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# Safe at Home

A Community-Based Action Plan to  
**End and Prevent Homelessness**  
In Whitehorse, Yukon

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September 30, 2017

“A Plan, Not a Dream is a declaration that we, as Canadians, are no longer willing to accept as inevitable the homelessness of any of our neighbours. This is a challenge to our fellow citizens and communities to take the initiative to end the un-natural disaster of homelessness in Canada”

*A Plan, Not a Dream* (The Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness)

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- Working Group Members who committed their time and energy to this new and unprecedented joint effort in a respectful and collaborative way:
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*Logo: provided by youth from the Youth of Today Society*



## From the Chairs

We are excited to present *Safe at Home: A Community-Based Action Plan to End and Prevent Homelessness in Whitehorse*. *Safe at Home* was built collaboratively by representatives of people with lived experience, the business community, members of the public, municipal, first nation and territorial governments and service providers. It recognizes the complexities of solving homelessness. Most importantly, it recognizes the urgent need for action.

The catalyst for *Safe at Home* came in 2015 when the City of Whitehorse and the Kwanlin Dün First Nation (KDFN) held two public events – the Vulnerable People at Risk Forum and the Business Roundtable. Spearheaded by Chief Doris Bill, KDFN and Mayor Dan Curtis, City of Whitehorse; these gatherings were borne from a shared belief that a new way to support homeless people and people at risk of homelessness needed to be found. The Yukon Government and the Ta’an Kwach’an Council later joined as governmental partners providing expertise and resources. Without the political leadership of all four governments and the commitment of citizens and service providers alike, this plan would not have been possible.

*Safe at Home* is not just an Action Plan, it is a commitment that signals a fundamental shift in how we can approach problems in our communities. In the past, we have seen people struggling with homelessness and feeling invisible. We have seen front-line organizations isolated in their work with homeless citizens. We have seen governments bearing the majority of the responsibility and accountability when things weren't working.

This plan is a significant shift in all of the above areas. People struggling with homelessness can trust that appropriate, timely, compassionate help is available where every door is the right door. Service providers will have weight to their voice in conveying the needs of our most vulnerable community members and identifying gaps as they arise. Governments can feel a shared responsibility with citizens for addressing homelessness. Citizens can expect a responsive system of care in their community and see themselves clearly defined in solutions and prevention.

Throughout the development of this plan, (which included reviewing a multitude of studies and reports produced over the past two decades by organizations and governments), we learned that many people face a myriad of challenges that can lead to homelessness. The action plan recognizes those challenges, highlights the gaps that create them and identifies actions that meet the urgent needs of community members struggling with homelessness.

We have learned that Housing First and harm reduction strategies have worked in other jurisdictions and can work here as well. We know that changing our systems of care can prevent homelessness from happening in the first place.

It is important to acknowledge that although we currently have a variety of services available in our community, our recent Point in Time count confirmed what many of us have understood for a long time. Too many of our neighbours, friends, family and loved ones are living shorter, extremely unhealthy and difficult lives. No one should have to trade sex for a place to sleep and people are dying in the streets of all Yukon communities. First Nations people are hugely over represented in the homeless population in Whitehorse and youth are struggling. The need for action is urgent.



The purpose of this plan is to ensure that viable, best practice solutions to ending and preventing homelessness have been identified and that no one organization or government has to assume responsibility for every action. The implementation of this plan will be community led. We agree to support one another in taking on the pieces each of us feel we can do well.

*Safe at Home* is a first step in recognizing and taking action to stop and reverse the financial and human costs of homelessness. It is a living document that has room for everyone. We ask you to take some time to read the plan, make notes and ask questions. For this plan to be successful, community champions and unsuspecting leaders need to emerge from all areas. We look forward to hearing where you see yourself in *Safe at Home*.

Christina Sim, RN  
*Co-Chair, Safe at Home Working Group*

Kristina Craig  
*Co-Chair, Safe at Home Working Group*



## Executive Summary

*Safe at Home* is a whole community response to the urgent issue of homelessness in Whitehorse. This Plan is an attempt to highlight what needs to happen to end and prevent homelessness, and to support better community coordination to provide better care for vulnerable people. This plan is about the whole community, all of us, working together and saying, 'these are the necessary actions to end homelessness in Whitehorse', it advocates for more effective community coordination to provide better care for vulnerable people.

Community champions realized that a solution would require a different kind of approach. The Plan, developed by a Working Group reflecting the diversity of Whitehorse, includes four governments, community organizations, and people with lived experience. This Working Group is a 'different' approach, both a challenge and a strength. As member Jack Bogaard observed: "we are the little group that has come so far".

The 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue temporary low barrier shelter that was opened February 2017 for three months speaks to how quickly resources can be amassed to meet urgent community needs. There was an alignment of people and a willingness to try something new, which led to real action that has helped some of Whitehorse's most vulnerable people.

*Safe at Home* is not a plan for any one government or organization to implement alone, and not all participants or decision-makers need to agree with all the identified actions. Rather, this plan is a guide to determine respective and coordinated courses of action, rooted in community values, personal and expert experiences, and the best available research.

Our Vision for Whitehorse is:

**A compassionate community working together to end and prevent homelessness, where everyone has a safe and affordable place to call home and can readily access the supports they need, when needed. Ending and preventing homelessness is possible.**

We will achieve our Vision by following our Mission:

***A community ending and preventing homelessness.***

*Safe at Home* is guided by a series of Principles that provide the foundation for five Strategic Priorities, each with a set of Goals, Key Actions, and Measures of Success:

- Increasing the Supply of Safe, Stable and Affordable Housing Options
- Access to Housing, and Programs and Services within a System of Care
- Strengthening Community Support and Engagement
- Preventing Homelessness
- Improving Data Collection and Evaluating Success of Systems



Also, included in this Plan are:

- 'Why now?'
- Understanding homelessness
  - Defining homelessness;
  - What 'ending homelessness' means to us;
  - Pathways into ending homelessness - a complex puzzle; and
  - The extent of homelessness in Whitehorse.
- Identified gaps in Whitehorse - housing and programs
- A series of useful Appendices

Ultimately, our success will be through the Plan's implementation. Many communities have developed plans to end homelessness, and many struggle with implementation. This plan recommends the following immediate first steps:

- Agreeing on and establishing a coordinating body or roundtable bringing governments, people with lived experience and community partners together and building on the equal and respectful relationships developed through the process of creating this plan;
- Identifying resources to support the coordinating body or roundtable and those who are participating;
- Accessing expertise and training opportunities through the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, Vibrant Communities Canada and the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (through the Yukon Planning Group on Homelessness); and
- Commitments from governments to work together on implementation of the plan, based on their participation in the coordinating body.

The working group is confident that the community will embrace the opportunities and challenges outlined in this plan and improve the lives of the most vulnerable of our citizens.



## Vision, Mission and Core Principles

### Vision

A compassionate community working together to end and prevent homelessness, where everyone has a safe and affordable place to call home and can readily access the supports they need, when needed. Ending and preventing homelessness is possible.

### Mission

A community ending and preventing homelessness.

### Core Principles

The following Core Principles were developed by combining community values and identified gaps, and collectively represent our commitment:

#### **Everyone has a Story and Everyone Matters:**

This means there are choices for people that reflect individual preferences, self-determination, cultures and traditions. All voices are heard with compassion and respect.

#### **We all have a Role to Play:**

We believe the best solutions come from within our community and it will take the heart of our community to bring about change

#### **Together we are Stronger:**

We believe that in order to truly end and prevent homelessness we must strengthen our unique and meaningful partnerships throughout all areas of our community. Businesses, NGO's, people with lived experience, governments and individual citizens need to develop lasting relationships that support vulnerable people at risk.

#### **Every Door is the Right Door:**

Individuals will receive immediate support accessing services regardless of where the first point of contact is made. We support a coordinated approach to care.

#### **Research and People's Stories Will inform our Actions:**

We will root our actions in people's stories and the best available research.

#### **Housing First:**

We believe in quickly moving people experiencing homelessness into safe and appropriate housing while offering necessary supports and services, regardless of one's history with addiction and/or mental illness. Those experiencing homelessness should be rapidly rehoused rather than remaining in the emergency shelter system.





#### Harm Reduction:

We believe in programming and practices aimed at reducing the risks and negative effects associated with trauma, addiction, mental illness crisis and homelessness. We know that any reduction in harm will improve health outcomes.

#### Shift in Approach:

We support replacing a system that manages homelessness to one that ends and prevents homelessness.

#### Northern and First Nations Solutions:

We believe in adapting innovative solutions for the north, based on best practice to ending and preventing homelessness.

#### Results-Focused:

We are committed to measuring our progress often.

#### Learn by Trying New Things:

Innovative solutions come from thinking outside the box and embracing mistakes as an opportunity to learn and improve.

**We need low-income housing – that’s what everyone is looking for; \$500 to \$600 for rent. Everyplace is too expensive.**

***~Guest, Whitehorse Connects***



## Why Now?

*Safe at Home: A Community-Based Action Plan to End and Prevent Homelessness in Whitehorse*, comes at a time when governments, businesses, community organizations, and citizens are recognizing the power of change and the need to work together to improve the health and wellbeing of all people. Today's political climate sees housing and homelessness firmly on the agenda for government and community action.

In 2015, Canada joined 192 world leaders at the United Nations to support the renewed *17 Global Goals for Sustainable Development*, which includes a shared vision of humanity “to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all.” Housing and healthy communities is front and center.

The United Nations’ [Habitat III Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development](#) recognized the need for governments and stakeholders to **work together**. Two key areas highlighted in Canada’s National Report coming out of the Habitat III and the new Urban Agenda include: “leaving no one behind” and “building homes and infrastructure for a better future”.

Canada’s [National Housing Strategy](#) mirror’s the top priorities we heard while developing *Safe at Home*:

- Helping those who need it most;
- Improving housing for Indigenous people – wherever they live;
- Making housing more affordable – whether you own or rent;
- Shaping communities that are inclusive and sustainable;
- Ending homelessness; and
- Strengthening our social housing sector.

