



Summary Report

Yellowknife Community Roundtable on Homelessness

Community Roundtable on Homelessness



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Table of Contents

Community Roundtable on Homelessness	0
Introduction	2
Roundtable Format	2
Table Discussions and Sharing	3
Discussion Results	4
City Councillor Takeaways	4
“State” Summaries	5
Recommendations and Conclusion	11

Introduction

The Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) Program with the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH), based on a long-standing relationship with the City of Yellowknife (the City) through multiple training and consulting experiences, was procured to provide facilitation of a roundtable process focused on challenges in the community regarding homelessness. The City had previously established this routine with other City departments, to glean a deeper level of understanding of various issues by interacting with associated stakeholders. Therefore, it was determined that a similar process should be incorporated regarding homelessness.

The City's desire for this event was to give community members the opportunity to contribute their ideas and connect with others around housing solutions. As quoted on the City website by City Councillor and Chair of the Community Advisory Board (CAB), Ben Hendrickson states, "We are hoping to provide a unique space for residents to openly share their ideas and insights." The event was advertised and open to the public (including people with lived and living experience), organizations, and businesses.

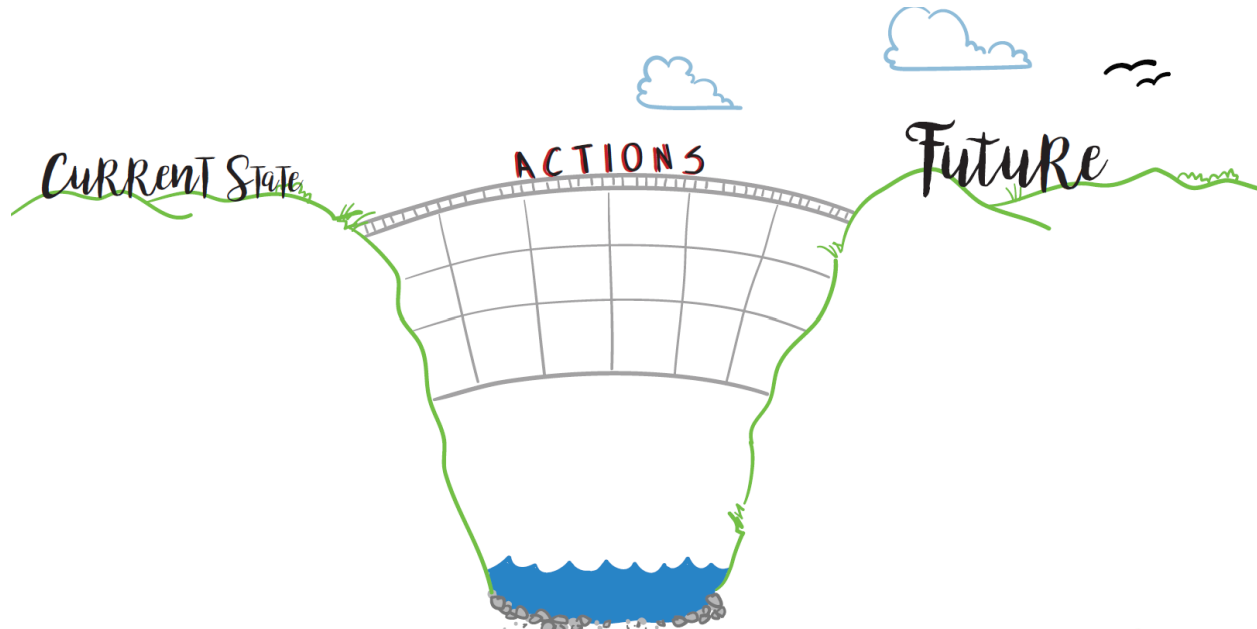
The event took place on June 26, 2024 at the Tree of Peace Friendship Centre. Approximately 70 individuals including City staff and representatives from federal and territorial governments were in attendance and actively participated. It is noteworthy and important to mention here that a missing element was that of people with lived, but mostly living experience of homeless. It was revealed during the event that many felt as though the environment did not seem "safe" enough and there exists a distrust and belief that their voices would be heard. This will be touched on later in the report in the "Recommendations" section.

