

Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy



Saskatoon Community Plan
2024-2028





We respectfully acknowledge that we are on Treaty 6 territory, the traditional lands of many diverse First Nations including the Cree, Dene, Nakota, Saulteaux and Dakota and the homeland of the Métis.



Table of Contents

- 1. Introduction..... 1
- 2. Community Engagement 3
- 3. Investment Plan..... 7
- 4. Cost-Matching Requirement..... 12
- 5. Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS)..... 14
- 6. Coordinated Access..... 16
- 7. Community-Wide Outcomes (Outcomes-Based Approach)..... 20
- 8. Official Language Minority Communities..... 24
- 9. Next Steps..... 24
- 10. Community Advisory Board..... 25
- Appendices 26
 - Appendix A – What We Learned Report
 - Appendix B - Focused Conversation/Interview Questionnaire
 - Appendix C – Reaching Home Directives Excerpt: Minimum Requirements



1. Introduction

Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) plays a central role in addressing homelessness in Saskatoon by coordinating housing-related activities and supporting affordable housing projects. As the Community Entity for the federal government's Reaching Home strategy, SHIP is critical in administering funds and spearheading initiatives to reduce homelessness. It supports local services and programs that assist individuals at risk of or experiencing homelessness, helping them achieve stability and long-term security.

Homelessness in Saskatoon is a significant and growing challenge. The recent 2024 Point-in-Time Count reported 1,499 individuals experiencing homelessness, a significant rise from 550 in 2022. This increase is partly due to expanded definitions capturing a broader segment of the city's homeless population, including those in emergency shelters, transitional housing, and less visible situations like couch surfing. The city faces a specific crisis in hidden homelessness, with 339 individuals identified, highlighting temporary and insecure housing challenges, particularly among youth and families.

SHIP's work reflects a community-wide commitment to tackle homelessness head-on.

In response to these challenges, SHIP has led the update of the Reaching Home Community Plan for 2024-2028. Prairie Wild Consulting was contracted to assist with this planning process, undertaking research, engagement, and aligning with other community initiatives such as the recent Point-in-Time Count and the Saskatoon Homelessness Action Plan (SHAP). SHAP is a comprehensive, community-driven framework addressing homelessness in Saskatoon.

The updated Community Plan focuses on identifying key priority areas for support and investment, helping to contribute to sustainable pathways out of homelessness and reflecting a collaborative and coordinated community approach forward.





Governance Framework

Effective governance is critical to the success of the Reaching Home strategy in Saskatoon. The Community Entity (CE) and Community Advisory Board (CAB) play complementary roles in ensuring that funding, programs, and initiatives align with the community's needs and priorities. This alignment particularly emphasizes the active involvement of Indigenous leaders, agencies, and organizations throughout the planning, implementation, and decision-making processes.

Indigenous communities play an important role in addressing the unique challenges faced by Indigenous individuals and families experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Their contributions are vital, offering culturally grounded housing and support solutions that prioritize self-determination and holistic well-being.

Role of the Community Entity (CE)

Under Reaching Home, a Community Entity (CE) enters into a funding agreement with Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada (HICC) to address homelessness at the local level. As the CE, SHIP administers Reaching Home funds, oversees project implementation, and supports the homelessness-serving sector. SHIP's responsibilities include:

- **Implementing the Community Plan** in collaboration with the CAB to prevent and reduce homelessness.
- **Soliciting and Approving Projects** from local service providers that align with the community's homelessness priorities.
- **Managing Contracts** with third-party service providers, ensuring projects are delivered effectively.
- **Monitoring and Reporting** of funded projects, reporting on outcomes to HICC.
- **Managing Data** through tools like the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS).
- **Implementing and Improving Coordinated Access** to ensure that individuals experiencing homelessness can access housing and services efficiently.
- **Engaging with the Community** to create a unified approach to addressing homelessness.

Role of the Community Advisory Board (CAB)

The CAB is an independent advisory body providing strategic oversight and direction for Reaching Home-funded initiatives in Saskatoon, whose role is to ensure that efforts are community-driven, inclusive, and aligned with local needs. Its responsibilities include:

- **Guiding Planning Efforts**, including the development, review, and official approval of the Community Plan.
- **Assessing and Recommending Projects** for funding to the Community Entity.
- **Being Representative** of the community.
- **Engaging in Meaningful Collaboration** with key partners, including Indigenous, municipal, provincial, and federal governments; entities coordinating provincial homelessness initiatives; non-profit organizations, service providers, and people with living and lived experiences of homelessness.
- **Supporting the Community Entity** in implementing, maintaining, and improving the Coordinated Access system, use of HIFIS, and preventing and reducing homelessness using an Outcomes-Based Approach.

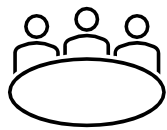


2. Community Engagement

This Plan is informed by the voices of various representatives who were engaged throughout this process. This includes community partners such as Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations, service providers, people with lived experience, and municipal partners. The process captured insights of diverse perspectives and aligns with broader initiatives to ensure a coordinated and systemic response to homelessness in Saskatoon.

Engaging with over 60 people, the updated plan emphasizes collaboration, inclusivity, and evidence-based strategies.

Community engagement in Saskatoon was undertaken through a multi-faceted approach, designed to ensure participants had an opportunity to contribute to the development of this Plan. Engagement spanned across several complementary methods and phases, including:



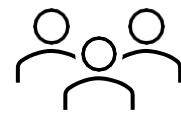
Community Advisory Board (CAB)

- Engagement through regular CAB meetings provided a platform for open discussion throughout 2024 and early 2025.
- Input gathered on the planning process and key themes, challenges, and priorities.



Focused Conversations/Interviews

- Seventeen (17) organizations, agencies, and government partners were invited to participate in a focused conversation either in-person or virtual.
- Twelve (12) conversations occurred, gathering insights on their role in the lives of people experiencing homelessness; community strengths and challenges; gaps; considerations related to Indigenous homelessness; Coordinated Access; and Reaching Home investments and priorities for the next four years.
- Focused conversations with the CA and HIFIS leads also took place to share an overview about both systems and regular updates on progress.



Intercept Surveys

- Informal conversations with over thirty (30) individuals experiencing homelessness were held in core neighbourhoods such as Riversdale, Pleasant Hill, and Downtown; at transit corridors and bus stops; and along the riverbank where informal communities were observed.
- The informal and flexible nature of the conversations created an open environment where participants felt comfortable sharing their stories.
- Participants shared about shelter and housing challenges; safety and privacy concerns; health and substance use issues; trust and relationships with services; basic needs and services; and freedom vs. structure in housing and support programs.



Complementary Initiatives

Engagement activities were closely integrated with concurrent and complementary processes, including the 2024 Point-in-Time Count and the Saskatoon Homelessness Action Plan (SHAP) renewal.

In April 2024, over seventy (70) stakeholders participated in a SHAP forum to identify needs, realistic solutions, collaborate with partners, discuss the sense of urgency, and consider the current environment. Following this gathering, an Executive Council was formed, including representation from the Saskatoon Tribal Council, Métis Nation-Saskatchewan, SHIP, and the City of Saskatoon.

Further input was gathered at an Advisory Committee meeting in October 2024, attended by approximately forty (40) participants, including Elders, community organizations, and individuals with living and lived experience. Discussions focused on draft Terms of Reference and priority setting.

Another opportunity to provide input into SHAP was presented at the SHIP annual conference in November 2024; gathering further input on key priorities.

The results of these are being compiled with ongoing engagement and a goal of finalizing and implementing the plan in Spring/Summer 2025.

Members of the Reaching Home Community Plan facilitation team participated in some of these opportunities, to document and contribute to discussions, and align SHAP priorities with this planning process.



Key Findings

Through these engagement efforts, several overarching themes emerged, highlighting strengths, challenges, and opportunities within Saskatoon’s homelessness response. These findings provide the foundation for the priorities outlined in this Community Plan.

Strengths

- **Inter-Agency Collaboration:** Saskatoon benefits from strong collaboration among service providers, governmental agencies, and community organizations, which facilitates a coordinated approach to addressing homelessness.
- **Community Engagement:** There is a high level of community engagement and advocacy, ensuring that key issues related to homelessness are addressed effectively.
- **Indigenous Leadership:** Indigenous-led organizations are appreciated for their culturally relevant, community-driven programming. Their contributions are critical in addressing the unique challenges faced by Indigenous individuals experiencing homelessness.
- **Adaptive Service Models:** The ability of Saskatoon’s service providers to adapt their models to meet changing needs and challenges. This flexibility has been particularly important in responding to crises like the COVID-19 pandemic, showcasing the community’s resilience and innovative capacity in continuing to support vulnerable populations under varied circumstances.

Challenges and Barriers

- **Housing Shortages:** The lack of affordable and diverse housing options remains the most significant barrier, with a need for solutions that cater to varying levels of acuity, from low-barrier shelters to permanent supportive housing.
- **Funding Limitations:** The reduction in provincial support since COVID-19 crucially impacts the operational capacity of service providers and the overall sustainability of homelessness initiatives.
- **Indigenous Homelessness:** Indigenous peoples are disproportionately affected, reflecting systemic inequities such as intergenerational trauma and barriers to accessing culturally appropriate services.
- **Mental Health and Addiction Services:** Gaps in mental health and addiction recovery resources hinder stability for individuals transitioning out of homelessness, worsening other systemic challenges.
- **Service Navigation Complexity:** Individuals experiencing homelessness often face challenges navigating the complex array of services available, impacting their ability to access needed support.

Opportunities for Growth

- **Culturally Relevant Strategies:** Prioritizing the expansion of Indigenous-led initiatives and ensuring cultural safety across all service delivery aspects is critical. This approach is foundational in promoting equity and advancing reconciliation.
- **Wrap-Around Services Expansion:** There is an opportunity to expand health and related services and supports, making them more accessible and comprehensive to meet the needs of vulnerable populations.
- **Enhanced Service Coordination:** Improving the implementation of Coordinated Access and HIFIS, emphasizing streamlined referrals and real-time data sharing.
- **Shelter Infrastructure:** Developing permanent, low-barrier shelter options that address immediate needs and serve as gateways to long-term housing stability.
- **Governance and Oversight:** Addressing perceptions and concerns about governance roles, responsibilities, and potential conflicts of interest, through open communication and transparency with stakeholders.



Integration into the Community Plan

The insights gathered through this engagement process directly shaped the strategic priorities and investment allocations for the next four years. These focus areas, prioritized based on engagement feedback, align with the Reaching Home directives and address key challenges identified by stakeholders.

- **Housing Services:** Stakeholders consistently highlighted the urgent need for transitional housing and shelter services to address the immediate needs of individuals and families experiencing homelessness. While outside the scope of Reaching Home funding, affordable housing remains a critical advocacy point.
- **Client Support Services:** Mental health and addiction supports emerged as critical areas for investment, with stakeholders emphasizing the need for tailored services to help individuals overcome barriers to housing stability.
- **Capital Investments:** Stakeholders emphasized the need to address the critical shortage of shelter beds and housing options, including building new facilities and expanding capacity within existing ones to meet both immediate and long-term needs.
- **Prevention and Shelter Diversion:** Stakeholders advocated for increased focus on early intervention strategies, such as eviction prevention and diversion programs, to reduce inflows into homelessness.
- **Coordination of Resources and Data Quality Improvement:** While stakeholders recognized the value of improved coordination and data management systems like HIFIS, this investment area was generally viewed as a supporting priority compared to the more immediate needs of housing services and client supports.

These priorities reflect Saskatoon's commitment to collaborative, evidence-based strategies that optimize resource allocation while addressing immediate needs and systemic challenges in preventing and reducing homelessness. For more details on engagement findings, see Appendix A.



3. Investment Plan

Addressing homelessness in Saskatoon requires a comprehensive, evidence-based approach that responds to the evolving needs of the community. The Reaching Home funding allocation is designed to address key priorities identified through engagement and data analysis, while aligning with Reaching Home directives and the strategic objectives of the Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP). SHIP plays a dual role as the Community Entity (CE) for both the Designated Communities (DC) and Indigenous Homelessness (IH) funding streams, ensuring a coordinated approach to addressing homelessness across diverse populations.

The upcoming federal election has introduced uncertainty regarding future funding commitments, with potential shifts in government priorities posing challenges for the homelessness-serving sector. These concerns, paired with rising homelessness rates and increasing demand for services, highlight the urgency of sustained funding to address growing needs. Addressing homelessness effectively requires sustained financial commitments and strategic collaboration between all orders of government to enhance service capacity and create lasting solutions.

SHIP and the Community Advisory Board (CAB) are responding to this evolving environment by focusing on proactive planning. SHIP’s upcoming strategic planning session, scheduled for early 2025, will refine these plans, ensuring alignment with federal directives and Saskatoon’s unique needs in an uncertain landscape. Efforts are underway to strengthen collaboration with Indigenous-led organizations and other key partners to ensure an equitable and culturally responsive approach to homelessness.

Allocations for the Indigenous Homelessness (IH) stream for 2026-2028 remain pending. However, priorities will include addressing systemic inequities, intergenerational trauma, and culturally relevant housing and supports through Indigenous-led solutions.

Table 3.1: Reaching Home Annual Allocations		
Year	Designated Communities	Indigenous Homelessness
2024-2025	\$2,913,961	\$3,604,850
2025-2026	\$2,913,961	\$3,604,850
2026-2027	\$3,029,688	TBD*
2027-2028	\$3,029,688	TBD*
Total	\$11,887,298	\$7,209,700

*Awaiting confirmation for funding for Indigenous Homelessness Stream for these years.



As part of the DC funding, the Community Capacity and Innovation (CCI) stream supports initial investments towards the design and implementation of Coordinated Access. This funding is critical in strengthening service coordination and ensuring that homelessness-related services operate in a streamlined and accessible manner.

The following CCI funding allocations have been provided under the DC stream:

Year	Amount
2024-2025	\$161,700
2025-2026	\$161,700
2026-2027	\$161,700
2027-2028	\$161,700

The following table outlines the planned allocation percentages for each activity area, with a detailed breakdown and explanation of allocations below based on engagement findings. These allocations will be reviewed and finalized each year based on updated data and ongoing engagement.

Activity Area	2024-25		2025-26		2026-27		2027-28	
	DC	IH	DC	IH	DC	IH	DC	IH
Housing Services	28.05%	39.95%	28.9%	38.25%	28.9%	38.25%	28.9%	38.25%
Prevention and Shelter Diversion	11.9%	10.2%	12.75%	8.5%	12.75%	8.5%	12.75%	8.5%
Client Support Services	17%	31.45%	17%	25.5%	17%	25.5%	17%	25.5%
Capital Investments	15.3%	0%	16.15%	9.35%	16.15%	9.35%	16.15%	9.35%
Coordination of Resources and Data Quality Improvement	12.75%	3.4%	10.2%	3.4%	10.2%	3.4%	10.2%	3.4%
Administration	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%



Allocation Breakdown

Housing Services

Housing Services include resources that help individuals and families move from homelessness into transitional or permanent housing. This category supports initiatives such as transitional housing, rapid rehousing programs, and housing placement services.

Transitional housing was repeatedly identified as critical for vulnerable populations, particularly youth and street-involved individuals who need stability before securing long-term housing.

The emphasis on Housing Services stems from engagement findings that highlighted the urgent need for transitional housing to bridge the gap between shelters and long-term stability. The focus is on these key areas:

- **Shelter Extensions** – Supporting programs and additional spaces that transition individuals from being unhoused to having basic needs met through sheltering.
- **Transitional Housing** – Addressing the immediate need for stable, short-term housing options that help individuals transition from shelters into permanent housing solutions.
- **Supportive Housing** – Supportive housing programs that transition high-acuity individuals from shelters to long-term stability.
- **Rapid Rehousing** – Providing short-term assistance to individuals and families to secure permanent housing quickly.

Prevention and Shelter Diversion

Prevention and Shelter Diversion programs aim to prevent homelessness before it begins or divert individuals from entering the shelter system. These programs include eviction prevention, landlord mediation, and access to temporary alternatives.