The [Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#) (TRC) released its 94 Calls to Action in 2015. The TRC’s mandate was to inform all Canadians about what happened in Indian Residential Schools (IRS). The 94 Calls to Action are meant to guide and inspire Aboriginal peoples and Canadians in a process of reconciliation and renewed relationships that are based on mutual understanding and respect. *Safe at Home* is one of the ways our community is responding to the 94 Calls to Action.

In January 2016, Yukon Government (YG) stated:

*“The Government of Yukon acknowledges that Aboriginal people in Yukon, and their descendants, continue to be affected by the devastating impacts of the Indian Residential School system. The Yukon government has also indicated that addressing this legacy is a significant priority. The residential school system is part of our shared history; the work called for by the TRC is part of our shared future.”*

Over the past two years, YG has facilitated with community partners the creation of a Housing Action Plan, which identifies the need for improved housing options in the housing system from emergency shelter services to affordable home ownership. The [Yukon Mental Wellness Strategy “Forward Together”](#), outlines the necessary supports for those facing challenges with mental illness and/or addictions. YG is also in the process of developing a 10-year Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder (FASD) training strategy with community partners. Its goal is to offer service providers and citizens with skills to better communicate and support community members living with FASD.

Recognizing that issues do not exist in silos; Government of Yukon has committed to an inter-departmental approach where departments are working collaboratively with one another. They have committed to supporting safe, adequate housing that meets the needs of families and individuals, particularly vulnerable



populations. The Government of Yukon also supports the increase of housing for vulnerable populations using a Housing First model.

There have been a number of comprehensive studies and strategies developed over the past decade in the Yukon by governments and NGO's that identified a variety of gaps and barriers to service for different populations of our community (Appendix A). KDFN also learned about housing and services gaps in a 2015 citizen-survey.

Locally, as *Safe at Home* was being developed, the new Salvation Army Centre of Hope began construction. The timing of this new building is an opportunity for the community to view emergency shelter services in a different light – a temporary measure during a crisis. We can improve how our most vulnerable citizens live as the Salvation Army and others, develop responsive and best practice programming that is in line with our 'Housing First' philosophy.

In Whitehorse, the partnerships between Kwanlin Dün First Nation (KDFN), Ta'an Kwach'an Council (Ta'an), the City of Whitehorse, and YG developing this plan are both unique and innovative, and have caught the attention of jurisdictions across the country. The equal participation of community organizations and people with lived experience ensures the plan reflects reality on-the-ground. *Safe at Home* is the spark for a new chapter for positive change in Whitehorse and beyond.

**I see this plan as an act of reconciliation. It allows us to come together to solve a problem and do things differently.**

**~ Elder, Ta'an Kwacha'an Council**

## Understanding Homelessness

### Jack's Story

*"Homelessness cannot be resolved simply by providing a home. Root causes that created the situation also need to be addressed. It's more than having four walls. It's more than addictions, mental health or just being down on one's luck. How people came to be in these situations is their story to tell and trust me, each does have a story. I know because I've been there ... More often than not, people have lost their sense of belonging or have faced a lack of social supports. We now have an opportunity to make a difference and show we are a community that cares."*

*Jack Bogaard is a member of the Working Group*

### Defining Homelessness

The [Canadian Observatory on Homelessness](#) defines homelessness as "the situation of an individual or family without stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it." Recently, this definition has been expanded to incorporate youth homelessness: "young people between the ages of 13 and 24 who are living independently of parents and/or caregivers, but do not have the means or ability to acquire a stable, safe or consistent residence."

Homelessness can include several living situations, including:

- **Unsheltered or Absolutely Homeless** - living on the streets or in places not intended for human habitation;
- **Emergency Sheltered** - staying in overnight shelters on a temporary basis such as the Salvation Army or the Skookum Jim Youth Shelter;
- **Provisionally Accommodated** - living in an accommodation that is unsafe or lacks security of tenure (examples include hotel rooms, hospitalized, correctional facility, drug or alcohol treatment or couch surfing); and
- **At risk of homelessness** - where one has a home but where one's current economic situation or housing situation is precarious, or does not meet public health and safety standards (examples include unsafe housing due to mould, lack of running water etc., potential job loss and inability to pay rent or violence in the home).

These definitions recognize that homelessness is not a static state but a fluid experience, where one's housing circumstances and options may shift and change, and with frequency. In Whitehorse, we also recognize 'hidden homelessness': people who are couch-surfing, staying with family, or remaining in unsafe relationships are all realities hard to capture with numbers.

### Pathways into Homelessness – A Complex Puzzle

According to [Enriching our Understanding of Homelessness in Whitehorse](#) it is helpful "to examine the interaction of structural factors, systemic failures and individual circumstances in order to gain a better understanding of how a person or family ends up homeless in the first place"<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Kate Mechan, *Enriching our Understanding of Homelessness*, 2013

- **Structural factors** are economic and societal issues that affect opportunities and social environments for individuals. Examples may include lack of affordable housing, lack of adequate income, or discrimination. The [2010 Whitehorse Housing Adequacy Study](#) found income as a contributing factor to homelessness: “Respondents reporting under \$20,000 gross household income in the past year were twice as likely to be homeless than respondents who reported a higher household income”.
- **Systemic failures** can occur when system gaps prevent an effective response to individual needs. Examples include discharging individuals from hospitals, correctional facilities or foster care without stable housing or appropriate supports.
- **Individual circumstances** may include traumatic events (e.g. house fire) or personal crisis (e.g. family violence or job loss). It may also involve some level of mental illness, addictions or another disability (e.g. Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder or acquired brain injury) making it a challenge to navigate systems and get needs met. The Whitehorse Housing Adequacy study states that 24% of homeless respondents stated needing some level of supported housing.

Several studies have examined how and why people have become homeless, or remained homeless, in urban and rural communities across the country. Homeless citizens in Whitehorse face similar challenges. Some groups of people are statistically more likely to be homeless than others: First Nations citizens, people with disabilities, women and families, those facing addictions or mental illness, members of the LGBTQ2S community, and youth.

Aboriginal people are overrepresented across the continuum of homelessness in communities in Canada. The 2010 *Whitehorse Housing Adequacy Study* found that: “Respondents who self-identified as Aboriginal were 3.9 times more likely to be homeless than those who did not.” To date the historical, experiential and cultural differences of Aboriginal peoples as well as the impact of colonization and racism have not been well reflected by our health and housing responses. Simply put: existing efforts are not working.

Some rural Yukoners have difficulty returning to their home community after spending time in Whitehorse for health care, alcohol and drug treatment, education or after exiting the correctional system.

Women and women-led households make up a large percentage of the hidden homeless population. Family and spousal violence is a major cause of women’s homelessness and family dislocation. Women typically earn lower incomes and are therefore at an increased risk for homelessness. Once homeless, women are at an increased risk for violence, assault and sexual exploitation.<sup>23</sup>

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer identified and 2 spirited (LGBTQ2S) people face higher risks for some mental illness issues due to the effects of discrimination and other negative health impacts.

Issues that can lead youth into homelessness include family conflict, abuse, mental illness and addiction. National trends point toward the increased prevalence of homeless youth aged 16 to 24. Here in Whitehorse, the Skookum Jim Emergency Youth Shelter is often at capacity. It has been reported that many local youth are relying on couch surfing and the support of friends to get their shelter needs met. In Yukon, youth can remain in custody until age 19, and receive transitional support up to age 24. Transition planning is to occur at age 16. Advocates and social workers have also identified that youth transitioning out of foster care can find themselves struggling to find stability.

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<sup>2</sup> Judie Bopp, Rian van Bruggen, Shylah Elliott, Lyda Fuller, Mira Hache, Charlotte Hrenchuk, Mary Beth Levan, & Gillian McNaughton (2007). *You Just Blink and It Can Happen: A Study of Women’s Homelessness North of 60*. Available at <http://ywcacanada.ca/data/publications/00000009.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Stephen Gaetz et al. (2013): *The State of Homelessness in Canada 2013*. Toronto: Canadian Homelessness Research Network Press

Finally, it is important to note current Canadian findings about trauma and homelessness:

- 46% of At Home / Chez Soi participants had adverse childhood experiences
- 62 per cent emotional abuse
- 55 per cent physical abuse
- 38 per cent sexual abuse

On average, participants reported between four and five of these adverse childhood experiences. At Home / Chez Soi Final Report (2014, p. 16)

### The Cost of Homelessness

According to [State of Homelessness in Canada](#): 2013 report, homelessness cost the Canadian economy \$7.05 billion annually. This includes the provision of emergency shelters and community supports as well as the increased costs of emergency services (including fire, police and EMS), health care and the criminal justice system.

In a 2005 study by Pomeroy which looked at costs in four Canadian cities, institutional responses (jails, hospitals etc.) cost \$66,000-\$120,000 annually, emergency shelters cost \$13,000-\$42,000 annually whereas supportive and transitional housing cost \$13,000-\$18,000 and affordable housing without supports was a mere \$5,000-\$8,000.

