

Revisioing Coordinated Access

Fostering Indigenous Best Practices
Towards a Wholistic Systems
Approach to Homelessness

Indigenous Reaching Home (IRH)
Team - Social Planning Research
Council (SPRC) (2020)



Land Acknowledgement

The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness and the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton recognize that the City of Hamilton is located on the traditional territories of the Erie, Neutral, Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee, and Mississaugas. The land is covered by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, which was an agreement between the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabek to share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. It is further acknowledged that this land is covered by the Between the Lakes Purchase, 1792, between the Crown and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (Urban Indigenous Strategy, City of Hamilton, 2019).

Panelists

- Representing the Indigenous Reaching Home Team (2020) Social Planning Research Council
 - Victoria Bomberry
 - Cindy Sue Montana McCormack
- Representing the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (2020)
 - John Ecker
 - Anika Mifsud

Thank You

- We would like to acknowledge and give thanks to all the respondents and participants who shared their stories and expertise with us.
- We would also like to extend our gratitude to the Hamilton Aboriginal Community Advisory Board for directing the Social Planning Research Council of Hamilton to complete this work.
- Finally, we thank Aaron Segaert for his knowledge and consultation on this project.
- This report was funded by the Community Capacity and Innovation Funds of the Reaching Home - Indigenous Stream, Employment and Social Development Canada.

Presentation Overview

- Introduction to coordinated access, Indigenous homelessness and data sovereignty.
- Background on the Revisioning Coordinated Access project.
- Results and Recommendations .
- Question and Answer period.

Indigenous Homelessness, Coordinated Access, and Data Sovereignty

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Indigenous Homelessness in Canada

- Indigenous people's experiences and risks of homelessness are distinct from the experiences of homelessness of the general Canadian population
- A helpful framework to understand Indigenous experiences of homelessness is *The 12 Dimensions of Indigenous Homelessness* (Thistle, 2017).
- Indigenous peoples are dramatically overrepresented among individuals and families experiencing homelessness in Canada.

Coordinated Access

Reaching Home definition:

- **Process** by which individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness or at-risk of homelessness are directed to a **community-level access point** where trained workers use a **common assessment tool** to evaluate the individual or family's depth of need, **prioritize** them for housing support services and then **match** them to available housing focused interventions.

Put another way:

- A way to ensure that individuals and families entering the homeless-serving sector **do not slip between the cracks**. Ensures that when an individual or family accesses a service, it is appropriate for them and their needs.

Coordinated Access

- Reaching Home requirements:
 - All Designated Communities are to have a coordinated access system in place by March 31, 2022.
 - Indigenous Community Entities do not have a specified timeframe to implement coordinated access
 - Communities that receive funding from both the Designated Communities and Indigenous Homelessness streams must collaborate on the design and use of coordinated access in their community.

Coordinated Access

- Six main features of coordinated access
 - A centralized database that collects and displays real-time data
 - A clear access point(s) of entry
 - Common assessment tools and standardized protocols
 - A prioritization process
 - A matching and referral process
 - Adequate resources



Data Sovereignty

- Important component of coordinated access is collecting data on the profiles and needs of individuals and families experiencing homelessness.
- Data Sovereignty
 - Management of information in a manner that is legally consistent with the practice and policies in the nation or state that it is located (Kukutai & Taylor, 2016)
 - Addresses legal and ethical aspects of the storage, use, ownership, consent, practicality and intellectual property of Indigenous data (Kukutai & Taylor, 2016)
 - For Indigenous communities, all data that is produced is understood to be controlled by the Indigenous communities involved, even if outside researchers/officials have gathered and compiled the data (Carroll, Rodriguez-Lonebear, & Martinez, 2019)

Data Sovereignty

- Data sovereignty has a critical role in informing how Indigenous peoples' make decisions for self-governance and self-determination.
- One perspective on achieving data sovereignty in Canada is through the integration of the Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP)© principles.
 - **Ownership** – Relationship of First Nations to their cultural knowledge, data, and information.
 - **Control** – First Nations are within their rights in seeking to control all aspects of data and data management processes.
 - **Access** – First Nations must have access to information and data about themselves and their communities regardless of where it is held
 - **Possession** – Physical control of data. Possession is the mechanism by which ownership can be asserted.

Appendices

- For more specific information, please read the appendices in the report:
 - Indigenous Homelessness Literature Summary
 - Coordinated Access Literature Summary
 - Data Sovereignty Literature Summary
 - Creating an Indigenous Homelessness Database in Hamilton
 - Survey of Reaching Home – Indigenous Community Entities

Background on the Revisioning Coordinated Access Project

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Why Was There a Need for the Project?