Prevention efforts align with engagement findings that stressed the importance of upstream interventions to reduce inflows into homelessness. The following was identified as important:

- **Eviction Prevention Services** – Programs offering financial assistance, case management, and legal support to prevent individuals from losing their housing and remaining in the private housing sector.
- **Landlord Mediation and Education** – Building relationships with landlords to mitigate evictions and promote housing access for individuals with complex needs.
- **Diversion Services** – Helping individuals identify and access safe, alternative accommodations without entering the shelter system.

Eviction prevention was identified as a vital service for at-risk families and individuals experiencing temporary financial crises.



Client Support Services

Client Support Services provide essential resources to empower individuals and address barriers to housing stability. These services include mental health and addiction supports, employment programs, and life-skills training.

Client Support Services are crucial for addressing the underlying factors that lead to homelessness. The community highlighted these areas:

- **Mental Health and Addiction Services** – Expanding access to counseling, harm reduction programs, and substance use treatment to address barriers to secure housing.
- **Employment and Life-Skills Programs** – Providing job training, financial literacy, and other resources to help individuals promote independence and long-term stability.
- **Specialized Support Services** – Offering tailored programs for high-risk populations, including survivors of domestic violence, Indigenous peoples, and veterans, to meet their diverse and intersectional needs.

Mental health and addiction support emerged as a significant gap, with stakeholders emphasizing the importance of integrated, low-barrier services.

Capital Investments

Capital Investments involve the development and enhancement of physical infrastructure to combat homelessness. This includes shelters, transitional housing facilities, and low-barrier drop-in centers.

Engagement findings highlighted the urgent need for infrastructure improvements and expansion to address the growing demand for safe, accessible facilities. The following areas were identified as priorities:

- **Shelter Upgrades and Expansions** – Increasing capacity and improving the safety and accessibility of existing shelters to better serve diverse populations and needs.
- **Transitional Housing Infrastructure** – Building transitional housing units tailored to youth, Indigenous peoples, and individuals with complex needs.
- **Low-Barrier Drop-In Centres** – Establishing spaces where individuals can access basic needs, such as hygiene facilities, meals, and temporary shelter, without restrictive entry requirements.

Individuals with lived experience shared that restrictive shelter policies, such as sobriety requirements and curfews, leave many without safe options. They shared that this concern is especially pressing during Saskatoon's harsh winters.



Coordination of Resources and Data Quality Improvement

This activity area is dedicated to enhancing community coordination and data management systems, such as HIFIS, to enhance the efficiency, accuracy, and accountability of service delivery for individuals experiencing homelessness.

Engagement feedback revealed limited capacity for large-scale data improvements, leading to a slight reduction in funding for this area to prioritize urgent needs like housing and client services. These areas will guide efforts related to:

- **Data Management and Reporting** – Investments will support maintaining HIFIS and improving data-sharing agreements to ensure accurate tracking of homelessness trends and informed decision-making.
- **Inter-Agency Collaboration** – Enhancing communication and coordination among service providers to optimize resource allocation and reduce duplication of efforts.
- **Training and Capacity Building** – Offering training to service providers to ensure consistent and accurate data entry and management.

Many agencies expressed a preference for reallocating resources toward direct client services while maintaining sufficient capacity for data collection and analysis. This adjustment strikes a balance between addressing immediate needs and supporting evidence-based planning and reporting.

Administration

Administration refers to the management and operational support required to deliver Reaching Home-funded activities effectively. This includes tasks such as financial oversight, reporting, and program coordination to ensure compliance with funding requirements and the efficient use of resources.

A 15% administration allocation is included in the investment plan for both the Designated Communities (DC) and Indigenous Homelessness (IH) streams. This funding supports the administrative functions necessary to coordinate programs, manage funding agreements, and ensure effective service delivery across the homelessness sector in Saskatoon.



4. Cost-Matching Requirement

Reaching Home mandates that Designated Communities (DC) match federal funding allocations dollar-for-dollar through financial or in-kind contributions from community partners. This requirement does not apply to the Indigenous Homelessness (IH) stream. SHIP collaborates with a network of community partners to secure contributions that meet this requirement, ensuring the sustainability of Reaching Home initiatives.

Cost-matching contributions are reviewed and updated annually based on the outcomes of the Reaching Home call for proposals. This approach ensures that contributions remain aligned with the community's evolving needs and priorities.

During the engagement process, stakeholders consistently emphasized the significant challenges posed by the Government of Saskatchewan's lack of cost-matching funding. This absence of provincial support has placed immense strain on the social services sector, leaving organizations without the resources needed to meet growing demands. Existing funding formulas are inadequate, highlighting the urgent need for a coordinated, multi-level approach.

Saskatchewan **remains the only province** in Canada without matching funds for homelessness initiatives under Reaching Home.

Contributions reflected in the table below are specific to Reaching Home-funded projects under the DC stream. The Métis Nation-Saskatchewan is IH-funded and included to recognize its role in leading Coordinated Access. These contributions demonstrate compliance with Reaching Home requirements but do not represent the total investments in homelessness services. Many other organizations and agencies contribute significantly to addressing homelessness in Saskatoon.



Table 4.1: Projected Investment Towards Homelessness in Saskatchewan

Organization/Agency/ Government	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	Total
Métis Nation-Saskatchewan	\$323,000	\$323,000	\$323,000	\$323,000	\$1,292,000
STR8UP	\$110,000	\$110,000	\$110,000	\$110,000	\$440,000
Elizabeth Fry Society	\$530,000	\$530,000	\$530,000	\$530,000	\$2,120,000
John Howard Society	\$295,000	\$295,000	\$295,000	\$295,000	\$1,180,000
YWCA	\$259,225	\$259,225	\$259,225	\$259,225	\$1,036,900
Salvation Army	\$853,262	\$853,262	\$853,262	\$853,262	\$3,413,048
Prairie Harm Reduction	\$1,165,000	\$1,165,000	\$1,165,000	\$1,165,000	\$4,660,000
OUT Saskatoon	\$202,000	\$202,000	\$202,000	\$202,000	\$808,000
Sanctum	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$8,000,000
Saskatoon Crisis Intervention Service	\$631,000	\$631,000	\$631,000	\$631,000	\$2,524,000
City of Saskatoon	\$2,500,000	\$2,500,000	\$2,500,000	\$2,500,000	\$10,000,000
TOTAL	\$8,868,487	\$8,868,487	\$8,868,487	\$8,868,487	\$35,473,948

SHIP and the CAB are committed to maintaining transparency in cost-matching reporting, ensuring alignment with Reaching Home directives while reflecting the collaborative contributions of local partners.



5. Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS)

The Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) is a comprehensive data management platform designed to support coordinated service delivery across homelessness-serving agencies. In Saskatoon, HIFIS has been instrumental in enhancing data accuracy and enabling service providers to collaborate effectively. The system fosters real-time updates and supports data-driven decision-making, which are critical to achieving the outcomes outlined under Reaching Home.

Under Reaching Home, HIFIS must meet specific **Minimum Requirements** to ensure communities have the tools to track, analyze, and respond effectively to homelessness challenges. These requirements guide the adoption, usage, and governance of HIFIS across all participating organizations.

Minimum Requirements for HIFIS

- **HIFIS MR 1:** Community Entities (CEs) must meet all HIFIS requirements by March 31, 2026, including maintaining, modifying, and implementing requirements introduced in 2024-25.
- **HIFIS MR 2:** CEs must use HIFIS or an equivalent Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS) that supports Coordinated Access (CA), Outcome-Based Approach (OBA) reporting, and secure data handling.
- **HIFIS MR 3:** Reaching Home-funded providers must use HIFIS/HMIS to manage client data and support CA and OBA reporting.
- **HIFIS MR 4:** CEs must establish data-sharing and privacy agreements to ensure compliance with federal, provincial/territorial, and municipal laws.

The Minimum Requirements for HIFIS described here are outlined in detail in the **Reaching Home: Community Plan Reference Guide 2024-2028**, Section 4, found in Appendix C.

Progress Towards Program Goals

Considerable progress has been made in aligning HIFIS with the Reaching Home program’s Minimum Requirements. In the past year, achievements include the onboarding of eleven (11) organizations, improvement in data management practices, and adaptations to ensure cultural relevancy. SHIP has successfully met all Minimum Requirements for HIFIS, as noted in the table below.

Minimum Requirement	Has the MR been met?	Minimum Requirement	Has the MR been met?
HIFIS MR 1	N/A	HIFIS MR 3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
HIFIS MR 2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	HIFIS MR 4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



In addition to the eleven (11) organizations already utilizing HIFIS, two (2) are currently in the process of onboarding, and efforts continue to engage with two (2) more organizations. SHIP is dedicated to fostering these relationships to expand HIFIS implementation.

As SHIP advances the implementation of HIFIS, the following key considerations are continuously prioritized to ensure the system's effectiveness and cultural alignment:

- **Cultural Adaptations in HIFIS:** Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous agencies have actively collaborated to make HIFIS culturally relevant and inclusive. Continuous feedback from Indigenous partners through mechanisms such as the CAB and the Saskatoon Homelessness Action Plan forums has been vital. These collaborations have led to the inclusion of culturally pertinent questions and identity designations in HIFIS, reflecting the diverse needs of the community.
- **Data Management and Privacy Considerations:** Implementing HIFIS continues to respect the Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP) principles, a foundation for maintaining trust and respect in data management involving Indigenous communities. The governance structure ensures that the release of anonymized community data is carefully managed, and that individual agency data remains confidential, adhering to established data sharing agreements.
- **Joint Capacity Building and Awareness:** Addressing challenges like staffing shortages and funding constraints, SHIP is committed to jointly enhancing the capacity of service providers. Training sessions on HIFIS and standardized service protocols are designed to equip all involved with the necessary skills for effective system use, respecting Indigenous data governance principles and promoting equitable service delivery. Trainings focus on ensuring timely and accurate data entry, with targeted support provided to address gaps in housing history and ongoing updates.

By maintaining its commitment to culturally relevant and privacy-conscious data management, SHIP will continue to foster trust and cooperation among all partners, ensuring the successful integration of HIFIS across the province. The updated Community Plan focuses on scaling up these efforts, aiming for full integration and real-time functionality of HIFIS by the end of the plan period in 2028, in so doing enhancing service delivery and strategic responses to homelessness in Saskatoon.



6. Coordinated Access

Coordinated Access (CA) provides a streamlined, equitable framework for connecting individuals experiencing homelessness to appropriate services and housing. This system strengthens collaboration between service providers and enhances the efficiency and consistency of service delivery in Saskatoon.

Reaching Home outlines **Minimum Requirements** for CA to ensure that communities implement equitable and data-informed systems. These requirements provide the foundation for creating a transparent and collaborative approach to service coordination.

System-Wide Requirements

- **CA MR 1:** Communities must meet all CA requirements by March 31, 2026, including maintaining, modifying, and implementing new requirements from 2024-25.

Governance and Partnerships

- **CA MR 2:** DC and IH streams must collaborate with each other, their CABs, and Indigenous partners to ensure culturally inclusive CA systems.
- **CA MR 3:** Governance structures must include diverse membership, representing population groups served, service providers, Indigenous partners, individuals with lived experience, and governments.
- **CA MR 4:** A CA Lead and HIFIS Lead must be designated to oversee service coordination and data quality.
- **CA MR 5:** Governance must align roles across the homelessness sector, including Community Entities, CABs, Indigenous partners, and local governments.
- **CA MR 6:** Reaching Home-funded service providers must participate in CA to ensure comprehensive service delivery.
- **CA MR 7:** Homelessness-serving providers, regardless of funding status, must be encouraged to participate to expand service access and efficiently fill vacancies through the CA system.

System Map and Resource Inventory

- **CA MR 8:** Communities must maintain a system map documenting service providers, roles, and HIFIS use.
- **CA MR 9:** Federally funded housing-related resources must fill vacancies using the Unique Identifier List and cannot maintain separate or parallel waitlists.
- **CA MR 10:** Eligibility requirements for all housing-related resources must be documented.
- **CA MR 11:** Prioritization criteria, including the order of application, must be documented and include factors like depth of need, housing history, and vulnerability to ensure fair resource allocation.



Service Navigation and Case Conferencing

- **CA MR 12:** Communities must ensure individuals are supported through CA by keeping information updated in HIFIS and addressing barriers to services and housing.

Access Points to Service

- **CA MR 13:** Access points must be available and ensure equitable, low-barrier service access across the region.
- **CA MR 14:** Processes must monitor and address barriers to ensure easy and equitable access to CA.

Triage and Assessment

- **CA MR 15:** Process must ensure consent, address immediate needs, and gather details on housing needs, eligibility, and progress using a person-centered approach.
- **CA MR 16:** A unified, trauma-informed assessment process must minimize duplication, maintain consistency, and address diverse population needs.

Vacancy Matching and Referral

- **CA MR 17:** Policies must outline roles, prioritization, referrals, and inventory management, including how vacancies are offered, concerns resolved, and housing outcomes tracked.
- **CA MR 18:** Vacancies must be filled using the Priority List, avoiding parallel waitlists or separate processes.

The Minimum Requirements for Coordinated Access are detailed in the **Reaching Home: Community Plan Reference Guide 2024-2028**, Section 5, found in Appendix C.



Progressing Toward Program Goals

Coordinated Access in Saskatoon has seen considerable advancements, successfully meeting all of the Minimum Requirements set by the Reaching Home program. Currently, eleven (11) organizations are fully trained and actively utilizing the CA system, enhancing their capacity to provide integrated and effective services. Additionally, six (6) organizations are in the midst of the onboarding process, preparing to fully integrate into the system. Beyond these, the CA team is actively engaged in building relationships with twelve (12) other agencies, aiming to expand the network and inclusivity of the program.

Minimum Requirement	Has the MR been met?	Minimum Requirement	Has the MR been met?
CA MR 1	N/A	CA MR 10	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CA MR 2	N/A	CA MR 11	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CA MR 3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CA MR 12	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CA MR 4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CA MR 13	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CA MR 5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CA MR 14	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CA MR 6	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CA MR 15	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CA MR 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CA MR 16	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CA MR 8	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CA MR 17	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CA MR 9	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CA MR 18	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



Ongoing and Meaningful Collaboration

The ongoing, meaningful collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners has been instrumental in the successful implementation and continuous improvement of the CA system. Here are the key collaborative efforts that will continue over the next four years:

- **Inclusive Planning and Governance:** The Planning and Governance committee, established in May 2023, includes substantial Indigenous representation (80%), ensuring that both Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives are integral to shaping policies and strategic directions. This committee oversees all policy and procedure changes, contributing to a well-coordinated approach in community engagement and system operation. Further structured collaboration is facilitated through the Team Leader Group and Frontline Support committees, which include diverse stakeholders from participating agencies, city services, and frontline workers, meeting regularly to discuss challenges and progress.
- **Regular Engagement and Feedback Mechanisms:** Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners actively participate in regular CAB meetings and the Saskatoon Homelessness Action Plan forum. These platforms facilitate continuous input and feedback, enabling SHIP to adapt and enhance operational and strategic aspects of CA based on diverse community insights.
- **Leadership Roles of Indigenous Partners:** The Métis Nation of Saskatchewan leads the CA team for Saskatoon, highlighting the essential role of Indigenous leadership in SHIP's collaborative framework. This leadership ensures that the services and supports are effectively tailored to meet the specific needs of Indigenous Peoples and communities.
- **Designated Access Points (DAPs) for Equitable Service Delivery:** All agencies participating in CA act as DAPs, ensuring that individuals experiencing homelessness can access services in a manner that is both comfortable and culturally sensitive. The locations are strategically chosen to be accessible, with consideration for the needs of diverse community members, including those from Indigenous backgrounds.

Despite significant advancements, challenges such as delays in onboarding new agencies and varying levels of engagement across agencies persist.

These ongoing efforts are designed to improve the coordination of services and enhance outcomes for all community members, particularly those facing homelessness. By fostering inclusive governance and engaging meaningfully with all stakeholders, SHIP aims to support the development of equitable, culturally competent, and data-driven solutions to address homelessness in Saskatoon effectively.

SHIP is committed to overcoming these obstacles by enhancing **relationship-building** efforts, providing **targeted training**, and offering **responsive support** to all participating organizations.