This report is meant to be a simple summary of the insights and perspectives of the Yellowknife community as expressed by attendees and based on the format of the event. What you will see in the following content will be brief descriptions of the various topics that outlined the roundtable. Items will be identified based on the most prevalent and repeated messages with additional context included as needed. The intention is to outline common themes to help those reading the report understand what matters most to the community and gain a sense of direction for next steps. But first, a description of the roundtable format will be provided to set the stage for the remainder of the report.

Please note that what is shared is based on both factual notes and written ideas provided by the actual participants of the event. But the writer of this report has also taken liberty to include some interpretation based on their perspective and understanding of the issue and community.

Roundtable Format

The TTA planned for and provide a format designed to facilitate an experience that would be conducive to sharing and giving participants several opportunities to be heard without creating space that would invite extensive amounts of "soap boxing" which often makes it difficult for the greater audience to express their own thoughts, ideas, and concerns. That was done by framing the entire evening based on a pictorial metaphorical bridge shown by the image below.



This bridge metaphor was divided into four areas representing Yellowknife in various states in relation to the homelessness issue. Each of these states provided an opportunity for discussions at separate tables as well as sharing amongst the larger group.

Table Discussions and Sharing

As participants entered the room prior to the event starting, they were encouraged to spread themselves out and not gather at tables solely based on sitting with their work colleagues or friends. They were asked to separate as much as possible. City and government officials were also asked to separate and mix throughout the room to ensure there was a diverse representation of people at each table. This would assist in facilitating rich discussion from a wide array of perspectives.

Each “state” of Yellowknife was introduced one by one. After each description, participants were asked to take 5-7 minutes brainstorming ideas and feedback related to that topic. The smaller table groups allowed for less fear in sharing and for hearing voices that would normally not be heard. The tables were asked to designate a spokesperson and/or a writer so they could capture the variety of points and messages on separate sticky notes which would then be shared openly with the larger group and then captured for the purposes of writing this report by placing them on sheets of paper representing that topic. Each topic or “state” of Yellowknife was introduced by a question to be answered at their tables and on the sticky notes.

“State” 1 – Future Failure: On the image above, this area is not labeled. However, it is represented by the space underneath the bridge. The question the groups were asked to discuss was, “What does your community look like ten years from now if plans and efforts to address the challenges of homelessness are not successful?”

“State” 2 – Current State: This is located on the left side of the bridge. The question to be considered and discussed for this section was, “When you think about Yellowknife and homelessness, how would you describe that the community is like now?”

“State” 3 – Future State: For this section, which is found on the far right of the graphic, groups were asked to consider and discuss this question. “If plans and strategies are implemented and successful, what does the community of Yellowknife like ten years from now?”

“State” or Status 4 – Action: This section is represented by the bridge itself in the image, suggesting that to move from the current state to the desired state without ending up in the bottom of the canyon and river, there must be a bridge. To build that bridge, there needs to be some concrete actions that form the materials and tools to construct it. Therefore, the question here tables were asked to discuss was, “After hearing the comments, ideas and perspectives regarding the other three “states,” what are some specific and concrete actions or steps that should be taken right now to get across the canyon?” Further context was provided. It was recommended that there be consideration for drilling down enough to come up with ideas that can literally be done at this time. These items may not seem like they move the needle very far, but they are necessary to achieve progress. Too often people focus too much on “North Star” goals instead of the smallest most basic steps that generate literal movement towards those North Star goals. For example, someone may want to achieve retirement in 5 years. That is a great goal. However, it is a North Star goal, and one will make little progress by simply focusing on that item alone. It is important to keep that goal visible but then bring your focus on the things you can do as soon as possible and realistically make happen right away. These become the steppingstones toward the north star. So, you may choose to identify that the action goal needed is to set an appointment with their investment broker or banker to discuss their current financial status. On the topic at and during the roundtable, the group was asked to ignore, even though it is important, things like “find housing for everyone,” because that is not going to happen very quickly and there are several things that need to be done along the way to make that a success.

Even with this context and additional explanation, the writer notes that this was still a challenging concept for people, and it was primarily lofty items that were captured and shared. This is also something that will be discussed in the “Recommendations” section.

Discussion Results

In this section, we have reviewed the breadth of the responses for each section or “State” and attempted to identify the key themes and summarize the points. We will highlight items that were common or repeated by multiple people and groups. Some items will contain additional description while others will be stated simply by the words used on the sticky notes.

