

Edmonton Homeless Commission

Mission

Eliminate
Homelessness
in Edmonton
within 10 Years

Overview

The Homeless Commission is the guardian of *A Place to Call Home* - Edmonton's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness and is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Plan.

Major Services & Activities

1. Engage the Aboriginal Community in finding solutions to homelessness.
2. Focus public attention on homelessness and enlist public support for the Plan.
3. Advocate for systemic changes, policy, and funding in support of the Plan.
4. Monitor, analyze, and report on progress in meeting Plan recommendations.
5. Steward the implementation and updating of the Plan.

Approved 2010 Operating Budget

On February 4, 2009, City Council endorsed *A Place to Call Home* - Edmonton's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness. The Homeless Commission was established to oversee the implementation of the Plan.

A 2010 Service Package was approved for \$400,000 which will establish the operating budget required to provide administrative support to the Homeless Commission.



Edmonton Homeless Commission

Immediate and Intermediate Outcomes and Measures

Outcome	Measure
People living on the street or in public places will be given the option of permanent, supported housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of supported housing units available• Street count of homeless persons• Rate of housing retention
Emergency shelters will be available in an emergency, but will not be used in lieu of permanent housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of shelter spaces• Number and frequency of shelter users
Transitional and long-term supportive housing will be available for those incapable of living independently.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of transitional and long-term supportive housing units
Prevent people from becoming chronically homeless.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Length of stay at shelters• Range of services available

Major Service Objectives

- A review of the provisions of the bylaw that established the Commission, including mandate and composition, will be completed as directed by Council.
- Undertake a review of progress achieved in meeting the goals, strategies and targets of the 10 Year Plan and report to Council and the public.
- Mobilize community members and volunteers in order to support successful integration of people who were previously homeless into the community.
- Work with the aboriginal community to develop the capacity of an Aboriginal agency or agencies to deliver Aboriginal specific services in support of the Housing First program.

Issues and Challenges

- The Commission will require adequate resources to fulfill its mandate. A grant from the Province and in-kind services enabled the Commission to operate in its first year without impact on the tax levy. However, it is a 10 Year Plan and on-going municipal funding is required for the Commission to oversee the implementation of the Plan.
- Government policies, practices and regulations impede the ability to meet the Plan's targets. For example, discharge policies need to be in place at institutions to ensure that people are not released into homelessness. Zoning provisions require modification to encourage the development of modestly sized housing units suitable for persons that were previously homeless.
- Significant progress has already been made to help people exit homelessness, but prevention programs are needed to 'close the front door into homelessness'.

Edmonton Homeless Commission

Service Package

Brought Forward as Directed by City Council / Committee

Funded

Homeless Commission

incremental (\$000)	2010				2011				2012			
	Exp	Rev	Net	FTEs	Exp	Rev	Net	FTEs	Exp	Rev	Net	FTEs
New Budget Annualization	400		400		(400)		(400)				-	-
Total	400	-	400	-	(400)	-	(400)	-	-	-	-	-

Description

On February 4, 2009 City Council endorsed A Place to Call Home - Edmonton's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness. The Plan charged City Council with responsibility for leading the effort to eliminate chronic homelessness in Edmonton. Council established the Homeless Commission to oversee the implementation of the Plan. This service package includes the administrative support to the volunteer Commission. The Commission will: engage the community in support of the plan; benchmark progress in meeting the Plan targets; influence key decision makers to support the Plan with funding and policy; and evaluate and modify the Plan based on research and changing conditions. This is a new service package; operating costs for the first year of the Commission were covered by a Provincial grant and in-kind services.

Justification

Without a Plan to End Homelessness, homelessness will continue to grow. For the past decade, every year, whether the economy was soaring or slumping, the number of people experiencing homelessness in our city has increased. Homelessness exacts a terrible toll on those caught in it's trap, medically, socially, psychologically, and economically. It also has a huge impact on our community, including associated costs of policing, emergency services and social programs. The Plan embraces the philosophy of Housing First. Housing First has proven successful in many cities at reducing the number of homeless and improving the lives of those housed. For example, Denver has seen an 11% reduction in overall homelessness and a 36% drop in the number of chronically homeless within three years of implementing their Plan. The city has also seen a dramatic decrease in panhandling. The 'Streets to Homes' program in Toronto reports that of the 1,800 people housed, 88% have remained in their homes and report a far better quality of life: alcohol and drug abuse has decreased, there is less use of emergency services and less panhandling.

Links to Strategic Goals & Departmental Outcomes

Ending homelessness will contribute to Council's goal of improving Edmonton's liveability and the related strategic goal in the MDP of complete, healthy and liveable communities. Homelessness is a concern of many Edmontonians. By integrating homes for the homeless in our neighbourhoods and providing the necessary support services, we will demonstrate that Edmonton is welcoming to all. A reduction of street homelessness will also improve perceptions of personal safety.