#### AVERAGE MONTHLY COST OF HOUSING SOMEONE WHILE HOMELESS



This analysis does not examine the social and human cost of homelessness. The longer someone remains homeless the greater likelihood that their physical and mental health will deteriorate and there is an increased chance of an early death.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The Homeless Hub, Cost Analysis of Homelessness. Available at <http://homelesshub.ca/about-homelessness/homelessness-101/cost-analysis-homelessness>

## Life expectancy for average Canadian

**77-82**

## Life expectancy for homeless

**34-47**

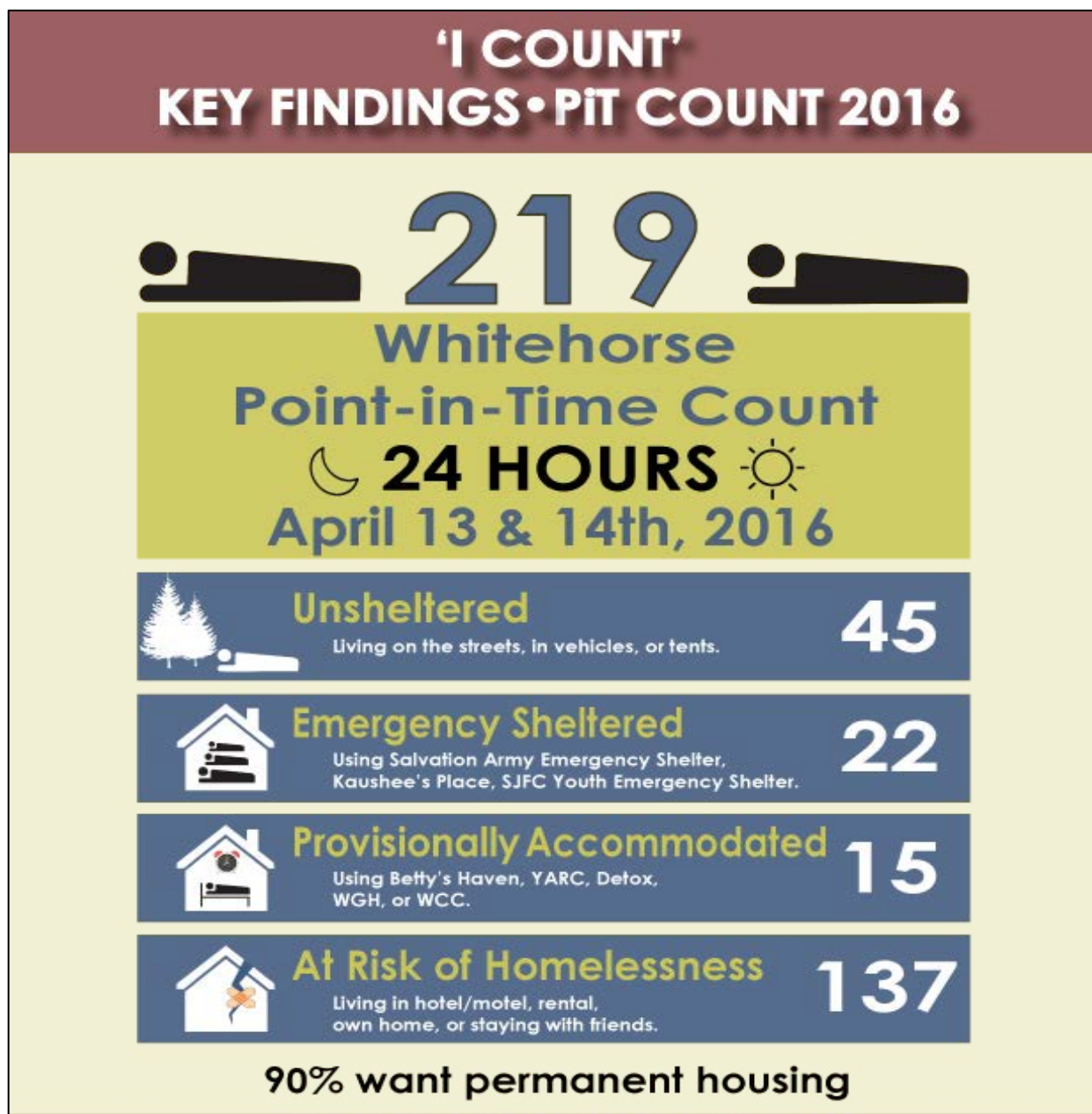
CBC NEWS

Source: St. Michael's Hospital

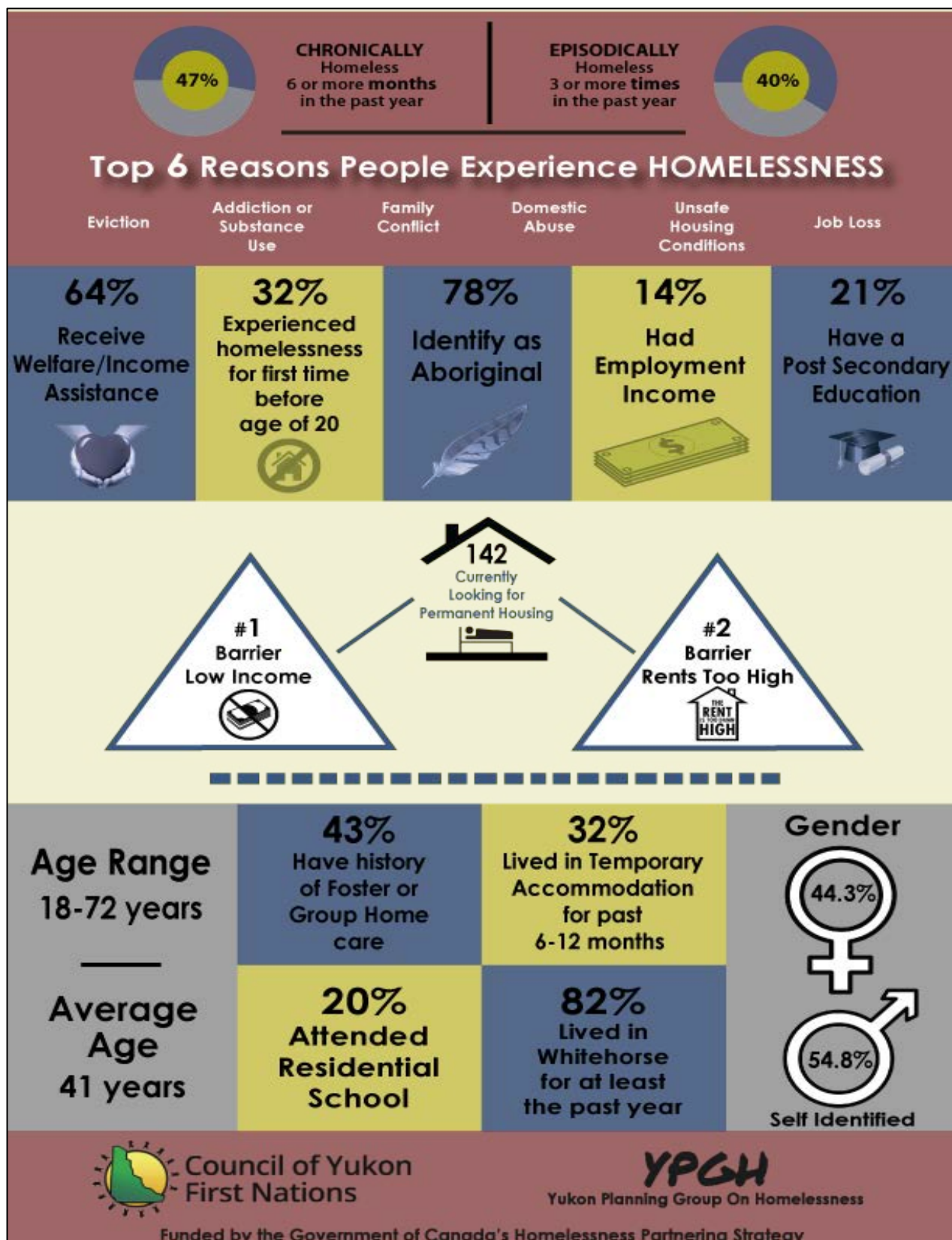


### The Extent of Homelessness in Whitehorse

The Council of Yukon First Nations, the Yukon Planning Group on Homelessness (YPGH), and local volunteers conducted Whitehorse’s first Point-in-Time (PiT) Homeless Count on April 13-14, 2016 to provide a ‘snapshot’ of homelessness in Whitehorse. PiT counts generally yield conservative results that only reflect those surveyed, and not those who were counted or absent from the count. 256 people were identified as homeless or at risk of homelessness. 219 people participated in a survey, noting the following results.







## What “Ending of Homelessness” means to us

Ending homelessness does not mean an absence of crisis in people lives. Ending homelessness means that our community responds to crisis by offering a variety of emergency shelter services and that no one finds himself or herself unsheltered. Ending homelessness requires rapid rehousing into stable and appropriate accommodations with the supports people require to remain housed. Ideally, shelter stays will last no longer than 30 days. This goal will be reached over time as systems of care and appropriate housing is established.

### The Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH)

*Safe at Home's* strategic priorities reflect, in part, CAEH's four core elements of a plan to end homelessness:

**Plan for Outcomes:** Communities should collect data at the local level on who is homeless, why they became homeless, what assistance they receive, and what is effective in ending their homelessness. Based on these data, communities should create a plan focused on the outcome of ending homelessness. The planning process should include representatives from the public, private, and NGO sectors.

**Close the Front Door:** A crucial part of ending homelessness is preventing people from becoming homeless in the first place. Public systems, such as the mental health, the public health, the welfare, and child protective services systems, must take responsibility for ensuring that their clients do not become homeless. These efforts should be supplemented by emergency prevention strategies, including rent and utility assistance and landlord–tenant mediation. Prevention efforts hold the promise of saving public and charitable expenditures in the long run.

**Open the Back Door:** Those experiencing homelessness should move back into housing as quickly as possible. Any necessary services should be provided in permanent housing, rather than in the homeless system. This approach is known as “Housing First.”

**Build the Infrastructure:** Communities must address the root causes of homelessness by working toward livable incomes, affordable housing, and access to services for people who need them.

**Providing long term supportive housing for youth and programming will cost a certain amount but save so much more in the justice system, social services, and the hospital long term. It will pay for itself in no time. It's not that difficult to address. Let's invest in our kids.**

~ Youth worker



## Identified Gaps in Whitehorse – Housing and Programs

In the course of building this plan, we sat with people with lived experience and heard their stories. We connected with front line workers and listened to their concerns and learned from their knowledge gained supporting vulnerable citizens. We talked with business owners and community members and captured their experiences as well.

The following list of gaps represents the best that the Working Group believes to be true, based on available time and resources; these gaps resonate with key-informants and existing studies.

