

---

---

**Review and Analysis of Funding and Staffing  
at Drop-in Centres  
City of Toronto**

---

---

**Final Report  
January 24, 2008**

**Connelly Consulting Services**

In association with

**Joyce Potter, Public Policy Consulting  
Deborah Hierlihy, Oriole Research and Design Inc.**



# Table of Contents

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1.0 INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>14</b>
1.1 Background .....	14
1.2 Project Summary .....	15
1.3 Methodology and Information Sources .....	15
1.4 Limitations .....	17
1.4.1 Missing Data .....	17
1.4.2 Inaccuracies .....	17
1.4.3 Inconsistency of Interpretation .....	17
1.4.4 Data Validity .....	18
1.5 Structure of the Report .....	18
<b>2.0 ANALYZING CURRENT FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS AND SERVICE STANDARDS.....</b>	<b>20</b>
2.1 Data Sources.....	20
2.1.1 Data from Drop-in Sector Scan .....	20
2.1.2 Review of Other Jurisdictions.....	20
2.1.3 Funder Interviews.....	20
2.2 Summary of Cost Analysis.....	20
2.2.1 Findings .....	21
2.2.2 Cost Drivers .....	21
2.2.3 Administrative Costs .....	22
2.2.4 Staffing Levels .....	23
2.2.5 Summary Comment.....	23
2.3 Service Standards .....	24
2.3.1 United Kingdom Service Audit Partnership .....	24
2.3.2 United Kingdom Homeless Link Quality Toolkit .....	25
2.3.3 New York City Department of Homeless Services .....	26
2.3.4 British Columbia Drop-in Centres.....	27
2.3.5 City of Ottawa Day Programs.....	28
2.3.6 City of Ottawa Shelter Services .....	30

2.3.7 City of Toronto Hostel Services.....	31
2.3.8 Sector Perspectives on Service Standards .....	32
2.3.9 Summary of Service Standards .....	32
2.4 Results of Funder Interviews .....	33
2.5 Summary Considerations .....	38
<b>3.0 REDUCING GRANT ADMINISTRATION ACTIVITIES.....</b>	<b>39</b>
3.1. Information Sources and Analysis .....	39
3.2 Summary of Grant Administration for Toronto Drop-in Services .....	39
3.3 Lessons from Elsewhere .....	40
3.3.1. City of Ottawa .....	40
3.3.2 British Columbia .....	42
3.3.3 City of Toronto Community Service Partnerships Program.....	43
3.3.4 City of Toronto Hostel Services.....	44
3.3.5 United Way of Greater Toronto .....	45
3.4 Pros and Cons of Multi-Year Funding.....	46
3.5 Considerations for Change .....	47
<b>4.0 REVIEW OF PEOPLE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES.....</b>	<b>51</b>
4.1 Overview of Existing Documentation and Data Sources.....	51
4.1.1 Relevant Documentation.....	51
4.1.2 City Staff Interviews with Executive Directors and Managers .....	52
4.1.3 Drop-in Sector Consultation .....	53
4.1.4 Consultants' Interviews with Senior Management in Drop-in Centres	53
4.1.5 Learning from other Jurisdictions .....	53
4.2 Findings .....	54
4.2.1 Recruitment and Selection of Staff.....	55
4.2.2 Retention of Staff .....	57
4.2.3 Compensation .....	59
4.2.4 Training .....	60
4.2.5 Performance Planning and Management.....	62
4.2.6 Use of Relief Workers .....	63
4.2.7 Legislative Compliance .....	64

4.2.8 Staff to Client Ratios/Staffing Levels .....	65
4.2.9 Use of Volunteers and Peer Workers .....	66
4.2.10 Activities Outside of Drop-in Hours .....	69
4.3 Summary Considerations .....	70
<b>5.0 SERVICE LEVEL ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>72</b>
5.1 Approach .....	72
5.2 Lessons from Other Jurisdictions.....	73
5.3 Analysis of Four Staffing Ratios.....	74
5.3.1 Findings .....	74
5.3.2 Sector Perspectives on Assessing Service and Staffing Levels.....	77
5.4 Analysis of Housing-Related Activities.....	79
5.5 Summary Considerations .....	81
<b>6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS .....</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>APPENDIX ONE .....</b>	<b>86</b>
Summary Notes Drop-In Services Sector Consultation on People Management Strategies September 25, 2007 .....	86
<b>APPENDIX TWO .....</b>	<b>96</b>
Summary Notes Drop-In Services Sector Consultation on Funding and Staffing Issues November 14, 2007 .....	96
<b>APPENDIX THREE.....</b>	<b>105</b>
Key Informant Interviews Among Funders of Drop-in Services .....	105
<b>APPENDIX FOUR.....</b>	<b>106</b>
Most Significant Staffing Pressures. Summary Results from City Interviews with Drop-in Sector Executive Directors and Managers. Winter 2006/2007. Responses from 34 Drop-In Centres, Grouped by Size of Operating Budget . .....	106
<b>APPENDIX FIVE.....</b>	<b>109</b>
Qualifications of Staff (Skills and Competencies). Summary Results from City Interviews with Drop-in Sector Executive Directors and Managers. Winter 2006/2007. Responses from 34 Drop-In Centres, Grouped by Size of Operating Budget .....	109

<b>APPENDIX SIX</b> .....	<b>111</b>
Summary of Staff Training. Responses from 29 Drop-in Centres, Grouped by Size of Operating Budget.....	111
<b>APPENDIX SEVEN</b> .....	<b>112</b>
Benefits and Pressures of Employing Relief Staff. Summary Results from City Interviews with Drop-in Sector Executive Directors and Managers. Winter 2006/2007. Responses from 34 Drop-In Centres, Grouped by Size of Operating Budget .	112
<b>APPENDIX EIGHT</b> .....	<b>114</b>
Summary of Activities of Drop-in Staff When Centre Is Not Open. Summary Results from City Interviews with Drop-in Sector Executive Directors and Managers. Winter 2006/2007. Responses from 34 Drop-In Centres, Grouped by Size of Operating Budget	114

**LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1: Cost Influences in Drop-in Centre Operations.....	22
Table 2: UK’s Homeless Link. 14 Areas of Inquiry to Assess Core Organizational Standards .....	25
Table 3: Sample Contents of Service Standards From City of Ottawa Shelter Services.....	30
Table 4: Key Informant Interviews with Funders (Summary of Responses).....	35
Table 5: Principles to Guide Funding Administration.....	48
Table 6: Interview Data Grouped by Size of Operating Budget.....	53
Table 7: Selected Characteristics of Drop-ins at Four Staffing Levels .....	75

## **Executive Summary**

This report is part of the third phase of the City of Toronto's Drop-In Sector Review. It is intended to be one of several initiatives to assist the City in determining policy direction related to funding drop-in services. The overall goal of this project was to establish the cost of delivering drop-in services and to provide options to the City for how funding of drop-in centres can be best aligned to meet the Streets to Homes policy direction. This report brings together the results of extensive analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, two sector consultations and three interim reports.

The specific objectives which guided this research project are summarized as follows:

1. Analyse current funding arrangements and identify options for funding drop-in services to provide basic and enhanced services at drop-in centres.
2. Identify options to reduce grant administration activities for the City and agency staff while complying with all program requirements and estimate benefits of these options.
3. Review existing human resource strategies and people management practices to identify how they support the provision of basic services and enhanced services at drop-in centres.
4. Identify the level of support that can reasonably be offered client/members of drop-in services at different staff to client ratios and the cost of these services.

## **Methodology and Data Sources**

The methodology for this project included a review of existing data and information; interviews with key informants; assessment of comparable jurisdictions; consultations with stakeholders in the drop-in services sector; liaison and consultation with city staff; analysis; and report-writing.

The City of Toronto provided key qualitative and quantitative data for this project. Information collected through interviews and an on-line survey as part of the *Scan of Toronto Drop-In Services* included data on funding, funding sources, operating budgets, opening hours, staffing levels and positions, and volunteer involvement.

Interviews conducted by City staff with executive directors and managers of Toronto drop-in centres provided observations about service delivery and pressures facing the sector. Follow-up interviews with a small number of management staff were conducted by the project consultants. The purpose of these interviews was to seek further clarification of themes raised during the sector consultation on human resource issues.

Key informant interviews conducted by the consultants along with a document review were vehicles for obtaining information about comparable services in other jurisdictions.

Two consultation meetings were held during this project with representatives from Toronto drop-in centres. A half-day consultation focussed on people management strategies and a full-day consultation explored the findings of this research related to the cost analysis, lessons from other jurisdictions, service standards, and service levels.

## **Limitations**

There were limitations in the data available for this research that affected the cost and service level analyses and the conclusions which could be drawn from the research. These limitations include missing data, inaccuracies in the data set, inconsistent interpretation of particular variables by survey respondents, and the absence of suitable indicators to reliably assess service costs, staff to client ratios, and service levels.

## **Selected Findings**

Following are findings from the key themes explored during this project: cost analysis, funding arrangements, service standards, people management strategies and service level analysis.

### **1. Cost Analysis**

Using data from 37 drop-in centres, the cost analysis considered four factors: direct staff costs, project expenses, administrative costs, and building costs for drop-in centres of varying sizes and funding sources. The analysis also included calculating the total cost per hour of operations and the cost to the City per hour of operations. The cost per participant and the cost per meal served were also considered for agencies offering varying numbers of basic services. Overall, very few patterns were observed in the data, and the findings from the cost analysis are inconclusive. The following are results of the cost analysis.

- No correlation was found between the size of drop-in centre budget and the percentage of the budget funded by the City.
- Staff costs as a percentage of total budget appear reasonably consistent across the data set regardless of total budget size with median staff costs ranging between 55 percent and 65 percent of total budgets.
- While definitions of what constitutes “administrative costs” vary between agencies and funders, the data showed that the average and median administrative cost of drop-in centres in the data set ranged between 5 percent and 12 percent of the total budget.

- Median building costs appear to rise consistently with the overall size of a drop-in centre's budget, which is logical if the assumption is that larger organizations are offering services to a larger number of client/members.
- No significant correlation was identified between the cost per person of providing basic or enhanced services and any other measure, including total budget, percentage of budget supplied by the City, number of services provided, number of hours of service per week, or any of the demographic categories such as age or housing status of the participants.

Concerns were raised during the sector consultation about the validity and usefulness of the findings of the cost analysis. The challenge that remains for the City and the drop-in sector is to identify measures for describing services and the associated costs. This is a critical step in developing a strong case for adequate and sustained funding for drop-in centres.

## **2. Funding Arrangements**

The key informant interviews conducted as part of this project served as a reminder that there are few jurisdictions with comparable funding arrangements to those in Toronto. Among those jurisdictions that may be most comparable to Toronto, none have implemented a funding model that is tied to the cost of specific services in the drop-in sector. Thus, while some lessons may be learned from other areas, to a large extent the City of Toronto is charting its own course in designing and implementing an improved method of funding drop-in services. The importance of the City's core funding is evident from interviews with other funders, most of whom offer funding only for specific projects and not for core operations.

The opportunity for multi-year funding for drop-in sectors was explored as an option for reducing grant administration activities of the City and other funders. Four major advantages of multi-year funding are identified.

1. Multi-year funding provides stability for drop-in agencies that allows them to do long-term planning and enter into longer-term commitments for staff, for major purchases or significant operating expenses, such as major repairs.
2. From the perspective of funders, multi-year funding enables longer-term, more extensive projects to be funded on an on-going basis.
3. Savings in administrative time can occur, if multi-year funding results in less onerous application and reporting processes in the "off" years, and can mean less repetition of activities for staff of both funders and agencies.
4. Staff time savings can mean both funders and agencies have more time to devote to achieving effective program results and focusing on evaluation and monitoring of outcomes and impacts.

Key disadvantages of multi-year funding are summarized as follows.

1. With fixed budgets, the on-going commitment of funds to specific drop-in centres means less funding is available to respond to new initiatives or changing priorities.
2. From the perspective of funders, there is the potential for less control over service delivery results and some potential for “service drift” where agencies funded for specific programs move that funding towards other services that may not be the funder’s priority.
3. Many funders, including municipal governments, are unable to commit funds from future budgets so that any multi-year funding agreement must be clear that the funding is conditional upon overall approval of the budget in future years.
4. Multi-year funding may make it more difficult to address situations where agencies experience organizational or service limitations and are unable to meet funder objectives and priorities.

