant cost savings to government from deferred service use in other areas, demonstrating that Housing First is a sound investment.

Housing First approaches have proven to be successful on a larger scale as well. The Alberta government adopted a Housing First strategy as part of its 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness. The province provides funding to community organizations to implement the strategy, which to date has resulted in 10,000 homeless individuals obtaining stable housing.

In addition to its proven effectiveness in addressing homelessness, Housing First is generally viewed as a desirable strategy from a human rights perspective because of the emphasis on client autonomy and choice (see Box 2).

Housing First is an important strategy for the Federal government because it is a low cost way to quickly achieve reductions in homelessness. Housing First investments ensure that individuals can access housing within months of funding being delivered to a community. When combined with accurate, person-specific data that can be used to quickly identify target recipients, Housing First is highly effective way of achieving short-term reductions in homelessness.

The Federal government has already incorporated a strong focus on Housing First into the HPS. As of April 2015, the largest community partners in the HPS are required to invest at least 65% of their funding in Housing First activities. This commitment should be maintained and strengthened over time, and supported through additional resources, training, and technical support for communities to ensure they have the know-how and capacity to implement the Housing First model. For additional discussion of how the Federal government can support communities to successfully implement Housing First approaches, see the "Community systems planning approach" section below.

The HPS should also support efforts to develop and test adaptations of Housing First to serve specific target populations and communities. While Housing First has had positive results for participants with diverse backgrounds, variations may be warranted to adjust for the specific needs of families, women fleeing violence, seniors, veterans, Indigenous people, and other groups. For example, Gaetz (2014) has developed a Housing First for Youth framework that outlines how Housing First programs can be adapted to incorporate a youth development orientation. The successful *At Home/Chez Soi* project site in Winnipeg adapted the Housing First model to effective serve Indigenous Canadians by including traditional teachers in services and programming and integrating an Indigenous holistic approach. The HPS should invest in implementing, evaluating and scaling up promising approaches for delivering Housing First to specific sub-populations to understand how Housing First can serve all Canadians all effectively.

Box 2   Principles of Housing First

1. **Immediate access to housing with no preconditions** – Clients obtain access to safe, secure and permanent housing as quickly as possible, and there is no requirement to demonstrate that they are "ready" for housing.

2. **Consumer choice and self-determination** – Housing First is a rights-based, client-centered approach that allows clients to exercise some choice in the location and type of housing and the services they receive.

3. **Recovery orientation** – Housing First supports individual well-being through social, recreational, educational, occupational and vocational activities and provides access to a harm reduction environment for those who need it.

4. **Individualized and client-driven supports** – Individuals have access to a wide range of support services, such as mental health needs or life skills, that are tailored to individual need.

5. **Social and community integration** – Housing does not stigmatize or isolate clients, and they have opportunities for social and cultural engagement.

Adapted from Homeless Hub, 2016

Community systems planning approach

In order for Housing First approaches to be effective, the key principles of Housing First must be applied across all homeless-serving systems. A key lesson learned from the *At Home/Chez Soi* demonstration is that "to fully address the complexity of chronic homelessness in our communities, strong leadership and partnerships across departments, sectors, government and communities is needed to build bridges across fragmented systems and programs." (Goering et al., 2014). To ensure Housing First is having an impact, a community systems planning approach is needed that brings together a wide range of community stakeholders to establish common goals, share information, and deliver evidence-based solutions to address homelessness.

Many Canadian (and U.S.) cities that have achieved significant reductions in homelessness (including Edmonton, Calgary, Red Deer, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat and Hamilton) have developed and implemented coordinated local systems. These systems feature community plans focused on preventing and ending homelessness, coordinated access processes, agreed prioritization criteria, the effective use of data to make decisions and track progress, and strong, dedicated local leadership. These communities are all working toward creating integrated community service systems that involve both the homelessness sector and other mainstream services to address the multiple social issues that accompany homelessness. As part of these strategies, some communities have adopted a "no wrong door approach" that ensures assessment and prioritization are handled consistently no matter where an individual enters the homeless serving system. Box 3 provides more information on community systems plans in three Canadian communities.

Turner (2014) outlines the essential elements of successful community system planning approaches:

- **Planning and strategy development:** Community plans need to move beyond distributing federal funding to integrating a systems framework, grounded in Housing First philosophy.