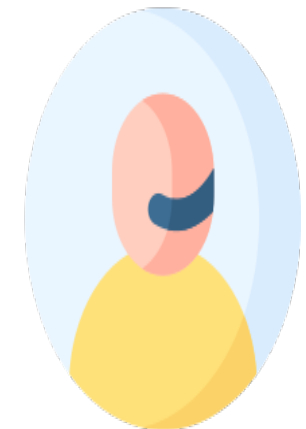
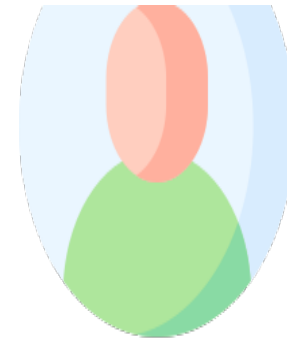
- It is not known how coordinated access systems will address the unique strengths and needs of Indigenous individuals and families experiencing or at-risk of homelessness.
- It is important to examine the application of western-based policies on Indigenous people since dominant colonial narratives and processes work to create a system in which Indigenous peoples are over-represented in homeless populations.

Where Was the Data for this Report Collected?

- The work was grounded in community and initiated by the Indigenous Reaching Home (IRH) team at the Social Planning Research Council (SPRC) in Hamilton.
 - Community consultations prior to the development of this project.
 - Advocacy-focused, grassroots level approach.
 - Input from local community members need to shape how policies are created, rather than having to adapt to policy directives.
- The methodology was co-developed by members from the IRH team of the SPRC in Hamilton and the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (COH)

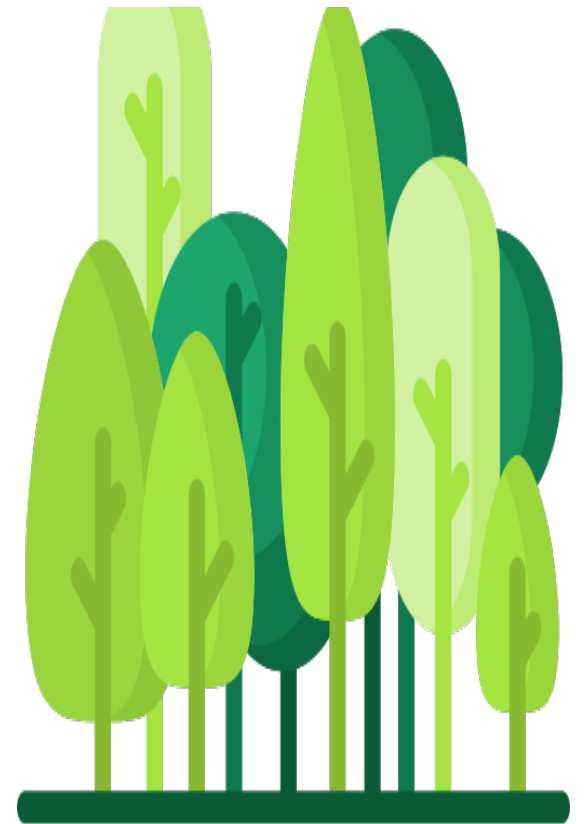
Where Was the Data for this Report Collected?

- A strong focus on relationship building between the IRH team of the SPRC in Hamilton and the COH team
- IRH team invited us into the community and shared the history of the community
- Tours of Indigenous organizations and meetings with staff from each agency
- Lunch breaks
- Attending community events prior to the beginning of the project and during



Where was the Data for this Report Collected?

- National Survey of Reaching Home – Indigenous Community Entities and Community Advisory Boards.
- Key informant interviews with senior leadership of local Indigenous agencies in Hamilton.
- Focus groups with Hamilton community members.
- Jurisdictional scan key informant interviews with Indigenous homelessness experts from across Canada.
- Community consultations (open forums) with members of Hamilton's Indigenous community.
- Data management consultation outlining different approaches communities can take to store and analyze data (Appendix in the final report!)



Community-Driven Data Collection



- Office of Research Ethics and Aboriginal Research Ethics Advisory Group – York University
- Focus groups and community consultations were led by Indigenous team members
- Focus groups and community consultations took place in Indigenous organizations
- Food, gifts, and honoraria provided for all in-person data collection (Focus groups and community consultations)

How Was the Data Analysed?

- Indigenous Reaching Home team members led the data analysis. It was grounded in their knowledge, values, and traditions. Followed a systematic structure, but deviated from western-based analysis techniques.
 - Team members reviewed the transcripts and community consultation notes and made comments and reflections based upon their interpretation of the data.
 - These comments and reflections were then shared with the larger team in a group setting over several sessions.
 - The codes were refined during these group discussions, and themes were created.

How Was the Report Written?