The examination of funding arrangements and grant administration activities raised a number of issues for future consideration by the City of Toronto. These include:

- Considering using a purchase of service agreement
- Specifying the drop-in services that must be provided in order to be funded through the drop-in services partnership program
- Using external advisory panels to assist with the selection of agencies to be funded
- Moving to multi-year funding based on a risk assessment of agencies
- Conducting in-depth site visits as a component of an initial assessment of agencies and on-going monitoring of services
- Reducing application and reporting requirements in “off-years” and considering reduced reporting requirements for agencies receiving very small grant amounts
- Considering other funding options for agencies not providing services specified for drop-in centres.

### **3. Service Standards**

Use of service standards for drop-in centres does not appear to be the norm in most jurisdictions. A review of other areas and sectors, however, uncovered several excellent models of service standards. The examples of standards provided in this report are ones that were created through extensive involvement of the community and a clear focus on client service. They have rigorous quality assurance processes associated with them to assess implementation in a way that promotes continuous improvement. They have many components that could be readily adapted to Toronto’s drop-in centre environment.

#### **4. People Management Strategies**

The top-of-mind concerns for drop-in centre management largely relate to the following themes: recruitment, selection, and retention of staff; compensation and benefits; training, performance planning and supervision; and the availability of relief workers. The report contributes to an enhanced understanding of the specific human resources pressures facing the drop-in sector and provides examples of current practices in people management. Dozens of ideas for increased sector collaboration are noted, as are ideas for increased collaboration between the City and the drop-in sector. Key opportunities for City-sector collaboration include:

- Sharing the findings and ideas contained in this report
- Seeking to widely distribute the *Toronto Drop-in Network Good Practices Toolkit* and encourage drop-in centres to make use of the resources
- Developing more simplified application and reporting processes for drop-in centres applying for and receiving City funds and considering online tools for data collection
- Continuing to support the Toronto Drop-in Network as a vehicle for coordinating training and some human resource activities
- Facilitating the development and training of a pool of relief workers
- Supporting the funding of drop-in centres to improve staff salary and benefits packages and make them more competitive within the community services sector
- Exploring the feasibility of more precise data collection on staff to client ratios, with a particular focus on the ratio of staff (and volunteers) to clients required to ensure safe operation of drop-in centres and minimum and maximum staffing levels
- Assessing the feasibility of developing planning tools to assist drop-in centres in determining their human resource needs.

The Toronto Drop-in Network is recognized as a vehicle for furthering the development of the drop-in sector and helping to spearhead some of the initiatives identified through this research.

#### **5. Service Level Analysis**

The analysis of service levels was undertaken in an attempt to assess the impact of different staffing levels on the types of activities that can be undertaken in Toronto's drop-in centres. Using data from 23 centres, four groupings were identified based on a calculation of staff to client ratios, with centres with a staff to client ratio of 1:4 to 1:12 at one end of the spectrum and centres with a ratio of 1:66 or more at the other end.

Drop-in centres in all four categories reported that they provide a safe space for client/members to meet and where participants can discuss personal challenges. Further, the majority of centres reported offering opportunities for participant involvement in running the drop-in. No consistent provision of *basic* services,

however, was found among the centres. Basic services refer to meals, showers, laundry, phone and an address for receiving mail.

With respect to *enhanced* services, such as housing supports, access to health and addictions services, case management, employment supports and more, the data compiled for this analysis suggest that centres with a staff to client ratio in the 1:12 category provide a greater variety of enhanced services than do drop-in centres with staff to client ratios in the vicinity of 1:66 or more. Also, a greater proportion of drop-in centres operating with a staff to client ratio around 1:12 were providing at least some enhanced services as compared to centres at the other end of the staffing spectrum.

There is some evidence to suggest that drop-in centres operating with ratios in the 1:12 and 1:13 to 1:30 categories are more likely to have staff positions that include addictions workers, housing workers, case workers, support workers and harm reduction workers. There are, however, examples of drop-in centres in the 1:66 category with housing workers and case management services available.

Participants at the sector consultation noted that at lower staffing levels referrals can be made, but that sufficient time is needed. Similarly services can be enhanced through partnerships, but these take time to develop and manage. On a practical note, the number and needs of client/members can vary from day to day and week to week: these variations have an impact on what services can be offered at any one time.

A starting point in thinking about service levels is to define how many staff are needed to provide basic services, manage the floor, and ensure a safe environment. From this base, additional services can be built in along with the required staffing.

Some participants felt that using staff to client ratios as a way to determine service levels provides some insight into the issue. The concept of staff to client ratios appeared to be most relevant for assessing the number of staff needed on the floor at any given moment to ensure a safe environment. It would reflect the minimum level of staff required for a maximum number of client/members.

Use of staff to client ratios, however, does not reflect the impact of having access to specialized staff delivering enhanced services. Higher staffing levels are required to address complex issues among client/members. Further, staff to client ratios are not a vehicle for looking at the role that volunteers play in the operation of centre or the impact of community development and member leadership in drop-in centres.

Service levels for housing related activities such as assisting clients find and retain housing were reported to be affected by both external and internal factors. Among the external factors are the lack of affordable or appropriate housing and

a lack of supportive housing or support services. Internal factors included staffing and funding constraints. Other barriers to assisting clients include resistance on the part of clients, often due to mental health or addictions issues, as well as a bias against homeless clients in the community and among landlords.

### **Summary Remarks**

The drop-in sector is a critical component of the City of Toronto's response to homelessness and plays a key role in fulfilling Council's direction to find permanent housing solutions and to help people retain their housing. For each \$1.00 expended from City funds for drop-in services, \$5.00 in total services is made available to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, due to contributions from other funders. Over and above the budgets of these drop-in centres is the role played by countless volunteers who supplement the services of paid staff. For the centres included in this study, the total paid staff of 140 full-time equivalents (FTEs) was supplemented by the equivalent of 96 volunteer FTEs. Again, the power of a dollar in City funding is magnified by the extensive use of volunteers in the drop-in sector.

The major purpose of this study was to establish the cost of delivering drop-in services and provide options to the City for how its ongoing funding of drop-in services can best be aligned to meet the Streets to Homes policy direction. Although the cost analysis was inconclusive, there are some conclusions that can be reached from having undertaken this project.

First, it is apparent that the City of Toronto is unique in its approach to designing and implementing an improved method of funding drop-in services. None of the other jurisdictions that were contacted had undertaken a rigorous cost analysis that would lead them to fund drop-in services according to specified formulas based on the costs of delivering services.

Second, the drop-in sector is extremely diverse and diversity in service is an appropriate response to the needs of the client group being served. While some standardization may assist in ensuring City priorities are met and that clients receive appropriate services, it is important to retain the distinctiveness and range of services provided by the community's drop-in centres.

Third, there may be an opportunity to set cost standards for some components of drop-in budgets. For example, there was some commonality in responses of the sector to necessary levels of administrative costs – in the range of 15 to 25 percent of overall budget, depending on how administration costs are defined. Similarly, minimum staff to client levels of 1:20 or 1:25 received a nod from many sector participants. Clearly, however, if such cost standards were to be proposed, there would be a need to reach, in consultation with the sector, an agreement about how such costs are to be defined and measured.

In the area of grant administration the most significant idea for further consideration is multi-year funding. This option has the potential to offer meaningful benefits to drop-in centres through enhanced stability, increased capacity for long-term staffing and funding commitments and a reduction in administrative costs.

In the area of human resource management, numerous ideas for enhanced sector collaboration were raised during this review. Many of these proposals could assist the drop-in sector in dealing with the crucial areas of recruiting and retaining staff, training and development and dealing with job pressures leading to burn-out.

## 1.0 Introduction

This is the final report of a five-month project undertaken by Connelly Consulting services in association with Joyce Potter, Public Policy Consulting and Oriole Research and Design Inc. to review and analyze data collected as part of the City of Toronto's review of drop-in sector services.

This report brings together the results of extensive analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, two sector consultations and three interim reports. This research was commissioned by the City of Toronto in July 2007 as a result of a *Request for Proposals* issued on June 7, 2007.

## 1.1 Background

The City of Toronto Council adopted the *Streets to Homes* report in February, 2005 to focus efforts of the City and its community partners on helping homeless people move off the street into permanent homes and to help them keep their housing. Drop-in services play a critical role in implementing this policy direction, offering day time shelter and access points for people who live outside and increased stability in life to those at risk of homelessness. There are fifty drop-in centres known to be offering services for marginalized individuals in the City of Toronto. Many of these centres are part of the Toronto Drop-in Network (TDIN).

Basic services at drop-in centres offer essential daily living support (meals, showers, laundry facilities) and a way for people living on the street to stay connected (offering telephones, mail address and a safe and supportive environment). Enhanced drop-in services include housing search and support, various forms of financial-related supports, employment opportunities, health care and legal services.

The City's review of the drop-in sector has four distinct phases:

1. A literature review to determine best practices in drop-in services;
2. An environmental scan of the drop-in services provided in Toronto, including focus groups and interviews with client/members and staff at drop-in centres;
3. Development and pilot testing of service delivery practices; and
4. Development of a City approach to funding drop-in services.

This report and the research behind it are part of the third phase of the drop-in services sector review. This project builds on the information gathered through the literature review and the sector scan. It is intended to be one of several initiatives to assist the City in determining policy direction related to funding drop-in services in the future.

## 1.2 Project Summary

The overall goal of this project was to establish the cost of delivering drop-in services and provide options to the City for how its ongoing funding of drop-in services can best be aligned to meet the Streets to Homes policy direction.

The total budget from the City in grants to drop-in centres is \$2 million in 2008. The challenge to the City and to the community is to ensure the most effective and directed expenditure of these funds in order to best serve the needs of homeless individuals and families.

The approach to this research was to focus on specific avenues for addressing cost pressures. An analysis of current funding was undertaken to assess costs and further understanding of the resources required to provide basic and enhanced services under various conditions. A review of the City's grant administration process considered ways to reduce administrative costs for the City and for drop-in centres, while providing greater stability for organizations offering drop-in services. As staffing represents a major portion of costs for individual drop-in centres, an assessment of human resources practices offered the opportunity to identify ways to optimize service provision. An analysis of service levels focussed on identifying what kinds of activities can be undertaken at different staffing levels.

The specific objectives which guided this research project are summarized as follows:<sup>1</sup>

1. Analyse current funding arrangements and identify options for funding drop-in services to provide basic and enhanced services at drop-in centres.
2. Identify options to reduce grant administration activities for the City and agency staff while complying with all program requirements and estimate benefits of these options.
3. Review existing human resource strategies and people management practices to identify how they support the provision of basic services and enhanced services at drop-in centres.
4. Identify the level of support that can reasonably be offered client/members of drop-in services at different staff to client ratios and the cost of these services.

## 1.3 Methodology and Information Sources

The methodology for this project included the following core activities:

- Review of existing data and information

---

<sup>1</sup> As stated in Request for Proposal No. 9155-07-7071 for *Review and Analysis of Funding and Staffing at Drop-in Centres*, issued by the City of Toronto, June 7, 2007.

- Interviews with key informants
- Assessment of comparable jurisdictions
- Consultations with stakeholders in the drop-in services sector
- Liaison and consultation with City staff
- Analysis and report-writing.

The key data sources for this project were:

***Scan of Toronto Drop-in Services.*** The City collected information through interviews and an on-line survey and compiled it into several data files. The scan included information pertaining to funding, funding sources, operating budgets, opening hours, staffing levels and positions, and extent of volunteer involvement.

***Executive Directors and Managers of Drop-in Centres in Toronto.*** Through interviews conducted early in 2007, City staff obtained observations about service delivery and pressures facing the drop-in services sector.

Follow-up interviews with a small number of executive directors and managers were conducted by the project consultants. The purpose of these interviews was to seek further clarification of themes raised during the September sector consultation meeting on human resources issues.

***Existing Documentation.*** A number of documents pertaining to the drop-in sector and other human services organizations in Toronto were available for use during this project. They included:

- *The Drop-in Services Sector Literature Review of Good Practices*
- *The Toronto Drop-in Network Good Practices Guidebook*
- *Cracks in the Foundation*
- *On the Front Lines*

***Information about drop-in services in other jurisdictions.*** Key informant interviews and a review of websites and existing documentation were vehicles for obtaining information about comparable services in other jurisdictions.

***Sector Consultations.*** Two consultation meetings were held as part of this project with representatives from Toronto drop-in centres. On September 25, a half-day consultation involved 33 participants and focussed on people management strategies. Thirty-four individuals attended the full-day consultation on November 14 to review the findings

of this research related to the cost analysis, lessons from other jurisdictions, service standards, and service levels.<sup>2</sup>

## **1.4 Limitations**

As outlined above, data for this project were gathered through a variety of sources and much of it was provided by the City to the consultants for the purposes of undertaking this research.