Prior to sharing these results, we felt it important to reach out to the City staff in attendance and ask the various representatives such as City Councillors, who participated at the table discussion, about their general thoughts and takeaways based on things they heard at their tables.

City Councillor Takeaways

We have taken the liberty of abridging this information. We have not identified which Councillor is responsible for which comments but instead themed and summarized their thoughts.

- Homelessness is widespread throughout the community and has been for some time. People are frustrated with the extensive discussions about the problems and what makes people more upset and frustrated is not enough time is put into developing and implementing concrete actionable strategies.
- Support (mental health in particular) is important and should be geared more toward helping people leave homelessness and shelters and be successful in housing. Supports are often what drive people to Yellowknife.
- More thought needs to be put into how funds are used and should be focused on the community and targeting the right things.
- There needs to be greater involvement of Indigenous people (government, lived experience) in the leadership and planning of efforts to address homelessness, especially since the majority of people experiencing homelessness are Indigenous but being supported primarily by Non-Indigenous service providers.

“State” Summaries

For this section we will outline the shared information in the same order the discussions occurred during the roundtable event.

Future State (Failure in Ten Years)

It is interesting to note here that as you pay attention to the description of a Yellowknife in ten years if efforts do not work or go well, you see several items that also describe the current state of things. But what we heard was a higher degree of intensity, fear, and fallout from those circumstances. This in turn led to several statements that suggested the demise or destruction of Yellowknife and a failing community. Whereas the similar concepts identified in the current state section appeared to have greater hope attached to them.

City in Crisis:

Probably the greatest overarching theme of this section boiled down to a sense of Yellowknife, in ten years, being in an almost non-recoverable state of crisis or chaos. A significant contributor to this is the vision that if things do not improve, problems such as gang activity, distribution of illicit substances, and crime in general will have dramatically increased. It was believed that you would also see businesses failing and/or leaving, which translates to the city’s tax base dwindling. Buildings would fall into disarray, and the city would become generally unclean. It was even suggested that with an abundance of people struggling, this would increase the likelihood of more forest fires. The quality of life in Yellowknife will drop extensively.

Increased and Increasing Homeless Population:

All these areas are interconnected in some way, however if Yellowknife was experiencing this crisis state, there would be a direct impact on the state of homelessness. If businesses are failing, there would be no desire or hope for new development. Overcrowding would increase, existing homes would become unsuitable, and what may already be considered an existing monopoly on market rentals would become even more challenging. The existing lack of affordable and appropriate housing options would be exacerbated, and women, seniors, and youth homelessness would be rising

uncontrollably. Shelters would then be closing due to the inability to handle the strain. Support services that do exist would also be overwhelmed and people experiencing homelessness, especially those with the highest level of complexity will die more frequently and housed individuals will be losing their housing without proper supports to assist them in maintaining housing. This will lead to a dramatic increase in the inappropriate use of ancillary services which will in turn overload correctional facilities and hospitals, which will impact access to those services for the rest of the community.

With high levels of existing trauma and a lack of treatment options, the trauma would be compounded. Others would be experiencing trauma they didn't have before. Intact families and homes would then break down which would also lead to more people on the streets. In effort to cope with the trauma, addictions and other high-risk behaviors would increase. With so many more people on the streets and without homes, encampments would be out of control.

Economic, Community, Human Division

As the problem persists, people will begin to become resentful. Resentful of people on the street as they will be seen as the problem and the reason life in Yellowknife has gone so far downhill. They will be resentful of the government and services for not doing more. Protests will increase as people become desperate to salvage their community. Hopelessness would set in and a state of "every person for themselves" would ensue and there would be more segregation. There would be an economical divide with clear lines between the "haves" and the "have nots." There would be a decline in access to education and only the elite would benefit. It was noted that even Indigenous Elders would begin to suffer and struggle which would remove an important element of Indigenous stability, resulting in a further divide between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous. There would also be an increase in the dependence of people on the government which further creates division and classes.

Current State

We mentioned earlier that there were definite parallels between the failed state and the current state. Many of the items brought out in this discussion reflect why certain things would be so devastated if things do not improve soon. Some individuals feel that things are already starting to be or are in an emergency state.