7. Community-Wide Outcomes (Outcomes-Based Approach)

Community-Wide Outcomes through the Outcomes-Based Approach (OBA) ensures that homelessness reduction efforts are driven by measurable results. This framework emphasizes the use of person-specific data to monitor progress, adapt strategies, and achieve sustainable outcomes for individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

To ensure success, the Reaching Home program also establishes **Minimum Requirements** for communities implementing the OBA. These requirements guide communities in data collection, analysis, and the establishment of baselines to measure progress.

- **OBA MR 1:** Communities must meet all OBA requirements by March 31, 2026, including maintaining, modifying, and implementing new requirements from 2024-25.
- **OBA MR 2:** Meaningful collaboration with CABs, Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners is expected, with active participation in the OBA by all providers.
- **OBA MR 3:** A written policy/protocol must define active/inactive criteria and data quality measures to manage client status changes effectively.
- **OBA MR 4:** A written policy/protocol must define how housing history is documented, including definitions of “homeless” and “housed,” data entry processes, and quality checks.
- **OBA MR 5:** Person-specific data must be collected with consent, maintained in the Unique Identifier List, and include all relevant details required for CA and filling vacancies.
- **OBA MR 6:** Data must be updated in real time to reflect changes in interaction with the system, housing status, and information relevant and necessary to CA, such as eligibility and prioritization for vacancies.
- **OBA MR 7:** Communities must maintain comprehensive data that covers all individuals and household types experiencing homelessness, including those sheltered and unsheltered.
- **OBA MR 8:** Communities must set baselines and reduction targets, track progress using HIFIS (or existing HMIS), and report on core outcomes, including overall homelessness, inflows, returns, Indigenous and chronic homelessness.
- **OBA MR 9:** Communities must continually improve data quality, and demonstrate its use and effectiveness in preventing and reducing homelessness through policy-making, program planning, and service delivery.

The Minimum Requirements for the OBA are detailed in the **Reaching Home: Community Plan Reference Guide 2024-2028**, Section 6, found in Appendix C.



Progress Towards Program Goals

SHIP has focused on integrating HIFIS and CA across Saskatoon and Saskatchewan. Efforts include detailed training sessions on data collection, consent protocols, and HIFIS navigation to support accurate data entry. Additionally, the CA intake process has effectively collected necessary person-specific data.

There is a commitment to the OBA to improve data quality and establish community-wide outcome baselines. While significant progress has been made, some minimum requirements have not been met. Updates on the MRs in progress and details of plans to achieve them is included below.

Minimum Requirement	Has the MR been met?	Minimum Requirement	Has the MR been met?
OBA MR 1	N/A	OBA MR 6	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
OBA MR 2	N/A	OBA MR 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
OBA MR 3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	OBA MR 8	<input type="checkbox"/>
OBA MR 4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	OBA MR 9	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
OBA MR 5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

OBA MR 8:

Establishing a comprehensive community-wide baseline for outcomes remains a work in progress as Saskatoon continues to build its CA/HIFIS system to support accurate data collection and reporting. The system currently encompasses the majority of local agencies, including all Designated Community-funded Reaching Home projects and most Indigenous Homelessness-funded projects.

HIFIS serves as a key platform for tracking outcomes, and as more agencies fully onboard, the capacity to generate detailed reports and assess outcomes at both the individual and system-wide levels will improve. Until full participation is achieved, baselines are being built using available HIFIS data since April 2024, complemented by insights from ongoing engagement efforts.

This process is dynamic, with baseline development functioning as a ‘live document’ that evolves alongside progress in data collection and reporting. CAB discussions continue to explore the ultimate goal for these baselines – whether the primary focus is on moving individuals into housing or tracking their progress along the broader housing stability continuum.

The establishment of baselines must also consider broader contextual factors:

- **COVID-19 Response:** The previous plan was implemented during the pandemic, when efforts centered on emergency responses such as Housing First and meeting basic needs.
- **System Development:** Both CA and HIFIS were in their infancy during this period. While significant progress has been made, neither system fully captured baseline data in earlier stages.
- **Sector Urgency:** The current homelessness-serving sector faces heightened challenges, including increasing demand for services, rising complexity of needs, and funding uncertainties.



- **Reaching Home’s Role:** It is important to recognize that Reaching Home serves as one piece of a larger and more complex homelessness response system. The baselines developed within this framework must align with broader community initiatives and priorities.

The proposed plan forward includes:

Next Steps	Target Date for Completion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Integration: Efforts will focus on achieving full HIFIS adoption across all participating agencies to ensure comprehensive data tracking and reporting capabilities. 	March 31, 2026
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement Insights: Outcomes of ongoing engagement activities will complement HIFIS data to assess whether current efforts are achieving the intended impact. 	March 31, 2026
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAB Collaboration: The CAB will continue discussions on defining goals, refining metrics, and establishing clear priorities for baseline outcomes, with an emphasis on long-term stability and systemic progress. 	March 31, 2026

Target dates for completion of a finalized baseline remain To Be Determined (TBD), as this work progresses in tandem with system integration and sector-wide collaboration. SHIP is committed to adapting its approach to ensure the baseline development reflects both community needs and the evolving homelessness landscape.

By integrating data-driven strategies and fostering meaningful collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations, SHIP aims to meet all OBA Minimum Requirements and enhance its capacity to address homelessness effectively.

Ongoing and Meaningful Collaboration

In the efforts to meet the OBA Minimum Requirements, SHIP leverages ongoing and meaningful collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners. This strategy aligns closely with the collaborative frameworks that have been established to meet other Minimum Requirements, ensuring that all approaches are comprehensive and synergistic across different streams.

This collaboration is particularly important in Saskatoon, where Designated Communities and Indigenous Homelessness streams coexist. By integrating these streams, SHIP enhances the effectiveness and inclusivity of its services and supports. SHIP’s approach is built on several key elements that ensure effective partnerships and integration:



- **Inclusive Governance Structures:** There are established governance structures that include significant representation from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous stakeholders. Ongoing collaboration includes ensuring that Indigenous-led organizations are participants and active leaders in these governance structures. The Métis Nation of Saskatchewan (MNS) plays a leadership role in coordinating the CA system for Saskatoon. This inclusion ensures that decision-making processes reflect a balanced perspective and that strategies developed are inclusive and culturally appropriate.
- **Regular Engagement through Integrated Community Advisory Boards (CAB):** Both the Indigenous CAB and the broader CAB are integral to SHIP's collaborative framework. These boards meet regularly to review progress, discuss challenges, and provide guidance on the implementation of the CA system and HIFIS.
- **Joint Training and Capacity Building:** Training sessions for staff and stakeholders are designed to enhance understanding of each community's unique needs and to build capacity for managing and implementing the OBA requirements effectively. Training topics include data management, privacy considerations, and the use of HIFIS, all tailored to respect and incorporate Indigenous perspectives and knowledge.
- **Collaborative Policy Development:** Policies related to data management, client intake, and privacy are developed through a collaborative process that reflects the shared principles guiding all the Minimum Requirement efforts. Throughout this process, SHIP and MNS adhere to Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP) principles, ensuring that data collection and sharing practices respect the sovereignty and preferences of Indigenous communities. This ensure that all polices are in compliance, culturally sensitive, and broadly applicable.
- **Coordinated Service Delivery:** All agencies involved in the CA system, including those serving Indigenous populations, act as Designated Access Points. This setup ensures that individuals experiencing homelessness receive services in a manner that is respectful, culturally appropriate, and accessible, regardless of their background.
- **Ongoing Feedback and Adaptation:** A strong feedback loop, which is vital for the continuous improvement of services across all Minimum Requirements, also supports the OBA. This mechanism ensures that SHIP's strategies remain responsive to the needs of the community and are effective in addressing the specific challenges identified through ongoing engagement.

These collaborative efforts are integral to SHIP's planning and implementation processes. The goal is to meet the OBA Minimum Requirements effectively and equitably.



8. Official Language Minority Communities

SHIP is dedicated to serving the needs of individuals experiencing homelessness in both of Canada's official languages. To ensure comprehensive accessibility, SHIP actively consults with sub-projects and shelters, continuously evaluating the availability and effectiveness of its services.

SHIP employs a staff member who is fluent in French, ready to provide translation services as needed. Recognizing the rich cultural diversity of Saskatoon, SHIP also maintains strong connections with local organizations, agencies, and networks. This enables the Community Entity to facilitate access to a range of language keepers and translators, including speakers of various newcomer and Indigenous languages.

SHIP is equipped to meet the **diverse linguistic needs** of the community, enhancing its ability to provide effective support and services to all residents.

9. Next Steps

Building on the strong collaborative foundation established through this plan and other community initiatives, SHIP is committed to advancing priorities that address both immediate challenges and long-term systemic improvements in Saskatoon's homelessness-serving sector.

Integrating Indigenous Leadership will be a priority across all aspects of plan implementation. This involves embedding culturally relevant practices into program delivery, governance, and decision-making to ensure Indigenous perspectives shape every stage of the process.

Engagement with Community Partners remains central to this effort, ensuring alignment with emerging needs and using a cohesive approach to tackling homelessness. These engagement efforts are enhanced by insights from the Saskatoon Homelessness Action Planning process, deepening collaboration with community partners. This integrated approach ensures that SHIP's strategies are well-aligned with the evolving needs of the community, including strengthening regular feedback mechanisms to ensure that insights and lived experiences shape SHIP's adaptive strategies and decision-making.

In collaboration with these partners, SHIP will also explore the development of a **System Navigation and Wayfinding Tool**. This visual tool will map out the various elements of the system, such as client pathways, governance structures, and service connections, enhancing transparency and empowering all users to access and understand the available supports more effectively.

Together, these efforts aim to foster a more accessible, inclusive, and responsive system that meets the needs of our communities.

Being listened to, really listened to, can change a person's life.
- Person experiencing homelessness in Saskatoon



10. Community Advisory Board

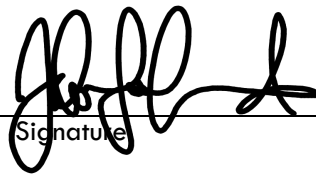
NAME	ROLE	ORGANIZATION
Jolon Lafond	Board Chair	White Buffalo Youth Lodge
Tenille Thomson	Vice-Chair	City of Saskatoon
Dr. Sharon Acoose	CAB Member	First Nations University
Gary Beaudin	CAB Member	United Way
Amy Dmyterko	CAB Member	Saskatchewan Housing Corporation
Ryan Bradley	CAB Member	Saskatoon Fire Department
Shirley Isbister	CAB Member	CUMFI
Sarah King	CAB Member	City of Saskatoon
Jodie Kurysh	CAB Member	John Howard Society of Saskatchewan
Susan Milligan	CAB Member	Social planning consultant
Amber King	CAB Member	Ministry of Social Services
Katie McKay-Argyriou	Ex-officio	Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada

CAB Chairs or Co-Chairs

I affirm that the above members of the CAB have reviewed the attached Community Plan, and that a majority of CAB members approve of its content.

Jolon Lafond, Director

Name



Signature

2025-3-17

Date (YYYY-MM-DD)

Name

Signature

Date (YYYY-MM-DD)

Name

Signature

Date (YYYY-MM-DD)



Appendices

Appendix A – What We Learned Report

Appendix B - Focused Conversation/Interview Questionnaire

Appendix C – Reaching Home Directives Excerpt: Minimum Requirements

**Reaching Home:
Canada's Homelessness Strategy**

**Saskatoon Community Plan
2024-2028**

**Appendix A -
What We Learned Report**

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	2
2	Planning Approach.....	2
2.1	Complementary Initiatives	3
2.2	Organizations, Agencies, and Municipal Representatives.....	3
2.3	People Experiencing Homelessness.....	4
3	Summary of Findings.....	5
3.1	Organizations, Agencies, and Municipal Representatives.....	5
3.1.1	Homelessness in Saskatoon: Roles, Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities.....	5
3.1.2	Coordinated Access	17
3.1.3	Investment Plan	22
3.1.4	Closing	24
3.2	People Experiencing Homelessness.....	27

1 Introduction

In March 2024, the Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) began the Reaching Home Community Planning process to develop a renewed Community Plan for 2024-2028. To support this, Prairie Wild Consulting Co. was engaged to conduct research, engage stakeholders, and help align on-going complementary community homelessness initiatives in Saskatoon.

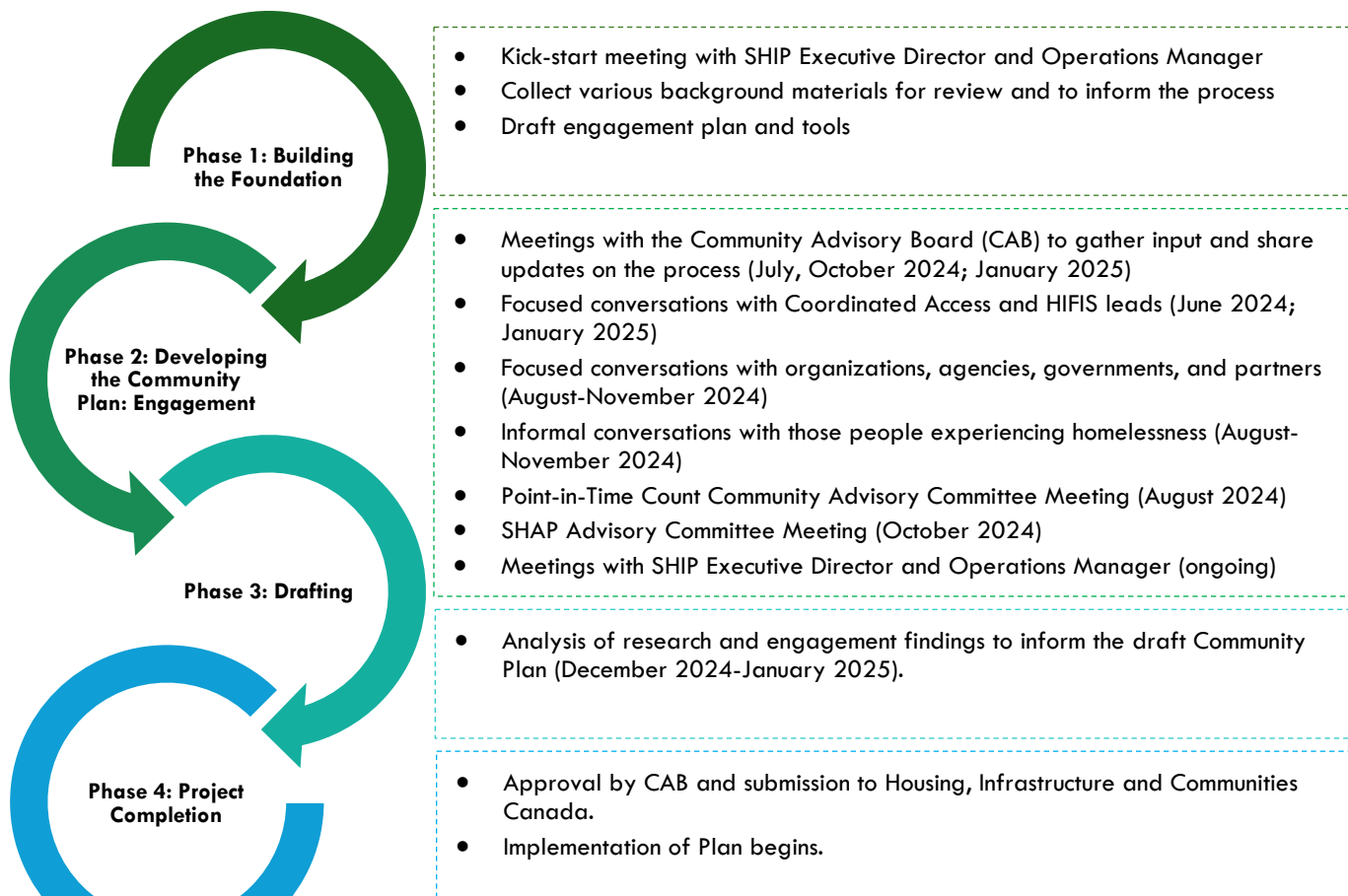
This What We Learned Report is a key part of the Saskatoon Community Plan for 2024-2028. It captures and summarizes valuable insights from a diverse group of stakeholders, including service providers, Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners, and people with lived experience about homelessness in Saskatoon and identifies key priorities moving forward. These perspectives are essential for guiding the distribution of funds and shaping the strategic directions of the Reaching Home initiative.

