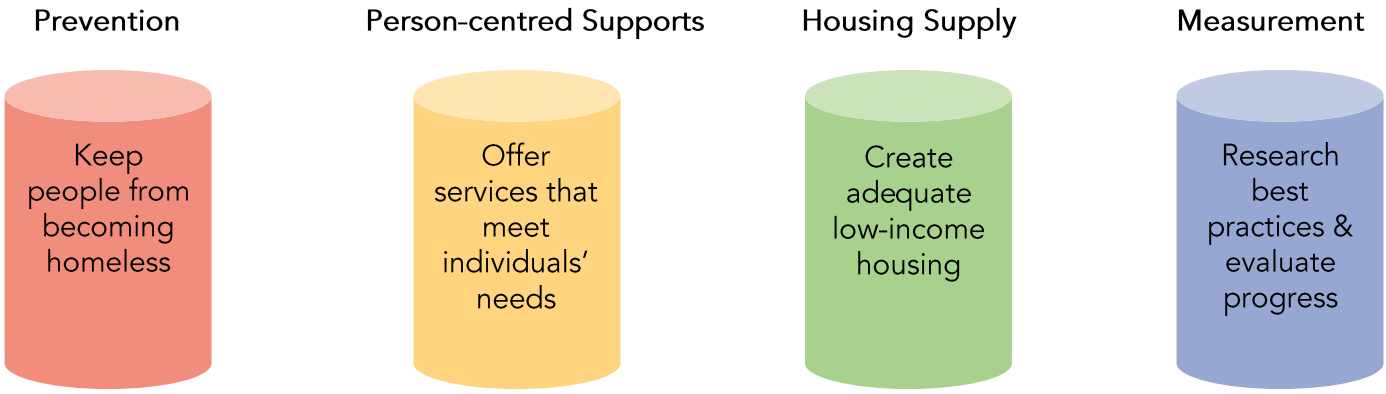
INTRODUCTION

Since 2015, End Homelessness Winnipeg has served as the backbone organization supporting implementation of the *10-Year Plan to End Homelessness in Winnipeg*. The 10-Year Plan sets out goals for making a shift from managing homelessness with emergency responses to ending it with long-term solutions. These solutions are identified as the 4 Pillars of the 10-Year Plan:



This report offers an update on activities, achievements and plans to the City of Winnipeg as a key funder and partner, covering the period from September 15, 2020, to June 15, 2021.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

End Homelessness Winnipeg continues to convene a COVID-19 Response for the city's homeless-serving sector, connecting more than 60 agencies in the homeless-serving, housing and health sectors to develop, implement and monitor a COVID-19 Response plan for those experiencing homelessness. The plan initially included social distancing while increasing capacity in shelters; low-barrier alternative isolation accommodations (AIAs); testing near emergency shelters and through safe, accessible transportation; health, food and hygiene, supplies; and enhanced street outreach. As the pandemic has evolved, so has the Response, to include a temporary staffing pool for homeless-serving agencies, an expansion of AIAs, and a shift in focus to housing, homelessness prevention and vaccination.

End Homelessness Winnipeg communicates with funders from the philanthropic and government sectors to resource priorities identified under the Response plan. As Community Entity for Reaching Home: the federal government's homelessness strategy, End Homelessness Winnipeg administered $7.9 million in Reaching Home funds specific to COVID-19 needs in Winnipeg in the fall and winter of 2020-2021. Thanks to the work of the COVID-19 Response, decisions and allocations were able to be rapidly deployed in support of pressing needs like winter warming spaces and outreach; shelter diversion; rapid re-housing; and expanding AIAs.

The COVID-19 Response helps to ensure a level of constant communication across the sector and the stabilization of support services delivered in ways that can protect the health and safety of those experiencing homelessness and the people who work with them. One example is the COVID-19 Resources for Winnipeg's Homeless-Serving Sector web page, which compiles the latest available, relevant guidance for providers from Shared Health, the Public Health Agency of Canada, and other reliable sources, to help ensure all providers are informed about important protocols for screening, testing, isolation and quarantine, and prevention.

As of June 15, 2021, through 3 successive waves of the pandemic, Winnipeg is the only major city in Canada to have averted a major COVID-19 outbreak within its emergency shelter system. This speaks to the effectiveness of the Response plan and to the success of AIAs established under the plan, in partnership between Main Street Project and the WRHA.