While it is not an exhaustive list, the Working Group believes addressing the following gaps will have the most immediate positive impacts in Whitehorse (in no particular order):

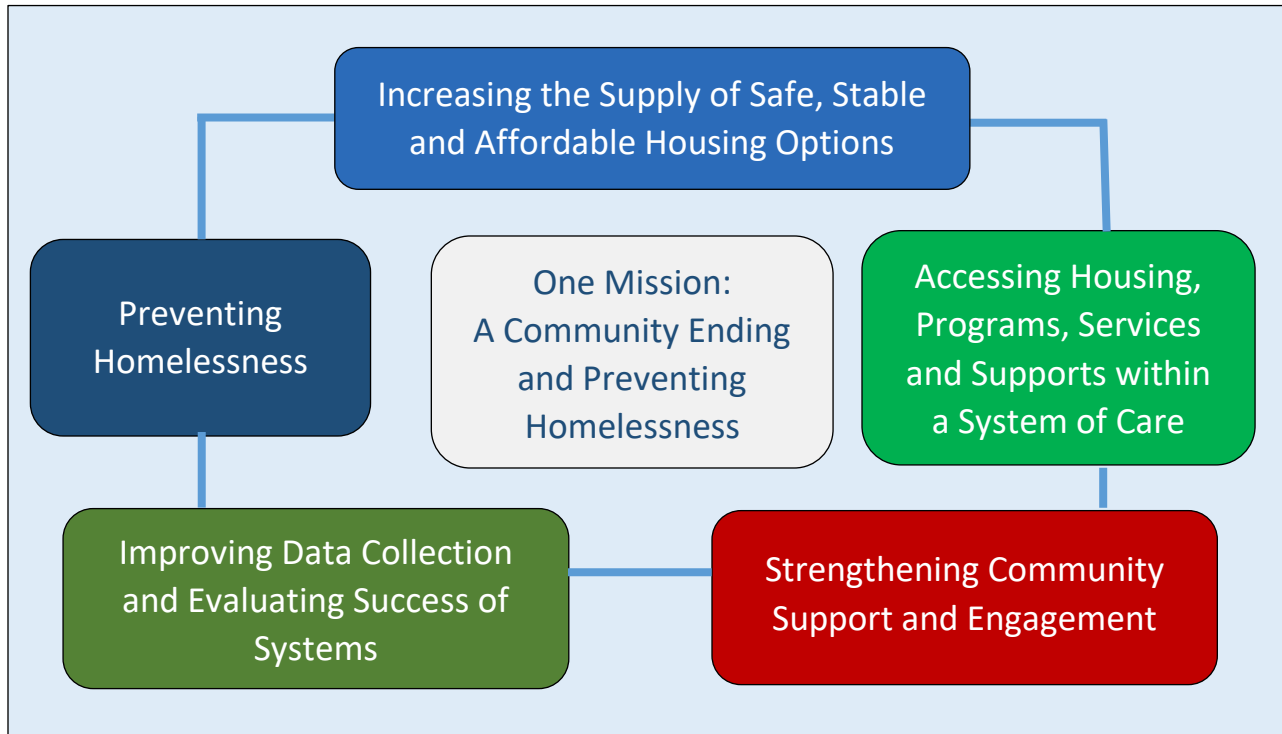
- Transitional housing for women leaving a correctional facility;
- Transitional housing for youth transitioning out of care;
- Supported Housing options for men and women living with cognitive impairments;
- Emergency shelter services for women and families not fleeing abuse;
- Affordable rental housing for men and women (bachelor and one-bedroom apartments);
- Quick access to services without having to engage with multiple agencies;
- Day programs and outreach services for people not currently employed and looking to gain skills as well as for people who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol;
- A safe place for young pregnant women to reside and receive support;
- A harm reduction program for those dependent on alcohol; and
- Access to laundry, washroom and transportation to make day-to-day living easier.

**People coming out of Corrections who are from the communities – Carcross, Old Crow, etc. are further marginalized because they have no means to going back. Others leave a community looking for work in Whitehorse, can't find work and then have no ability to return to the community and then they become homeless.**

*~ Justice worker*

## Safe at Home: Priorities, Goals, Key Actions, and Measures of Success

*Safe at Home* is structured around five inter-related strategic priorities grounded in the model of 'Housing First':



**I like that the plan is based in research. We've been studied out and it's time to get to work.**  
*~ Elder, Kwanlin Dun First Nation*

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## Priority: Increasing the Supply of Safe, Stable and Affordable Housing Options

The lack of safe, stable and affordable housing along the housing continuum is a barrier to ending and preventing homelessness in Whitehorse. Citizens require a variety of options such as Transitional, Supported/ Supportive, Social Housing and Market housing.

### Goals

- Building on the [Housing Action Plan \(HAP\)](#), increase the supply of safe, affordable and appropriate housing along the housing continuum based on the most immediate housing needs in the community as identified in “Identified Gaps in Whitehorse” (p.16);
- Support existing and potential landlords in innovative ways to provide a variety of sustainable housing options; and
- Ensure enough safe and appropriate emergency shelter services are available from multiple providers that meet the needs of various demographics of citizens in crisis working toward a maximum stay of 30 days and a coordinated response for rapid rehousing of citizens.

### Key Actions

- Develop partnerships with landowners, non-governmental organizations and businesses to increase joint opportunities to build and house people who require supported housing;
- Based on the identified housing gaps, develop appropriate:
  - Supported Housing for:
    - Youth transitioning out of care;
    - Women and men active in their addiction with alcohol and/or drugs; and
    - Pregnant youth.
  - Transitional Housing for:
    - Women and men exiting the correctional system who have completed their sentence;
    - Women who could leave correction early and finish their sentence in a halfway house like the Salvation Army’s ARC; and
    - Youth experiencing a mental illness crisis.
- Identify / quantify the amount of additional housing required for:
  - Supported Housing for:
    - Men and women living with cognitive impairments.
  - Transitional Housing for:
    - Men exiting the correctional system (who are finishing out their sentence at the ARC);
    - Women and men leaving alcohol and or drug treatment; and
    - Women and men experiencing a mental illness crisis.
- Improve zoning by-laws to ensure timely construction of new housing options when opportunities arise;

- Establish incentives for landlords and contractors to improve the supply of affordable and fully accessible, market rental housing, offering a variety of sized units by:
  - Offering financial incentives and tax subsidies;
  - Working with the federal government to address the rental income tax differentiation for landlords and incentivize supporting vulnerable people;
  - Offering education for landlords on rent to own options for tenants; and
  - Working with banks to reduce loan barriers for contractors and developers.
- Work with multiple providers, develop new emergency shelter beds, or enhance emergency shelter services where necessary with the goal of shelter-stays that do not last longer than 30 days before an individual is rapidly rehoused, for:
  - Families in Crisis;
  - Youth; and
  - Separate Services for Men and Women (both sober and low barrier).
- Explore ways to provide incentives for 'micro home' developments that are safe and affordable, including holding a forum to assist interested developers, governments, NGO's and individuals to explore best practices for building and integrating these homes into communities;
- Provide citizens who would like to live in the bush with safe and affordable options in order to live safely on the land; and
- Increase the number of transitional housing units available in Whitehorse to pregnant women and their families coming from communities near the end of their term until discharge back to their home community.

### Measures of Success

- Chronic and episodic homelessness in Whitehorse is significantly reduced through rapid re-housing appropriate to an individual's needs and unique circumstances;
- A significant increase in the number of safe, affordable, appropriate and stable housing options at all points along the housing continuum;
- Shelters, campgrounds and hotels will not be used to accommodate citizens in need of stable housing for more than 30 days; and
- The need for emergency sheltering in Whitehorse is significantly reduced, both in terms of the numbers of individuals requiring emergency shelter and the average length of stay.

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## Priority: Access to Housing and Programs and Services within a System of Care

It is critical that Whitehorse improves access to housing and services. Housing and support systems need to be co-ordinated and simple to navigate, while service providers take a holistic approach and target assistance quickly to the people who want help.

### Goals

- To ensure we have an effective, streamlined and co-ordinated service structure that facilitates quick and easy access to programs and services, in which needed supports are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to all citizens;
- To ensure that programs and services reflect, where possible, each person's unique needs and preferences, and delivers supports in culturally relevant ways including language preference;
- To ensure organizations and service providers are aware of each other's mandate and are working collaboratively to ensure citizens are supported in the best possible way; and
- Housing First principles are adopted; to ensure that low barrier housing options are available.

### Key Actions

- Working closely with housing navigators, outreach professionals and people with lived experience, establish an inter-agency team to review eligibility and intake processes of existing programs and housing options. Make recommendations to improve and streamline requirements to ensure programs are accessible;
- Develop a Community of Practice to ensure sharing of best practices, training and professional development opportunities for each of the following groups:
  - Housing Navigators and Outreach professionals;
  - Transition Home professionals; and
  - Emergency Shelter professionals.
- Develop culturally appropriate training opportunities for people with lived experience to gain employment skills and work as peer mentors with agencies who support street involved clients;
- Promote and provide when available First Nation cultural awareness training for all government staff and elected officials, NGO and business staff and community members to ensure services are provided in a knowledgeable and culturally-sensitive manner;
- Promote and provide training when available about mental illness for all government staff, elected officials, NGO, business staff and community members to ensure services are provided in a knowledgeable and culturally sensitive manner;
- Review and enhance and/or develop existing Memorandums of Understanding (MOU's) between Governments and/or Services providers that can provide coordinated training opportunities for all staff and community members;
- Explore the development of a Managed Alcohol Program using Best Practice methods for supporting community members who are alcohol dependent and are unable to obtain or maintain housing due to their dependence on alcohol;





- In consultation with people with lived experience, provide safe drop in spaces for men and women who are street involved and unemployed to access a variety of supports;
- Increase outreach and coordinate services to be accessible 7 days a week, day and night with a specific focus on:
  - Outreach teams for Elders and seniors who require support navigating things like applications, financial literacy, healthcare and food security;
  - Downtown outreach to support street involved citizens with a focus on harm reduction; and
  - Youth.
- Review existing transportation gaps and find solutions to ensure consistent, safe and affordable access for all citizens;
- Ensure that basic amenity needs are being met for people who are homeless or at risk of being homeless by providing the following:
  - Laundry facilities;
  - Access to water fountains; and
  - 24-hour bathroom facility.
- Enhance Rent Supplement programs, both portable and fixed.