2 Planning Approach

The community planning process in Saskatoon was grounded in an Appreciative Inquiry Framework, building on community strengths and ensuring everyone involved has a voice. This was coupled by creating Ethical Space, creating environments rooted in mutual respect and shared understanding.

This process was also closely linked with other key homelessness efforts in Saskatoon, particularly the 2024 Point-in-Time Count and the ongoing Saskatoon Homelessness Action Plan. The Homelessness Action Plan brings together various community partners to identify important priorities and strategies. It's a comprehensive plan that evolves through ongoing engagement with the community. Feedback from this engagement is continuously incorporated into our broader planning efforts, ensuring that actions are well-coordinated and responsive to the community's needs.

The planning process followed a four-phase approach:



2.1 Complementary Initiatives

Engagement activities were closely integrated with concurrent and complementary processes, including the 2024 Point-in-Time Count and the Saskatoon Homelessness Action Plan (SHAP) renewal.

In April 2024, over 70 stakeholders were engaged in a SHAP forum to identify needs, realistic solutions, collaborate with partners, complete actions with a sense of urgency, and consider the current environment. A report was compiled on the findings of this research.

Following this gathering, an Executive Council was formed that includes the City of Saskatoon, SHIP, Saskatoon Tribal Council, and Métis Nation-Saskatchewan. Facilitated by the City of Saskatoon, community partners including Elders, various organizations, agencies, people living and with lived experience, and others were invited to participate in an Advisory Committee meeting in October 2024 to review the draft Terms of Reference and begin prioritizing priorities. Approximately 40 people were in attendance.

Another opportunity to provide input into SHAP was presented at the SHIP annual conference in November 2024; gathering further input on key priorities.

Members of the facilitation team participated in some of these opportunities, to document and contribute to discussions, and align SHAP priorities with the Reaching Home Community Planning process.

The results of the SHAP engagement are being compiled with on-going engagement with the community, and a goal of finalizing and implementing the Plan in Spring/Summer 2025.

2.2 Organizations, Agencies, and Municipal Representatives

As part of the engagement process for the Community Plan, focused conversations and interviews were conducted with representatives from a range of organizations, agencies, and governments in Saskatoon. These discussions provided valuable insights into homelessness-related challenges and opportunities within the community.

Engagement and Outreach	Total
Organizations Contacted	17
Interviews Conducted	12
Participants Involved	20

Those contacted included indigenous organizations, shelter operators, affordable housing providers, service organizations, municipal and provincial partners, and more.

During the interview process, representatives were asked a number of questions related to:

- The role their organization plays in the lives of people experiencing homelessness;
- Community strengths that can be built on and leveraged to create new opportunities;
- Challenges and barriers to improving outcomes;
- Gaps and what is needed to fill them;
- Truth and Reconciliation considerations to be incorporated into the Community Plan;
- Coordinated Access; and
- An assessment of previous Reaching Home investments and investment priorities moving forward.

2.3 People Experiencing Homelessness

Informal intercept conversations with people experiencing homelessness were also conducted by the facilitation team. These conversations occurred through happenstance meetings and casual discussions while out in the community. No formal or scheduled interviews were conducted.

Conversations occurred within the core neighbourhoods including Riversdale, Caswell Hill, Pleasant Hill and Downtown; transit corridors and bus stops; and the along the riverbank where informal communities were observed.

A breakdown of participants is summarized in the table below.

Month	Participant Overview
August	10 participants, aged 20s to late 60s (6 men, 4 women)
September	12 participants, with an even gender split and a couple of undetermined genders. Most were in their 30s, 40s, and 50s
October-November	12 participants, including 7 men, 4 women, and 1 undetermined gender. Ages ranged from late 20s to late 60s

The engagement was characterized by its informal and flexible nature, creating an open environment where participants felt comfortable sharing their stories. The process was relationship-focused, emphasizing listening, building trust, and respecting the lived experiences of the participants. Contextual insights from the facilitation team supplemented the discussions, helping to frame individual comments within broader community themes.

These engagements have provided valuable perspectives that are integral to shaping a responsive and inclusive Community Plan, aimed at addressing the challenges faced by those experiencing homelessness in Saskatoon.

3 Summary of Findings

This section synthesizes the valuable input gathered from a broad range of stakeholders, including organizations, agencies, orders of government, and individuals experiencing homelessness.

The engagement process aimed to capture a diverse array of viewpoints to ensure the Community Plan is comprehensive and inclusive. Organizations and agencies provided professional insights into systemic issues and resource needs, while orders of government offered perspectives on policy alignment and funding priorities. Critically, individuals experiencing homelessness brought forward personal narratives that highlighted real-world impacts of existing interventions and gaps in the service delivery network.

3.1 Organizations, Agencies, and Municipal Representatives

3.1.1 Homelessness in Saskatoon: Roles, Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities

Question 1 – Roles, and Programs and Services Offered

In Saskatoon, community organizations play a vital role in addressing homelessness by offering a **comprehensive continuum of care** that extends beyond immediate shelter needs. Their efforts emphasize long-term stability through integrated supports designed to address diverse and complex challenges. **Proactive support** is crucial for individuals exiting the criminal justice system, with housing seen as essential for successful reintegration. Food security programs further support individuals in immediate need.

Beyond housing, clients rely on a broad range of services and programs aimed at addressing their varied needs. These services are essential to helping individuals regain stability and include:

- **Legal and Financial Support:**
 - Court support and bail planning.
 - Assistance with income, health services, and addiction recovery.
- **Essential Resources:**
 - Access to emergency housing and transitional support.
 - Assistance with obtaining identification and hygiene products.
 - Programs such as tax clinics and literacy support.
- **Programs Supporting Specialized Needs:**
 - Employment initiatives and youth-focused services.
 - Targeted support for mental health, domestic violence, and sexual assault survivors.

Collaboration among organizations ensures a **coordinated network of care**. Partnerships among community paramedics, nurse practitioners, and case managers play a critical role in delivering holistic support. Case managers and support workers connect clients to necessary services, forming a safety net that goes beyond providing a roof over people's heads. This network helps individuals regain stability, maintain housing, and tackle underlying challenges such as health issues and food insecurity.

Question 2 – Demographics Served

Community organizations in Saskatoon serve a wide range of demographics, balancing targeted support with flexibility to meet emerging needs. Many organizations focus on specific groups while extending services to others when resources allow.

Several organizations are mandated to serve individuals with unique challenges, such as:

- **Women** who are **criminalized** or **facing incarceration**.
- Individuals **exiting gang life**, often with tailored programs to support reintegration.
- **Youth in transition** and families requiring assistance with reunification.

Others, such as those focused on homelessness and addiction recovery, have broader mandates but prioritize key populations when resources are constrained:

- **Men** in shelters, who often face barriers to accessing housing services.
- **Indigenous peoples** who are disproportionately affected by homelessness.

Some organizations also address specialized needs, including:

- **HIV** prevention and support for individuals at risk or living with HIV.
- **Newcomers** facing language barriers, often in collaboration with other agencies to provide holistic assistance.

A growing trend is the inclusion of **gender-diverse** individuals, as more organizations begin to serve non-binary and transgender folks. However, certain organizations maintain a narrow focus, serving only specific groups such as male-identified persons or those recently incarcerated. These decisions often reflect their **resource limitations** or **alignment with core missions**.

This demonstrates the flexibility some organizations have in expanding their reach while maintaining a focus on their core mission, with a few exceptions based on the availability of resources or contracts that define service eligibility.

Question 3 – Strengths

The community in Saskatoon demonstrates several key strengths in addressing homelessness, with **collaboration**, **commitment**, and **coordination** standing out as central themes. Despite facing significant challenges, organizations remain dedicated to meeting the needs of those experiencing homelessness, often leveraging their collective strengths to overcome barriers.

Key Strengths of Saskatoon's Approach

- **Indigenous Leadership:** Indigenous-led organizations play a vital role in housing projects and related programming, highlighting the success of culturally relevant and community-driven solutions.
- **Collaboration:** Partnerships among various organizations, including the Saskatoon Fire Department, police, and community groups, have enhanced coordination and improved responses to immediate needs like shelter and safety.
- **Advocacy and Knowledge Sharing:** A strong sense of urgency and a committed advocacy community ensures that critical issues related to homelessness are consistently prioritized. Community partnerships are increasingly recognized as essential to the response, with organizations actively coming together to share knowledge, resources, and expertise.
- **Data-Driven Decision-Making:** Tools like the Point-in-Time (PIT) survey and initiatives from local foundations provide critical data to guide decision-making and resource allocation effectively.

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The pandemic underscored the importance of collaboration, as organizations came together—despite limited resources—to develop a more **integrated response**. This period also highlighted the sector’s ability to **adapt quickly to changing needs**, strengthening partnerships and increasing cooperation across service providers.

Challenges and Opportunities

While these strengths are commendable, the community still faces significant challenges:

- **Resource Limitations:** Funding constraints and competition for resources often hinder capacity to meet growing demands.
- **Service Gaps:** Increasing demand for services frequently outpaces available resources, creating pressure on organizations to do more with less.

Despite these obstacles, Saskatoon’s community organizations remain committed to building a strong foundation of partnerships and open communication. Their collaborative efforts have already proven crucial in navigating complex challenges and ensuring effective support for those experiencing homelessness.

In summary, the progress made by Saskatoon’s organizations is a testament to the power of **community-driven solutions, strong advocacy, and data-informed strategies**. Continued focus on collaboration and resource-sharing will be critical to addressing homelessness effectively and sustainably.

Question 4 – Challenges

The community in Saskatoon faces numerous challenges in addressing homelessness, with the **severe lack of affordable housing** standing out as a critical issue. **Exclusionary requirements, insufficient infrastructure, and high housing costs** contribute to the shortage. Many shelters in the city are enhanced facilities requiring individuals to be actively engaged in recovery programs. However, basic shelter options - safe spaces for those not yet ready to transition into long-term housing - are notably absent. The demand for housing far exceeds supply, and the private rental market is increasingly inaccessible due to high costs and landlords’ reluctance to rent to individuals with complex needs.

Barriers to Support and Recovery

Another significant challenge is the lack of coordinated resources and adequate supports for individuals experiencing homelessness. Key issues include:

- **Limited Recovery Services:** A clear need exists for sober-living environments and non-institutional recovery options, such as at-home support services, which are currently unavailable.
- **Underfunded Addiction Services:** These services lack capacity, compounding the difficulties faced by individuals with complex mental health and addiction needs.
- **Mental Health Support Gaps:** Insufficient mental health resources and limited treatment beds leave individuals in crisis without access to critical care.

Systemic Challenges

The **province’s reduced support for social services** has contributed to a crumbling safety net. Funding formulas and the lack of matching provincial funds have left organizations unable to meet increasing demand. This underfunding has also led to:

- **Burnout Among Service Providers:** Workers are stretched thin and unable to manage the growing complexity of needs effectively.

- **Public Misunderstanding:** A lack of education about homelessness perpetuates misconceptions, with some viewing homelessness as solvable by simply providing jobs. This overlooks root causes like intergenerational trauma, mental health challenges, and substance abuse.

Community Resistance and Service Gaps

Efforts to create supportive housing solutions are often hindered by the "Not In My Backyard" (NIMBY) mentality, as public resistance grows against placing shelters or affordable housing in certain areas. Additionally:

- There is a shortage of safe, welcoming community spaces for individuals who are homeless or at risk.
- Existing services are overwhelmed, and the siloed nature of some efforts limits progress toward holistic solutions.

As homelessness continues to rise, the need for **proactive** over reactive solutions becomes increasingly urgent. A coordinated, holistic approach is essential to ensure individuals not only have access to shelter but also to the comprehensive supports needed to regain stability and independence.

In summary, Saskatoon faces critical challenges related to **affordable housing availability, inadequate mental health and addiction services, and the under-resourcing of support systems**. While collaboration between organizations has improved, there is a growing recognition that better coordination, increased funding, and a more comprehensive approach are vital to addressing homelessness effectively.

Question 5 – Trends and Patterns

Homelessness in Saskatoon is worsening, with both visible and hidden homelessness on the rise. Rough sleeping has become more common, particularly during colder months, while hidden homelessness—such as couch surfing and staying in abusive situations—remains prevalent, especially among women and children.

Escalating Mental Health and Addiction Issues

Addiction and mental health challenges are growing concerns:

- **Substance Use Trends:** Increased opioid and crystal meth use contributes to violence, episodic psychosis, and long-term trauma, further complicating efforts to address homelessness.
- **Mental Health Barriers:** Untreated mental health issues exacerbate instability for individuals and families.

Shifting Demographics

The demographics of those experiencing homelessness are changing:

- **Younger People and Families:** More youth, families, and seniors are seeking shelter, reflecting new pressures on the system.
- **New Canadians:** Many face housing challenges, particularly due to language barriers and limited resources.
- **Indigenous Overrepresentation:** Indigenous peoples, especially women, are disproportionately affected, driven by systemic factors such as over-incarceration and intergenerational trauma.

Strain on Shelters and Housing

Shelter demand is significantly outpacing supply, leading to overcrowding and unmet needs. There is an urgent need for:

- **Basic Shelters:** Facilities that do not require immediate participation in housing programs, as many individuals are not ready to take that step.
- **Accessible Housing:** Barriers to accessing housing persist, including difficult-to-navigate income assistance systems and a private rental market plagued by low vacancy rates and landlord reluctance to rent to individuals with complex needs.

Rising Family Struggles

Family challenges, particularly those linked to domestic violence, are escalating. Compounding factors such as mental health issues, addiction, and intergenerational trauma make it harder for families to regain stability and independence.

Service Coordination and Systemic Challenges

Service coordination remains a significant barrier:

- **Siloed Efforts:** Many organizations work independently, limiting the effectiveness of their collective impact.
- **Resource and Bureaucratic Constraints:** Underfunding, staff shortages, and bureaucratic barriers prevent many agencies from fully addressing the growing demand.

Addressing homelessness in Saskatoon requires a holistic, culturally sensitive approach that prioritizes better service coordination and increased funding. Without these measures, the escalating trends in homelessness will continue to strain an already overburdened system.

Question 6a. Supports for Indigenous homelessness

Saskatoon's Indigenous homeless population comprises **over 90%** of those experiencing homelessness. To address their needs, many organizations blend traditional practices with modern support systems, providing holistic care and healing.

Culturally Relevant Practices

Several agencies incorporate **traditional Indigenous practices** to foster healing and connection:

- **Smudging** and other spiritual practices help clients reconnect with their cultural roots.
- Weekly **healing circles** led by **Elders** provide mental health and spiritual support.
- Programs such as **medicine walks** offer opportunities for physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Community-Led Services

Indigenous homelessness is directly addressed through culturally informed, community-driven initiatives:

- Programs developed **by Indigenous people, for Indigenous people** ensure that services remain culturally relevant and responsive.
- **Wraparound services** focus on holistic care, prioritizing trust-building and empowerment through community-led approaches.

- **Elder validation processes** ensure programs align with Indigenous knowledge and traditions, with Elders playing a pivotal role in offering guidance and support.

Challenges

Despite these efforts, challenges persist:

- **Indigenous Representation:** Difficulties in recruiting Indigenous staff and board members limit organizations' ability to fully engage with the Indigenous population.
- **Role of Non-Indigenous Organizations:** There is ongoing debate about whether non-Indigenous organizations should deliver these services or if this responsibility should lie solely with Indigenous-led organizations.
- **Misconceptions and Barriers:** Misunderstandings about Indigenous support services and perceptions of preferential treatment continue to hinder effective service delivery.

While Saskatoon's community organizations have made notable progress in offering culturally informed support, deeper collaboration with Indigenous leadership is essential. Empowering Indigenous peoples to take a leading role in designing and delivering services will help ensure programs remain culturally relevant and community-driven, addressing the growing crisis of Indigenous homelessness with greater effectiveness and sensitivity.