- **Organizational infrastructure:** Essential system leadership and coordination infrastructure must be in place to meet the goals set out in the community plans

- **System mapping:** An assessment of the existing services, against a framework of best practice in system planning, to understand where there are gaps and redundancies in the system

- **Co-ordinated service delivery:** Facilitate common access points, assessment tools and flow-through to respond to the needs of the client

- **Integrated information management:** Allows coordinated systems delivery through shared data, as well as simplified intakes and referrals

- **Performance management and quality assurance:** Ensure that programs and systems are achieving optimal outcomes

- **Systems integration:** The homelessness sector works collaboratively with public systems and services such as health, child welfare, criminal justice, domestic violence and poverty reduction

Although the Homelessness Partnering Strategy currently recognizes the importance of community planning and service collaboration, a stronger emphasis should be placed on system co-ordination by requiring and supporting HPS-funded communities to implement community system plans with these essential elements. This requirement would complement the efforts that many local and provincial jurisdictions are already undertaking to integrate and co-ordinate service delivery throughout their homeless-serving systems.

Box 3   Examples of effective community system plans in Canadian jurisdictions

Medicine Hat

In 2009, Medicine Hat implemented a five-year plan to end chronic homelessness by ensuring that no one would have to spend more than 10 days in a homeless shelter before obtaining access to stable housing and supports. Led by the Medicine Hat Community Housing Society (MHCHS), the city worked to implement a systems-wide response by bringing together multiple community stakeholders to establish common goals and implement consistent policies and procedures. To support the systems approach, community partners developed a coordinated intake and assessment process and rigorous performance management systems that have been adopted across the homeless-serving system. In addition, MHCHS has worked with the health, police and justice systems to identify shared priorities and increase collaboration. In 2015, Medicine Hat reported that they had achieved their goal of ending chronic homelessness, and that overall shelter usage had decreased by 41% since 2009.

Red Deer

Red Deer currently has in place a plan to end homelessness by 2018. A key objective of the plan is to bring together stakeholders and service providers and develop coordinated policies and programs to address and prevent homelessness. A key player in this effort is the Red Deer Housing Team, a unique partnership between multiple agencies delivering support services for those facing homelessness including the Central Alberta Women's Outreach Society and the Canadian Mental Health Association. Homeless individuals served the Housing Team receive permanent supportive housing and partnership supports in an integrated system of services for clients.

Hamilton

Hamilton launched a strategic plan to address homelessness in 2007 focused on moving vulnerable citizens into affordable long-term housing. The plan framework focuses on engaging the entire community in addressing homelessness in order to provide a continuum of supports and services to help all clients. The new strategies implemented under the plan included an integrated case management approach in which clients can obtain referrals and linkages to appropriate services and supports, no matter where they are served.

As part of the 20,000 Homes Campaign, Hamilton also conducted an extensive survey of the homeless population through a "Registry Week" to gain a better understanding of the needs of homeless individuals and families and inform program planning and investments. In addition, Hamilton is working to develop a "by-name list" with real-time information about the needs of those experiencing homelessness. This list will facilitate community coordination and prioritization of resources so that the most vulnerable individuals receive the help they need.

Develop a homelessness prevention framework

Homelessness prevention focuses on providing supports and services to people at-risk of homelessness to ensure access to safe, affordable housing. Preventing homelessness requires a coordinated approach that recognizes and addresses the "upstream" issues that lead to homelessness, including a lack of affordable housing and complex social needs that contribute to precarious housing situations.

Homelessness prevention typically involves three types of interventions:

Primary prevention – Interventions targeted at communities or specific at-risk groups to reduce the risks of homelessness and address problems that may eventually contribute to homelessness, such as educational programs, early childhood supports, and anti-violence campaigns.

Secondary prevention – Strategies that target people at risk of, or who have recently become homelessness. These strategies include policy and service practice reforms to stop the flow of individuals from the health, child protection and corrections systems into homelessness, as well as interventions to help households retain their housing or become rapidly rehoused.

Tertiary prevention – Services and supports for the previously homeless to ensure that once they move into housing, they are stable and secure, reducing the likelihood of homelessness occurring again. Housing First is an important strategy for tertiary prevention.