### Measures of Success

- Individuals and families will report receiving programs, services and supports tailored and targeted to meet their unique needs, in culturally-respectful ways, delivered in a manner that works best for them and where accessing supports is not conditional on sobriety or other factors;
- Individuals in need can easily and quickly access needed supports 24 hours a day, seven days a week;
- Landlords and tenants will report improved relationships and length of tenancy for individuals;
- Individuals living with addiction and/or mental illness will report improved health outcomes; and
- Client contact will increase and NGO staff's ability to network and maintain best practices will be supported.





## Priority: Strengthening Community Support and Engagement

Ending and preventing homelessness can only occur by changing the story about homelessness and empowering the community to be empathetic and part of a new approach today.

### Goals

- To inform and promote community awareness, including in the school system, about the issues of homelessness in order to combat the stigma associated with being homeless and needing support;
- To encourage a collaborative effort between the business community, the NGO sector, all levels of government, people with lived experience and law enforcement to work towards innovative and creative solutions and resources to prevent and end homelessness; and
- To ensure NGOs are appropriately resourced in order to provide optimal services by well-trained staff that are trusted by their clients and the community.

### Key Actions

- Develop public education around pathways to homelessness with opportunities for people with lived experience to tell their stories, to influence public perceptions around homelessness and poverty;
- Support first responders such as Emergency Medical Services personnel, security guards and RCMP with training to increase their connection and use of the variety of community services available when supporting people in crisis;
- Identify and implement meaningful actions to improve the safety of individuals living on the street by working with the community (i.e., Justice, Health Agencies, business community, people with lived experience and other community members) for example:
  - Street first aid course for front line staff, private sector workers and people with lived experience that includes information on frostbite, basic first aid, mental illness and addictions; and
  - Public education about mental illness, signs and symptoms and how to support someone in a crisis.
- Acknowledge and respond to frontline worker advocacy as many street involved clients disclose their concerns and needs to frontline workers and rely on advocates to be their voice;
- Establish and implement a multi-year public awareness initiative to influence public perceptions around homelessness and poverty;
- Develop a centralized way to publicly share initiatives and projects from different organizations and governments; and
- Celebrate community successes to build momentum and support changing attitudes.

### Measures of Success

- Community knowledge of homelessness is based on facts, data and the stories of those who have experienced or are experiencing homelessness.

## Priority: Preventing Homelessness

The most important thing that can be done to address homelessness is to prevent it from happening in the first place.

### Goals

- To ensure the community is aware of the support services that exist to help individuals and families to prevent homelessness and maintain housing;
- To ensure streamlined access to a system of care that helps community members at risk of becoming homeless;
- To ensure that all individuals have a safe and appropriate home to go to once discharged from a hospital, the correctional system, halfway home, foster care, addictions treatment including detox, mental illness respite;
- To ensure youth and young men and women are aware of/and have access to a system of care that empowers self-sufficiency and independence, while prioritizing ongoing safety and support as needed; and
- To ensure that people have access to trauma informed care that is culturally appropriate.

### Key Actions

- Ensure culturally appropriate programs and services are offered to empower parents to remain primary caregivers;
- Invest in family supports in the home to prevent displacement of children and youth;
- Ensure new curriculum incorporates culturally relevant life skills up to Grade 12. Identified areas of importance include: healing from trauma, mental illness, addiction, counselling and social determinants of health;
- Provide workshops for educators on how to connect youth with available services and develop relationships between service providers and youth outreach workers in the schools;
- Enhance alternate schooling options for children and youth who do not thrive in the current mainstream educational system;
- Explore additional summer educational programming for children and youth who are not yet meeting grade level expectations to support vulnerable families;
- Provide a safe daytime drop in centre for youth not currently attending school to gain access to skills, supports, healthcare and cultural activities;
- Develop youth mentorship programs where community role models help youth identify interests and invest their time in supporting youth to obtain skills and experience;
- Ensure that youth leaving care are transitioned into safe, stable housing with adequate supports to foster life skills, education, cultural connections and improved health. Support staff should always have training to work with a trauma informed approach;
- Partner with traditional lenders to enhance current financial literacy courses for youth and community members;
- Explore current legislative opportunities to decrease financial exploitation of low-income individuals by commercial loan companies;



- Establish a Landlord/Property Manager Liaison Program to ensure strong working relationships between landlords and service agencies by developing and / or enhancing:
  - LWEH program;
  - Rent well program that includes emergency housing fund for landlords;
  - Tenant skills workshops;
  - Landlord support services for navigating difficult tenancy issues;
  - Cultural awareness workshops for landlords and housing service agencies staff;
  - Provide landlords with education and support to ensure units are accessible for people with physical disabilities; and
  - Educating landlords about the benefits of victims of violence maintaining tenancy after the leaseholder has been evicted.
- Ensure minimum rental standards are being met;
- Enhance public awareness campaign around landlord and tenant rights and responsibilities;
- Create a dialogue amongst governments administering income support programs to ensure legislation, regulations and policies allow all Yukon citizens to receive the same level of benefits;
- Evaluate and potentially enhance, existing emergency financial assistance programs for tenants to ensure the programs address identified gaps. For example, providing necessary damage deposit; and
- Ensure people at risk of homelessness can easily obtain and safely store required identification.

### Measures of Success

- Individuals, youth and families are using support services, as needed, to maintain housing;
- Institutions are working with individuals, families, supporting agencies, and housing providers to ensure discharge planning includes appropriate housing; and
- Fewer youth are accessing shelter services and fewer children and youth are being taken into care.

## Priority: Improving Data Collection and Evaluating Success of Systems

Ending and preventing homelessness requires access to high quality and easily accessible real-time and person-specific information – including qualitative information that captures, reflects and values individual stories and experiences. Access to client information to support a coordinated system of care will be at instruction of client, not service providers.

### Goals

- To create and use a common information technology system that is accessible to all relevant organizations, which ensures that housing and systems of care decisions are based on evidence and best practices; and
- Use the common information technology system for two purposes: 1) to collect data and 2) to support clients through a coordinated system of care.

### Key Actions

- Carry out the federal Point in Time count every two years and act on the information collected;
- Research and evaluate data collection tools currently used in Yukon and other jurisdictions to ensure appropriate tool(s) are being used for their defined purpose, including use of the federal government tool, Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS);
- Establish clear and measurable outcomes and milestones that will be monitored and evaluated annually to ensure the Action Plan is effectively preventing and ending homelessness;
- Develop and implement an agreed upon and Yukon wide multi-agency integrated case coordination system for individuals experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness; and
- Use *Housing Action Plan for Yukon* data gap analysis to ensure data gaps are filled swiftly.

### Measures of Success

- Strategic capital investment and programming decisions are based on evidence and best practices;
- Confidentiality is assured and clients maintain ability to direct who has access to their information; and
- A published annual 'report card' that clearly sets out progress towards achieving the outcomes and milestones established in '*Safe at Home*'.



## What's next

Implementing *'Safe at Home'* is not the responsibility of any one government or agency. It was built with the expertise of front line workers, people with lived experience, government representatives and community organizations as a result of local, strong, political leadership.

*'Safe at Home'* provides a working framework that will evolve over time as governments and community partners work collectively to end homelessness in Whitehorse. It will require a multi-year implementation period supported by stakeholders and driven by community champions.

We believe that support from governments and community organizations will take different forms and can include financial resourcing, political leadership and a commitment to work with one another and people with lived experience.

Some of the first steps include:

- Agreeing on and establishing a coordinating body or roundtable bringing governments and partners together and building on the equal and respectful relationships developed through the process of creating this plan;
- Identifying resources to support the coordinating body or roundtable and those who are participating;
- Accessing expertise and training opportunities through the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, Vibrant Communities Canada and the Homelessness Planning Strategy (through the Yukon Planning Group on Homelessness); and
- Commitments from governments to work together on implementation of the plan, based on their participation in the coordinating body.

*'Safe at Home'* is a new and unique approach to solving the multifaceted and complex issues that lead to homelessness. It requires an openness to do things differently as a community and a commitment to work together in new ways.

Members of the Working Group have already seen success in this approach. With the involvement of Yukon Government, the Kwanlin Dün First Nation, the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition and the business community, a temporary 10 bed alternative shelter was in operation in early February 2017 within 8 weeks of identifying the need.

We are convinced that with a common goal and a framework from which to work, governments, front line workers, people with lived experience, business owners and community members will hold one another accountable to reaching our goal of ending and preventing homelessness in Whitehorse.

## Glossary

**Aboriginal, First Nations and Indigenous** are used inter-changeably throughout the document to identify indigenous peoples of Canada.

**Affordable Housing:** Housing that costs less than 30% of before-tax total household income. For renters, housing costs include rent and utilities. For homeowners, housing costs include mortgage payments, property taxes, utilities and insurance.

**Best Practice:** A Best Practice is an intervention, method or technique that has consistently been proven effective through the most rigorous scientific research (especially conducted by independent researchers) and which has been replicated across several cases or examples. To be a 'best practice', an intervention must be able to show that it produces better results than other approaches and that is a practice that can potentially be adapted with success in other contexts and/or scaled up to a systems-wide approach. In other words, there is a sufficient body of evidence that allows us to confidently say that the described practice is a generalizable example of something that works.

**Case Coordination/Circle of Care:** Case Coordination/Circle of Care refers to a collaborative process that assesses, plans, implements, co-ordinates, monitors and evaluates the options and services required to meet a person's health, human service and housing needs.

**Chronic Homelessness:** Those who are homeless for a long time, usually a year or more.

**Emergency Shelter:** Provides a place to stay overnight if you become homeless or otherwise experience a housing issue and have no place to go.

**Episodic Homelessness:** Those who move in and out of homelessness for shorter periods of time.

**Gap Analysis:** Those in management literature, gap analysis involves the comparison of actual performance with potential or desired performance. If an organization does not make the best use of current resources, or forgoes investment in capital or technology, it may produce or perform below its potential.

**Hidden Homeless:** Those who live temporarily with others without the guarantee of continued residency or immediate prospect for accessing permanent housing.

**Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS):** HIFIS is a national information system that helps service providers with their day-to-day operations and planning activities through free, easy-to-use software. HIFIS includes features to track and support the management of Housing First activities, and collects data on shelter use to help develop a national portrait of homelessness.

**Housing Continuum:** The Housing Continuum consists of a range of housing options available to individuals and families of all income levels, from emergency shelter and transitional housing, to supportive/supported, social and market rental housing to home ownership.

**Housing First:** An approach to ending homelessness that centers on quickly moving people experiencing homelessness into housing and then providing additional supports and services as needed.

**Housing Navigators:** Refers to people who are trained and knowledgeable in housing and related supports and services available within a community, and can personally work with each person experiencing homelessness to help them access these supports in culturally-reflective ways.



**Landlords Working to End Homelessness (LWEH):** Landlords Working to End Homelessness program was initiated by Blood Ties Four Directions Centre in 2013 and has expanded to Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society Yukon and Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre. LWEH is a way to help landlords maintain stable tenancies with people in need of housing. An organization leases a unit from a landlord and as the tenant of the unit, assumes responsibility for: paying rent in full and on time, avoiding/repairing damages, being a good tenant, and providing notification of termination of tenancy. A client of the organization sublets the unit and the staff provides ongoing supports to ensure the tenant is successfully housed in the unit.

**Low barrier housing:** Applicants do not need to meet any specific requirements to enter into a provided facility or housing, especially surrounding their use of drugs and/or alcohol. While this method does not immediately curtail the consumption of substances, this model has been proven effective in building trust between the participants and those facilitating their housing which has seen improved health outcomes for participants.

**Managed Alcohol Program:** A program that provides regulated doses of alcohol to residents in supportive accommodation to address seemingly intractable health and social problems experienced by people with alcohol dependence, use of non-beverage alcohol and unstable housing.

**Mental Wellness:** A state of complete mental, physical, spiritual and emotional wellbeing. A balance of mental, physical and emotional wellbeing that includes a sense of purpose; hope for the future; and a sense of belonging and connectedness. A state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.

**Point in Time Count:** Provides a 'snapshot' of the number of people experiencing homelessness during a specific time period (usually 24 hours).

**Rapid Re-Housing:** Refers to a program that provides assistance/services to prevent individuals/families from becoming homeless or help those who are experiencing homelessness to quickly find stable/suitable housing.

**Rent Supplement:** government funded payments that bridge the gap between the rent that an individual or family can afford to pay and what the actual cost of housing is. Depending on the program, rent supplements can be used in social and market housing; they also can be portable (i.e. tied to the tenant and move with the tenant from unit to unit) or fixed (i.e. attached to a specific housing unit or program).

**Rent Well Program:** Education/training program that helps individuals become successful and stable renters.

**Social Determinants of Health:** The social determinants of health influence the health of populations. They include income and social status; social support networks; education; employment/working conditions; social environments; physical environments; personal health practices and coping skills; healthy child development; gender; and culture (as defined by the Public Health Service of Canada).

**Social Housing:** Housing for low and moderate income individuals/families, typically owned, operated and subsidized by the Government and/or a non-profit organization.



**Supportive Housing:** Refers to housing that is long-term and affordable for individuals experiencing (or at imminent risk of) homelessness. Supportive housing is coupled with embedded support services (i.e. available on-site) that are made generally available and not connected to any individual. The support services and referrals provided through supportive housing include those required to promote, improve, conserve or restore the mental and/or physical well-being of the participant. Available services can include any combination of clinical and social support programming.

**Supported Housing:** Refers to housing that is long-term, independent and integrated into the community, coupled with support services for individuals experiencing (or at imminent risk of) homelessness. These support services are not embedded within a specific housing; rather, they are connected to the individual. Supported housing can occur all along the housing continuum, and provides assistance with obtaining affordable housing, rental assistance and support services targeted to promote, improve, conserve or restore the mental and/or physical well-being of the participant.

A '**system of care**' approach also known as '**circle of care**' is based on individualized, strength-based practices, cultural competence, community-based services, full participation of families at all levels of the system and shared responsibility for successful results. It requires governments and agencies *co-ordinating and integrating their efforts so that* those experiencing or at-risk of experiencing homelessness receive quick access to the services they need, in order to help them function better at home, in school, in the community and throughout life.

**Transitional Housing:** Refers to housing where people can live for a limited period of time and participate in employment or training programs, enrol in educational facilities, address addiction or mental illness issues and ultimately transition to more permanent, stable housing.

**Wrap-Around Supports (Services):** Refers to services that help address a homeless individual's underlying causes of homelessness. These support services could include medical and psychiatric case management, life skills training, landlord liaison assistance and addictions counseling.



## Appendix A: Reviewed Yukon Studies, Plans, Strategies and Reports

The following studies were identified and considered by Working Group members and key stakeholders:

1. Yukon Status of Women Council/Council of Yukon First Nations. [A Little Kindness Would Go a Long Way: A Study of Women's Homelessness in the Yukon, 2007](#)
2. Youth of Today Society. Program Management Development Plan: Angel's Nest (Supportive Living for Young Men and women), 2007
3. Yukon Department of Health and Social Services. [2010 Whitehorse Housing Adequacy Study](#), 2010
4. Beaton/Allen. [Report of Task Force on Acutely Intoxicated Persons at Risk, 2010](#)
5. Yukon Health and Social Services. (2010). [Bridges and Barriers 2010](#): Yukon experiences with poverty, social exclusion and inclusion. Retrieved from the Yukon Health and Social Services website: [http://www.hss.gov.yk.ca/pdf/bridgesand\\_barriers.pdf](http://www.hss.gov.yk.ca/pdf/bridgesand_barriers.pdf)
6. Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition. [A Home for Everyone: A Housing Action Plan for Whitehorse, 2011](#)
7. Yukon Department of Health and Social Services. [Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy, 2012](#)
8. Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition. [Enriching our Understanding of Homelessness: What We Know in Whitehorse, 2013](#)
9. Various stakeholders. [Ours to Build On: Yukon Housing Action Plan, 2015](#)
10. Yukon Status of Women Council | Council of Yukon First Nations. [Repairing the Holes in the Net: Responding to the Mental Health Needs of Northern Homeless Women, 2015](#)
11. City of Whitehorse | Kwanlin Dün First Nation. [Report on the Vulnerable People at Risk Initiative, 2016](#)
12. Yukon Department of Health and Social Services. [Forward Together: Yukon Mental Wellness Strategy, 2016](#)
13. Yukon Planning Group on Homelessness. Whitehorse Community Plan/Homelessness Partnering Strategy, undated
14. Kwanlin Dün First Nation. Report on the Community Safety and Well-Being Initiative, 2016
15. Yukon Planning Group on Homelessness. [2016 Report: Whitehorse PiT Count](#) (draft, unreleased), 2016

## Appendix B: Interviews, Presentations and Meetings

### Interviews completed by Strategies North:

1. Jack Van den Bogaard | Working Group community member with lived experience
2. Ian McKenzie | Executive Director, Salvation Army
3. Patricia Bacon | Executive Director, Blood Ties
4. Laura Lang | Policy Advisor, YG Health & Social Services
5. Christina Sim, RN | Manager, Outreach and Health Promotion, KDFN
6. Kristina Craig | Executive Director, Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition
7. Leslie Grant | Outreach, Carcross/Tagish First Nation
8. Esther Armstrong | Housing Navigator, Victoria Faulkner Society
9. Charlotte Hrenchuk | Coordinator, Yukon Status of Women Council
10. Joseph Tisiga | Manager, Skookum Jim Youth Emergency Shelter
11. Leah White | Manager, YG Whitehorse Corrections
12. Vincent Smarch | Director, Community Services, KDFN
13. Dr. Sharon Lazeo | Health Care Professional, Taiga Referred Care Clinic / Yukon Medical Association
14. Linda Rapp | Director, Community and Recreation Services, City of Whitehorse
15. Vikki Durrant | Staff, Youth of Today Society
16. Christine Tapp | Staff, Yukon Government Social Services
17. Yukon Council on Aging
18. Geoff Zaparnuk | Director of Patient Care, WGH
19. Wenda Bradley | Executive Director, FASSY
20. Lynn Sparks | Health and Education Manager, Ta'an
21. Chris Balser | Manager, EMS
22. Eileen Duchesne | Executive Assistant to Chief Doris Bill, KDFN
23. Maura Sullivan | Staff, Whitehorse Individual Learning Centre
24. Lars Hartling | Board Member, Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce

### Presentations to Governments

1. Mayor and Council and Senior Management, City of Whitehorse
2. Chiefs and Councils of KDFN and Ta'an Kwacha'an
3. Elders Council of KDFN and Ta'an Kwacha'an
4. Housing Action Plan Implementation Committee
5. Departments of Yukon Government

### Presentations to Community Organizations

1. YAPC's Housing Task Force
2. Presentation to Business community at their annual banquet (March)

### Conversations with Key Stakeholders

1. Members of the judiciary – March 2017
2. Attendees at Whitehorse Connects and Connects and Sally & Sisters/Soeurs – February 2017



## Appendix C: Existing Emergency Shelters and Treatment Services in Whitehorse

### Emergency Shelters

#### **Salvation Army**

The Salvation Army currently operates 14 beds and 16 mats at their emergency shelter. In summer 2017, the existing shelter will be decommissioned and a new facility, The Salvation Army Centre of Hope, will open. The new building will have 25 shelter beds available for both men and women.

#### **Kaushee's Place (Yukon Women's Transition Home Society)**

18 short-term emergency shelter beds for women and children fleeing abuse.

#### **Temporary Emergency Shelter (Kwanlin Dün First Nation)**

10-unit low barrier temporary emergency shelter for both men and women. This shelter is operational from February 1, 2017 to April 30, 2017 only.

#### **Youth Emergency Shelter (Skookum Jim Friendship Centre)**

11 emergency shelter beds (8 for males and 3 for females) for youth aged 17-23.