Question 6b. Adequate Supports for Indigenous Homelessness

The responses indicate that supports for Indigenous homelessness in Saskatoon are insufficient, particularly given the size of the Indigenous population in the city. While efforts are being made, significant gaps remain in the availability of cultural supports and dedicated services for Indigenous individuals experiencing homelessness.

Current Efforts and Leadership

Some Indigenous-led organizations, such as the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan (MNS) and Central Urban Métis Federation Inc. (CUMFI), have demonstrated leadership in providing housing and transitional services, particularly for youth and families.

The Role of Non-Indigenous Organizations

There is a consensus that non-Indigenous organizations should contribute to reconciliation by working collaboratively with Indigenous communities. Key recommendations include:

- Centering **Indigenous voices** in decision-making processes to ensure culturally appropriate programming.
- Integrating Indigenous needs into funding proposals and strategic plans, rather than treating them as secondary considerations.
- Ensuring Indigenous leadership remains at the forefront of strategies to address homelessness

Challenges in Housing Support

Uncertainty persists around the specifics of housing support:

- Many respondents noted they are aware of available supports but lack direct involvement in providing housing services. This often limits their role to referrals, exposing gaps in comprehensive, direct support.
- These coordination challenges highlight the need for better service integration to address unmet needs effectively.

While Indigenous organizations are making vital contributions, a significant need remains for expanded cultural supports and housing options tailored specifically to the Indigenous homeless population. Enhanced collaboration between Indigenous-led and non-Indigenous organizations is essential to ensuring services are adequate and responsive to the community's needs. Indigenous leadership and culturally informed approaches must guide future strategies to address these gaps effectively.

Question 7 - Uplifting and Funding Programs Supporting Indigenous Homelessness in Saskatoon

The responses emphasize the need for greater coordination, funding, and community engagement to effectively address Indigenous homelessness in Saskatoon. While many community organizations are providing services, significant gaps remain in program availability, culturally appropriate resources, and stable funding, particularly for transitional housing and long-term solutions.

Empowering Indigenous Leadership

One of the key themes is the importance of **listening** to Indigenous communities and **empowering** them to lead efforts in addressing homelessness. Respondents highlighted:

- **Indigenous-Led Programs:** Self-governance in areas such as child and family services is seen as crucial for systemic change.
- **Community-Based Decision-Making:** Stronger involvement from Indigenous leaders in shaping policies and allocating resources ensures solutions are culturally relevant and sustainable.

Addressing Funding Challenges

Funding is a critical issue, with calls for a shift from short-term, patchwork funding to long-term, stable contracts. The current uncertainty in funding negatively impacts:

- **Service Delivery:** Staff turnover and the inability to plan for long-term solutions hinder progress.
- **Philanthropic Contributions:** There is a strong need for support from local businesses and philanthropists to invest in shelter infrastructure and supportive housing tailored to the Indigenous homeless population.

Culturally Appropriate Programming

Several respondents pointed to the lack of spaces and programs that specifically support Indigenous peoples. Recommendations include:

- Collaboration between non-Indigenous and Indigenous organizations to ensure Indigenous perspectives are embedded in program development.
- Prioritizing culturally appropriate spaces and programming that address the unique needs of Indigenous communities.

Prevention and Systemic Change

Respondents also recognized the importance of addressing intergenerational trauma and other systemic issues as preventative measures. Key suggestions include:

- Tackling racism and barriers to accessing services.
- Focusing on upstream solutions to prevent homelessness before it begins.

To uplift and support Indigenous homelessness, the community must focus on culturally rooted solutions, prioritize Indigenous-led initiatives, and provide stable funding. Collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations is essential, alongside long-term efforts to address systemic barriers and create lasting impact. By sustaining these efforts, Saskatoon can make meaningful progress in addressing Indigenous homelessness with compassion and effectiveness.

Question 8 – Changes in the State of Homelessness Over the Past Five Years

The state of homelessness in Saskatoon has significantly worsened over the past five years, with several key trends and challenges emerging. A growing number of people are experiencing homelessness, driven by escalating substance use, mental health issues, and systemic gaps in housing and employment supports.

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a major contributing factor, exacerbating homelessness, particularly among individuals struggling with addiction and mental health challenges. The pandemic heightened vulnerabilities and disrupted access to services, leaving many without the support they needed during critical times.

Increasing Complexity and Safety Concerns

The complexity of homelessness has grown significantly:

- **Unpredictable Situations:** The interconnected challenges of substance use, mental health, and economic instability have made the issue more difficult to address.
- **Safety Concerns:** Both individuals experiencing homelessness and the broader community report a general sense of decreased safety. Areas with visible homelessness, such as downtown, have seen a decline in perceived security.

Substance Use Trends

Substance use patterns have shifted, with new drugs contributing to the evolving crisis. These trends exacerbate mental health challenges and increase the difficulty of stabilizing individuals experiencing homelessness.

Rising Transience

An increase in transience has added strain to local resources:

- More individuals are coming into Saskatoon from surrounding Indigenous communities, particularly during summer months.
- This seasonal movement highlights the need for coordinated regional responses to homelessness.

Over the past five years, homelessness in Saskatoon has become more severe, complex, and unpredictable. The available supports have not kept pace with the growing challenges, leaving significant gaps in addressing the crisis. Increased collaboration, targeted resources, and adaptable solutions will be critical in meeting the evolving needs of individuals experiencing homelessness.

Question 9 - Impact of COVID-19 on Homelessness Services and Recovery Needs

The COVID-19 pandemic had a profound impact on homelessness services in Saskatoon, forcing organizations to adapt rapidly to unprecedented challenges. While some agencies were able to pivot quickly with innovative solutions—such as providing takeout meals, creating transitional housing models, and enhancing inter-agency collaboration—others struggled with reduced capacity, staff shortages, and fluctuating funding. Despite these difficulties, the pandemic also fostered a stronger sense of community solidarity, with agencies working together through emergency response teams and regular communication to better serve the homeless population.

Initial Support and Post-Emergency Challenges

During the pandemic's early stages, a surge in funding and resources helped many organizations maintain operations and address immediate needs. However, as the emergency phase subsided, the return to regular funding models created significant gaps:

- **Transitional Housing and Recovery Services:** Critical services for housing and addiction recovery were underfunded, leaving many vulnerable populations without adequate support.
- **Short-Term Funding Models:** The reliance on project-based or temporary funding created instability, particularly for staffing and long-term planning.

Key Supports Needed for Recovery

As the community looks toward recovery, several supports are essential to building resilience and addressing gaps:

- **Stable, Diversified Funding:** To ensure consistent service provision and organizational capacity.
- **Long-Term Commitments:** Multi-year contracts to provide stability for service providers and reduce staff turnover.
- **Improved Coordination:** Enhanced communication and collaborative problem-solving among organizations to make the best use of stretched resources.
- **Expanded Resources:** Increased access to transitional housing and addiction recovery services to support long-term stability.
- **Safe Spaces:** Resources for women and those struggling with substance use, providing stigma-free environments to access support without fear of judgment or loss of belongings.

Continued Investments

While supportive infrastructure has improved during the pandemic, ongoing investment is critical. Key priorities include:

- **Basic shelter services** such as warm-up stations and public bathrooms.
- **Addiction treatment programs** to address long-term recovery needs.

The road to recovery requires sustained community-wide engagement, better communication, and a focused effort to address the root causes of homelessness, including intergenerational trauma and substance use. By prioritizing long-term, stable funding and collaborative solutions, Saskatoon can build a more resilient support system for its homeless population.

Question 10 - Suggestions for Addressing Homelessness Needs Moving Forward

Addressing homelessness in Saskatoon will require a comprehensive approach focused on systemic solutions, collaboration, and expanded services. Key recommendations include:

Continuum of Care

A stronger continuum of care is needed to address the interconnected issues of substance use, mental health, and homelessness. Services should be tailored to meet individuals at various stages of their needs:

- **High Acuity:** 24/7 support for individuals requiring intensive assistance.

- **Low Acuity:** Stable housing for those with fewer support needs.

Basic Shelter Services

A year-round basic shelter is essential to provide a safe space for individuals not ready for housing or treatment. Seasonal shelter models, which often leave gaps in services, are insufficient for meeting ongoing demand.

Addiction and Mental Health Services

To address the growing demand for treatment, there is an urgent need for:

- **Additional Treatment Beds:** Recovery spaces for addiction and mental health challenges.
- **Specialized Services:** Support for individuals with complex needs, including substance use and mental health issues.
- **Safe Waiting Spaces:** Areas for those on long treatment waitlists to access interim support.

Community Engagement and Education

Public education and engagement are critical to fostering understanding and compassion:

- Addressing "**Not In My Backyard**" (**NIMBY**) attitudes through awareness campaigns.
- Encouraging **volunteerism and community involvement** to create a more welcoming environment for individuals experiencing homelessness.

Collaborative Efforts

Stronger collaboration among agencies and stakeholders is vital to overcoming siloed approaches. Improved coordination between social services, housing providers, and other organizations is necessary to drive long-term systemic change.

Transitional Housing and Support

Expanding transitional housing programs is essential to help individuals move from homelessness to stable housing. These programs should include:

- Teaching life skills and household management.
- Supporting individuals with intellectual disabilities to maintain independence.

Funding and Resource Allocation

Adequate and consistent funding is needed, particularly for operational costs such as staffing, which are often overlooked. Funding structures should also:

- Prioritize culturally sensitive programs.
- Support **Indigenous-led initiatives** and include Elders in programming to address unique community needs.

Prevention and Upstream Solutions

A stronger focus on prevention can address homelessness before it occurs. This includes:

- Supporting individuals transitioning from the justice system.
- Addressing mental health and substance use challenges proactively.

By strengthening community-based supports, expanding transitional housing, and focusing on prevention, Saskatoon can better address homelessness in a sustainable and compassionate way. Long-term solutions that prioritize collaboration, education, and culturally sensitive programs will create a stronger foundation for reducing homelessness in the community.

Question 11 - Barriers Facing Agencies Working with People Experiencing Homelessness

Agencies in Saskatoon face significant barriers that hinder their effectiveness and limit the support they can provide to individuals experiencing homelessness. These challenges span funding, infrastructure, systemic issues, and safety concerns, each impacting service delivery.

Key Barriers

- **Siloed Government Ministries**
The fragmentation of government ministries and the lack of coordinated funding create difficulties for organizations. This misalignment often results in challenges securing and managing the resources needed to meet the growing demand for services effectively.
- **System Navigation Challenges**
Agencies face obstacles in helping individuals navigate complex systems, including:
 - Obtaining identification.
 - Filing taxes and applying for government support.
 - Securing employment opportunities.
Critical roles such as System Navigation Advocates and Employment Coaches are difficult to fill, and funding for these programs is limited due to low success rates, which are further impacted by the trauma many clients face.
- **Lack of Accessible Spaces**
Delivering services in suitable, accessible locations is another challenge. Funding constraints and location limitations restrict agencies' ability to provide services in environments that are both welcoming and discreet, often leaving client needs unmet.
- **Insufficient Funding and Resources**
Many organizations operate with severe financial constraints, leading to:
 - **Understaffing** and service reductions.
 - Scarce resources like social workers, wraparound support, and transportation.
 - Outdated or inadequate equipment, such as vehicles for outreach.
These limitations hinder agencies' ability to provide comprehensive, effective support.
- **Safety and Security Concerns**
Ensuring safety in and around shelters is a persistent issue, especially when working with individuals facing complex mental health and addiction challenges. The perceived insecurity of these spaces can deter clients from seeking services, further exacerbating their struggles.
- **Community Partnership Limitations**
Limited community involvement and the "Not In My Backyard" (NIMBY) mentality hinder collaborative solutions. Stronger partnerships are needed to foster collective responses to homelessness and enhance service delivery.

- **Inadequate Transitional Supports**

Agencies struggle to provide sufficient transitional support for vulnerable groups, particularly women fleeing domestic violence. These individuals often require additional resources, including:

- Legal assistance.
- Mental health services.
- Housing advocacy.

The lack of these supports leaves many without a clear path to stability.

Addressing these barriers will require systemic change, increased funding, and improved collaboration across agencies, government ministries, and community stakeholders. By fostering partnerships, enhancing service accessibility, and prioritizing long-term investments, Saskatoon can create a more effective and responsive homelessness support system.

Question 12 – Other Funding Sources

A diverse range of additional funding sources are accessed by some organizations in Saskatoon to support operations and initiatives related to homelessness. These include:

- **Government Support:** Organizations benefit from various provincial government departments including corrections, justice, and housing, along with federal support for specific projects. Municipal support from the City of Saskatoon is also instrumental.
- **Foundational and Community Support:** Significant backing comes from local foundations such as the Saskatoon Community Foundation, which provides both multi-year funding and smaller grants. Other community-oriented funds like the United Way and the Community Initiatives Fund contribute to these efforts as well.

In-Kind Contributions:

- In-kind contributions, including donated services and volunteerism, play a role. These non-monetary supports range from boiler repairs to IT services, which are significant though challenging to quantify for funding reports.

Challenges with Current Funding Models:

- **Navigating Funding:** Organizations often find themselves in a constant search for grants, requiring an understanding of which programs fund specific needs and managing corporate responsibilities.
- **Perception Issues:** There is a challenge associated with public perception, where organizations are sometimes thought to have more resources than they actually do, impacting potential funding opportunities.

3.1.2 Coordinated Access (CA)

Question 1a – Awareness of Coordinated Access

Coordinated Access (CA) is a system gradually being adopted by agencies in Saskatoon to streamline service delivery for individuals experiencing homelessness. By centralizing access, CA enables individuals to connect with multiple supports without needing to repeatedly share their information. However, its full implementation is still in progress, and agencies face various challenges.

Current Adoption and Challenges

While some agencies are successfully utilizing CA, others struggle with:

- **System Navigation:** Difficulties integrating CA into existing workflows due to time constraints and limited staff capacity.
- **Staff Turnover:** High turnover rates make it difficult to maintain consistent use of the system.
- **Training Gaps:** Limited training on the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) software has created confusion, particularly around the referral process and intake systems.
- **Resource Constraints:** Operational challenges, including a lack of funding and support, have slowed adoption for some organizations.

Flexibility and Integration Needs

Agencies recognize the importance of participating in CA to secure funding and prioritize housing support. However, they emphasize the need for:

- **Flexibility:** To accommodate urgent cases where individuals require immediate services without going through standard CA processes.
- **Enhanced Training:** To improve understanding and integration of CA among staff.
- **Clearer Guidance:** On referral and intake procedures to ensure smoother implementation.

Leadership and Engagement

CA in Saskatoon is coordinated by the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan (MNS), with agencies participating in committee meetings to address challenges and improve their use of the system. Despite these efforts, resource limitations and operational hurdles continue to affect its uptake in some organizations.

Question 1b (for those using it) – Benefits of CA

Coordinated Access (CA) is widely recognized as beneficial in theory, offering the potential to connect clients with a broad network of resources and supports. However, agencies using the system report mixed experiences, with significant challenges impacting its practical implementation.

Benefits of Coordinated Access

- **Improved Resource Connections:** CA's centralized system aims to streamline referrals and provide clients with access to multiple services without redundancy.
- **Data Collection:** Agencies value CA's ability to gather and centralize data, which promises future benefits for improving service delivery and tracking homelessness trends.

Challenges in Practice

While CA offers potential benefits, several barriers have limited its effectiveness:

- **Demographic Limitations:** Some organizations find CA's standardized approach restrictive. The system often prioritizes referrals over tailored screening, making it harder to address specific client needs effectively.
- **Transitional Housing Concerns:** CA's rules for transitional housing placements have raised concerns, as agencies fear losing funding if they cannot comply with system mandates.
- **Unfulfilled Promises:** The rush to implement CA has led to frustrations, including:
 - Unfulfilled assurances to clients about service eligibility.
 - Insufficient housing placements to meet demand.
- **Confusion with HIFIS:** The distinction between CA and the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) remains unclear to many agencies, contributing to integration and training challenges.