The data from the City was initially compiled into four separate data files – qualitative interview data, budget data and two files with on-line survey data. This is the first time that such extensive information on drop-in centres, both those funded by the City and those that are not, was collected and made available for analysis. As with many first-time initiatives, there were limitations in the data that have affected the analysis and the results obtained, particularly for the cost and service level analyses described in Sections 2.2 and 5.0. The following is a discussion of four types of concerns about the project data.

### **1.4.1 Missing Data**

The files provided to the consulting team included budget information from 49 drop-in centres and on-line survey data from 38 centres. However, in undertaking the analysis, we discovered there were many incomplete data elements, both in the budget and survey data. The result was that only 24 drop-in centres had sufficiently complete data to be included in much of the analysis.

A three-stage process was used to collect information that would lead to a comprehensive picture of the drop-in sector. This proved to be an ambitious task and at the end of the data collection phase, there were incomplete data sets, limiting the opportunity for analysis of the sector as a whole.

### **1.4.2 Inaccuracies**

In the course of the analysis, there were a few occasions when data inaccuracies were spotted by either the consultants or by City staff. While all the errors that were identified were corrected, we do not know if others remain, particularly in the on-line survey data. A complete scan of the data by someone very familiar with drop-in centres in Toronto could help in identifying some potentially obvious data inaccuracies.

### **1.4.3 Inconsistency of Interpretation**

For data collected through the on-line survey, a glossary of definitions was available to guide participants in providing data in a consistent way. However, during the sector consultation meetings, it was apparent that there were different definitions used for particular variables. It is not known, for example, how each

---

<sup>2</sup> See Appendices One and Two for summary notes from the September 25 and November 14 sector consultations.

agency defines “administrative” cost or time. When we attempted to analyze the cost per hour of drop-in centre operations, it became apparent that in some drop-in centres, the hours of service are not the same as the hours the centre is “open.” Or, in other cases, a centre might be closed for two months a year in the summer, yet the reported hours of operation would not reflect this difference. These inconsistencies have reduced the reliability of the comparisons between the various agencies.

#### **1.4.4 Data Validity**

The City has an interest in determining the costs of providing each of the basic and enhanced services in various drop-in environments. However, the available data did not allow the consultants to identify the costs of providing basic and enhanced services, as budget information was not provided in a way that could be categorized as such. This meant that some assumptions about resource allocation were made before beginning to assess operating costs; these assumptions would not necessarily be agreed upon by drop-in centre providers. Further, the City is interested in an analysis of staff to client ratios, yet meaningful indicators of the number of clients served by staff at any given time were not available in the data provided. Thus, key data needed to measure indicators requested by the City were not available.

Despite these limitations, in our view, there is merit in having had an assessment of the data conducted by independent consultants, not directly involved in the funding or delivery of drop-in services.

### **1.5 Structure of the Report**

The remainder of this report presents the results of this project. The report is organized to highlight the key components of the work undertaken as part of this analysis of the drop-in services sector.

Section 2 provides an overview of the cost analysis, current funding structure and a discussion of service standards.

Section 3 examines grant administration activities in Toronto and other jurisdictions and explores the pros, cons and implications of multi-year funding of drop-in services.

Section 4 presents a review of people management strategies in Toronto drop-ins and highlights human resources challenges facing the sector and ideas for future collaboration within the drop-in services sector and between the City and the sector.

Section 5 reports on the service level analysis conducted for this project, including lessons from other jurisdictions, findings from the Toronto data, and a summary of services related to stabilizing client/members in housing.

Section 6 of the report looks at the findings of the project in terms of anticipated project outcomes. Consideration is given to the overarching themes emerging from this project, implications for future policy development, and future information needs and analysis.

## **2.0 Analyzing Current Funding Arrangements and Service Standards**

The following section presents the research findings related to:

- The cost analysis of existing drop-in centres in Toronto
- Service standards in other jurisdictions and sectors and
- A consultation with funders to identify approaches to funding drop-in centres.

### **2.1 Data Sources**

Data for this component of the project comes from several sources: the drop-in sector scan, documentation from other jurisdictions and sectors, and interviews with funding organizations.

#### **2.1.1 Data from Drop-in Sector Scan**

Data from the budgets, interviews and an on-line survey were available for 38 drop-in agencies. Of these, 34 contained reasonably complete data on costs and budgets and were included in the initial cost analysis. On September 19, the consultants were advised of the receipt of three outstanding quantitative surveys and two more that were expected. These data were included in the final report.

#### **2.1.2 Review of Other Jurisdictions**

Building on the background reports and contact information provided by City of Toronto staff, this research included a review of service standards in the United Kingdom, Ottawa, New York, British Columbia and the Hostel Services Unit of Toronto. Results of website reviews, document reviews and interviews conducted are discussed in Section 2.3 of this report.

#### **2.1.3 Funder Interviews**

Five organizations that provide some form of funding to community-based organizations in Toronto were interviewed by phone in August and September 2007. They are Toronto Public Health; the City of Toronto Social Development, Finance & Administration Division; the Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network (LHIN); the Ontario Arts Council; and the United Way of Greater Toronto.

### **2.2 Summary of Cost Analysis**

Using data from 37 drop-in centres, the consultants conducted a cost analysis with a view to determining patterns in the costs of providing drop-in services. Four cost factors were considered – direct staff costs, project expenses, administrative costs and building costs – for drop-ins of varying budget sizes and funding sources. The analysis also included calculating the total cost per hour of

operation and the cost to the City per hour of operation of drop-in services. Finally, the cost per participant and the cost per meal served for agencies offering varying numbers of basic services were also calculated.

The following section provides an overview of themes which emerged from the cost analysis and from the November 14 sector consultation.

### **2.2.1 Findings**

The initial findings from the cost analysis were presented at the November 14 sector consultation with summary data circulated in advance of the meeting for review. In introducing the results of the cost analysis, the consultants noted limitations and assumptions to be considered in interpreting the data. (See Section 1.4 of this report). Moving forward, the consultants then focused on results from the cost analysis that participants at the November 14 meeting agreed were consistent with their experience, as this agreement served in part as a means to validate the data.

Selected findings from the cost analysis are:

- No correlation was found between the size of drop-in centre budget and the percentage of the budget funded by the City.
- Staff costs as a percentage of total budget appear reasonably consistent across the data set regardless of total budget size with median staff costs within each group of centres ranging between 55% and 65% of total budgets.
- While definitions of what constitutes “administrative costs” varies between agencies and funders, the data showed that the average and median administrative cost of drop-in centres in the data set ranged between 5 percent and 12 percent of the total budget.
- Median building costs appear to rise consistently with the overall size of a drop-in centre’s budget, which is logical if the assumption is that larger organizations are offering services to a larger number of client/members.
- No significant correlation was identified between the cost per person of providing basic or enhanced services and any other measure, including total budget, percentage of budget supplied by the City, number of services provided, number of hours of service per week, or any of the demographic categories such as age or housing status of the participants.

### **2.2.2 Cost Drivers**

Small group discussions at the November 14 sector consultation permitted further exploration of the factors which affect the costs of operating a drop-in

centre.<sup>3</sup> Refer to Table 1 for a list of factors influencing building costs, staffing costs, and program costs as identified by participants at the consultation.

**Table 1: Cost Influences in Drop-in Centre Operations**

<i>Factors influencing facility costs:</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ owning property versus renting or leasing</li> <li>▪ geographic location in city</li> <li>▪ control and design of environment for drop-in</li> <li>▪ organizing for storage space, quiet space, kitchen, showers, laundry facilities etc.</li> <li>▪ physical design of space (e.g. size, arrangement, basement location, or multi-level)</li> <li>▪ neighbourhood environmental factors e.g.. poverty, housing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ fostering positive neighbourhood and community relations</li> <li>▪ maintenance, repair, including equipment such as stoves, fridges</li> <li>▪ capital cost</li> <li>▪ cost of utilities</li> <li>▪ technology costs (IT, computers, phones, fax)</li> <li>▪ hours of operation (e.g. open on weekends?)</li> </ul>
<i>Factors influencing staffing costs:</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ salaries</li> <li>▪ benefits (approximately 24% of salary costs required for full time employees, benefits to include RRSP and pension contribution)</li> <li>▪ unionized environments (higher salaries, better benefits)</li> <li>▪ staffing model (frontline, management); type of staff needed: floor staff versus case co-ordination staff, case management, cleaners, maintenance staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ staff qualifications required (e.g. higher staffing costs for case management qualifications)</li> <li>▪ training requirements</li> <li>▪ health and safety requirements</li> <li>▪ hiring costs (posting, interviewing, training)</li> <li>▪ volunteers (volunteer training, including staff support)</li> <li>▪ need for competitive salaries and cost of living increases</li> </ul>
<i>Factors influencing programming and development costs:</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ start up costs higher depending on environment</li> <li>▪ target group (who are we serving? Needs of target population?), number of individuals being served</li> <li>▪ availability of in-kind supports (volunteers, food banks)</li> <li>▪ other funds (direct/indirect) in place already to support program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ food programs (food staples)</li> <li>▪ health and hygiene supplies, detergent, supplies for kitchen (staples)</li> <li>▪ history of organization</li> <li>▪ mission</li> <li>▪ available funding and criteria</li> <li>▪ programming specific to community development</li> </ul>

### 2.2.3 Administrative Costs

Feedback from participants at the November 14 sector consultation suggested that a reasonable allocation for administrative costs for drop-in centres would be between 15 and 25 percent of overall operating budget, depending on how administration costs are defined. Participants at the consultation noted that the size of a drop-in program and its client group can have a significant impact on administrative costs. Smaller drop-in centres, for example, may have disproportionately high administrative costs and administrative costs in unionized workplaces can be different than their non-unionized counterparts.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix Two for summary notes from November 14 sector consultation.

Some participants shared the sentiment that a standard administration cost permitted by the funder would mean less overall measuring and reporting. Some favoured an approach where all funders agree on a global definition of what constitutes reasonable administrative costs.

Fundraising costs, training and professional development costs, and accurate allowances to pay for staff benefits were among the issues raised in discussing administrative costs with participants at the sector consultation. The costs of 'being a good neighbour' were also mentioned. These would include hosting open houses or community events, responding to inquiries from the offices of local councillors, and participating in neighbourhood committees.

#### **2.2.4 Staffing Levels**

The minimum staffing levels proposed by participants at the sector consultation were 1:20 and 1:25, with the understanding that a minimum of two or three staff are "on the floor." Additional staff would be dictated by the number of participants.

Base salary for drop-in staff was suggested to be \$40,000 to \$42,000/year for full time positions, with benefits.

#### **2.2.5 Summary Comment**

Participants at the sector consultation noted concerns about the initial findings of the cost analysis. They questioned the usefulness of the findings, the validity of the data, and assumptions made at the outset of the analysis. They noted the difficulty in reflecting the diversity of the sector while generating meaningful measures.

There was, however, some recognition of the challenge that faces the City. Without ways to describe the drop-in sector, the work that takes place within drop-in centres, the services provided to vulnerable individuals, and the costs associated with these services, City staff are poorly equipped to develop a strong case for funding this vital sector. Additionally, without concrete cost measures, the City is hampered in its efforts to go to other funders and advocate for the drop-in sector or to make effective decisions on appropriate funding allocations.

While a major thrust of the research was the cost analysis, a number of other issues related to the delivery and costs of services were also explored and presented for discussion at the November 14 sector consultation. For the next topic, service standards, the consultants looked to the experiences in other sectors and other jurisdictions to identify possible implications for the drop-in sector in Toronto.

## **2.3 Service Standards**

Service standards can be an important element of responsible management. Well-performing organizations or “learning organizations” are characterized by a focus on continual improvement and the use of facts, data and knowledge to improve decisions and system effectiveness. Service standards can ensure that the interests of clients are first and foremost in the delivery of services. They also support responsible spending, ensuring that intended results are achieved in exchange for the expenditure of public funds.

Our brief review of service standards for drop-in centres in other jurisdictions suggests that creating service standards and monitoring their implementation is not a common practice for drop-in centres, but is beginning to appear on the radar screen of a number of organizations. Summarized below are findings from a cursory review of documents and a limited number of telephone interviews with staff in several jurisdictions.

### **2.3.1 United Kingdom Service Audit Partnership**

In the U.K., for five years from 2000-2005, the Association of London Government funded a Service Audit Partnership (SAP), which aimed to improve the quality and safety of projects for homeless people via a programme of peer audits. According to the SAP website, the program was formally ended on January 31, 2005, citing “not enough consensus as to its future direction and funding...to continue.”<sup>4</sup>

This innovative approach involved peer auditing of projects for homeless people, including day centres. Staff of member agencies received training in audit and report-writing techniques and then assessed the services of another member agency’s team or project. They measured performance against a national framework developed for day centres, as well as the organization’s own aims and objectives. An audit report was given to the organization’s Board of Management for action. Numerous benefits of the approach are cited on their website, including improved processes and performance and the development of strong inter-agency partnerships.