### Treatment Centers

#### **Jackson Lake Healing Camp (Kwanlin Dün First Nations).**

A land based healing camp for men, women and families that incorporates traditional first nation knowledge and healing with clinical counseling services, Camp typically run for 4 to 5 week sessions in the summer with participants living fulltime in camp.

#### **Sarah Steele Building (Health & Social Services, Yukon Government).**

This newly built Alcohol and Drug Services facility opened in September 2016 and includes 50 beds total: 20 intensive in-patients, 18 detox/withdrawal management and 4 youth treatment.

## Appendix D: Existing Housing Options in Whitehorse

### Existing Supportive Housing

- Options for Independent Living - OFI (Options for Independence Society). 14 supportive housing units for individuals diagnosed with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).
- St. Elias Group Home (Health & Social Services, Yukon Government). 10 units for individuals with cognitive disabilities.
- Takhini Haven (Challenge Disability Resource Group). 5-unit adult group home for individuals with varying disabilities.

### Existing Transitional Housing

- Betty's Haven (Yukon Women's Transition Home Society). 15 transitional housing units for women and children fleeing abuse.
- Children's Receiving Home (Health & Social Services, Yukon Government). 6 bedrooms for children who have been removed from abusive family situations.
- Mental Health 6-plex (Challenge Disability Resource Group). 6 units for individuals receiving treatment for mental health diagnoses.
- New Sarah Steele Building (Health & Social Services, Yukon Government). The new facility, opened in September 2016, includes 8 short term (1 week) transitional units for patients exiting treatment.
- Steve Cardiff Tiny House (Blood Ties Four Directions Society). 1 unit of transitional housing for Blood Ties' clients.
- Yukon Adult Resource Center - ARC (Salvation Army). 18 transitional housing beds for men exiting the federal and territorial correctional system.
- LWEH Program (Blood Ties Four Directions Society). As of December 2016, 4 units of supported housing for Blood Ties clients were available through this program.
- LWEH Program (Victoria Faulkner Women's Center). As of December 2016, 1 unit of supported housing for Victoria Faulkner clients was available through this program.
- LWEH Program (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Society Yukon). As of December 2016, 2 units of supported housing for Victoria Faulkner clients were available through this program.

### Planned Transitional Housing

- Salvation Army Centre for Hope. The new facility, scheduled to open in early fall 2017, will have 20 transitional housing units. Length of stay yet to be determined.

### Existing Social/Non-Market Rental Housing

- Gateway Housing Society. 37 units of affordable rental housing.
- Grey Mountain Housing Society 74 affordable rental units primarily for First Nations families.
- Kwanlin Dün Community Services (Kwanlin Dün First Nations). 232 single-family units and three six-plex apartment building, totalling 18 units, of affordable housing for KDFN citizens.
- Ta'an Kwäch'än Community Services (Ta'an Kwäch'än Council). 12 units available to TKC citizens and total of 42 affordable housing units in Whistle Bend.
- YHC Seniors Housing (Yukon Housing Corporation, Yukon Government). 241 units of affordable seniors' rental housing.



- YHC Social Housing (Yukon Housing Corporation, Yukon Government). 395 units of affordable rental housing. This includes Whitehorse Affordable Family Housing initiative with 31 units of affordable rental housing with programming for single parent families.
- Whitehorse Housing Co-op. 12 units of affordable rental housing.

#### **Affordable Home Ownership**

- Habitat Homes (Habitat for Humanity Yukon). 18 homes have been constructed since operations began in 2004, with a further 10 planned by 2018.

#### **Assisted Living for the Elderly**

- The Birch Lodge (Health & Social Services, Yukon Government). 10 intermediate care beds.
- Macaulay Lodge (Health & Social Services, Yukon Government). 44 intermediate care beds.
- Thomson Centre (Health & Social Services, Yukon Government). 29 intermediate and extended care beds.
- Copper Ridge Place (Health & Social Services, Yukon Government). 96 long-term care beds.

#### **Planned Assisted Living for the Elderly**

- Whistle Bend (Health & Social Services, Yukon Government). 150 long-term care beds, expected to open in early 2018.

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## Appendix E: Existing Programs and Services in Whitehorse

- Alcohol and Drug Services – Withdrawal Management/Detox (Yukon Government, Health and Social Services). This facility and program provides a safe, confidential and supportive environment with a high standard of compassionate care and professional treatment. Detox staff support clients, medically and emotionally, to safely withdraw from substances while maintaining client dignity, privacy and respect.
- Blood Ties Four Directions Centre - Blood Ties seeks to eliminate barriers and create opportunities for people to have equal access to health and wellness in the community. Services provided include harm reduction, HIV/AIDS and Hep-C workshops, needle exchange, and support and counseling.
- Boys and Girls Club Yukon - The Boys and Girls Club of Yukon is dedicated to facilitating positive programming. Along with families and communities we support Yukoners to evolve into healthy, confident and connected individuals.
- Bringing Youth Toward Equality (BYTE) - BYTE is a 'for youth, by youth' organization focused on empowering youth throughout the Yukon and Canada's north. Their mission is to unlock potential through youth empowerment.
- Challenge Disability Resource Group (Challenge) - This organization assists people with disabilities to become active and independent in their community, by learning real job skills and entering the job market. Programs include vocational assessment, employment coordination and job development services. Challenge has numerous enterprises (business service contracts, food services, wood products manufacturing, landscaping and yard management services) that offer clients the opportunity to build their skills and obtain valuable experience.
- Downtown Outreach Clinic - This clinic offers wound care, immunizations, foot care, health promotion/harm reduction education, help navigating the health care system, referrals, and other nursing assessments and treatment.
- Elizabeth Frye Society of Yukon - The society works with women involved in the justice system. They assist women with issues that arise while they are in prison or transitioning back into the community (e.g. housing, social assistance, access to community supports).
- Employment Central (Yukon Government and Service Canada) - This agency provides a job board, free access to computers and counselling, all designed to facilitate re-entry into the workforce.
- Family & Children's Services/Child Protection (Yukon Government, Health and Social Services) - Family and Children's Services provides support, assistance and counselling for parents and families. This agency investigates and addresses instances of child abuse and neglect.
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Society (FASSY) - This is a non-profit organization dedicated to fostering accepting and educated communities, where individuals with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) have equal access to opportunities to reach their full potential.
- Handy Bus (City of Whitehorse) - The Handy Bus provides safe and secure transportation for persons who, for a variety of reasons, have difficulty using regular transit service.

- Jackson Lake Healing Centre (Kwanlin Dün First Nation) - The Healing Centre provides aftercare support (cultural and spiritual) to people who have attended the Land-Based Healing Program held each summer. The focus is on assisting individuals, families and communities on their healing journeys, and providing assistance during a family or community crisis. The Jackson Lake Wellness team also holds men's circle every week.
- Kwanlin Dün Health Centre - Kwanlin Dün First Nation - The Natsékhi Kù Health Centre provides a wide range of health services and programs, including walk in nursing clinic, Health promotion activities, Home and Community care programs, outreach nursing services, Elder day programming, physician services, clinical counselling services and maternal / paternal child programming. The health centre programs incorporate traditional first nation knowledge into all of our care.
- Many Rivers/Outreach Van - This organization provides free and confidential counselling services for youth, families, couples and individuals. The Outreach Van is a partnership program that reaches out to the most marginalized individuals in the city of Whitehorse. Since April 2002, the Outreach Van has provided non-judgemental support, crisis counselling, harm reduction material, nursing and survival gear to people who may not access mainstream services. Staff travel the streets of Whitehorse "meeting people where they're at", six nights per week.
- Mental Health Services (Yukon Government Health & Social Services) - Mental Health Services is a community mental health clinic offering assessment, individual and group therapy, supportive counseling and referral services for a wide range of emotional and behavioral problems and mental illnesses. Mental health professionals work to provide assistance in managing depression, anxiety, schizophrenia and bipolar disorders.
- Options for Independence (OFI) - Options for Independence is a Yukon Government funded Not for Profit Organization (NGO) established in 1999 to provide Supported Residential (Housing) Program for adults with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).
- Sacred Heart Cathedral - This church hosts a weekend soup kitchen to those in need.
- Sally and Sisters/Soeurs - This program provides a free hot lunch to women and children in a safe and sober space at the Whitehorse Food Bank on Mondays and Fridays.
- Salvation Army - The Salvation Army is a faith-based organization that provides emergency shelter, showers and meals to those in need. In 2015, it was announced that the Salvation Army, in partnership with the Yukon Government, would build a Centre of Hope to replace its aging facility at the corner of Fourth Avenue and Black Street. Expected to open in 2017, the Centre of Hope will provide a range of support services and will feature a 25-space emergency shelter, drop-in space, increased dining room capacity and 22 transitional housing units.
- Service d'Orientation et de Formation des Adultes (SOFA) - SOFA provides a wide range of services in the fields of employment assistance, training, guidance and literacy for French language speakers at the Centre de la Francophonie.
- Second Opinion Society - Provides a drop-in centre for those interested in holistic alternatives for mental health. Services provided include peer-counselling, workshops and recreational activities.