Outlook and Cooperation

Despite these challenges, agencies remain hopeful that CA will evolve to better meet operational needs. Many organizations continue to engage with the system in the hope that it will ultimately bring more resources, improve service coordination, and enhance awareness of homelessness issues in Saskatoon.

Question 2 – Participation in CA Moving Forward

Organizations in Saskatoon vary in their engagement with Coordinated Access (CA), with some still in the early stages and others reassessing their involvement. While many agencies recognize the potential benefits of CA, concerns about its effectiveness and alignment with specific program needs have led to mixed levels of commitment.

Influence of Funding on Participation

For many organizations, funding is a key factor driving participation. Dropping out of CA could mean losing access to critical resources for their clients, making disengagement a difficult decision. However, a few organizations have paused their participation to:

- Reevaluate their programs.
- Explore alternative models, such as affordable housing partnerships, before making a long-term decision.

Commitment and Challenges

Among those still committed to CA, there is cautious optimism about its potential to streamline services and improve outcomes. However, challenges remain:

- **Execution Issues:** Practical difficulties in implementing CA, including system navigation and resource alignment, continue to hinder full integration.
- **Need for Adjustments:** Agencies emphasize the importance of tailoring CA to better meet the diverse needs of programs and clients.

While CA is supported in theory, agencies agree that further adjustments and open dialogue are essential for successful implementation. Deeper conversations about its design and execution will be crucial for agencies to fully integrate CA into their services and realize its potential benefits.

Question 3 – Barriers/Challenges

Organizations in Saskatoon have identified several key barriers to continued participation in Coordinated Access (CA). These challenges include resource limitations, logistical issues, and trust concerns, particularly among Indigenous organizations.

Resource Constraints

A lack of adequate staffing and technical support is one of the most significant barriers:

- **Onboarding and Training:** Insufficient resources to properly onboard staff or provide training for managing the intake process effectively.
- **Limited Capacity:** Many organizations struggle to allocate enough staff and technical resources to fully integrate CA into their operations, hindering their ability to meet the system's demands.

Logistical Challenges

Operational challenges with CA include:

- **Referral Requirements:** The system's mandate for referrals to come exclusively through CA can frustrate organizations, particularly when it limits their flexibility in managing housing stock or addressing complex client needs.
- **Practical Misalignment:** Agencies noted that CA, while well-intentioned, doesn't always align with the practical realities of their work, especially in contexts of limited housing availability and high client diversity.
- **Early Implementation Issues:** A lack of clear communication during CA's initial rollout led to dissatisfaction and confusion among participating organizations.

Trust Concerns

For Indigenous organizations, trust remains a significant barrier:

- **Data Collection:** Systems like the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) have raised concerns about how data is collected, stored, and used.
- **Cultural Alignment:** Indigenous organizations often feel these systems may not align with their values and may perpetuate mistrust of institutional processes.

While CA has potential, its success depends on addressing these barriers. Adequate resourcing, clear and consistent communication, and building trust—particularly with Indigenous organizations—are essential to ensuring CA can meet the needs of both service providers and individuals experiencing homelessness. Without these foundational elements, the system risks falling short of its intended impact.

Question 4 – Improvements

Improvements to the CA system focus on addressing systemic limitations, enhancing support and training, and ensuring the system effectively serves both clients and service providers. These changes aim to increase efficiency, sensitivity, and accessibility.

Decentralizing Coordination

One significant concern is the centralization of CA under a single organization, which creates delays and risks individuals falling through the cracks. Suggested improvements include:

- Expanding the involvement of multiple organizations and partners to make the system more accessible and responsive.

- Streamlining processes to reduce delays in client processing, approvals, and staff training, which currently disrupt service delivery.

Improving the Intake Process

The intake process presents opportunities for meaningful adjustments:

- Many clients find intake questions triggering, leading to disengagement and even relapses. Greater sensitivity during this process can reduce harm and make services more accessible.
- Some mandatory questions, unrelated to the support being sought, are burdensome and perceived as compliance-focused rather than client-centered. Simplifying these requirements would improve client experiences.

Enhancing Data Flow and Resource Allocation

Organizations identified inefficiencies in the flow of information and resource allocation:

- **Data Entry:** Repeated data entry and excessive paperwork strain organizational capacity. Streamlining these processes would improve efficiency and save time.
- **Capacity Building:** Increasing resources and technical support for CA systems would prevent delays and allow for smoother intake and tracking processes.

Training and Capacity Building

Agencies highlighted the need for comprehensive training to improve CA worker effectiveness:

- **Understanding Client Realities:** Additional training is essential to help CA workers navigate the complexities faced by individuals experiencing homelessness.
- **Landlord Engagement and Housing Resources:** Strengthening relationships with landlords and expanding housing options, including more accessible beds, would align CA better with available resources and address housing shortages.

To enhance CA, the system must prioritize decentralization, client-centered intake processes, efficient data management, and capacity building. By addressing these areas, CA can evolve into a more responsive and effective tool for supporting individuals experiencing homelessness while improving outcomes for service providers.

Question 5 – Suggestions Regarding HIFIS and CA Intake

The responses highlight both positive feedback and areas for improvement in training and implementation for the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) and Coordinated Access (CA) intake processes.

Positive Feedback on Training

Many organizations noted several strengths in the training process:

- **Accessibility:** Training sessions were described as flexible and accommodating, with multiple opportunities to attend.
- **Support for Onboarding:** Agencies appreciated the onboarding efforts, which provided useful resources for initial engagement with HIFIS and CA.

Challenges with HIFIS and CA

Despite these positives, several challenges hinder the effective use of HIFIS and CA:

- **System Design Issues:**
 - HIFIS was frequently described as cumbersome, with an interface that slows workflow due to repeated data entry requirements.
 - Re-entering previously captured information was a common frustration, creating inefficiencies.
- **Data Collection Concerns:**
 - Some organizations, particularly smaller ones, found the data collection requirements intrusive or overly complicated.
 - Intake questions perceived as unnecessary—such as those trying to quantify homelessness in specific terms—were seen as problematic for certain populations.

Capacity and Implementation Gaps

Organizations also identified systemic barriers that limited their ability to fully engage with HIFIS and CA:

- **Resource Limitations:** Smaller agencies and those with limited resources struggled with the volume of paperwork and the capacity required to meet system demands.
- **Delayed Onboarding:** Training and onboarding delays for new agencies negatively impacted service delivery, leaving some organizations frustrated with the pace of implementation.
- **Turnover Challenges:** High staff turnover made it difficult to retain the knowledge and skills needed for effective system use.

Recommendations for Improvement

Participants suggested several ways to improve the HIFIS and CA intake experience:

- **Ongoing Support:** Provide continued support and refresher training for organizations, particularly to address challenges caused by staff turnover.
- **Targeted Training:** Focus on specialized training tailored to specific agency needs to ensure a better fit for different program requirements.
- **Streamlined Processes:** Simplify data entry and remove unnecessary intake questions to improve system efficiency and relevance.
- **Enhanced Capacity:** Increase resources and technical support for organizations to ensure smoother integration into day-to-day operations.

While feedback on the training process for HIFIS and CA has been generally positive, the challenges in implementation and day-to-day use highlight the need for ongoing improvements. Addressing system inefficiencies, enhancing support, and simplifying processes will be critical to improving the overall user experience and ensuring effective outcomes for both agencies and clients.

3.1.3 Investment Plan

Question 1 – Reflections on Past Reaching Home Investment Allocations

Over the past five years, Reaching Home funding has played a valuable role in supporting housing services, prevention, and shelter diversion in Saskatoon. However, several concerns and recommendations have been identified to improve the long-term impact and sustainability of the funding.

Strengths of Reaching Home Funding

- **Immediate Impact:** The funding has helped meet urgent needs, such as food security and basic shelter services, providing critical support for individuals experiencing homelessness.
- **Allocation to Housing Services:** Housing services received the largest share (60%) of funding, reflecting a prioritization of immediate housing needs.

Challenges and Gaps

Despite these strengths, several gaps in strategy and implementation were noted:

- **Short-Term Focus:** Respondents highlighted the funding's emphasis on short-term solutions over long-term strategies, limiting its broader impact on reducing homelessness.
- **Underfunded Areas:**
 - **Prevention and Shelter Diversion:** Representing only 10% of the funding, this area was viewed as underfunded given its importance in addressing root causes of homelessness.
 - **Support Services:** Limited funding for services addressing addiction and mental health issues was seen as a missed opportunity to provide comprehensive support.
- **Indigenous Funding:** The Indigenous stream, receiving only 2% of the budget, was criticized as insufficient to address the significant overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in the homeless population.

Administrative Concerns

Operational inefficiencies and leadership challenges have further impacted the effectiveness of Reaching Home funding:

- **Inconsistent Leadership:** High turnover among executive directors and shifting priorities created inconsistencies in funding application.
- **Conflicts of Interest:** Some respondents raised concerns about potential conflicts of interest within the Community Advisory Board (CAB), affecting funding allocation.
- **Administrative Inefficiencies:** Bureaucratic processes and lack of coordination have hindered the timely and effective use of funds.

Recommendations for Improvement

To enhance the impact of Reaching Home funding, respondents suggested several key changes:

- **Long-Term Investments:** Focus on capital investments and sustainable housing solutions, particularly for vulnerable groups such as women and children.
- **Multi-Year Funding:** Transition from short-term funding cycles to multi-year commitments to provide stability and enable organizations to implement long-term solutions.
- **Improved Coordination:** Establish a more consistent and collaborative approach to funding allocation, ensuring alignment with community priorities and reducing administrative inefficiencies.

- **Increased Indigenous Support:** Expand the Indigenous funding stream to adequately address the unique challenges faced by Indigenous peoples experiencing homelessness.

While Reaching Home funding has provided valuable support in addressing immediate needs, its long-term effectiveness depends on strategic investments, better alignment across funding streams, and more sustainable commitments. By addressing these gaps, the funding can have a greater impact on reducing homelessness and supporting vulnerable populations in Saskatoon.

Question 2 – Investment Priorities Moving Forward

The responses highlight several key priorities for addressing homelessness in Saskatoon, with a strong focus on capital investments, tailored housing solutions, and support services. These priorities aim to provide both immediate relief and long-term solutions.

Capital Investment and Housing Supply

A primary priority is increasing the availability of housing through:

- **Renovation of Existing Properties:** Upgrading current housing to meet safety and functionality standards.
- **Construction of New Housing:** Expanding the supply of housing units to accommodate the growing demand.
- **Tailored Housing Solutions:** Moving away from a one-size-fits-all approach to provide housing that meets the diverse needs of different demographics and situations.

Transitional Housing and Shelter Services

Investment in transitional housing models and basic shelters is critical:

- **Transitional Housing:** Providing a bridge for individuals moving from homelessness to stable housing.
- **Basic Shelters:** Developing year-round facilities for overnight stays to address immediate needs.
- **Prevention and Shelter Diversion:** Programs that prevent homelessness by intervening early and diverting individuals from entering the shelter system.

Support Services

Support services are essential for breaking the cycle of homelessness:

- **Addictions and Crisis Intervention:** Addressing underlying challenges that lead to homelessness.
- **Staffing Resources:** Ensuring adequate staffing to deliver individualized support and case management.

Resources for Non-Profit Organizations

Non-profits face challenges in managing additional projects due to:

- **Lean Staffing:** Limited capacity to take on responsibilities beyond their core missions.
- **Funding Constraints:** A lack of resources to expand services or invest in new initiatives.

Basic Services

Access to basic necessities remains a pressing issue:

- **Safe Washrooms and Cooling/Warming Spaces:** Providing essential facilities for individuals without stable housing.
- **Affordable Housing Options:** Accommodating individuals at various stages of homelessness, from temporary shelters to long-term housing solutions.

Coordination vs. Capital Investment

While service coordination is important, many respondents emphasized prioritizing capital investments in physical spaces. The immediate need for housing and shelter infrastructure outweighs coordination efforts in the short term.

Concerns and Recommendations

Key concerns include:

- **Funding Sustainability:** Ensuring long-term funding for programs and infrastructure.
- **Capacity Limits:** Addressing organizational capacity challenges to deliver services effectively.
- **Strategic Planning:** Developing a comprehensive, long-term strategy to address homelessness holistically.

Capital investments in housing, transitional models, prevention programs, and support services are identified as the main local priorities. By addressing these areas while ensuring funding sustainability and strategic planning, Saskatoon can make meaningful progress in reducing homelessness and supporting vulnerable populations.

3.1.4 Closing

Question 1 – Community-Wide Outcomes and Measures of Success

The responses identify several community-wide outcomes and measures of success for addressing homelessness in Saskatoon. These outcomes focus on fostering public understanding, promoting dignity for individuals experiencing homelessness, and building a comprehensive system to address both immediate and long-term needs.

Changing Perceptions and Promoting Dignity

A significant priority is changing how the community perceives homelessness, particularly for individuals who have been incarcerated. Key goals include:

- Promoting greater understanding of the systemic issues contributing to homelessness.
- Treating housing as a human right, emphasizing dignity and respect for individuals experiencing homelessness.
- Expanding year-round shelters and basic shelter services to ensure people can sleep safely and with dignity.

Measuring Success

Success can be measured through a combination of direct and indirect indicators:

- **Data-Driven Metrics:**
 - Lower Point-in-Time (PIT) counts, though recognized as a limited snapshot.
 - Tracking housing stability over time, such as one, three, and six months post-housing.
- **Indirect Indicators:**
 - Reductions in emergency room visits and police calls, reflecting decreased strain on community services.

Collaboration and Community Involvement

Collaboration among organizations and broad community involvement are essential for meaningful outcomes. Respondents emphasized the importance of:

- Overcoming the **"Not In My Backyard" (NIMBY)** mentality to create a supportive environment.
- Increasing public awareness of homelessness through educational campaigns that highlight systemic causes and promote empathy.

Social Inclusion

Promoting social inclusion is seen as critical for long-term success:

- Viewing individuals experiencing homelessness as valuable members of the community.
- Creating opportunities for contributions, such as paying individuals to assist with community cleanup projects.
- Ensuring equitable access to services for all, with particular attention to Indigenous and immigrant communities.

Tailored Housing Solutions and Prevention

Tailored housing solutions and preventative measures are key priorities:

- Addressing individual needs through diverse housing options.
- Strengthening prevention efforts to stop homelessness before it occurs, supported by integrated systems for housing, prevention, and shelter diversion.

To achieve community-wide outcomes, Saskatoon must prioritize dignity, inclusion, and collaboration while utilizing data-driven and indirect measures of success. Building a comprehensive, integrated system that supports housing and prevention efforts will be essential to creating lasting change.

Anything Else

The responses highlight a shared interest in strengthening community partnerships and deepening the understanding of homelessness in Saskatoon. Many respondents expressed a commitment to contributing to solutions by actively listening and inquiring to better understand the needs and challenges of those experiencing homelessness.

Hub Model for Service Delivery

One notable suggestion was the creation of a **"hub" model** for service delivery. This idea builds on the success of a model implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic, where:

- Resources like housing information, health cards, and case workers were made available at a community dining space.
- Services were centralized, allowing individuals to access multiple supports in one convenient location.

Expanding this approach could:

- Streamline access to critical supports.
- Serve a broader range of needs by integrating services with existing meal programs, creating a one-stop shop for assistance.

Advocacy for a Basic Shelter

Respondents emphasized the importance of establishing a permanent, **basic shelter** in Saskatoon. Key points include:

- The increasing demand for basic shelter services highlights the need for urgent action.
- A permanent shelter would provide a safe space for individuals who are not yet ready for transitional or long-term housing solutions.

Collaboration and Community Involvement

The responses also underscored the importance of involving a diverse range of community organizations in developing and implementing solutions. A collaborative, multi-stakeholder approach is essential for creating sustainable and inclusive services.

Expanding community partnerships, advocating for a basic shelter, and exploring innovative service delivery models like the hub concept are vital next steps in addressing homelessness in Saskatoon. By fostering collaboration and tailoring solutions to meet diverse needs, the community can work toward creating a more supportive and effective system.

3.2 People Experiencing Homelessness

This section captures the experiences, challenges, and priorities shared by individuals with lived and living experiences of homelessness in Saskatoon. Through informal, relationship-focused conversations, participants provided valuable insights into shelter access, safety, health, trust, and their basic needs.