Implementing effective strategies for homelessness prevention through a new prevention framework will reduce the flow of individuals and families into homelessness, relieving pressure on current systems and services. Homelessness prevention can also produce cost savings for government by reducing the need for emergency services and other services that address the traumatic effects of homelessness. Several studies have demonstrated that the costs of providing emergency services to the homelessness are much higher than the costs associated with ensuring access to affordable housing. In a review of the costs of homelessness in four Canadian cities (Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal and Halifax), Pomeroy calculated that the average cost of emergency services (including health and correctional services, and shelter stays) for homeless individuals ranges from $79,000 to $162,000, while the cost of providing affordable or supportive housing ranges from $5,000-$18,000 (Pomeroy, 2005). Another study in Toronto tracked the cost of providing medical and psychiatric services for both housed and homeless patients in Toronto, and found that after adjusting for additional patient characteristics, the average cost of services for homeless patients was $2,559 higher than costs for housed patients (Hwang et al., 2011).

To support homelessness prevention, the Federal government should develop a framework outlining goals, principles, and concrete strategies for preventing homelessness. The framework should be developed in collaboration with communities and government organizations at the federal, provincial and territorial levels, recognizing that multiple systems and services need to work together to achieve homelessness prevention. This federal framework will provide leadership and guidance on effective

strategies for homelessness prevention and support communities to integrate prevention strategies into their homelessness strategies.

Use data and research to target investment, make decisions and track progress

Achieving success through the HPS requires the Federal government and partners to know what works (and what does not work) to prevent and reduce homelessness. Given this, the HPS should incorporate a strong focus on research, including the following elements:

- **Basic research** on the causes, lived experiences and solutions of homelessness, including research on different models for preventing homelessness and effective strategies for serving specific subgroups within the homelessness population to contribute to better policy and practice.

- **Program evaluation and demonstration projects** to test innovative strategies and practices, including community systems planning approaches, adaptations of Housing First for target populations, and prevention initiatives, to learn what works and drive continuous improvement.

- **Knowledge mobilization** to support the sharing of research findings and promising practices within and among communities.

The HPS currently supports research activities and sharing of promising practices so that communities have the information needed to design effective plans to address homelessness. The Federal government should continue to support and expand upon these activities to drive innovation in policy and service delivery and grow the knowledge base about what works to address homelessness in Canada.

Additional considerations

In this section, we provide a high-level discussion of additional considerations related to the implementation of these recommendations. We focus on two key considerations: federal, provincial, territorial and municipal roles and responsibilities, and targeted strategies for specific groups.

Federal, provincial, territorial and municipal roles

Any strategy to prevent and reduce homelessness should reflect the reality that homelessness and homeless systems are ultimately local or regional in nature. Strong local leadership in investment planning and allocation and coordinated local systems, combined with support from higher levels of government, are critical success factors in jurisdictions where homelessness reductions have been achieved.

Provincial and territorial governments are directly involved in providing many programs and services that are closely related to homelessness such as health care, mental health and addictions, income supports and child protection services. Many of these services are particularly important for homelessness prevention since they address the upstream causes of homelessness.

Given this context, the Federal should engage provinces, territories and municipal government in efforts to address homelessness, ensuring that federal, provincial, territorial and local efforts are integrated and coordinated. This goal could be achieved through a federal, provincial and territorial framework for addressing housing and homelessness to clarify the roles and responsibilities of different partners and establish guidelines for federal investment in housing. HPS Community Plans could be the basis for the articulation of this relationship on the ground.

Targeted strategies for specific groups

Homeless individuals and families in Canada are diverse and have a wide range of needs and challenges. Strategies to address homelessness need to take into account the unique needs of specific subpopulations, including youth, veterans, and Indigenous Canadians. To achieve this, the Federal government could consider:

- Implementing specific strategies and goals to address homelessness for priority groups

- Identifying and testing specific service approaches and housing supports that are tailored to the needs of specific population groups

- Pursuing and strengthening partnerships with other organizations that serve priority subgroups including Veterans Affairs Canada and the Ministry of Indigenous and Northern Affairs

Solutions to address homelessness for specific groups should involve collaboration with community leaders and experts to accurately identify needs and promising approaches.

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