The audit framework specific to day centres was found on the SAP website, identified as “under development” (with discontinuation of the program, presumably it will not be finalized). The Framework specifies standards and three levels of performance indicators in each of the following areas:

---

<sup>4</sup> For more information on this initiative see: [www.serviceaudit.org](http://www.serviceaudit.org), Service Audit Partnership, Page 1.

- Individual Support (client acceptance, clear statement of services, need assessment, client involvement, risk assessments, referral mechanisms, links with local community)
- Individual Rights and Empowerment (clear statements of rights and responsibilities, commitment to diversity, inclusion and equal opportunity, activities that develop independent living skills, respect of privacy and confidentiality, clear complaints procedure)
- Managing and Developing People Delivering Support Services (minimum staffing levels, access to senior staff, appraisal and supervision processes, codes of conduct, induction and training programs, role of volunteers)
- The Physical Environment (building and equipment condition, staff offices and reception areas, gardens and outdoor spaces).

### 2.3.2 United Kingdom Homeless Link Quality Toolkit

The U.K. has also developed a toolkit to assist organizations working with homeless people to implement quality standards. The toolkit was developed with much collaboration between homelessness agencies in London and is based on PQASSO – a practical quality assurance system for small organizations, designed by Charities Evaluation Services. This toolkit is similar in nature to the Good Practices Toolkit developed by the Toronto Drop-in Network, but specifically identifies quality standards that can be implemented by organizations on the basis of a self-assessment checklist.

The toolkit is designed to provide organizations with a “framework for incrementally improving both the quality of their activities and the way their organisation functions.”<sup>5</sup> Three levels of quality standards are identified for each of twenty different areas. Table 2 captures the first fourteen areas that cover core organizational standards.

**Table 2: UK’s Homeless Link. 14 Areas of Inquiry to Assess Core Organizational Standards**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planning for quality</li> <li>▪ Governance</li> <li>▪ Management</li> <li>▪ User-centred service</li> <li>▪ Complaints and suggestions</li> <li>▪ Managing resources</li> <li>▪ Administration and finance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Staff and volunteers</li> <li>▪ Training and development</li> <li>▪ Equality and diversity</li> <li>▪ Networking and partnerships</li> <li>▪ Monitoring and evaluation</li> <li>▪ Results</li> <li>▪ Client care</li> </ul>
--	--

The remaining six areas involve service specific standards, including one for day centres, as well as others for street outreach, accommodation services and specialist services. In each of these areas, standards for each of three levels of quality are provided, along with a checklist for ready self-assessment by the agency of their achievements and areas for improvement.

<sup>5</sup>Thick 2002: 7

### 2.3.3 New York City Department of Homeless Services

New York City's action plan for ending homelessness, "Uniting for Solutions Beyond Shelter" includes reference to drop-in centres in the context of "overcoming street homelessness."<sup>6</sup> Drop-in centre usage is tracked (average number of clients using drop-in centres each day) and is shown over fiscal years 2002-2004. Action steps pertaining to drop-in centres include to:

- Establish a Citywide Outreach/Drop-in Centre Coordinating Council. This council will guide and coordinate policy and practice of providers engaged in outreach and drop-in services to ensure goals are met for reducing street homelessness and ensuring better coordination among groups whose different funding streams have led to varied approaches.
- Create an Accessible Citywide Clinical Database that will be accessible to participating outreach and drop-in service providers and others to share information to better engage clients.
- Expand the Capacity of Drop-in Centres. Currently there are 10 drop-in centres in the city that offer a range of social and medical services, assistance in accessing benefits and permanent or transitional housing placement services. Capacity will be expanded, based on need data.

A staff contact in the New York City Department of Homeless Services confirmed that the Department funds 10 drop-in centres across the city and additionally oversees one that is funded by HUD (the federal department of Housing and Urban Development). These drop-in centres were apparently created as a safety net for street homeless clients who chose not to enter the shelter system. Drop-in centres provide basic needs (food, showers, clothing, personal care items, etc.) and also offer case management, housing placement and medical/psych services for those who are interested. Case management is encouraged but is not mandatory. The drop-in system in NYC only has chairs for clients to sleep in; there are no beds available although the agencies are open 24 hours per day.

In response to a question about service standards and funding, NYC staff indicated that the average cost to provide drop-in services is \$43 per person per day. The department negotiates budgets with drop-in centres under contracts that generally have three-year terms. Budget submissions from the drop-in centres are analyzed by staff on a line-by-line basis and assessed against industry standards. For example, staff would assess personnel costs for a particular agency against the personnel costs of other drop-in centres in the city and seek additional justification from a drop-in centre for those costs that seem

---

<sup>6</sup> Information on New York City was obtained through the Department of Homeless Services website [www.nyc.gov/html/dhs/html/home/home.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dhs/html/home/home.shtml) and through an interview with Danielle Minelli, Deputy Director, Outreach, Drop-in and Reception Center Unit, [DMINELLI@DHS.NYC.GOV](mailto:DMINELLI@DHS.NYC.GOV), 212-361-0603.

higher than those in other centres. Generally, drop-in centres are considered to be well-funded and to have the capacity to offer professional services.

The Department is in the process of evaluating the system with the potential of introducing some changes. The City is looking at doing away with chairs that are used for overnight sleeping and exploring different models including day-only. They have also recently revamped the entire street outreach system and are beginning to procure “Safe Havens,” a transitional model geared toward the most chronic of the street population. Safe Havens have no curfews or sobriety requirements so are more appealing to a chronically street homeless client.

The NYC website<sup>7</sup> contains a Critical Activities Report that tracks a great many statistics on homelessness monthly, primarily focused on shelter usage. This report contains one reference to placements by outreach in drop-in centres.

### **2.3.4 British Columbia Drop-in Centres**

Drop-in centres in B.C. are funded primarily by B.C. Housing, as well as through private donations, health authorities, federal homelessness funding and limited municipal grants or employment programs.<sup>8</sup> B.C. Housing assumed responsibility for drop-in centres in October 2005, through a transfer of programs from the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance. B.C. Housing’s budget for seven stand-alone drop-in centres across the province is \$2.5 million, of which \$1.9 million is directed to two drop-in centres in Vancouver. Drop-in centres that are co-located with emergency shelters have their funding included in their shelter budget.

Services in drop-in centres are not standardized. Generally they offer meals, showers, de-lousing, laundry and a warm place to get out of the elements. Some offer connections to employment, housing search, case planning and referral. They are not necessarily funded according to what they do, but rather based on historical commitments. There are no specified staff to client ratios, nor are staffing costs dictated. Operational costs as well as service costs are funded based on actual costs. For example, if a centre has unionized staff they would receive more funding for administration and staffing. If a centre owns their own building, they would not receive funding for rent, but would have a portion of their utilities and other operating costs paid.

B.C. Housing has not yet defined expectations of service although they hope to do so. They are just finalizing standards for shelters and will likely introduce service standards for drop-in centres. They do receive reports on the number of people served and the number of meals, but no analysis is done on these numbers and they are not available for comparison purposes. The number of

---

<sup>7</sup> Refer to: [www.nyc.gov/html/dhs/html/home/home.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dhs/html/home/home.shtml)

<sup>8</sup> Information obtained through an interview with Michael Anhorn, Manager Emergency Shelter Program, B.C. Housing, 604-439-8395, [mianhorn@bchousing.org](mailto:mianhorn@bchousing.org)

hours centres are to provide service are identified in their contribution agreements, but specific hours of operation are not prescribed by the Province.

Emphasis in B.C.'s Homelessness Strategy is on developing innovative ways to move people to permanent housing. There have been some internal discussions about how drop-in centres fit within this model and about whether full-service providers would be better equipped to promote more independent living. If such a change in approach ever were to occur, it would be phased in over time, recognizing the important functions undertaken by stand-alone drop-in centres.

### **2.3.5 City of Ottawa Day Programs**

The majority of City of Ottawa funding for drop-in centres is through the Community Funding envelope that is 100% municipally funded.<sup>9</sup> Drop-in centres may also apply for provincial or federal homelessness funding administered through the Housing Branch. Homelessness grants have been used primarily for funding specific housing-related services, such as housing support workers to assist people to access permanent affordable housing. Most drop-in centres also have other funding sources through their own fundraising activities and other granting organizations.

In 1996, the City of Ottawa completed a day program review and identified with the day program community those core functions that must be provided in order to be considered a Day Program by the City. These core functions include:

- Personal and Practical Support (provision of supportive direction, offering choices, access to showers, laundry facilities, bus tickets, telephone, fax, computer and hygiene products).
- Crisis Intervention (offering support and advocacy when a client faces a situation beyond their means, such as homelessness, eviction, criminal justice issues, assault or death; and management of disruptive or violent people).
- Advocacy (liaising between clients, landlords, and external agencies).
- Referrals (referrals to external agencies for additional programs and services).
- In-reach (provision of on-site programs or services by external, partner agencies, such as Public Health or CMHA).

---

<sup>9</sup> Information for the City of Ottawa was obtained through telephone interviews with Christine Moran, Community Funding Consultant, 613-580-2424 ext. 24494, [Christine.Moran@ottawa.ca](mailto:Christine.Moran@ottawa.ca) and through a review of documents obtained from the Community Funding Division and the Housing Branch.

- Meal Programs<sup>10</sup> (full meal: breakfast and/or lunch and/or dinner. May include participation of clients in meal preparation or provision of Emergency Groceries).
- Counselling (one-to-one interaction with certified counsellors who develop a long-term relationship with their client).
- Social/Recreational Activities (encouraging participation in positive activities and improving lifeskills through e.g. sports, outings).

If an agency qualifies as a day program provider, City funding is provided on a renewable basis both for operational costs (rent, utilities, insurance, staffing, office/administration, legal, transportation, taxes and other expenses) and for costs associated with the delivery of core services. Agencies receive one blended funding amount with funds not tied to specific programs or core costs.

The City of Ottawa does not have a funding formula that reflects the cost of services provided. They do not fund on a “per client” basis because service levels are so different, as are the needs of specific clients. Some agencies may have many clients, but less intensive interventions. Agencies submit their budget pressures on an annual basis and budgets may be adjusted, within the overall budget parameter fixed by Council. There are seven drop-in centres funded as day programs and they all offer full-time services, with a minimum of 28 hours a week.

Service agreements are negotiated with agencies every three years. These agreements specify the funding to be provided, subject to City Council’s annual approval of the City Budget, the services and activities to be provided by the agency and the annual reporting requirements of the agency to the City of Ottawa.

Service standards have not been negotiated with day program providers. The City monitors activities and annually receives statistics on the number of visits, the number of meals served, the average number of people visiting, number of staff, number of volunteers, number of hours of operation and any changes in governance, staffing levels or services. City funding per person per day averaged \$3.57 in 2005. City staff do site visits to keep in touch, but do not use a checklist or specific monitoring tool to assess services. They are currently developing a standardized form that will be used to conduct a more in-depth assessment of the agency in the second year of the three-year funding agreement.

---

<sup>10</sup> Meals and counselling do not necessarily need to be provided on-site due to space or other constraints and may be referred to other local agencies.

### 2.3.6 City of Ottawa Shelter Services

The City of Ottawa Housing Branch has developed service standards for emergency shelters, as well as a compliance review process that assesses implementation of shelter standards and service agreements.

Service standards for emergency shelters were finalized in 2005 following extensive consultation with community stakeholders. Table 3 provides an overview of these service standards.

**Table 3: Sample Contents of Service Standards From City of Ottawa Shelter Services**

<b>1.</b>	<b>Client Service</b>
1.1	Intake (24-hour service, reasons for denial of access, information requirements, rules, available services, referrals)
1.2	Shelter (bed, cleanliness, bath/shower, laundry, hygiene products, access to common areas, storage)
1.3	Food Service (number of meals, Canada's Food Guide, alternatives to food service, medical assessments, posting of menus, safe handling and storage of food)
1.4	Personal Support (needs assessment, individual service plans, housing search, health care, home care)
1.5	Services to Children (positive parenting, community resources, safety and security, planned activities, school attendance, child minding, obligations of Child and Family Services Act)
1.6	Service Restrictions (policies and procedures for applicable restrictions)
1.7	Client Rights and Responsibilities
1.8	Client Medication Management
<b>2.</b>	<b>Facility</b>
2.1	Building Premises (hazards, cleanliness, water availability, privacy)
2.2	Health and Safety (pest control, infectious disease, WHIMIS standards, hygiene in food preparation, first aid requirements, fire safety, emergency preparedness)
<b>3.</b>	<b>Governance</b> (governance structure, reporting requirements, conflict of interest)
<b>4.</b>	<b>Administration</b> (policies and procedures, human resources, record keeping, confidentiality, financial accountability).