EXTREME WEATHER RESPONSE

End Homelessness Winnipeg facilitates the Extreme Weather Response Committee, coordinating strategies to keep those without a home safer during extreme weather. The committee includes representatives from emergency shelters, outreach services, City departments, Health services and Environment and Climate Change Canada. This winter's Extreme Weather Response rose to challenges arising from COVID-19 by enhancing communication with elected representatives and the public on available warming spaces and outreach services, as well as the signs and risks of cold illness and how to respond. Through constant communication with the COVID-19 Response and the Community Entity, a portion of Reaching Home COVID-19 funds were able to be targeted in support of critical services throughout the cold season. Given unseasonal extreme weather events such as the heat wave of Spring 2021, the Committee is making a shift from Extreme Cold (winter) and Extreme Heat (summer) plans to a year-round Extreme Weather Response plan that can address weather hazards at any time of year. This plan will launch at the end of June 2021.

KÍKININAW ÓMA – A STRATEGY TO SUPPORT UNSHELTERED WINNIPEGGERS

In June 2020, End Homelessness Winnipeg released *Kíkininaw Óma – A Strategy to Support Unsheltered Winnipeggers*, created in collaboration with a group including representation from the City of Winnipeg, first responders, outreach workers, homeless-serving agencies and people with lived experience of homelessness.

The Strategy made six key recommendations for supporting individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness or living in encampments. In the 12 months since the release of the Strategy, rapid progress has been made on some recommendations, while barriers have emerged to the implementation of others.

The COVID-19 pandemic has increased urgency for addressing homelessness, building broad awareness that housing is health care. However, COVID-19 has also increased the visibility of unsheltered homelessness in Winnipeg, as health concerns add to barriers some people face in accessing emergency shelters, and as many "hidden" homelessness arrangements, such as couch surfing, have been forbidden under public health orders. In response, outreach services have expanded and work in ever-closer collaboration, supported by strong relationships with first responders when emergencies arise. New and expanded Safe Spaces have opened doors, supported by all levels of government. However, many of these spaces are struggling for operational or staffing resources and not able to stay open 24/7. While the *Rapid Housing Initiative* and other federal programs will help to develop more than 150 urgently required new housing units in Winnipeg by 2022, need may be outpacing construction of this housing supply. The city would need 300 new units of low-income housing each year for the next decade to meet demand, according to the 2020 *Comprehensive Housing Needs Assessment*. While the introduction of the *Canada-Manitoba Housing Benefit* and a new Disabilities benefits program will increase income supports for people in need, it is uncertain whether these benefits will keep up with inflation in Winnipeg's housing market. As the Interim Strategy continues, partners are working to adapt to the realities of the pandemic and to include connections with new services and programs, such as the Downtown Community Safety Partnership or the 211 phone line. A 1-year report, tracking progress made and next steps on all six recommendations, will be released in July 2021.

PROGRESS ON THE TARGETS OF THE 5-YEAR PLAN, 2020-2025

The *5-Year Plan* launched by End Homelessness Winnipeg in 2019 aligns the goals of the ***10-Year Plan to End Homelessness in Winnipeg*** with the directives of *Reaching Home*, the Reaching Home *Winnipeg Community Plan*, and data gathered on homelessness in Winnipeg since the ***10-Year Plan*** was launched in 2014. The ***5-Year Plan*** sets out 7 measurable targets for reducing homelessness in Winnipeg over the next five years. Updated progress on specific actions related to each target are highlighted in the table below.