Crisis Situation

Many people spoke about the housing situation being a "crisis" noting that there are so many people needing housing yet there are empty apartments because people refuse to rent to the homeless. At the same time there is a lack of housing options and those that do exist are often in poor condition or unlivable. People spoke about the increase in housing takeovers which contributes to the poor state of the units. Overcrowding was also seen as a current challenge. A positive thought was that of Spruce Bough and it being considered a successful endeavor and a possible model to replicate. Some were concerned however that the negative aspects of the housing crisis were starting to become seen as the norm which would suggest a lack of belief things can change. This would explain why some individuals see that homelessness is already increasing in Yellowknife, specifically with women, youth, seniors, and the hidden homeless phenomenon. People see that because of the housing crisis and increasing homelessness, shelters are already currently at capacity, which is another sign that the

system is stressed now let alone ten years from now. Interestingly it was mentioned as a positive perspective, that with the size of the community, the majority of those experiencing homelessness are known to service providers and the community which suggests empathy and compassion for them, yet it was also noted that currently there is already blaming of the homeless for these community issues occurring now.

Several comments were made about the overall crisis state of the community that exists today. Participants identified that fear exists now. People are afraid to be downtown at certain times or in certain places. People fear interactions with various people. At the same time some indicated that their experience is that the people on the street show politeness and they seem examples of others getting the help they need. While other statements used words to describe the current state as an “emergency” situation due to how unsafe things are.

Other things mentioned that could also be impacting the sense that things are in crisis are the extent of addiction present in the community and because of it, the unpredictable nature of people struggling with addiction. Others pointed out that there are now many deaths occurring which causes uneasiness and worry. And finally, an already existing sense of hopelessness seems to be on the rise giving more weight to the idea of things being in crisis now.

Indigenous Element

It was clear to the people at the event that the overrepresentation of Indigenous people experiencing homelessness is a central aspect of these challenges. Starting with the recognition of the vast amounts of intergenerational trauma that is present and according to event participants, not being addressed very well. This is in part connected to a belief that the community currently lacks enough treatment and support options and more importantly, options that are specific for and sensitive to Indigenous culture. There is also an understanding of the disparity of Indigenous led programs and treatment services.

It was acknowledged that a current bright spot is that people with lived experience are making effort to help others where possible. Indigenous people from more remote communities are also trying to come to Yellowknife to access services and then getting “stuck” unable to return for a multitude of reasons. This is adding to the stress of existing support. Therefore, it is ironic that people are coming to Yellowknife for the supports and services, yet the community is seen as not having enough and what exists is being stretched to the max. Additionally, they do not appear to be focused enough on Indigenous culture. It was noted that there is also little happening between communities to address the gaps that exist and contribute to the overall problem. Another positive highlight was that even with the recognition of a lack of Indigenous specific support, there are some Indigenous specific counselling options and the possibility and desire for more.

People stated that there are multiple barriers currently for Indigenous people such as access to housing, and support, access to treatment, and acceptance within the community. The existence of “class divisions” surfaced. Additional clarity was not provided however based on the significant focus and over representation of Indigenous people experiencing homelessness, one can assume that the majority of the concern regarding this division is about Indigenous vs Non-Indigenous. A core factor mentioned often is the existing state of a lack of Indigenous leadership in services as well as in the decision-making processes associated with addressing the community issues.

Absence of Effective Intervention

There was a distinct theme which highlighted a few key things people believe are important for making a positive impact but are lacking. The point that surfaced repeatedly was the perception that there is an extensive lack of support available in Yellowknife. One comment even labeled it “real” support suggesting a façade of support that is not effective or appropriately geared toward the right people or challenges. We would draw you back to earlier statements about the issue of migration from smaller communities hoping to benefit from the abundant “supports.” But this is problematic if the support services that do exist are either not seen as beneficial or are not as available or accessible as some would think. Examples of support areas lacking would include:

- Treatment (mental health, addiction)
- Aftercare
- Access to resources
- Culturally specific
- Navigation

Another factor identified, which may speak somewhat to the perception or reality of a lack of, or ineffective support was a sense of a lack of collaboration among service providers. Participants stated they see them working in silos and that a bottleneck has developed, making it difficult and unreasonable to access them. A lack of or ineffective policies governing the system of care was another common thought. People seemed to feel that the system is disorganized and disjointed which can lead to greater animosity and even competition among services providers. This in turn can result in apathy and stagnation. The lack of action was another popular notion that arose during the roundtable.