At least once every 30-month period, City staff conduct a compliance review that includes site visits, physical assessment of the facility, file reviews, on-premises observations and interviews with senior and front-line staff and clients. The on-site review takes one to two days and is compiled in a written report that is discussed with shelter management to convey results and discuss plans for

remediation. A specific on-site review tool has been developed that reflects the requirements of the service standards identified above.

### **2.3.7 City of Toronto Hostel Services**

The Hostel Services Unit recently completed a funding review for shelters that resulted in per-diem rates being revised for core services and for enhanced case management services.<sup>11</sup> Agencies are funded based on their client groups, hours of service, actual costs, agency and other contributions. As part of the review, an attempt was made to establish individual costs for core services, but staff found it impossible to do, because of the significant variances in staffing, building costs and client services. Per-diem costs do not differentiate a percentage for administrative costs (unlike the United Way analysis that has identified 12-15% as a norm for administration).

Hostel Services has developed service standards for Toronto's shelters and an extensive quality assurance review process. Service standards cover the following areas:

1. Standards of Organization (organization status, governance, financial accountability, program accountability, conflict of interest).
2. Access to Shelter (admission and discharge, reserving beds, substance use, service restrictions, transgendered needs).
3. Resident Rights and Responsibilities (resident input, complaints and appeals).
4. Program Standards (provision of essential services, counselling supports, daytime access, services to children, child abuse/neglect, confidentiality, sharing of resident information, staff code of conduct).
5. Food Safety and Nutrition Standards.
6. Health and Safety Standards (health, safety, resident medication, weapons).
7. Staff Training (outlining mandatory training required for shelter staff, food preparation staff, supervisory/management staff and staff working with specific client groups).

Hostel Services staff have identified a three-phase cycle of assessing quality and determining compliance with the prescribed standards. Phase One involves an on-site review of each shelter. Phase Two goes into a more in-depth examination of key policies, practices and implementation of core business functions. Phase Three focuses on reviewing, refining and improving the standards and sharing examples of service excellence across the system. Staff have completed Phase One and expect that Phase Two will be done next spring.

---

<sup>11</sup> Information in this section was obtained through an interview with Maura Lawless, Manager, Operations, City of Toronto Hostel Services, 416-397-4493, [mlawles@toronto.ca](mailto:mlawles@toronto.ca) and a review of related documents.

The development of service standards involved one and a half years of community consultation. The standards are rooted in quality and client focus and reflect what is important for the City to fund to benefit vulnerable, homeless people.

### **2.3.8 Sector Perspectives on Service Standards**

The November 14 consultation with drop-in centre representatives provided an opportunity for feedback on the issue of service standards. For the most part, caution was expressed about what standards are measuring, the degree to which drop-in services can be measured and the level of resources required to undertake meaningful measurements. The following summarizes feedback and discussion among participants:

- The examples of standards don't obviously link to outcomes such as housing and may not respond to sector pressures.
- Need to have clear expectations about what drop-in centres are providing, such as housing work and to understand the subtleties of what is occurring, for example, the need of a client to access addiction services.
- How does one measure the value of access to a shower?
- Linear perspectives miss the subtleties in outcome measurement.
- Standards are often implied to be measurable, but may not be measuring anything meaningful.
- Standards could discourage new drop-ins or smaller drop-ins from operating.
- Examples of standards in other jurisdictions were in areas where sector resources are much better. We can't do standards without better resources in the sector.
- Need resources to ensure existing organizations can meet standards.
- Need to "unpack" the standards and see how they affect clients, for example the issue of nutrition and the impact on people's lives.

### **2.3.9 Summary of Service Standards**

Use of service standards for drop-in centres does not appear to be the norm in most jurisdictions. Yet service standards can be an important element of ensuring service quality and accountability for funding. As noted in the City of Toronto Community Services Committee report *Quality Assurance Review of Shelters*:

*A quality assurance review process supports effective service system delivery. In a social service system that supports vulnerable homeless people, it is important to ensure that agencies in receipt of funding meet the service expectations of the City. In the spirit of continuous improvement, this process also provides an opportunity to identify, evaluate and replicate excellent service practices*

*in the system. This will ensure a continued and improved quality of service for homeless people using shelter services, while at the same time identifying agencies that need to address shortfalls in meeting the standards.<sup>12</sup>*

Should the City of Toronto want to develop service standards for drop-in centres, the City's Hostel Services standards, the City of Ottawa's emergency shelter standards and the U.K.'s Homeless Link quality toolkit provide excellent models. They all were created with extensive involvement of the community, focus on client service, have many areas that could be readily adapted to Toronto's drop-in centre environment, and have rigorous quality assurance processes to assess implementation of the standards in a way that promotes continuous improvement. At the same time, cautions expressed by drop-in sector representatives reinforce the importance of full participation by agency staff, if service standards are to be designed and implemented, so that standards would meaningfully reflect what drop-in centres are funded to do.

## **2.4 Results of Funder Interviews**

Representatives from five organizations that provide some form of funding to community-based organizations in Toronto were interviewed as part of the data collection for this project. The following summarizes the findings of these key informant interviews.

Of the organizations included in these interviews, only the United Way provides core funding, and that only to members. All other funding is based on the acceptance of an application based on a specific project. (The goals of the projects vary widely, given the varied nature of the program goals of the funders.) To the extent that drop-in centres participate in any of the funding programs set out below, therefore, the drop-in centres generally act as the location of a particular set of approved activities which have specific goals and a defined timeframe. Core administrative costs (salaries and benefits, building costs apart from those which can be directly allocated to programs, overhead, etc.) are not eligible for funding, again with the exception of the United Way's regular funding to members.

All of the funders require a report, either after a specific period of time or at the end of the project. Generally, these funders do not use "hard data" benchmarks to evaluate the projects, but instead focus on how well the project achieved the aims set out in the original application.

The two City of Toronto agencies, Public Health and Social Development, Finance & Administration, participate in the wider City funding program called Community Partnership and Investment Program (CPIP), also used by the

---

<sup>12</sup> City of Toronto 2005

Shelter, Support and Housing Administration Division to provide grants to drop-in centres. The CPIP uses benchmarks, but only for internal evaluation of its own effectiveness in reaching out to potential funding recipients in the community. At this time, there is no ongoing benchmarking of the recipient's effectiveness in achieving the funders' program goals.

Overall, the main impetus behind the funders' activities appears to be the theory that many programs that rely on the participation of individual community members, especially those who are marginalized, should be carried out by community organizations not by government agencies. Thus, the government agencies' evaluations tend to be focused on their own effectiveness in getting funding into the community or information about funding opportunities into the hands of potential recipients. There is great reliance on community-based actors in each particular field or area of activity to evaluate the effectiveness of the various programs.

Table 4 presents an overview of the responses received from the five organizations interviewed for this project.

**Table 4: Key Informant Interviews with Funders (Summary of Responses)**

<b>Organization</b>		Social Development, Finance & Admin.	Toronto Central LHIN <sup>13</sup>	Ontario Arts Council	United Way of Greater Toronto
<b>Program name</b>		Community Service Partnerships (Part of CPIP)	Integrated Health Services Plan	Artists in the Community/Workplace	"Regular" Program and Winter Relief Program
<b>Program goals</b>		Prevent spread of HIV/AIDS and prevent spread of and damage caused by drug abuse	Provide support to agencies that offer services that respond to community need	Integrate the arts into community life through artistic projects. □	Regular program provides funding to 200 social service agencies in Toronto as well as carrying out education. The Winter Relief program provides funding to some agencies, including drop-ins to help homeless individuals in winter.
<b>Number of agencies funded that provide drop-in services</b>		17	Six	One (at this time)	Winter Relief to 38 agencies – 22 member agencies (eligible for core funding) and 16 non-member agencies
<b>Are recipients required to seek additional funding?</b>		Yes	Yes	Yes. Recipient organization must contribute at least 25% of project cost.	There is no policy for member agencies. The Winter Relief recipients have other funding.
<b>Is your funding on an annual cycle or multi-year?</b>		Annual, but priority given to applicants who have already received funding.	Multi	Project-based for the life of the specific initiative. Therefore, can be multi-year.	Winter Relief funding is annual. Core funding is on a 3-year cycle.

<sup>13</sup> The Toronto Central LHIN is a relatively new organization and only published its first Integrated Health Services Plan in 2006. So far, most of its activities have been in relation to the hospital system in Toronto, but the goal is to expand into partnership with the community sector within the life of the current three-year plan.

<b>How do you let potential recipients know there is funding available?</b>			
Proposal call, direct contact with current recipients and all former applicants to notify of proposal-call details.	Notify former applicants and interested parties on mailing list, information sessions, on-line application form.	Policy under development	Ongoing outreach, advertising in media, word of mouth
<b>Do you have a set of core costs that you fund, and if so what activities are included?</b>			
Funding for cost of people actually carrying out the programs, plus materials those people actually use (i.e. no admin funding).	Direct program costs, including staff, materials, child-minding, dedicated program space.	Policy under development	Project funding, which can include research.
<b>Do recipients have to re-apply when their grant cycle is completed?</b>			
Yes. Previous recipients have a high renewal rate.	Yes. Priority given to applicants who have already received funding		Yes.
<b>How do recipients report on the funds they receive (i.e. interim reports, year-end, end of funding cycle, etc.)?</b>			
All recipients report twice a year	Year-end		Recipients report at end of project. There is a standard reporting form.
<b>In analyzing the costs your recipients report, do you use a set of benchmarks to determine "value for money?"</b>			
No, but recipients do report on uses of funds, e.g. number of FTE's employed, etc.	No.	No	Winter Relief – year-end report. Members reporting on core funding have a main report at the end of the funding cycle as part of the re-application process and a simplified report in "off-years."
<b>Do you have a set of core costs that you fund, and if so what activities are included?</b>			
Funding for cost of people actually carrying out the programs, plus materials those people actually use (i.e. no admin funding).	Direct program costs, including staff, materials, child-minding, dedicated program space.	Policy under development	Project funding, which can include research.
<b>Do recipients have to re-apply when their grant cycle is completed?</b>			
Yes. Previous recipients have a high renewal rate.	Yes. Priority given to applicants who have already received funding		Yes.
<b>How do recipients report on the funds they receive (i.e. interim reports, year-end, end of funding cycle, etc.)?</b>			
All recipients report twice a year	Year-end		Recipients report at end of project. There is a standard reporting form.
<b>In analyzing the costs your recipients report, do you use a set of benchmarks to determine "value for money?"</b>			
No, but recipients do report on uses of funds, e.g. number of FTE's employed, etc.	No.	No	Winter Relief – year-end report. Members reporting on core funding have a main report at the end of the funding cycle as part of the re-application process and a simplified report in "off-years."
<b>Do you have a set of core costs that you fund, and if so what activities are included?</b>			
Funding for cost of people actually carrying out the programs, plus materials those people actually use (i.e. no admin funding).	Direct program costs, including staff, materials, child-minding, dedicated program space.	Policy under development	Project funding, which can include research.
<b>Do recipients have to re-apply when their grant cycle is completed?</b>			
Yes. Previous recipients have a high renewal rate.	Yes. Priority given to applicants who have already received funding		Yes.
<b>How do recipients report on the funds they receive (i.e. interim reports, year-end, end of funding cycle, etc.)?</b>			
All recipients report twice a year	Year-end		Recipients report at end of project. There is a standard reporting form.
<b>In analyzing the costs your recipients report, do you use a set of benchmarks to determine "value for money?"</b>			
No, but recipients do report on uses of funds, e.g. number of FTE's employed, etc.	No.	No	Winter Relief – year-end report. Members reporting on core funding have a main report at the end of the funding cycle as part of the re-application process and a simplified report in "off-years."
<b>Do you have a set of core costs that you fund, and if so what activities are included?</b>			
Funding for cost of people actually carrying out the programs, plus materials those people actually use (i.e. no admin funding).	Direct program costs, including staff, materials, child-minding, dedicated program space.	Policy under development	Project funding, which can include research.
<b>Do recipients have to re-apply when their grant cycle is completed?</b>			
Yes. Previous recipients have a high renewal rate.	Yes. Priority given to applicants who have already received funding		Yes.
<b>How do recipients report on the funds they receive (i.e. interim reports, year-end, end of funding cycle, etc.)?</b>			
All recipients report twice a year	Year-end		Recipients report at end of project. There is a standard reporting form.
<b>In analyzing the costs your recipients report, do you use a set of benchmarks to determine "value for money?"</b>			
No, but recipients do report on uses of funds, e.g. number of FTE's employed, etc.	No.	No	Winter Relief – year-end report. Members reporting on core funding have a main report at the end of the funding cycle as part of the re-application process and a simplified report in "off-years."
<b>Do you have a set of core costs that you fund, and if so what activities are included?</b>			
Funding for cost of people actually carrying out the programs, plus materials those people actually use (i.e. no admin funding).	Direct program costs, including staff, materials, child-minding, dedicated program space.	Policy under development	Project funding, which can include research.
<b>Do recipients have to re-apply when their grant cycle is completed?</b>			
Yes. Previous recipients have a high renewal rate.	Yes. Priority given to applicants who have already received funding		Yes.
<b>How do recipients report on the funds they receive (i.e. interim reports, year-end, end of funding cycle, etc.)?</b>			
All recipients report twice a year	Year-end		Recipients report at end of project. There is a standard reporting form.
<b>In analyzing the costs your recipients report, do you use a set of benchmarks to determine "value for money?"</b>			
No, but recipients do report on uses of funds, e.g. number of FTE's employed, etc.	No.	No	Winter Relief – year-end report. Members reporting on core funding have a main report at the end of the funding cycle as part of the re-application process and a simplified report in "off-years."