- Skookum Jim Friendship Centre - This organization provides a wide variety of programs and support to youth and men and women, including a Youth Employment Centre, traditional sports and Keish camps, pre-natal care, legal advocacy for women and traditional parenting classes.
- Social Assistance, (Yukon Government, Health & Social Services) - Social Assistance is a program that provides monthly financial assistance to people either on an on-going basis or in time of emergency. This program is to be used only as a last resort after all other possible sources of income have been explored. The Yukon Government, Department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada and all Yukon First Nation governments have social assistance programs.
- Sport Yukon - Sport Yukon manages the Kids Recreation Fund, which helps families experiencing financial hardship to enable their children to participate in organized sport, art, cultural, social and recreational programs.
- Teegatha'oh Zheh - A non-profit that provides day programming and residential support services for adults labeled with intellectual disabilities. "Teegatha'oh Zheh" is a Gwitch'in phrase meaning: to return home by the path on which you left.
- Teen Parent Centre - This Centre welcomes young students during and after pregnancy, and provides services such as free quality daycare for infants and toddlers, and information and support related to healthy living, nutrition, parenting and child development, life skills and options for completing high school.
- Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre - This centre is a local non-government, non-profit organization that offers programming, advocacy and support to women in Whitehorse. It provides lunches and other supports (such as showers and laundry facilities to women). Sobriety is not a barrier to obtaining supports. It offers A Safe Place, the only low barrier after hours' program for women Friday, Saturday & Sunday evenings.
- Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle - This non-profit, community-based society provides a platform for all Aboriginal women to voice concerns and to seek support and guidance from each other, and to participate in community events that promote wellness and healing.
- Whitehorse Food Bank - This non-profit, community-based organization provides three-day hampers (one per family, per month) for pick-up for those in need.
- Youth of Today Society - This non-profit provides a variety of drop-in services for youth.
- The Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition (YAPC) - YAPC facilitates the elimination of poverty in Yukon through advocacy, awareness and action. YAPC hosts Poverty and Homelessness Action Week every October, produces "Surviving in Yukon: a guide to free and low-cost goods and services in Yukon" and hosts Whitehorse Connects three times a year. YAPC employs a Housing Navigator/Housing Coordinator and provides Program Coordination at the Whitehorse Affordable Family Housing Initiative.
- Yukon Association for Community Living - This community-based organization supports, men and women, teens and children with intellectual disabilities and their families through formal advocacy, public education and awareness. Services include a weekly youth group, supported employment, and sexual health and social skills training.





- Homecare (Yukon Government, Health & Social Services) - Yukon Government Homecare programs provide an array of health-related services for Yukoners of all ages in the home and community setting.
- Social Services (Yukon Government, Health & Social Services) - Yukon Government Social Services provide a variety of programs such as adult community services, alcohol and drug services, family and children's services, regional services, senior services, senior and elder abuse, services for people with disabilities, and social assistance.
- Rent Supplement Enhancement Program (Yukon Housing Corporation). Under this program, Yukon Housing Corporation pays the median market rent directly to the landlord, and the tenant pays the Corporation 25% of their income.
- Victims of Violence Housing Program (Yukon Housing Corporation) - This program is designed to improve housing programs and the quality, quantity and sustainability of infrastructure for housing that supports victims of family violence.
- Rental Housing Allowances for Families (Yukon Housing Corporation) - This program aims to help working families with children to better afford private market rental housing by offering direct rental housing allowances.
- Emergency Repair Program (Yukon Housing Corporation) - This program is designed to provide financial assistance to help low-income households make emergency repairs required for continue and safe occupancy of their principal residence.

## Appendix F: Summary from Questionnaire provided at Whitehorse Connects and Sally and Sisters/Soeurs – February 2017

In the early 2017, approximately 80 respondents gave input on a short survey distributed to people with lived experience as part of ensuring 'Safe at Home' included actions that people with lived experience identified. This document summarizes the answers to the questionnaire distributed at Sally & Sisters/Soeurs on February 20, 2017 and at Whitehorse Connects on February 21, 2017. The first 50 respondents received a \$5 Tim Horton's card as recognition of their time and participation.

### Shelter

The most commonly-voiced concern by far is the difficulty finding affordable or free shelter, or shelter that is geared towards a particular group of people (the elderly, men, women, children). No fewer than 23 of the respondents listed this as a primary issue, with many more including more specific issues, including things like, "shelters are unsafe" (2 people), shelters should have longer/daytime hours (6 people), Whitehorse needs shelters that are specific to men, or to women and children. Many, many people indicated that they wish to see shelters with shower and laundry services available or failing that, affordable, convenient public laundry and shower facilities available at some other location in town (17 people). Two people suggested that a winter camping site, with these facilities available, and in close proximity to downtown would be helpful in their lives. One person said that more shelter and affordable housing is needed outside Whitehorse, and one person suggested that a shelter in McIntyre would be useful.

Other shelter-related concerns that were raised include the thought that shelters should offer fellowship services, that the Salvation Army shouldn't kick people out, and that off-sales should not be located next-door to the Salvation Army (1 person each). Finally, others raised issues such as more privacy and stability (a place where people can leave possessions overnight) are needed in existing shelters and housing, that a quiet shelter would be helpful, and that more support is needed within the shelters themselves.

### Housing

A second related concern raised by many was that more homes are needed – 10 people specifically addressed this above and beyond concerns about the lack of day-to-day and night-to-night shelter. Two people suggested that there needs to be more apartments available around a price-point of \$500-\$600 per month. Two respondents suggested that tiny homes ought to be investigated further as a possibility. One individual said that more housing stock that accepts pets is needed.

### Employment

The next top-level concern brought forward was of difficulty finding employment, which was mentioned by 11 respondents directly, and by another 5 individuals indirectly (who brought up concerns about the availability of assistance finding employment, or the ease of acceptance into educational programs that would aid in finding employment. Two individuals specifically mentioned that there is a need for more pathways towards work on the land.



### Transportation

Nine individuals mentioned transportation concerns: four suggested that bus passes and tickets ought to be free or subsidized, one person wished for Sunday service on the bus system, and one said there is currently no place to buy tickets or passes in Granger. Finally, one individual said that safe rides home are needed for those who work late or have transportation needs that go beyond the footprint of the bus system.

### Food

Perhaps surprisingly, only a relatively few people spoke of difficulties finding food: Four people spoke of a shortage of affordable food, and two people suggested the food bank should reconsider the policy of only assisting a given person once per month.

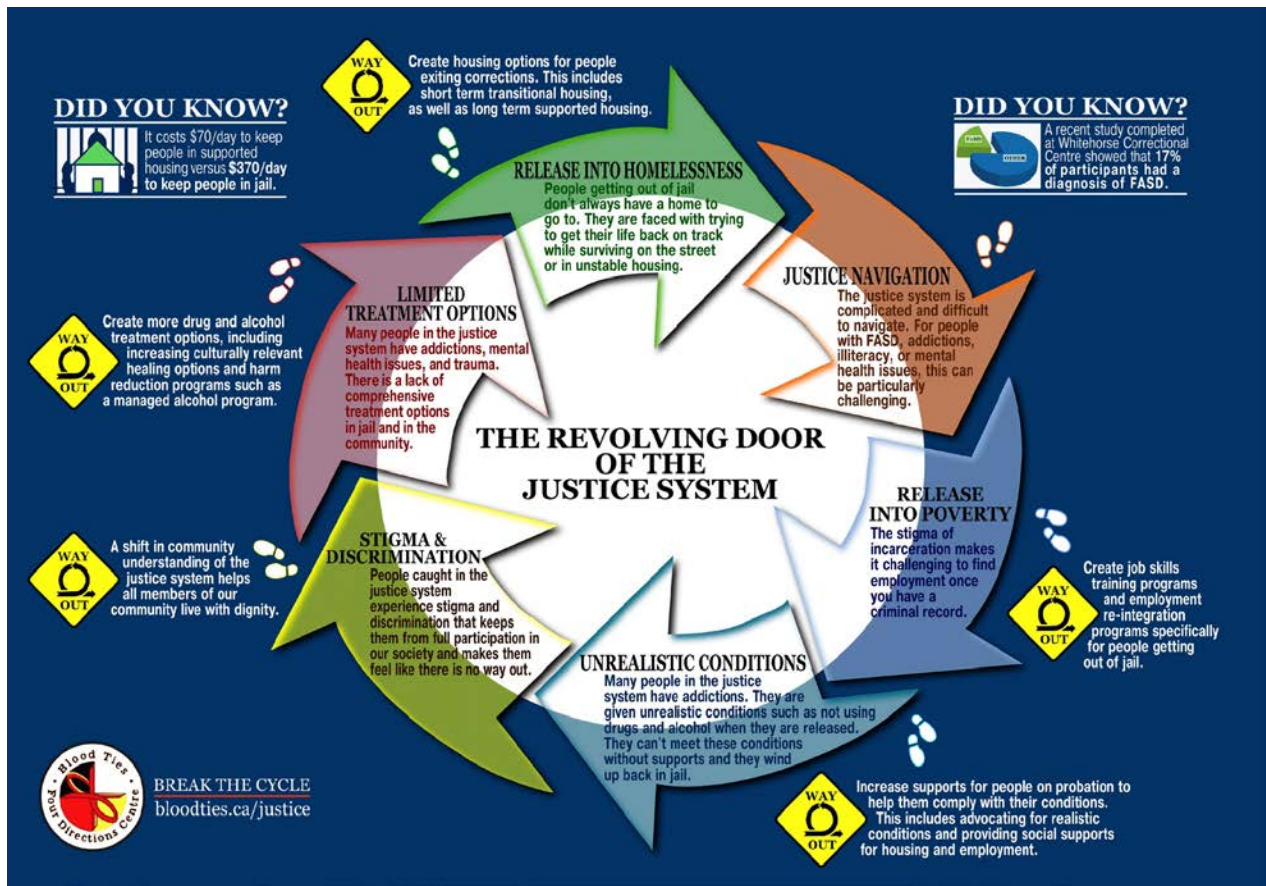
### Other concerns

One theme seen on several surveys is the idea that homeless and vulnerable people need more activities – recreational and educational. It was suggested by one respondent that they would help keep people off the streets during the peak tourism season in summer. Two suggested that cheaper/free passes for the Canada Games Centre could assist with this while others mentioned a need for classes in areas like sewing, carpentry, gardening and cooking. Four people indicated they'd like to see more classes and educational opportunities in the areas of independent living, legal rights, financial literacy and healthy living. One individual voiced a need for more services for pregnant women. Three individuals spoke of needing more warm clothing for winter, and one person said that footwear is a specific concern. Dental care and prescription drug costs were each mentioned by one person. One individual said that the RCMP and court system need to show more compassion.

## Appendix G: The Revolving Door of the Justice System

In 2016, Blood Ties Four Directions received funding from Crime Prevention Yukon to highlight common-lived experiences amongst their clients. They designed an infographic highlighting the common themes and issues they found.

All participants in this project were Indigenous, with lived experiences within the Yukon Territory, as well as British Columbia, Alberta, and the Northwest Territories.



## Appendix H: Emergency Shelter Operating Principles

Source: Salvation Army