Some event participants indicated they see a lack of education as an existing challenge. This was directed at education about the problem, the people experiencing homelessness including the roots or reasons for their circumstances, and education about best practices and solutions and action that can be taken. Tied to this was the notion that there is a lack of transparency about the reality of the situation and the efforts that are being made or not made and what service providers are or are not doing.

The final area brought out for this section could speak to most of these points. That is the lack of data. People are seeing that there is not a clear picture of the state of homelessness in Yellowknife or there is a lack of transparency which is hiding the actuality of the situation. Nevertheless, clear, accurate, thorough data seems to be missing and important to the community.

Future State (Success in Ten Years)

If all the plans and efforts put in place in Yellowknife to address these struggles are effective and have a positive impact, what would the community look like ten years from now? This question begins to tap in the hope and optimism people have and helps to ascertain a picture of what people would like to see and what a healthy Yellowknife would be like. What stands out is there is hope and a desire for change but that there is an expectation that all stakeholders must do their part and develop a united strategy based on what is best for the community, not for individual organizations or institutions.

Vibrant Yellowknife

Above all else, the most frequent comments related to a positive future state was around vibrancy. The community would be “thriving.” What does thriving mean? Probably the most stated words to describe this was that the community would be “happy” and “unified.” There would be a sense of empathy for all people. We would note for you a way to frame what empathy really means.

1. Being able to take other people’s perspective.
2. Staying out of judgement about them.
3. Recognizing internally, emotions (not necessarily situations) they are experiencing.
4. Being able to communicate the recognition.

Words explaining “being unified” like “community-centric” and “multicultural” were used. Community members would express a positive outlook about Yellowknife and be hopeful and trusting towards others regardless of race, culture, or socioeconomic background or standing.

People indicated they would see lively, productive public spaces with new buildings and businesses. There would be a dramatic reduction in crime. Tourism would be on the rise and developers, including not-for-profit ones, would exist and be active. More seniors would be retiring and there would be a greater number of intact families with less need for foster care. Several people noted that the Indigenous culture would be present and celebrated.

Homelessness and Community Health

Obviously, the dream is to have homelessness eliminated. However, people seem realistic in this section suggesting that although there would be far less people in all demographics experiencing it, it may not be completely gone. But the key is that it has made great progress in the direction of an end to the problem and is still moving in that direction. And in large part, that would happen due to an improved system of care and a robust portfolio of support services.

People identified that support would be more accessible, including government services. There would be an increase in Indigenous representation in the work force and leadership of the support system. One of the most stated comments was that there would be far more housing options and a greater level of unique types to accommodate the varying needs. This also included an increase in the number of landlords available to support services and all people seeking permanent homes. The allocation of resources would be efficient and effective and fair, focused on data and people-driven solutions.

To continue with the support perspective, people indicated that there would be a more streamlined referral process to access support. And probably most of all people mentioned the existence of an Indigenous led and run treatment centre to assist with rehabilitation needs. Additional things were identified describing a positive community from a support perspective.

- Work programs for both the housed and unhoused
- Options for those who still might not be in housing
 - Access to mail
 - More public facilities including washrooms and showers
 - Safety net options

- 24/7 outreach or access to assistance
- Aftercare for post-treatment support

These things could potentially be responsible for what was noted as an increase in the appropriate use of emergency services or a reduced strain due to issues related to the homeless. Additionally, when it comes to shelters, people suggested that in this state, they would be almost empty and unnecessary. Health outcomes would be improved.

All levels of government would be collaborating and working for one united purpose. It was suggested that in this state, with the other mentioned improvements, there would likely be less movement from smaller communities that would result in people becoming homeless in Yellowknife. But at the same time the community tax base and the population would be increasing.

Suggested Actions

We will again remind readers that the purpose of this section was to identify immediately actionable items that would move the community closer to the positive future state, keeping in mind that this cannot be done by defining “increased housing options” as the key focus. This is a North Star Goal. It is important to break this down into smaller steps that are actionable as soon as possible. It will be the responsibility of the community to take most of the items identified in this section, which would be identified as North Star goals, and work to whittle them down into smaller chunks. That said, the items noted here appear to be accurate assessments of the needs from our perspective.

In this section we will highlight the items completely based on the most mentioned to the less frequent statements.