<b>Does your organization conduct site visits?</b>			
Yes: grants staff.	Yes.	No	Staff will try to visit public activities of the recipient.
			Yes for members. In "off years" may attend events or AGM. At re-application time, there is a specific visit by review team. For Winter Relief recipients, not necessarily any site visits.
<b>What other measures do you take to ensure compliance with your program objectives and maintenance of the quality of service you expect?</b>			
Consultation with other funders, community-based review panel	Evaluation criteria of risk (low, medium, high) that recipient will not carry out activities successfully. More oversight of high-risk recipients.	Criteria under development	Feedback from community-based experts.
			None Occasionally, members will stop being members, for various reasons, but not often.
<b>Do you meet with or interact with other organizations that fund drop-ins in Toronto? If so, how?</b>			
Not formally		As needed	No
			Membership on drop-in review. SCPI-funded capacity-building project.
<b>Do you meet with or interact with the drop-in network? If so, how?</b>			
No, just with individual drop-ins.	No	No	Not formally

## 2.5 Summary Considerations

The most significant hurdle in this project relates to the quality of data available for costing the basic and enhanced services delivered through drop-in centres. The cost analysis did not yield specific information about the cost of providing basic or enhanced services per se.

To supplement the results of the data analysis, the November 14 sector consultation provided an opportunity to work with representatives from Toronto drop-in centres to identify factors that influence costs. Concerns were raised during the sector consultation about the validity and usefulness of the findings of the cost analysis. The challenge that remains for the City and the drop-in sector is to identify measures for describing services and the associated costs. This is as a critical step in developing a strong case for adequate and sustained funding for drop-in centres.

The key informant interviews conducted as part of this project are a reminder that there are few jurisdictions with comparable funding arrangements to those in Toronto. Among those jurisdictions that may be most comparable to Toronto, none have implemented service standards and a funding formula that is tied to the cost of specific services in the drop-in sector. Thus, while some lessons may be learned from other areas, to a large extent the City of Toronto is charting its own course in designing and implementing an improved method of funding drop-in services. The importance of the City's core funding is evident from interviews with other funders, most of whom offer funding only for specific projects and not for core operations.

### **3.0 Reducing Grant Administration Activities**

As one component of this project, the consultants were asked to examine the City's processes for administering grants to the drop-in sector. The objective of this component of the work was to identify options to reduce grant-administration activities for City and agency staff and to focus particularly on the option of multi-year funding.

#### **3.1. Information Sources and Analysis**

To undertake this component of the work, we examined the current administrative practices in the City of Toronto's funding for drop-in centres, reviewed funding practices in other jurisdictions, and considered the implications of adapting a multi-year funding model. Specifically the work involved:

- A review of documents provided by City of Toronto staff, the City of Ottawa and the United Way of Greater Toronto.
- Interviews with staff of the City of Ottawa, B.C. Housing, the United Way of Greater Toronto, the City of Toronto Social Development and Administration Division and the City of Toronto Hostel Services Unit.
- Two meetings with staff from the Community Initiatives group in the Housing and Homelessness Supports and Initiatives Unit in Shelter, Support and Housing Administration.
- Analysis of staff input on the pros and cons of multi-year funding and allocations of staff time to the granting process.
- Analysis of the implications of multi-year funding of drop-in services.

#### **3.2 Summary of Grant Administration for Toronto Drop-in Services**

The City of Toronto is the Service Manager for homelessness services in Toronto. In this capacity, the City is responsible for integrated system planning, allocating funding within an accountability framework, promoting collaboration of service providers and coordinating a full range of services for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

A critical component of the service system for homelessness is the provision of drop-in services. Funding for drop-in centres in Toronto is provided through annual grants funded under the City's Drop-in Services Partnership Program. This grant program is one component of the Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program funded by the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the City. In 2007, allocations to drop-in services were \$2,002,900<sup>14</sup> funded entirely by the Province and administered by the Shelter, Support and Housing Administration unit of the City.

---

<sup>14</sup> Of this total, \$1,859,321 is allocated to 28 community agencies. (City of Toronto 2006).

On an annual basis, City staff issue a call for grant applications to drop-in centres that received funding in the previous year, and then consider requests for funding. A guide is prepared by staff to outline the funding process, including the objectives and priorities set by the City for drop-in sector funding, the criteria for funding and the process timelines. City staff also hold information sessions prior to the application deadline to provide an opportunity for agency staff to make enquiries about the process and to receive assistance in understanding the application process.

Staff of the Community Initiatives group receive all applications and carry out a rigorous review, assessing the financial risks of applicant organizations, their governance practices, risks associated with specific projects and past performance on projects with respect to outcomes, reporting, site visit results and any other identified issues. Staff review applications individually and then as a team, culminating in the preparation of a report to City Council with recommendations for funding. Funding decisions are considered by the Community Development and Recreation Committee and ultimately are approved by City Council.

Following Council approval, staff develop letters of understanding with the organizations approved to receive funding. Letters of understanding include any conditions for funding and a cash flow schedule. Organizations submit monitoring reports on a regular basis that are used by City staff to review results and to provide monitoring reports to the Province.

### **3.3 Lessons from Elsewhere**

The following is a discussion of funding administration practices in five different jurisdictions or sectors: City of Ottawa, British Columbia, City of Toronto Community Service Partnerships Program, City of Toronto Hostel Services, and the United Way of Greater Toronto. This discussion leads to the concluding sections on the pros and cons of multi-year funding and implications for Toronto's drop-in services sector.

#### **3.3.1. City of Ottawa**

In the City of Ottawa<sup>15</sup>, core funding for day programs (drop-in services) is provided through the Community Funding envelope that is funded entirely by the municipality. In 2006, funding for day programs was \$1,553,858 and was directed to seven drop-in centres in the City. Provincial homelessness funding is also made available to drop-in centres through the allocation process administered by the Housing Branch. In 2006, the seven drop-in centres accessed \$132,077 of provincial homelessness funding and \$73,827 from the

---

<sup>15</sup> Information for the City of Ottawa was obtained through a review of documents and an interview with Christine Moran, Community Funding Consultant, 613-580-2424, ext. 24494, Christine.Moran@ottawa.ca

Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI). In addition to this funding, the City provides additional support to drop-in centres through public health services equivalent to approximately 3 FTEs (full-time equivalent staff) to offer on-site nursing service, immunization clinics, infection control training, harm reduction equipment and education and related health services. The City does not measure the number of individual clients who are served through their day programs (although they expect to do so in future), but the drop-in centres reported 422,750 visits in 2006.

The City of Ottawa funds day programs through purchase of service agreements that span three-year periods, making it clear that the funding is subject to City Council's annual approval of the budget. The Community Funding Service Agreement in place for 2007, for example, contains the following wording with respect to the Term of Agreement:

*The Agreement shall commence on July 1, 2007 and shall remain in force until June 30, 2010, **subject to City Council's annual approval of the City Budget** and subject to the terms of this Agreement.*<sup>16</sup>

Similarly, the wording under "Funding Contribution" contains the following stipulation:

*The City agrees to provide conditional funding payments to the Recipient in the amount set out in Schedule "A", **subject to City Council's annual approval of the City Budget**, for the purposes specified in Schedule "A"*<sup>17</sup>

The City of Ottawa introduced three-year funding commitments in 2006 following a review of day program services. At that time, they undertook a risk assessment of agencies to determine whether they would be funded on a one, two or three year basis. Currently, all seven drop-ins are funded on a three-year basis. The City recognized the value of services provided through the not-for-profit sector and that funding day programs through community agencies costs significantly less than the City could provide directly because of lower staffing costs, leveraging of other sources of income and the extensive use of volunteers.

The rationale for multi-year funding given by the respondent from the City of Ottawa was that it provided greater stability for agencies and simplified their administrative process. Agencies are not required to re-apply on an annual basis for funding, but they are required to submit an annual report and they monitor the City's budget process to determine that no reductions are made to the community-funding envelope. While the change to multi-year funding is relatively recent, staff do not anticipate any concerns with it. They have included a 60-day

---

<sup>16</sup> City of Ottawa, Community Funding Service Agreement, emphasis (bold font) as shown in the funding agreement.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

notice provision in the service agreement that permits either the City or the agency to terminate the agreement on 60 days notice.

The City of Ottawa's Community Funding Service Agreement includes multiple references to the condition of City Council's approval of the budget. It also includes audit and reporting requirements. Agencies are required to report on an annual basis in the form of an annual Funding Submission that includes the following:

- Minutes of Annual General Meetings, Annual Reports, Lists of Board of Directors and audited financial statements for each of three years (for example for 2006, 2007 and 2008 in the 2007 Agreement).
- Proof of insurance.
- A list of activities funded through the Agreement, a summary of results and impact on the community.

Attempts have been made to streamline reporting so that agencies can reproduce existing documents such as insurance coverage, treasurer's reports or audited financial statements, without having to complete additional forms. City staff do site visits to keep in touch with agencies and keep an eye on service levels but do not use a specific checklist. They are proposing to do an evaluation in the second year of the agreement and are developing a standardized form for that purpose.

The City of Ottawa also streamlined reporting processes through its Community Funding Framework Policy, so that agencies that receive less than \$25,000 (2005 dollars) or organizations that are run entirely by volunteers, have reduced reporting requirements. Currently, all day programs in Ottawa receive more than \$25,000 in City funding, and have paid staff, so do not have reduced reporting requirements as a result of these conditions. However, streamlining interim annual reporting requirements was also introduced for organizations with three-year service agreements and applies to day programs, as outlined above.

The Ottawa interview respondent indicated that the success of the Community Funding Service Agreement depends on good communication and a collaborative working relationship between City staff and agencies. If agencies have changes in governance, staffing levels or services provided, they inform City staff. If City staff have changes they would like to see in policies, they do it through consultation and negotiation with the agencies.

### **3.3.2 British Columbia**

Drop-in centres in British Columbia<sup>18</sup> are funded through contribution agreements administered by B.C. Housing. Seven stand-alone drop-ins are funded through

---

<sup>18</sup> Information on British Columbia was obtained through an interview with Michael Anhorn, Manager Emergency Shelter Program, B.C. Housing, 604-439-8395, mianhorn@bchousing.org

the drop-in program, while those that are in shelters are funded through the shelter budget.

B.C. Housing currently funds drop-in centres on an annual basis, but generally there is an automatic renewal of agreements each year. Budgets are negotiated annually, but drop-ins do not need to re-apply for funding annually. Staff are currently looking at the possibility of five-year agreements and assessing the costs and benefits of a multi-year funding approach. Since most of the housing agreements that B.C. Housing administers are for 35 years, they consider five-year agreements relatively short by comparison.

Benefits of multi-year funding that have been identified by staff to date are:

- Drop-in agencies can do long-term planning.
- There is a reduced administrative burden both for the province and for drop-in agencies.
- Annual reporting can be used to assure accountability.
- A cost of living inflator can ensure that costs keep up with inflation over the five-year period.
- Having long-term funding commitments can assist agencies in securing financing for purchasing buildings or doing major repairs.
- In order to permit mid-term policy changes, a statement in the funding contract would indicate that B.C. Housing has the right to update service standards, or they would enter into amending agreements.