- Written collaboratively with IRH team and COH team
- Wording is very important
 - Discussion around wholistic compared to holistic
- Writing for different audiences
 - Reaching Home Indigenous Stream Community Entities
 - Indigenous community leaders across Canada
 - Non-Indigenous homelessness service providers and policy makers in Canada

Implementation of Coordinated Access: Recommendations

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Implementation of Coordinated Access (CA)

- Accessing Coordinated Access
 - An effective communication strategy, including in-person outreach, posters in travel hubs, and posts on social media, is necessary to ensure that coordinated access systems are accessible by all.
 - Indigenous access point(s) are critical.
 - In mainstream coordinated access systems, an Indigenous agency/agencies should be included as an access point
 - Indigenous representation among staff of mainstream agencies needs to be increased so that Indigenous individuals and families who access these agencies can speak with an Indigenous service provider.

Implementation of Coordinated Access

- Accessing Coordinated Access
 - Indigenous outreach workers should be hired to collaborate with mainstream services to ensure that coordinated access systems are accessible by Indigenous individuals and families.
 - In-person access is preferred, but multiple methods for access are necessary (e.g., telephone, video calls, and online platforms).
 - Coordinated access systems need to take an intersectional, culturally safe, and trauma-informed lens in implementation.

Implementation of Coordinated Access

- Intake & Assessment
 - Needs to be completed based upon the pace of the client and strict time frames for the completion of an intake should not be imposed.
 - Trust and rapport are essential.
 - Current assessment tools are framed in deficit-based, western perspectives and represent just one part of the assessment process.
 - A strengths-based assessment tool created specifically for Indigenous individuals and families should be developed.
 - As part of an intake procedure, clear information on the confidentiality of the data should be made available for clients.

Implementation of Coordinated Access

- Prioritization
 - Prioritization strategies need to be based upon Indigenous values and traditions.
 - For communities that have a separate list for Indigenous people experiencing homelessness, the Indigenous Community Entity, in collaboration with the Indigenous Community Advisory Board, must be given authority to determine prioritization procedures.
 - For communities that choose to maintain a single priority list, Indigenous individuals and families should be prioritized and the Indigenous community must be given authority to determine their own prioritization procedures.

Implementation of Coordinated Access

- Matching & Referral
 - There needs to be housing available for coordinated access to work.
 - Housing options should meet the needs of prioritized groups.
 - Indigenous housing needs to be available for matching.



Implementation of Coordinated Access

- Matching & Referral
 - Housing for Indigenous people needs to be created and federal, provincial, and municipal funds need to be provided.
 - From the federal perspective, this includes the release of the National Urban, Rural, and Remote Indigenous Housing Strategy.
 - Cultural competency training should be required in all mainstream organizations.



Data Collection & Data Sovereignty: Recommendations

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Data Collection & Data Sovereignty

- Racism impacts the time it takes Indigenous people to get housed, thus data reporting requirements should be flexible.
 - Federally mandated benchmarks and data requirements should be co-created with national Indigenous homelessness experts.
 - In collaboration with national Indigenous homelessness experts, Reaching Home should co-create opportunities for the collection of qualitative data.
- Feedback mechanisms should be put in place at regular intervals to allow for clients, front-line service providers, and program managers to share their experiences with coordinated access.

Data Collection & Data Sovereignty

- Data sovereignty needs to be further clarified as it relates to coordinated access.
- Indigenous agencies need to be included in data governance committees.
- Indigenous agencies have the right to decide how their data is stored and analysed.
 - Indigenous Community Entities should be given the autonomy to choose the data management system that fits their needs and provides adequate, sustainable funding to manage their coordinated access system and analyse their data

Engaging with the Federal Government and Designated Community Entities: Recommendations

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Engaging with the Federal Government

- Need for clear directives from the federal government on Indigenous engagement and coordinated access.
 - Indigenous partners are often brought to the table, but only as a means for mainstream organizations to “check the box” for engagement.
 - More formalized procedures for engagement between Designated Community Entities and Indigenous Community Entities are required.
- Adequate funding for Indigenous agencies to rollout coordinated access is required.
 - Indigenous communities need to be equitable funded to rollout a coordinated access system and increased Indigenous housing stock

Engaging with Designated Communities

- Early and persistent engagement between Indigenous Community Entities and Designated Community Entities is required.
 - Enact the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada when developing Coordinate Access systems.
 - As advised by local Indigenous community leaders, engage in ceremony when developing coordinated access systems.
 - Engage with local Indigenous experts to contextualize local issues impacting the Indigenous community.

Engaging with Designated Communities

- Early and persistent engagement between Indigenous Community Entities and Designated Community Entities is required.
 - Acknowledge and address the racism Indigenous people face in the community.
 - In order to ensure that no Indigenous person or family falls through cracks created by the lack of system integration, representation from various sectors should be part of coordinated access tables.

Question & Answers

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