Targeted Housing Policy

Without question, the most noted action item was around creating housing policy that would take measured and deliberate steps to identify accurately the types of housing needed and prioritize the creation of it. Specific types of housing mentioned as areas to explore were:

- Public housing
- Transitional housing
- Affordable housing
- Permanent Supportive Housing
- Market housing (increasing the number of landlords)

The next most popular suggestion was to increase and/or strengthen available support services. This would also include identification of what services are truly most essential. Sub-areas this touches on would include:

- Increased staffing to provide more effective staff to participant rations which improves positive outcomes.
- Training and hiring of more Indigenous staff.
- Housing with supports
- Greater access to diverse and flexible funding options
- Strengthening Housing First support
- Prevention and early intervention programs

- Employment programs
- Increase culturally appropriate treatment options
 - Trauma
 - Mental health
 - Substances/addiction
- Aftercare
- Training and hiring of more Indigenous staff
- Identify barriers to accessing support

System Guidance and Governance

Another highly mentioned action item, although a high-level item needing to be broken down, was increased government collaboration. This included municipal, federal, territorial and local Indigenous bodies. Connected to the importance of Indigenous involvement, the next most stated idea was to formulate an Indigenous and participant led advisory group.

It was also important for many to develop methods to better educate the community, service providers, emergency services about homelessness, trauma, and how we should view these issues.

There were also a few outlier suggestions that are still, in our opinion, important to mention.

- Increase safe accessible spaces for marginalized people.
- Address illicit drug distribution problem.
- Reduce conditions associated with accessing housing.
- Resolve the running water issue.
- Increase access to technology for marginalized or people experiencing homelessness.
- Increase shelter beds. This one is slightly controversial due to it also being mentioned during the event how best practice suggests that additional shelter space is not that answer and has been shown to only create space that will likely fill up also. But there are times when shelter space may be essential. We might suggest that another way to look at this is to consider how to improve existing shelters to be more housing and recovery focused with their operations.

Finally, an area that had only two mentions but what feels like a high priority if it can be determined how to break it down into actionable steps, is to obtain a community wide, unified commitment to take action in-part by understanding how emergent this situation truly is.

Recommendations and Conclusion

The TTA committed to utilize the experience and understanding of this sector while facilitating the roundtable event and completing this report and draw what we believe would be some key recommendations for the community to consider moving forward as you look to take practical action. Another concept that was heard during the event but not directly identified in the exercise feedback, was that people feel like there has been a lot of talk over the years that has not resulted in much change. Some remember being in similar meetings with the promise and hope of change but having things either continue with the status quo or seeing things worsen. This is likely why there is some sense of hopelessness or disbelief in the process.

Our hope is that you will be able to delineate essential steps and gain the will, understanding, and commitment to follow through. The word transparency was mentioned often. This is going to be necessary as you act. No community has everything work well. You will experience setbacks. But often what happens is when those setbacks are hidden or camouflaged for fear of backlash, you instead get distrust, disillusionment, and fear. Therefore, you must move forward with eyes wide open and prepared to see successes and opportunities to learn from things that did not go so well. But you must move forward. Do not let the fear of mistakes or bumps in road paralyze you from acting. “Imperfect action trumps perfect planning.” Your community will be more likely to get behind you if you are doing and being transparent about it. Being in the know helps people feel safe. And with safety being one of the primary reported concerns, that will be important.

Recommended Steps to Consider

1. You don’t know what you don’t know. From this point forward, it will be important to identify areas associated with homelessness in Yellowknife that are unclear and take steps to learn and understand them more fully. The concept of education that came up several times during the roundtable is important. **Assess which areas where you need additional knowledge and understanding** and invest in opportunities to obtain it. Identify what the **best practices** are across the country for addressing homelessness and then work to receive **education and training** on how they can and should be tailored to your community. Consider this from several levels.
 - a. General community population – Education for community members at large to have a better understanding of the roots of homelessness, trauma, and models for success.
 - b. Community leaders – Same as above but include education about the roles of community leaders in ending homelessness.
 - c. Service providers – Best practices in providing direct services. How to engage, house, and support individuals experiencing homelessness.
 - i. Mainstream support (emergency services, corrections, mental health and addiction)
 - ii. Support programs funded to provide direct services to people experiencing homelessness
 - d. Government – The role of government in funding, supporting and providing direct support. Collaborative efforts. Avoiding duplication of services and funding models that create these challenges.
2. Clearly **assess gaps in services** and support for your community. Which support options do you have? Is there any unnecessary duplication? What do we need to strengthen? What is missing? Collaboration will be the next recommendation; however, you can be the most collaborative community in the world, but if the people providing direct support to those experiencing homelessness are not equipped effectively or are limited, you will continue to have a revolving door in and out of homelessness as people become more ill, injured, and traumatized. **Properly review the effectiveness and impact of existing support options.** Do some programs need to be shifted in focus? Do you need to add others that are missing or more of some that are already in place to more effectively meet the demand?