The one concern that B.C. Housing staff identified with multi-year funding is the need to build in a mechanism to ensure adequate service delivery is occurring on an on-going basis. They would likely do an operational review of every agency every year and if there are any “red flags,” they would do a more thorough review and would consider reducing the length of the funding contract. Their operational review would include both an organizational assessment and a review of the quality of service provided.

### **3.3.3 City of Toronto Community Service Partnerships Program**

The Community Service Partnerships (CSP) Program,<sup>19</sup> previously called the Community Services Grants Program (CSGP) provides approximately \$10 million in grants for community-based programs that provide services for vulnerable, marginalized and high-risk communities. Both program delivery and core administration can be funded through the grants, but the City does not fund one hundred percent of any service.

On an annual basis, there is an open call for applications and an eligibility assessment is conducted. Most of the funding goes to returning applicants, but

---

<sup>19</sup> Information in this section was obtained through an interview with Sue Kaiser, Manager, Community Funding Programs, Social Development, Finance and Administration, 416-397-7302, [skaiser@toronto.ca](mailto:skaiser@toronto.ca) and through a review of documents provided by her.

the funding is awarded one year at a time because it is budgeted annually. Some programs have been funded on a multi-year basis. For example, through the Community Safety Investment Program, initiatives were identified that would take longer than one year to implement. For those initiatives, staff adopted one, two or three-year timelines. Applicants were funded a year at a time, but they had a modified application form, and were not required to re-submit a full application each year. Their funding agreement would indicate that they were receiving funding for “year one of a three-year funding plan,” for example.

In terms of the pros and cons of multi-year funding, the main advantage identified by our respondent is that it allows organizations to do bigger projects with longer timeframes. As well, the elimination of an annual application process or even a modified annual process results in reduced administration for community organizations. It is not necessarily less complex, nor is it a way to save staff time. Our respondent suggested that some staff time could be saved if all agencies were funded on the same basis in a multi-year funding scenario. However, currently in the CSP program, two different funding models are used (one for annual funding and one for those initiatives in the Community Safety Investment Program where there is longer-term funding) and this actually requires more staff time because there are two sets of forms and a mixed model in place. A key disadvantage to multi-year funding is that the more money carried over from year to year, the less money is available to respond to new initiatives or changing priorities.

### **3.3.4 City of Toronto Hostel Services**

The City of Toronto Hostel Services Unit<sup>20</sup> has a mixed delivery system, with six hostels operated directly by the City and 53 administered through purchase of service agreements with community agencies. Hostels are funded on a per-diem basis, cost-shared between the City and the province. They are not funded on the basis of specified benchmarks, but rather based on an analysis of the actual cost of services, agency contributions and other funding.

In the past three years, the Hostel Services Unit has rationalized their funding and uses a purchase of service agreement to administer funds to community-based shelters. They fund core services and enhanced case management services, taking into account hours of service and client groups. In a recent funding review, Hostel Services staff tried to establish individual costs for core services but found it impossible to do, since costs for staffing, buildings and even food (because of bulk purchasing) are greatly varied among different agencies.

While shelters provide on-going services, they are not funded through multi-year agreements. They make annual budget submissions and have annual contracts. In their annual funding application, agencies will indicate their current year

---

<sup>20</sup> Information in this section was obtained through an interview with Maura Lawless, Manager, Operations, City of Toronto Hostel Services, 416-397-4493, [mlawles@toronto.ca](mailto:mlawles@toronto.ca) and a review of related documents.

expenditures and projections for the next year, and can submit a business case to request more funding.

Our respondent indicated that funding services through grants offers greater flexibility than funding through purchase of service agreements. However, both grants and purchase of service agreements are simply mechanisms to flow money. The real issue is to determine what services are important for the City to fund in order to benefit vulnerable homeless people. The funding approach should be rooted in quality and client focus, and be applied consistently and equitably in terms of which community services receive City funding.

### **3.3.5 United Way of Greater Toronto**

The United Way<sup>21</sup> supports drop-in services in Toronto, both through its Winter Relief Program (approximately \$300,000 in total funding for the program) and through funding of “member agencies.” Of \$52 million allocated to member agencies, approximately \$4 million would be for homelessness services, with the specific amount for drop-in services not known.

Agencies providing social services in Toronto are eligible to apply for United Way membership if they meet specified eligibility criteria and provide services in the United Way’s priority areas. They are then assessed against standards related to performance criteria in the following areas:

- Program effectiveness
- Accessibility
- Resource management

There are currently 149 member agencies and new agencies are admitted annually, usually about two per year. Upon initial application and then after the first year of membership, agencies are reviewed rigorously and are reviewed every three years. The United Way respondent explained that reviews are done by a panel of volunteers and staff who consider applications, do interviews and conduct site visits to determine whether agencies should be funded as members. The panel usually has five volunteers – one finance expert, one labour representative and three general community members reflecting the diversity of Toronto. Volunteers are encouraged to stay on for a total of six years so they develop expertise in assessing agencies and have good bases for comparison from year to year.

Agencies who are not accepted as members, or who have concerns identified during subsequent reviews can be moved to one or two year funding and offered support through a variety of capacity building initiatives to improve their status.

---

<sup>21</sup> Information on the United Way was obtained through an interview with Lorraine Duff, Director, Community Resources, United Way of Greater Toronto, 416-777-1444, ext. 593 and a review of documents provided by her.

Once agencies are accepted as members, they are funded on a three-year basis. The United Way previously funded members on a two-year basis and is now moving to three-year funding. The rationale for multi-year funding given by our respondent is that it reduces the administrative burden on agencies and recognizes that most of them are stable and providing good, effective services. Those who are in trouble are reviewed more often and receive shorter-term funding. A proviso in the funding contract indicates that funding in subsequent years is conditional on the United Way achieving its overall fund-raising goals, but there has been no need to invoke this clause to date.

The application process for funding every three years is an extensive one, involving 21 different forms, including 10 financial worksheets. Other submission requirements include information on the agency and its fundraising activities, information on program services and the type of funding that is being requested. In “off years” (that is, at the end of years 1 and 2), agencies are still required to submit information packages, but this is a much less onerous submission, with only eight forms, three of which are financial worksheets.

Monitoring is done at the completion of the three-year period through a report on all areas for which United Way funding has been used. Agencies are asked to identify their progress in completing an outcome evaluation. They are asked to submit their logic model or to respond to questions regarding program outcomes, major activities, key indicators and measurement tools. They are also asked to identify any key findings from their evaluations, the extent to which their expected short-term outcomes were achieved, reasons if outcomes were not achieved and any planned changes to programs based on the evaluation results.

### **3.4 Pros and Cons of Multi-Year Funding**

The *Cracks in the Foundation* report produced by Toronto’s Community and Neighbourhood Services Department identifies the need for changes in funding practices for the community-based sector, including the use of “multi-year funding agreements to enhance an organization’s stability and capacity for longer-term planning.”<sup>22</sup> This is one of several reports that identify the financial pressures being placed on the not-for-profit sector, as continued downloading and project-based funding increase significantly. The federal government’s Voluntary Sector Initiative resulted in a code of good practice on funding that was developed jointly by the Government of Canada and representatives of the voluntary sector. Included in that document is recognition that,

*Funding arrangements, including their duration, should reflect the nature and scale of the issue to be addressed. For example, chronic or systemic social issues are not likely to be solved through short-term project funding.*<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> Toronto Community & Neighbourhood Services 2003: 29

<sup>23</sup> Joint Accord Table of the Voluntary Sector Initiative 2002:9

Based on the interviews we conducted with other funding organizations, and with staff of the Community Initiatives group, the major advantages of multi-year funding may be summarized as follows:

- Multi-year funding provides stability for drop-in agencies that allows them to do long-term planning and enter into longer-term commitments for staff, for major purchases or for significant operating expenses, such as major repairs.
- From the perspective of funders, multi-year funding enables longer-term, more extensive projects to be funded on an on-going basis.
- Savings in administrative time can occur, if multi-year funding results in less onerous application and reporting processes in the “off” years, and can mean less repetition of activities for staff of both funders and agencies.
- Staff time savings can mean both funders and agencies have more time to devote to achieving effective program results and focusing on evaluation and monitoring of outcomes and impacts.

Key disadvantages identified were:

- With fixed budgets, the on-going commitment of funds to specific drop-in centres means less funding is available to respond to new initiatives or changing priorities.
- From the perspective of funders, there is the potential for less control over service delivery results and some potential for “service drift” where agencies funded for specific programs move that funding towards other services that may not be the funder’s priority.
- Many funders, including municipal governments, are unable to commit funds from future budgets so that any multi-year funding agreement must be clear that the funding is conditional upon overall approval of the budget in future years.
- Multi-year funding may make it more difficult to address situations where agencies experience organizational or service limitations and are unable to meet funder objectives and priorities.

### **3.5 Considerations for Change**

Based on discussions with City staff and lessons from other jurisdictions, we suggest seven principles to guide administration of funding for the drop-in sector. Refer to Table 5.

**Table 5: Principles to Guide Funding Administration**

An effective grant administration process should:	
1.	<i>Build the capacity of persons who are homeless or at risk of homelessness through effective drop-in services, and enhance the capacity of drop-in centres through funding stability and organizational development.</i>
2.	<i>Facilitate response to Council direction, such as the current Streets to Homes policy direction.</i>
3.	<i>Promote accountability to ensure that funds administered by the City for drop-in centres meet provincial funding requirements and assure the provision of services in accordance with City priorities.</i>
4.	<i>Be efficient, reducing unnecessary administrative burdens on City staff and on staff of drop-in centres.</i>
5.	<i>Offer flexibility to respond to changes in community needs or City priorities.</i>
6.	<i>Respect Council authority and comply with legislation pertaining to funding and administration of grants.</i>
7.	<i>Seek consistencies with other funders to promote broad-based community responses and to simplify processes for funded agencies.</i>

Our review of grant administration in other jurisdictions suggests the following ideas that the City may wish to consider in modifying its grant administration process (with the jurisdiction where the idea originated shown in parentheses):

**Specify the drop-in services that must be provided in order to be funded through the drop-in services partnership program (City of Ottawa).**

Following its review of day programs, the City of Ottawa explicitly identified the core functions that had to be provided if an agency was to receive funding from the City as a day program. These core functions include personal and practical support (access to showers, laundry, bus tickets, etc.); crisis intervention; advocacy; referrals; in-reach (that is offering services from other agencies such as mental health or public health); meals; counselling and social/recreational activities. The City made clear that all drop-in centres needed to make these services available, but did not necessarily mean that all services had to be provided on-site. For example, if a facility did not have the capacity to provide meals on-site, they could refer clients to another nearby location. However, all of the defined services have to be available for clients in order for a facility to be funded by the City of Ottawa as a day program.

**Consider using a purchase of service agreement (City of Ottawa Drop-in Services and Hostel Services in both Toronto and Ottawa).**

Grants are intended to respond to community needs and are by design less directive to community agencies than a purchase of service agreement. Situations where specific service standards and rigorous quality assurance

processes have been put in place have tended to rely on purchase of service agreements. This funding mechanism may facilitate funding specific drop-in services in accordance with Council priorities in an on-going way, without the need for continuous reapplication for grant funding.

**Use external advisory panels to assist with the selection of agencies to be funded** (United Way of Greater Toronto).

The United Way's use of external advisory panels, involving experts in areas such as finance and labour, as well as community representation to assist staff in funding decisions, may offer benefits to the City's grant administration process. The advantages of this approach are that it can encourage buy-in and greater understanding of the drop-in sector environment by the broader community. Plus, expertise in specific areas like finance or labour issues can supplement the knowledge of staff who would normally be doing all reviews and making funding recommendations.

**Move to multi-year funding based on a risk assessment of agencies** (City of Ottawa and United Way).

The City of Ottawa is funding drop-in services through multi-year funding agreements, as is the United Way in Toronto. B.C. Housing is considering multi-year funding agreements for their drop-in services. The advantages and disadvantages of multi-year funding were reviewed above and warrant consideration for funding drop-in agencies in Toronto.

**Conduct in-depth site visits as a component of an initial assessment of agencies and on-going monitoring of services** (United Way and City of Toronto/City of Ottawa hostel services).

In-depth site visits conducted by staff of the funder organization is an idea used by the United Way, by the City of Ottawa and the City of Toronto. This can encourage a shared understanding of the day-to-day challenges faced by drop-in staff and can help funders feel comfortable with the kinds of service that are being provided.

**Reduce application and reporting requirements in "off-years" and consider reduced reporting requirements for agencies receiving very small grant amounts** (United Way and City of Ottawa).