Shelter and Housing Challenges

Participants consistently described significant challenges in accessing stable housing and shelters, often relying on temporary accommodations, outdoor spaces, or informal networks to meet their needs.

Gendered Differences

- **Men:** Frequently reported a lack of family support, limited employment opportunities, and insufficient affordable housing. Many described moving between locations to survive, often feeling isolated and unsupported.
- **Women:** Highlighted the critical need for safe spaces, emphasizing their heightened vulnerability to violence and exploitation due to limited support systems. They underscored the importance of shelters designed to provide security and dignity for women.

Informal Communities

Some participants valued informal riverbank communities for the sense of belonging they provided. However, these environments were also associated with safety concerns, including theft and the constant need to remain vigilant. Many expressed a preference for the freedom and autonomy these spaces offered, despite the hardships.

Seasonal Differences

- **Cold Weather Challenges:** During colder months, frustrations intensified as participants faced a lack of non-judgmental services and shelter options. Many voiced the need for spaces that balance privacy with community, providing warmth and safety without imposing overly restrictive rules.

Safety and Privacy Concerns

Safety emerged as a universal priority, particularly for women and older participants.

- Participants stressed the need for secure spaces to store belongings and rest without fear of theft or violence.
- Many shared feelings of being visible yet ignored, with one participant stating, “We are people, just like you,” emphasizing the need for dignity and respect.

Health and Substance Use Issues

Health challenges, including untreated illnesses and substance use, were common themes:

- Many participants acknowledged the stigma surrounding substance use, which often deterred them from seeking services.
- Participants called for harm-reduction approaches that prioritize health and safety over rigid rules, which they felt created unnecessary barriers.

Trust and Relationships with Services

Distrust of institutions, including emergency responders and service providers, was a recurring concern:

- While some participants appreciated efforts made by organizations, others described feeling judged, pressured, or disrespected.
- Participants expressed a desire for services focused on relationships and respect rather than restrictive rules.

Basic Needs and Services

Access to food, clothing, and hygiene remains a top priority for individuals experiencing homelessness:

- Many participants acknowledged existing supports but noted, “It’s not enough.”
- They highlighted the importance of flexible, low-barrier spaces that combine safety with autonomy.

Freedom vs. Structure

Perspectives on structured housing and support programs varied widely:

- Some participants valued stability and structure as a path toward regaining independence.
- Others resisted structured environments, citing their preference for freedom and autonomy. As one participant shared, “I like the streets. It is my tradition. But sometimes it is not enough.”

The insights shared by people experiencing homelessness emphasize the need for tailored and respectful approaches that address diverse challenges and priorities. By incorporating these perspectives, Saskatoon can build a more inclusive and responsive Community Plan to support individuals on their journey toward stability and independence.

Reaching Home – Saskatoon Community Plan

Appendix B - Focused Conversation/Interview Questionnaire

Introduction

- We are working with Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership and Saskatoon’s Community Advisory Board conducting interviews as part of the community engagement process for their Reaching Home: Community Homelessness Plan for 2024-2028.
- We are working alongside SHIP to engage key community organizations and stakeholders through in-person interviews, focus groups, and community wide meetings
- Through the course of the interview, we will look at current and future servicing needs related to homelessness in Saskatoon which will help to identify gaps and develop local funding priorities for the next four years.
- Please note all of your responses will be confidential and only used in aggregate form.

Background & Context

- Saskatoon’s Community Advisory Board and Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership have been working to help guide homeless funding activities in Saskatoon for several years through Reaching Home: Canada’s Homelessness Strategy.
- Examples of programs that have received funding under Saskatoon’s 2019-2024 Reaching Home: Community Homelessness Plan include:
 - Central Urban Métis Federation Inc. (CUMFI) — provided funding to a number of different CUMFI housing programs such as Hessdorfer House and the Round Prairie Elders’ Lodge.
 - Saskatoon Tribal Council’s Saweyihtotan Mobile Services.
 - John Howard Society of Saskatchewan’s Housing Reintegration Program Saskatoon.
 - STR8-UP’s Transitional Housing Program.
 - White Buffalo Youth Lodge Miskasowin Youth Emergency Shelter.
 - Please note that this list is non-exhaustive and not necessarily indicative of where investments will be directed under the next Community Homelessness Plan.
- Saskatoon’s Community Homelessness Plan for 2019-2024 is concluding and the time for the development of a new plan for 2024-2028 is here. This is an opportunity to update local priorities in order to reflect the changes of the past five years in how funding for the homeless-serving sector is distributed going forward.

Homelessness in Saskatoon

1. What role does your organization play in the lives of people experiencing homelessness in Saskatoon?
 - Why do you consider this to be important?
 - What other services/programs do your clients use?
 - What is your process when a person experiencing homelessness comes to your organization?
2. Are you mandated to serve a specific demographic? Do you also serve people outside that demographic? Which?
3. What do you consider the biggest strengths of the community in addressing homelessness?
 - What is working well – where are successes happening?
 - Do you have any lessons/learnings to share?
4. What do you consider the biggest challenges facing the community in addressing homelessness?
 - What programs and services are lacking?
 - Are they: non-existent? Underfunded? Lacking capacity?
5. What trends/patterns have you noticed regarding homelessness in the community?
 - What types of homelessness are most prominent in the community?
 - Absolute Homelessness - Individual has absolutely no place to stay—is on the street, roaming around the community.
 - Sheltered Homelessness - Individual has no home of their own but is staying in some sort of shelter or facility at night.
 - Hidden Homelessness - Individual has no home of their own but is staying with friends, relatives or strangers (does NOT include lengthy seasonal visits).
 - Who do you find are accessing services most often – families, individuals (male, female), etc.?
 - What do you find your clients struggle most with alongside homelessness – domestic violence, sickness, addictions, mental health?
 - Where are people experiencing unsheltered homelessness gathering?
 - Where are the points of entry to services?

6. The latest Point in Time count identified that over 90% of people experiencing homelessness in Saskatoon are Indigenous. Does your agency have any supports directly aimed at Indigenous homelessness?
 - Do you believe that there are adequate supports specifically for Indigenous homelessness in Saskatoon? Why or why not? Can you identify what some of those supports are?
7. How can the community uplift and fund programs supporting the Indigenous homeless population?
 - Are there any other Truth and Reconciliation considerations that should be considered at a community wide level with regards to Reaching Home?
8. What are the biggest differences between the state of homelessness now and the state of homelessness five years ago?
 - Does homelessness seem to be increasing or decreasing?
9. Reflecting on the COVID-19 pandemic, how was your agency affected?
 - Did your agency feel supported while pandemic measures and related disruptions were occurring?
 - As things stand currently, what supports are needed to continue with the recovery?
10. Moving forward, what are your suggestions on the types of programs and services that need to be provided in the community to address the needs of people experiencing homelessness?
 - Where are the servicing gaps?
 - How can we fill them?
11. What are the barriers that your agency is facing when working with people experiencing homelessness?
 - Funding, lack of community partnership etc.
12. Do you have any funding sources, including financial and in-kind contributions, other than Reaching Home?
 - Which? What programs are they funding?

Coordinated Access

For organizations which are not participating in Coordinated Access:

Coordinated Access is a centralized intake and assessment system which makes it easier for people experiencing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless to get the supports they need. Through Coordinated Access, organizations have access to an information management system called HIFIS which allows them to keep track of their clients. When a client is referred from one Coordinated Access using agency to another, their file can be shared, eliminating the need to do repeated intake processes.

1. Have you heard of Coordinated Access?
 - What do you know about it?
2. Do you plan on participating in the future? Why or why not?
 - If no: are there any barriers to participating in Coordinated Access that need to be addressed for you to sign on?

For organizations which are participating in Coordinated Access:

1. Do you find Coordinated Access beneficial? Why or why not?
2. Do you plan to continue participating in Coordinated Access?
3. Are there any barriers to continued participation in Coordinated Access?
4. Does the Coordinated Access system present any challenges for you? If so, what are the challenges?
5. What can be done to improve the Coordinated Access system?
6. Do you have any comments or feedback on the training you/your organization received for HIFIS and Coordinated Access intake and assessment?

Investment Plan

- Part of the mandate for the Community Plan is to develop an investment plan based on community priorities.
- There are 6 areas of investment in which the Reaching Home funding can be allocated:
 - **Housing Services:** Services that lead to an individual or family transitioning into more stable housing that has been deemed appropriate and safe. Funding can go to housing placement, emergency housing services and housing set up. Includes transitional, permanent-supportive, permanent, or indigenous housing options.
 - **Prevention and Shelter Diversion:** Prevention references activities that are aimed at preventing homelessness by supporting people before crisis occurs. Includes initiatives such as helping families at risk of losing their home or preventing people who are being discharged from public systems from becoming homeless. Shelter diversion works to prevent the use of emergency shelters by providing individualized support systems that allow individuals to explore safe and appropriate alternate housing arrangements.
 - **Support Services:** Individualized supports to help improve integration and connectedness to support structures, such as the provision of basic needs and treatment services. Includes services to support economic, social and cultural integration of individuals.
 - **Capital Investments:** Includes new construction or repair and maintenance of existing units or facilities used to support homeless populations.
 - **Coordination of Resources and Data Collection:** Includes implementation of HIFIS, community mapping activities, implementation of coordinated access, and PIT counts, etc.
 - **Administration:** Includes costs related to delivering Reaching Home programming like staff expenses.
- There are two different funding streams: Designated Communities and Indigenous Homelessness. Any agency can apply for designated communities funding, but only Indigenous agencies can apply for Indigenous homelessness funding.
- The planned allocation of Designated Communities funding over the course of the 2019-2024 Community Plan was as follows:
 - Housing Services 38.72%
 - Prevention and Shelter Diversion 9.24%
 - Support Services 6.47%
 - Capital investments 10.53%
 - Coordination of Resources and Data Collection 20.93%
 - Administration 14.1%
- The planned allocation of Indigenous Homelessness funding over the course of the 2019-2024 Community Plan was as follows:
 - Housing Services 70.12%
 - Prevention and Shelter Diversion 5.69%
 - Support Services 3.78%
 - Capital investments 3.91%
 - Coordination of Resources and Data Collection 2.4%

- Administration 14.1%

1. How well has Reaching Home funding been invested over the last five years?

- Which investments have paid off well?
- Are there any investments which could have been utilized better elsewhere? In your opinion, why do you think this is? Could anything have been done to make the investment successful?
- Have funding priorities and allocations aligned with local needs? Why or why not?

2. What are some local priorities related to the following investment areas?

- What services in particular are important for the community and why?
Not based on specific **programs that individuals would like to see funded

<p>Housing Services</p> <p>24-25:</p> <p>25-26:</p> <p>26-27:</p> <p>27-28:</p>	<p>Prevention and Shelter Diversion</p> <p>24-25:</p> <p>25-26:</p> <p>26-27:</p> <p>27-28:</p>
<p>Support Services</p> <p>24-25:</p> <p>25-26:</p> <p>26-27:</p> <p>27-28:</p>	<p>Capital Investments</p> <p>24-25:</p> <p>25-26:</p> <p>26-27:</p> <p>27-28:</p>
<p>Coordination of Resources and Data Collection</p>	<p>Administration</p>

24-25:	
25-26:	
26-27:	
27-28:	

Conclusion

1. What kind of Community-Wide Outcomes would you like to see in relation to the people experiencing homelessness in Saskatoon?
 - a. How can we measure success in these areas – program completion, low PIT counts, etc.?
2. Is there anything else you would like to share?
 - Thank you for your time.
 - Please remember that all information that is shared is valuable. All individual responses will be held in confidence and protected when used in an aggregated form.
 - We thank you for your contribution.

Appendix C – Reaching Home Directives excerpt: Minimum Requirements

Taken from *Reaching Home: Community Plan Reference Guide 2024-2028*

Reference	Minimum requirement text
Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) (Return to Section on HIFIS)	
HIFIS MR 1	<p>Community Entities must meet all HIFIS minimum requirements by March 31, 2026. Confirmation that communities are on track to do this will be required by October 31, 2025. Meeting all requirements includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining minimum requirements that were met by March 31, 2024; • Meeting requirements that were modified as of 2024-25; and, • Meeting new requirements introduced in 2024-25.
HIFIS MR 2	<p>The use of HIFIS is mandatory for all Community Entities that are not already operating with an equivalent Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS). An equivalent HMIS must meet all of the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-existing use of the HMIS (the operation of an established HMIS prior to receiving Reaching Home funding); • Allows service providers to participate in Coordinated Access and for the collected data to be used to generate a Unique Identifier List and for Outcome-Based Approach reporting; • Capable of collecting and storing data securely to prevent unauthorized access; • Capable of collecting and exporting the same mandatory data fields to Infrastructure Canada each quarter, in the same safe and secure manner as HIFIS (e.g., data is encrypted and anonymized) • Capable of modifying the mandatory data fields if the data fields are updated.
HIFIS MR 3	<p>Community Entities must ensure that their Reaching Home-funded service providers actively use the <u>same</u> HIFIS/HMIS that is being used to manage individual-level client data (i.e., person-specific data) and service provider information for Coordinated Access and the Outcomes-Based Approach.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Entities and their Reaching Home-funded service providers must actively use their HIFIS/HMIS to generate data for

Reference	Minimum requirement text
	<p>their Unique Identifier List in order to meet Coordinated Access requirements and to generate data for outcome reporting in order to meet the Outcomes-Based Approach requirements;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure data comprehensiveness for the Coordinated Access system and an understanding of community-level progress towards outcome targets for the Outcomes-Based Approach, active use of this same HIFIS/HMIS by all providers that serve people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness in the community, regardless of funding source, must be encouraged. • Community Entities must ensure there are no unnecessary barriers preventing Indigenous partners from accessing the HIFIS/HMIS data and/or the reports needed to help the people they serve; and, • Infrastructure Canada may deem certain updates of HIFIS to be mandatory for Community Entities. In these scenarios: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Infrastructure Canada will, in writing, instruct Community Entities using HIFIS to adopt the latest version of HIFIS within a specified period; and, ○ Infrastructure Canada will, in writing, provide Community Entities using an equivalent HMIS with the necessary information to update their system to have equivalent functionality with the latest version of HIFIS. This information will specify what mandatory features or functionality have been added to HIFIS.
HIFIS MR 4	<p>Community Entities must enter into a Data Provision Agreement with Infrastructure Canada, as well as develop a set of local agreements to manage privacy, data sharing, and client consent in compliance with municipal, provincial/territorial, and federal laws. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Provision Agreement: An agreement between the Community Entity and Infrastructure Canada that outlines the roles and responsibilities between both parties, as well as authorizes Infrastructure Canada’s collection of certain non-directly identifiable data fields; • A Community Data Sharing Agreement: An agreement between the Community Entity and their participating service providers that outlines the roles and responsibilities between both parties, and includes an understanding of what information is being shared and why; and,

Reference	Minimum requirement text
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client Consent Form: An agreement between the service provider and the client that outlines the consent for the collection, retention, and sharing of certain data points from the client. <p>Note: Coordinated Access systems rely on the sharing of information between service providers. While individuals remain the owners of their personal information, service providers and the Community Entity are responsible for protecting it.</p>
Coordinated Access (Return to Section on Coordinated Access)	
CA MR 1	<p>Communities must meet all Coordinated Access minimum requirements by March 31, 2026. Confirmation that communities are on track to do this will be required by October 31, 2025. Meeting all requirements includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining minimum requirements that were met by March 31, 2024; • Meeting requirements that were modified as of 2024-25; and, • Meeting new requirements introduced in 2024-25.
CA MR 2	<p>As communities work to implement, maintain and improve their Coordinated Access system, meaningful collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners is expected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In communities where only Designated Communities funding is available, Community Entities are expected to collaborate with their respective Community Advisory Board, and local Indigenous partners. • Where Designated Communities and Indigenous Homelessness streams co-exist, and where there are distinct Community Entities for each stream, the Designated Community and the Indigenous Homelessness Community Entity are expected to collaborate with each other and their respective Community Advisory Board(s) and local Indigenous partners. • Where Designated Communities and Indigenous Homelessness streams co-exist, and where there is a single Community Entity for both streams, this entity is expected to collaborate with the Community Advisory Board(s) and local Indigenous partners. • Territorial capitals funded under the Territorial Homelessness stream are expected to collaborate with their respective

