

MOVING FORWARD

A Plan to Address Housing and Homelessness within the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board Catchment Area over the Next 10 Years



Social Planning Council of Sudbury

June 27, 2013

Overview of the Task as per the Ministry

- Ontario Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy requires a 10 Year Housing & Homelessness Plan by Jan. 2014. Plans are to be locally driven and respond to local need.
- The Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB is responsible for producing an H&H Plan for 18 municipalities and two unorganized territories.
- Recognize the Housing First Model - Stable and permanent housing is considered to be the first step in a person's journey toward stability in multiple aspects of life, should the individual agree and wish to be housed at that time.
- The Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB contracted the Social Planning Council of Sudbury (SPCS) to lead the development of the plan.

What is known about Rural Homelessness

- It's under-studied
- Hard to understand – relatively invisible compared to urban homelessness. Generally speaking, individuals and families at-risk of homelessness in rural areas tend to more readily experience living in substandard or overcrowded housing or living with friends or family rather than experiencing absolute homelessness (Reid & Katerburg, 2007).
- Rural areas would benefit from having a data collection coordinator who would maintain good relationships with service providers and advocates, facilitate data collection training, and overall create a standard for data collection, quality assurance, and dissemination (Toomey & First, 1993).

Gathering Information for The Plan

- The key priorities of the plan were informed by Community Profile Data (Statistics Canada) and by community consultations
 - 12 focus groups/six communities
 - Several telephone/email interviews (open-ended questions)
- Participants included:
 - Social and non-profit housing tenants; persons in low income living in market rent; service providers/community agency workers; board members, mayors and other municipal reps



Issues at the Forefront of Stable Housing/Living

- Widespread geography → access to services and amenities further compromised by limited transportation options and diluted information flow
- Lack of housing that is affordable for people in low income
- Staggering senior and aging population who require affordable housing with regular supports
- Lack of known supports in place for at-risk youth/no service connections to schools
- Housing is part of a larger context, impacted by the state of the labour market and accessibility to education

Key Priorities Identified

- 1. Understand and Respond to the District's Demographic**
- 2. Strong Emphasis on Seniors Required – Housing and Supports**
- 3. Implement Strategies to Support Overlooked Populations – Aboriginals, Youth, and Individuals who are Homeless**
- 4. Address Gaps in Services that Contribute to Homelessness**
- 5. Imperative Action on Improving Transportation Accessibility Required**
- 6. Employment and Training Opportunities**

Key Priorities, continued...

- 7. Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Housing**
- 8. Innovation and Efficiency with Affordable Housing**
- 9. Increase Opportunities by Increasing Knowledge Dissemination**
- 10. Spearhead Integrated Service Delivery**
- 11. Increased Advocacy Role for Civic Leaders**
- 12. Increase Program Evaluation**
- 13. Closely Monitor the Release of RFPs and Funding Opportunities**

References

- Reid, D. & Katerburg, L. (2007). *Understanding Homelessness and Housing Stability in Waterloo Region's Rural Areas*. ON: Regional Municipality of Waterloo.
- Toomey, B.G, & First, R.J. (1993). Counting the rural homeless population: Methodological dilemmas. *Social Work Research & Abstracts*, 29(4), 23-27.