3. **Establish a collaborative community.** In Yellowknife, there seems to be greater effort on the part of the varying levels of government to work together and support each other. This work must continue. It would be important to conduct a **system and services map**, including government, and NGO's to ensure you know where people are possibly working against each other, gaps in services, and how they can be improved.
4. As noted throughout the roundtable event, it is essential that there is a stable, **indigenous led, participant-driven advisory body** to guide the systemic work. As much as there needs to be a collaborative approach, **someone needs to be taking the lead on the systems approach.** This means that a leadership entity must have a capable and knowledgeable person at the helm ensuring that the systems machine is well-oiled and continuously working. However, based on the undeniable aspects of your community makeup, there must be **Indigenous leadership** and additional **Indigenous and lived experience involvement.** The voice of the people being served is a must. "We would have less meetings, and the meetings we do have would take less time, if we involved the people we are talking about in those meetings" (Peter Block). It would be beneficial to start a participant advisory group allowing for regular opportunities to glean from people experiencing homelessness or participating in the available programs and support what things are working and how efforts are being received and what they would recommend going forward.
5. Regardless of how amazing your support services might be or how smooth your systemic pathways are, if you do not have housing options, people are not moving towards recovery. But we understand this is a very challenging proposition. Housing in any community is difficult to obtain but your community has proven to be particularly challenging. But to our point earlier about the idea of action over trying to get all your ducks in a row first, effort must be made to at least **begin diligently exploring how the community can be creative in expanding the housing portfolio.** Explore **bringing landlords together** to foster and repair relationships as well as educate them about the value of a community wide effort in reducing homelessness. The State of Homelessness Report from 2016 highlights even the financial or economical benefits for a community by eliminating homelessness. It also states that for every \$10 spent on intense and appropriate supports, almost \$22 is "saved." When landlords understand this, it can make a big difference. But you should also be prepared and willing to be educated by landlords. They have valuable insight into why renting to this population is challenging for them and their rental business. Look for options and **funding to inject Permanent Supportive Housing options.** Identify money that can be prioritized toward both strengthening support services and housing development. Consider the role of a housing liaison. This is someone whose sole job is to focus on exploring and procuring housing options. They would lead the efforts with landlords and know how to educate developers and landlords on the benefits both to the community and them by providing options for housing the communities most vulnerable. This also is closely tied to the need for trained and quality support workers. Most of these people will require support in their housing. If this support is not provided properly, we end up with damaged properties, upset landlords and neighbors, and burned bridges.
6. Remove the competition factor. Even with support programs, there is often a sense of ownership and a protective nature regarding "their clients." There needs to be a thinking shift. People experiencing homelessness in Yellowknife need to be considered the community's clients or participants. This means that they eliminate competition for housing and support options and



instead cooperate with the coordinated access model and by-name list to ensure that those participants, out of the entire homeless population in Yellowknife, that require the housing resources the most, are given access first.

We highlighted earlier in this report that there is an obvious sense of commitment to the betterment of the community. People want to see improvements and they want to help. And there is a desperate need for the people experiencing homelessness to be seen as people and not a “problem” on the streets. Because they are people, it is essential that the action or approach taken does not become a service provided **to** these people, but instead occurring **with** them. But action must be taken, reviewed, adjusted, then implemented again. This must continue. You will not get it right tomorrow or even next month or next year. But if you are doing this with the right mindset, things will be getting better tomorrow, next month, and next year. But you must set things up so that you can learn from and measure the change in smaller, more realistic, and concrete steps. But measurement and data collection must occur.

The TTA is grateful for the opportunity we have had to assist Yellowknife in several capacities. We are always open and eager to help further. Please feel free to reach out if further support is required. Please let us know if there is anything regarding this report you require further explanation of.

Sincerely,

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