2025 TARGET	ACTIONS	PROGRESS	NEXT STEPS
CREATE **1,340** additional housing units based on identified local housing needs	Build fund development capacity by establishing a financing model for new housing	Housing Supply Action Committee developed an innovative financing model for funding housing initiatives	Engagement with developers and funders on the model, which will be piloted for a project to develop housing for women and children fleeing violence.
	Revise *Housing Models & Development Framework* to reflect current data on housing need	Framework data included in *Housing Needs Assessment Report*, which adds baseline data; Developed system to track new supply	Finalizing baseline supply data to update Framework document
	Develop a master plan to create 1,340 units	Assessing opportunities, needs and best practices	Draft Master Plan, including costing
	Leverage partnerships with developers/ funders/service providers to build housing units	Partners engaged through Housing Supply Action Committee and ***Astum Api Niikinaahk:*** The Village Project	Leverage partnerships to implement Master Plan
	Engage governments to ensure funding criteria & policies for new housing meet needs of those experiencing homelessness	*Kíkininaw Óma Strategy* sets out recommendations for governments to address housing needs based on engagement with lived experience	Continue to engage governments on new low-income housing needs; track new supply
	Collaborate with the City of Winnipeg to inform its new Poverty Reduction Strategy	*Poverty Reduction Strategy* additional draft measures as of Spring 2021 include Housing	Collaborate on Housing measures with City of Winnipeg
	Leverage partnerships with major providers of rent-geared-to-income housing	Partnering with Manitoba Housing and MNPHA	Leverage partnerships for Master Plan

2025 TARGET	ACTIONS	PROGRESS	NEXT STEPS
HOUSE **1,519** people experiencing absolute homelessness or provisionally housed	Develop a comprehensive, reliable inventory of available housing units	*Coordinated Access (CA)* system will include a centralized inventory of housing resources	Establishing CA inventory by Fall 2021
	Develop and implement a CA system that streamlines the process for people experiencing homelessness to access housing and supports	Advisory Committee struck to guide development of Governance Structure, October-December 2020; CA Council established January 2021	Engagement on co-creation of the system design; implement CA system by March 2022
	Support/facilitate creation of 24/7 Safe Spaces	Produced *24/7 Safe Spaces* report and ***Kíkininaw Óma Strategy***; City, Provincial and Federal funding commitments made for 24/7 Safe Spaces	Working with providers to provide backbone support for 24/7 Safe Spaces. Engaging Safe Space providers in CA system development
REDUCE Indigenous overrepresentation in emergency shelters by **50%**	Facilitate development of transitional housing for women and children fleeing violence, in partnership with Wahbung Abinoonjiag and 8 other Indigenous and women's organizations	Subdivision and Land Transfer underway with Manitoba Housing; financing model completed; partnerships established; schematic design complete	Working with partners and province to secure capital and operating funds; demolish existing structure
	Partner with Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) and others to implement the Strategy for Ending First Nations Homelessness	Initiated ***Astum Api Niikinaahk*** Indigenous-led housing, a Strategy recommendation: engaged partners, Elders and lived experience; secured site; completed design; confirmed funding; began building	Awaiting AMC release of the Strategy
	Collaborate with federal and provincial partners to identify and address jurisdictional gaps impacting Indigenous homelessness	Engaging Justice, CFS, CLDS, education and health to address homelessness among Indigenous people exiting systems	Connect Indigenous youth and adults exiting these systems with appropriate income supports and housing to divert from shelters

2025 TARGET	ACTIONS	PROGRESS	NEXT STEPS
REDUCE Indigenous overrepresentation in emergency shelters by **50%**	Partner with Indigenous organizations to create a collaborative network that provides wraparound supports to address housing affordability, access, innovative housing and funding models	Initiated ***Astum Api Niikinaahk:*** the Village Project with Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata and other Indigenous organizations. Engaged partners, Elders and lived experience to establish cultural operating model	***Astum Api Niikinaahk*** is expected to welcome its first tenants starting Fall 2021
	Partner with Indigenous organizations to build culturally appropriate approaches, systems, and supports for people exiting homelessness	Director, Housing Supports, completed *Circles for Reconciliation* training to achieve Facilitator designation	Developing ***Astum Api Niikinaahk,*** CA, and other initiatives from an Indigenous perspective
	Partner with Indigenous organizations to build housing and increase access to housing	Supported Wahbung Abinoonjiiag to Sponsor Manage 56 units in partnership with 8 other Indigenous and women's organizations	Sustain and build partnerships to develop transitional housing for women and children fleeing violence and future initiatives
	Understand demographics of those staying in shelters for >10 days to inform population-specific responses	Initiated Street Health Survey Indigenous sub-report on Housing Needs and Preferences of Indigenous People in Winnipeg	Report to be launched by Fall 2021: will not focus specifically on those staying in shelters for >10 days but will inform population-specific responses
SHORTEN lengths of stays in emergency shelters so that 92% are less than 10 days	Support a continuum of housing types and services: supportive, cultural, transitional, community etc.	Engaging Housing Supply Action Committee to explore diverse models and supports	Diversify Reaching Home investments in housing services and capital projects
	Work with emergency shelters to become more housing focussed	Supporting engagement with the *Shelter Transformation Network*	Increase housing supply and housing services at shelters
	Transfer provincial homeless programs and subsidies serving Winnipeg to End Homelessness Winnipeg	Finalized plans, policies and procedures for implementation of Canada-Manitoba Housing Benefit (CMHB)	CMHB homelessness stream administered by End Homelessness Winnipeg as of July 2021 with Building Services Program to support tenancies