Reference	Minimum requirement text
	<p>Community Advisory Board, and local Indigenous partners to support meaningful participation in the Coordinated Access system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active participation in Coordinated Access by all providers that serve people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness is encouraged, particularly from those that serve Indigenous peoples. For example, the Resource Inventory should include housing units, subsidies and supports that are intended for Indigenous peoples.
CA MR 3	<p>Communities must maintain an integrated, community-based governance structure that supports a transparent, accountable and responsive Coordinated Access system, with HIFIS as the local HMIS. Membership must include representation from the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population groups the Coordinated Access system intends to serve; • Types of service providers that help prevent homelessness and those that help people transition from homelessness to safe, appropriate housing; • Indigenous partners (more than a single representative, wherever possible); • People with lived experience of homelessness; and, • Provincial/territorial and municipal governments. <p>Note: Terms of Reference for the governance structure must be documented and be made publicly available, if requested.</p>
CA MR 4	<p>A lead organization must be identified for Coordinated Access and for HIFIS. The Coordinated Access Lead and HIFIS Lead must collaborate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve service coordination and data management; and, • Increase the quality and use of data to prevent and reduce homelessness. <p>Note: Roles and responsibilities for the Coordinated Access and HIFIS Lead must be documented and be made publicly available, if requested.</p>
CA MR 5	<p>The governance structure must identify how various homeless-serving sector roles and groups are integrated and aligned in support of the community's overall goals to prevent and reduce homelessness, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Entity; • Community Advisory Board; • Coordinated Access Lead and HIFIS Lead roles;

Reference	Minimum requirement text
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provincial/territorial and/or municipal designations relative to managing homelessness funding, as applicable; • Local groups with a mandate to prevent and/or reduce homelessness, as applicable; and, • Local Indigenous partners, including Indigenous service delivery organizations, as applicable. <p>Note: This must be documented and be made publicly available, if requested.</p>
CA MR 6	<p>All service providers receiving Reaching Home funding (i.e., those that deliver one or more federally funded projects/sub-projects) must participate in Coordinated Access.</p> <p>Note: Documenting participation in Coordinated Access forms part of a community’s system map (see CA MR 8).</p>
CA MR 7	<p>Communities must encourage broad service provider participation in the Coordinated Access system, regardless of funding source.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad service provider participation—regardless of funding source—is important as it is the best way to connect everyone who needs and wants help with their housing to the widest range of services in the most seamless way possible. • Participation must be encouraged from service providers that do not receive Reaching Home funding and (a) serve people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness and (b) could fill their vacancies through the Coordinated Access system (e.g., they have housing units, subsidies and/or supports that could be accessed by people experiencing homelessness). <p>Note: Documenting participation in Coordinated Access forms part of a community’s system map (see CA MR 8).</p>
CA MR 8	<p>Communities must develop and maintain a document that identifies and describes the service providers that participate in the Coordinated Access system (referred to as a “system map”). Communities must use this tool to guide their efforts to improve their Coordinated Access system, use of HIFIS and data quality. This document must include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name of the organization and/or service provider; • Type of service provider (e.g., emergency shelter, supportive housing); • Funding source(s); • Eligibility for service (e.g., youth); • Capacity to serve (e.g., number of units); • Role in the Coordinated Access system (e.g., access point); • Role with maintaining quality data used for a Unique Identifier List (e.g., keep data up-to-date for housing history); and,

Reference	Minimum requirement text
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the service provider currently uses HIFIS. <p>Note: The system map must be made publicly available, if requested.</p>
CA MR 9	<p>All housing-related resources funded under the Designated Communities or Territorial Homelessness streams (i.e., federally funded projects/sub-projects) must be included in the Resource Inventory and fill vacancies using the Unique Identifier List, following the vacancy matching and referral process. They will not maintain a separate wait list or use another, parallel process to fill vacancies.</p> <p>Note: Documenting participation in Coordinated Access forms part of a community's system map (see CA MR 8).</p>
CA MR 10	<p>Eligibility requirements must be documented for each housing-related resource in the Resource Inventory.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligibility requirements can apply to a type of resource (e.g., all supportive housing) and/or a smaller subset of that type (e.g., a unit in a supportive housing building). <p>Note: Documenting eligibility requirements forms part of a community's system map (see CA MR 8).</p>
CA MR 11	<p>Prioritization criteria, and the order in which they are applied, must be documented for each housing-related resource in the Resource Inventory.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depth of need (i.e., acuity) must be included as a factor in prioritization. • Prioritization criteria may also include housing history, current length of homeless episode, current living situation, health status, vulnerability to victimization, household type, number of children and/or pregnancy, age, Veteran status and/or Indigenous identity. • Prioritization criteria can be shared for more than one type of resource (e.g., all rapid re-housing and supportive housing) or apply to only one type (e.g., only supportive housing). • Only information identified in the community's prioritization policy may be used to filter the Unique Identifier List to generate a Priority List for filling vacancies. <p>Note: Documentation must be made available, if requested.</p>
CA MR 12	<p>Communities must have processes in place to ensure that people experiencing homelessness are being supported to move through the Coordinated Access process (often referred to as service navigation or case conferencing).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While there is flexibility in how these supports may be structured, processes must include keeping people's information up-to-date in HIFIS (e.g., interaction with the

Reference	Minimum requirement text
	<p>system, housing history, as well as data used to inform eligibility and prioritization for housing-related resources) and helping people to identify and overcome barriers to accessing appropriate services and/or housing-related resources.</p> <p>Note: Service navigation and case conferencing processes must be documented, and this documentation must be made available, if requested.</p>
CA MR 13	<p>Access points must be available throughout the geographic area covered by the Designated Communities or Territorial Homelessness funded region, so that people can be served regardless of where they are in the community.</p> <p>Note: Access points must be documented and be made publicly available.</p>
CA MR 14	<p>There must be processes in place to monitor if there is easy, equitable and low-barrier access to the Coordinated Access system, and to respond to issues that emerge, as appropriate.</p> <p>Note: These processes must be documented and be made available, if requested.</p>
CA MR 15	<p>The triage and assessment process must be documented in one or more policies/protocols and address the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consent: Ensuring that people have a clear understanding of the Coordinated Access system, as well as how their personal information will be shared and stored. Includes addressing situations where people may benefit from services but are not able or willing to give their consent. • Intake: Documenting that people have connected or reconnected with the Coordinated Access system and have been entered into HIFIS, including obtaining or reconfirming consents, creating or updating client records, and entering transactions in HIFIS. • Initial triage: Ensuring safety and meeting basic needs (e.g., food and shelter), and guiding people through the process of stopping an eviction (homelessness prevention) or finding somewhere to stay that is safe and appropriate besides shelter (shelter diversion). • More in-depth assessment: Gathering information to gain a deeper understanding of people’s housing-related strengths, depth of need, and preferences, including through the use of a common assessment tool(s) to inform prioritization for vacancies in the Resource Inventory.

Reference	Minimum requirement text
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community referrals: Gathering information to understand what services people are eligible for and identifying where they can go to get their basic needs met, get help with a housing plan and/or connect with other related resources. • Housing plans: Documenting people’s progress with finding and securing housing (with appropriate subsidies and/or supports, as applicable). • Using a person-centered approach: Tailoring use of common tools to meet the needs and preferences of different people or population groups (e.g., youth), while also maintaining consistency in process across the Coordinated Access system. <p>Note: Documentation must be made available, if requested.</p>
CA MR 16	<p>A common, unified triage and assessment process must be applied across all population groups in the community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities can select the triage and assessment tool(s) that work best for them, based on local needs and priorities. • People should not be asked to repeat similar information gathered through more than one tool to access services (e.g., ensure people are not asked to complete two tools with similar questions that measure depth of need), even if they are being served by different providers. • People should not have to complete different tools unless there is a good rationale for doing so, such as a change in their circumstances (e.g., an individual becomes part of a family) or developmental phase (e.g., when youth become adults). • If more than one tool is being used, communities will need to put additional processes in place to limit the risk of re-traumatizing people (e.g., ensure people are not asked similar questions multiple times), as well as reducing administrative burden and data duplication if service providers are expected to use multiple tools (e.g., entering users are not being asked to enter similar information into multiple fields in HIFIS). • If more than one triage and/or assessment tool is being used, there must be a protocol in place that describes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ When each tool should be used (e.g., tools used only for youth verses those that can be used with more than one population group);

Reference	Minimum requirement text
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ When a person/family could be asked to complete more than one tool (e.g., if an individual becomes part of a family or a youth becomes an adult); and, ○ How the matching process will be managed in situations where more than one person/family is eligible for the same vacancy and, because data to inform prioritization was collected using different tools, results are not the same (e.g., one tool gives a higher score for depth of need than the other). <p>Note: The triage and assessment process must be documented and this documentation must be made available, if requested. See also CA MR 15.</p>
CA MR 17	<p>The vacancy matching and referral process must be documented in one or more policies/protocols and address the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Roles and responsibilities: Describing who is responsible for each step of the process, including data management. ● Prioritization: Identifying how prioritization criteria is used to determine an individual or family’s relative priority on the Priority List (a subset of the broader Unique Identifier List) when vacancies become available (i.e., how the Priority List is filtered and/or sorted). ● Referrals: What information to cover when referring an individual or family that has been matched and how their choice will be respected, including allowing individuals and families to reject a referral without repercussions. ● Offers: What information to cover when a provider is offering a vacancy to an individual or family that has been matched and tips for making informed decisions about the offer. ● Challenges: How concerns and/or disagreements about prioritization and referrals will be managed, including criteria by which a referral could be rejected by a provider following a match. ● Resource Inventory management: Steps to track real-time capacity, transitions in/out of units, occupancy/caseloads, progress with referrals/offers, and housing outcomes.
CA MR 18	<p>Vacancies from the Resource Inventory must be filled using a Priority List, following the vacancy matching and referral process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A Priority List is used to determine who is currently waiting for a housing-related resource (e.g., a unit, subsidy, or supports through a case manager) and is offer-ready. It is a subset of

Reference	Minimum requirement text
	<p>the broader Unique Identifier List, which includes everyone in the community that is currently experiencing homelessness, has come into contact with the homeless-serving system and has given their consent to be included.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only information relevant to the prioritization criteria may be used to make decisions.
<p>Outcomes-Based Approach (Return to Section on Outcomes-Based Approach)</p>	
OBA MR 1	<p>Communities must meet all Outcomes-Based Approach minimum requirements by March 31, 2026. Confirmation that communities are on track to do this will be required by October 31, 2025. Meeting all requirements includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining minimum requirements that were met by March 31, 2024; • Meeting requirements that were modified as of 2024-25; and, • Meeting new requirements introduced in 2024-25.
OBA MR 2	<p>As communities work to strengthen their Outcomes-Based Approach, meaningful collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners is expected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In communities where only Designated Communities funding is available, Community Entities are expected to collaborate with their respective Community Advisory Board, and local Indigenous partners. • Where Designated Communities and Indigenous Homelessness streams co-exist, and where there are distinct Community Entities for each stream, the Designated Community and the Indigenous Homelessness Community Entity are expected to collaborate with each other and their respective Community Advisory Board(s) and local Indigenous partners. • Where Designated Communities and Indigenous Homelessness streams co-exist, and where there is a single Community Entity for both streams, this entity is expected to partner with the Community Advisory Board(s) and local Indigenous organizations. • Territorial capitals funded under the Territorial Homelessness stream are expected to collaborate with their respective Community Advisory Board, and local Indigenous partners to support meaningful participation in the Outcomes-Based Approach.

Reference	Minimum requirement text
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active participation in the Outcomes-Based Approach by all providers that serve people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness is encouraged, particularly those that serve Indigenous peoples.
OBA MR 3	<p>Communities must have a written policy/protocol (“Inactivity Policy”) that describes how interaction with the homeless-serving system is documented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of this policy/protocol, communities must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Define what it means to be “active” or “inactive”; ○ Define what keeps someone “active” (e.g., data entry into specific fields in HIFIS); ○ Specify the level of effort required by service providers to find people before they are made/confirmed as “inactive”; ○ Explain how to document a person’s first time as “active”, as well as changes in “activity” or “inactivity” over time; and, ○ Explain how to check for data quality (e.g., run a report that shows the clients that are about to become inactive and work with outreach workers to update their files and keep them active, as needed).
OBA MR 4	<p>Communities must have a written policy/protocol that describes how housing history is documented, which may form part of a broader data entry guide.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of this policy/protocol, communities must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Define what it means to be “homeless” or “housed” (e.g., define a housing continuum that shows which housing types align with a status of “homeless” versus “housed”); ○ Explain how to enter housing history consistently; and, ○ Explain how to check for data quality (e.g., run a report that shows the percentage of clients that have complete housing history, so that “unknown” fields can be updated).
OBA MR 5	<p>Communities must maintain person-specific data that is collected with consent, where people currently experiencing homelessness are included in the dataset only once.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Coordinated Access, communities must generate data for their Unique Identifier List using HIFIS (or existing, equivalent HMIS). Processes must be in place to ensure that all relevant and necessary data for filling vacancies is complete (e.g., data

Reference	Minimum requirement text
	used to determine if someone is eligible and can be prioritized for a vacancy is not missing from the dataset).
OBA MR 6	<p>Communities must keep data up-to-date (real-time), making updates as soon as new information is available about a person. Timely updates must be made when there are changes to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interaction with the homeless-service system (e.g., changes from “active” to “inactive”); • Housing history (e.g., changes from “homeless” to “housed”); and, • Data that is relevant and necessary for Coordinated Access (e.g., data used to determine who is eligible and can be prioritized for a vacancy).
OBA MR 7	<p>Communities must maintain comprehensive data, so that it includes everyone currently experiencing homelessness that has interacted with the system. At minimum, comprehensive data must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All household types (e.g., singles and families experiencing homelessness); • People experiencing sheltered homelessness (e.g., staying in emergency shelters), where applicable; and, • People experiencing unsheltered homelessness (e.g., people living in encampments), where applicable.
OBA MR 8	<p>For each core community-level outcome, communities must use their person-specific data for homelessness to set baselines, set reduction targets and track their progress up to 2027-28.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities must be able to get accurate monthly baselines and set monthly reduction targets by March 31, 2024. • Communities must be able to get accurate annual baselines and set annual reduction targets by March 31, 2026. Confirmation that communities are on track to do this will be required by October 31, 2025. • The five core community-level outcomes under Reaching Home are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Homelessness is reduced overall; ○ New inflows into homelessness are reduced; ○ Returns to homelessness are reduced; ○ Indigenous homelessness is reduced; and, ○ Chronic homelessness is reduced. • For tracking community-level outcomes, communities must collect data using HIFIS (or existing, equivalent HMIS) on who is currently experiencing homelessness, who is newly identified as experiencing homelessness, who has returned to

Reference	Minimum requirement text
	<p>homelessness, as well as Indigenous and chronic homelessness. Processes must be in place to ensure that all relevant and necessary data for outcome reporting is complete (i.e., data for interaction with the system, housing history, and Indigenous status is not missing from the dataset).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities can set their own targets for each core outcome with the exception of chronic homelessness, where a reduction target of 50% must be set. • Beyond these core outcomes, communities also have the option of reporting on other community-level outcomes. • Baselines, reduction targets, and progress must be documented and be made publicly available. <p>Note: See also HIFIS MR 3 that specifies data must be collected using HIFIS (or an existing, equivalent HMIS).</p>
OBA MR 9	<p>Communities must continually work to improve the quality of their data and demonstrate how it is used to prevent and reduce homelessness. This requires:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data to be readily available and accessible; and, • Data to be used to inform action in policy making, program planning, performance management, investment strategies and/or service delivery. <p>Note: Efforts to improve data quality and demonstrating how data is being used to inform actions related to preventing and reducing homelessness must be documented and be made publicly available, if requested.</p>