2025 TARGET	ACTIONS	PROGRESS	NEXT STEPS
SHORTEN lengths of stays in emergency shelters so that 92% are less than 10 days	Educate the public on issues related to homelessness: reduce stigma, mobilize support for inclusion/integration	Re-launched *Residents' Guide and Media Toolkit*, in January 2021; significant media activity	Continue implementing Communications Strategy and raising public awareness
	Finalize long-term plan to prevent discharge from provincial corrections into homelessness	Demonstration project underway at Headingly Women's to facilitate EIA intake so women have income supports within 1 day of release	Report on project results and opportunities to scale approaches
ELIMINATE Entries to homelessness among released inmates and youth who are in CFS care or disengaging from school	Work with Winnipeg School Division and youth on strategies to prevent homelessness among students disengaging from school	Discussions initiated with WSD, CFS, EIA, CLDS, Inclusion Winnipeg, Abilities Manitoba and youth on prevention strategies	Engaging youth and disability services sectors on prevention strategies and models
	Determine numbers and demographics of those being discharged from institutional settings into absolute homelessness	Survey at Headingly Women's revealed more than 80% of respondents had no housing when released	Complete Street Census to create new snapshot of numbers and demographics
	Identify gaps and develop a plan with partners and stakeholders to stop inflow into homelessness	Community Loan Program piloted to prevent eviction due to temporary income shortfall	Expanded *Rent Bank* established Spring 2021, funded by the Province and administered through MNPHA
	Identify gaps through System Mapping	Systems Mapping initiated with *HelpSeeker*	Complete Journey Mapping with providers and lived experience to better understand referral pathways among Winnipeg services

2025 TARGET	ACTIONS	PROGRESS	NEXT STEPS
EXPAND Use of HIFIS to **45** homeless-serving organizations and programs as part of a coordinated access system	Integrate shelter, Housing First HIFIS systems	Systems integrated in 2019-2020; onboarded new agencies	Add 8 new programs/ organizations per year, based on local priorities
	Add 45 organizations and programs to HIFIS, based on priorities identified through Systems Mapping/ research	40 organizations and programs at various stages of HIFIS4 implementation as of December 2020	Onboarding all Reaching Home-funded agencies, as well as Winnipeg Outreach Network (WON) members
	Develop a plan/budget for CA system	Budget and plan developed in 2019-2020; updated in 2020-2021 for and 2021-2022	Finalize budget for operational phase of CA system, 2022-2023
	Implement CA using standardized intake, assessment tools	CA Council has established an Intake Working Group to review best practices on tools and processes, informed by recent research	CA intake processes to be developed in consultation with lived experience and service providers, Fall 2021
	Participate in *BFZ-C*	Participated to June 2020; now with *CAEH*	Meeting monthly with CAEH to support CA implementation
	Create by-name list in HIFIS to facilitate CA	CA Council to consult with stakeholders on list criteria and protocols	By-name-list established by March 2022
PREVENT **90%** of those served by coordinated access from re-entering homelessness	Evaluate practices, policies contributing to people returning to homelessness	Working with Justice, CFS, CLDS, Education and Health to identify policies and practices	Initiating project to reconnect CLDS clients with these supports when the clients enter shelters.
	Enhance community of practice, learning and care for direct service workers	Supporting providers with *COVID-19 best practices and resources*	Leverage COVID-19 Response partnerships toward community of practice, learning, care
	Establish community loan program to prevent people from being evicted due to one-time financial shortfall	Community Loan program established; Rent Bank launched	Monitor impact