Both the United Way and the City of Ottawa have reduced their application and reporting requirements as part of their multi-year funding approach. So, for example, if three-year funding agreements were in place, in year one the agency would submit a full application package, but in years two and three both their application and reporting requirements would be reduced. This can result in time savings, both on the part of agencies and on the part of City staff. The City of Ottawa also has reduced reporting requirements for agencies receiving very small amounts of funding. Agencies that receive less than \$25,000 from the City or organizations that are run entirely by volunteers have reduced reporting requirements.

**Consider other funding options for agencies not providing services specified for drop-in centres (City of Ottawa and United Way).**

Both the City of Ottawa and the United Way of Greater Toronto have used the approach of working with agencies to help them find alternative funding options if they are not funded as day programs (in Ottawa) or as member agencies by the United Way. Part of this approach has also involved doing some capacity building so that agencies that do not meet funding criteria are assisted with training or other support so that they may qualify for funding in future.

These ideas from other jurisdictions are worthy of consideration and could lead to more rational, stable funding of drop-in services. At the same time, it is apparent that Community Initiatives staff in Toronto are already implementing many improvements to the grant administration process and further changes should build on the strengths of the current process. In this report, we have suggested some principles to guide an effective funding process and some administrative mechanisms which could support the outcomes that both the City and the drop-in sector community wish to achieve.

## 4.0 Review of People Management Strategies

This examination of human resources issues and people management strategies complements the preceding sections on costs, service standards, and funding administration as they relate to the drop-in services sector. The context for this review of people management strategies is that staffing costs represent a significant part of the overall cost of running a drop-in centre and improvements in human resources management can result in greater efficiency and lead to more effective services for homeless or vulnerable individuals.

### 4.1 Overview of Existing Documentation and Data Sources

This look at people management strategies included a review of a number of recent reports, analysis of data collected by the City of Toronto, reflection on input provided through a consultation meeting with the drop-in services sector and consultant-led interviews.

#### 4.1.1 Relevant Documentation

The 2006 literature review commissioned by the City of Toronto, *Drop in Services Sector Literature Review of Good Practices* provided a starting point in reviewing human resources pressures and practices in drop-in centres. The staff role is described as a catalyst for the functions and services which occur within drop-in centres. Further, the report sets out a list of worker characteristics which emerge in the literature as important for outreach and engagement work with vulnerable populations.

The literature on drop-in services also points to the need for agencies to be ready to provide training to staff to enhance their skills on the job. Staff supervision is mentioned as needing to include topics that are particular to drop-in environments (such as maintaining clear boundaries between staff and client/members).<sup>24</sup>

The literature also provides a context for looking at clients/members as staff. Opportunities and challenges facing organizations that adopt this model of participant engagement and empowerment are documented.<sup>25</sup>

The *Toronto Drop-in Network Tool Kit (2007)* was included in the documentation reviewed for this study of people management practices. A major strength of the resource is that it was specifically designed with the human resources and operational issues of Toronto drop-in centres in mind. The tool kit provides many sample templates which organizations can use to create the policy, procedures and documentation required to support staff recruitment, training, communication

---

<sup>24</sup> Crammond et al. 2006:34-35

<sup>25</sup> Crammond et al. 2006: 26

and evaluation in addition to processes and ideas for supporting peer workers, volunteers, and board members.

What was not clear from the consultation process with the sector is how widespread use of this tool kit is to date. With a release date in 2007, it is presumed that many drop-ins may not have had the opportunity to make significant use of this resource yet. Questions to consider over the coming year include: To what extent is this resource being used by drop-in centres, how are they using it and how well does the tool kit respond to the information sharing needs that drop-in centres say they have?

Two other Toronto specific reports, *On the Front Lines of Toronto's Community Service Sector* (2006) and *Cracks in the Foundation* (2003) were reviewed to situate the people management issues and strategies pertaining to the drop-in services sector within the wider community services sector. These reports discuss sector concerns such as job insecurity due to insecurity in agency funding from year to year, inability of many organizations to offer competitive wages and benefits packages or pension plans, the difficulty in recruiting qualified staff to work with clients with complex problems, and the lack of opportunities for advancement.

#### **4.1.2 City Staff Interviews with Executive Directors and Managers**

A key data source for this review of human resources pressures and practices was the results of the interviews conducted by City staff with executive directors and managers of drop-in centres. The range and amount of data coming from these interviews and the quantitative data from the on-line survey of drop-in centres point to a key research challenge in this study: how to deal with the diversity of the drop-in sector in compiling and reporting on findings.

The starting point in exploring the human resources pressures of the drop-in sector was recognition that drop-in centres differ in how they are funded, who they serve, priority services, operating philosophy, hours of service per week, size of client/member group, size of organization, linkages to a larger multi-service organization, whether unionized or not, and in the level of involvement of volunteers and peer workers. To deal with this diversity, the data from the executive director and manager interviews was grouped by size of the centre, using total operating budget as an indicator of the size of the drop-in centre.<sup>26</sup> (See Table 6.)

---

<sup>26</sup> Other ways to group the findings could have included geographic location, type of client group, number of service hours each week, and so forth. Future analysis of this data or other subsets of the interview data could include consideration of variables other than the size of the centre.

**Table 6: Interview Data Grouped by Size of Operating Budget**

<b>Grouping</b>	<b>Size of Operating Budget</b>
Small drop-in centres	Less than \$100,000
Small-medium drop-in centres	\$100,000 to \$199,999
Medium drop-in centres	\$200,000 to \$399,999
Medium-large drop-in centres	\$400,000 to \$699,999
Large drop-in centres	\$700,000+

Five questions from the City staff interviews with executive directors and managers directly pertained to human resources challenges and practices. This set of data is presented in Appendices Four to Eight. The interview questions probed the following topics: top human resource pressure, staff training, staff qualifications, use of relief workers, and activities occurring outside of drop-in hours. For each topic, the main themes are noted and our interest was to look for trends across centres of different sizes. At the outset it is interesting to note that despite the obvious differences that exist between the drop-in centres in terms of size, staffing level and operating conditions, there are many experiences and concerns that are common across the sector that become apparent when human resources issues are explored.

#### **4.1.3 Drop-in Sector Consultation**

A half-day consultation was held on September 25 in Toronto for senior staff from all drop-in centres operating in the City, regardless of their funding source. The purpose of this consultation was to present the early findings of this review of people management strategies and to gather information from participants about the human resources practices in place in their organizations as well as their ideas for further collaboration between drop-in centres in their area or within the drop-in sector more broadly. A summary of participant input from this consultation is included in Appendix One and is reflected in the findings on specific issues identified in this report.

#### **4.1.4 Consultants' Interviews with Senior Management in Drop-in Centres**

Interviews were conducted with representatives of the Toronto Drop-in Network and four drop-in centres as a follow-up to the consultation meeting. The purpose of these interviews was to outreach to a number of centres that were unable to send anyone to the meeting and to speak to several 'leaders' within the sector to obtain their input. These interviews focussed on staff recruitment, retention, performance planning and supervision, volunteer and peer worker support and training, legislative compliance, and staff to client ratios. The results of these interviews are presented in Section 4.3 of this report.

#### **4.1.5 Learning from other Jurisdictions**

Interviews conducted by this consulting team to obtain information about funding and service levels related to drop-in centres also included questions about

human resources issues. Interviews conducted with staff in the City of Ottawa, the Province of British Columbia and New York City touched on human resource management in the drop-in sector.<sup>27</sup> Overall these interviews did not yield significant new information about people management strategies for this sector. A few findings, however, are relevant to the discussion and they are included in Section 4.3.

## 4.2 Findings

The management staff interviewed by the City in the winter of 2006/2007<sup>28</sup>, as well as participants in the September 25 consultation provided ample examples of pressing human resources concerns in the drop-in services sector. These can be summarized as follows:

- Financial pressures including the need for more staff resources, ability to offer job security, competitive salaries and benefits, and cost of living increases; also reported was the need for core funding, multi-year funding, increased staff resources to meet funding reporting requirements and additional capacity to carry out programs and community development.
- Staff turnover and retention
- Staff support, development, and supervision
- Staff to client ratio, staff workload too heavy; staff doing administrative work on their own time
- Burnout and absentee rates due to stress and health issues
- Development of policies and procedures
- Contract negotiations and possible layoffs
- Recruitment and retention of volunteers including board members, and board members not staying long enough to develop the necessary skills to support the drop-in centre
- Reorganization and change management, finding a new space for operation.

The top-of-mind concerns for drop-in centre management are largely captured by the themes that were selected to be the focus of this review of people management strategies. The themes for attention in this report are:

- Recruitment and selection of staff (including the qualifications of staff)

---

<sup>27</sup> Information for the City of Ottawa was obtained through telephone interviews with Christine Moran, Community Funding Consultant, 613-580-2424, ext. 24494, [Christine.Moran@ottawa.ca](mailto:Christine.Moran@ottawa.ca). Information for B.C. was provided by Michael Anhorn, Manager Emergency Shelter Program, B.C. Housing, 604-439-8395, [mianhorn@bchousing.org](mailto:mianhorn@bchousing.org). Information on the City of New York's drop-in program was obtained through an interview with Danielle Minelli, Deputy Director, Outreach, Drop-in and Reception Center Unit, [DMINELLI@DHS.NYC.GOV](mailto:DMINELLI@DHS.NYC.GOV), 212-361-0603.

<sup>28</sup> Refer to Appendix Four for the results of the City's interview on the question of most pressing staffing issues.

- Retention of staff
- Compensation
- Training
- Performance planning and supervision
- Use of relief workers
- Legislative compliance
- Staff to client ratios
- Use of volunteer and peer workers
- Activities outside of drop-in centre hours

The remainder of this section presents the findings on each of these themes.

#### **4.2.1 Recruitment and Selection of Staff**

The literature recognizes the role of social workers and staff trained in psychiatric rehabilitation in work that requires outreach and engagement with homeless and vulnerable individuals. The following characteristics of the desired worker in a drop-in setting are noted in the literature<sup>29</sup>:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Good judgement, intuition, street sense</li> <li>▪ Non-judgemental attitude</li> <li>▪ Team players</li> <li>▪ Flexibility and resilience</li> <li>▪ Realistic expectations</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Altruism: finding reward in the work</li> <li>▪ Sense of humour</li> <li>▪ Creativity and resourcefulness</li> <li>▪ Cultural competency</li> <li>▪ Commitment</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

The City's interview data shows that drop-in centres of all sizes share concerns about finding skilled staff. The difficulty in finding qualified staff was generally linked to the specialized skill set required by staff to handle the job. Interviewees noted that they compete with the entire community health sector and supportive housing sector for qualified staff. While many applications may be received for a job posting, few applicants have the necessary qualifications.

In some centres, the difficulty in recruiting qualified staff was explained by the terms of the employment that were offered. In these cases, the drop-in worker positions were contract positions or part time positions, offering no benefits and poor pay levels.

Appendix Five summarizes the skills and competencies required by drop-in workers that were reported for 34 Toronto drop-in centres. Overall the interpersonal skills, abilities, knowledge and formal training required for positions in drop-in centres was found to be fairly uniform across drop-in centres of different sizes. One exception is that in the smaller drop-in centres which serve food, it appears that staff are as likely to be hands on with kitchen duties as they are with "on the floor" duties, and more likely to be responsible for volunteer management.

---

<sup>29</sup> Crammond et al. 2006: 35

Drop-in centres were found to vary in their recruitment practices with respect to staff needing formal education versus significant relevant job experience or personal qualities and attributes which would be assets to a staff team.

Drop-in centres were found to vary in how willing they were to reach out to new graduates from post-secondary institutions or to students. Some drop-in centre managers feel that hiring students who need to obtain experience in the field is a good idea, especially when salary levels are low and there is little job security. Other managers, however, look for more mature staff, who are roughly in the same age group as their clients and who have relevant work and life experience coming into the position:

*We look for people with mental health and addictions training. We do have some peer positions, but most drop-in positions are professional positions- community college or university degree plus some experience. We sometimes end up with people who are right out of school, but mostly the environment requires new staff to have some experience. We look at getting mature staff because the average age of clients is 40 plus.*

Manager of a Toronto drop-in centre, Oct. 07

Job opportunities within drop-in centres are advertised through the Charity Village web site, through emailing or faxing to community agencies, internal agency promotion, email communication to drop-in sector staff, and the Toronto Drop-in Network (TDIN).

The following human resources practices were noted in the interviews with drop-in centre management and during the sector consultation:

- Try to have a staff team with mixed backgrounds.
- Post ads for weekend workers and part time staff. Use part time positions as a way to hire a diverse staff team.
- Use students just out of school, and don't expect anyone to stay.
- Hire part time staff before hiring full time staff (e.g. summer students).
- Use HRSDC program to hire summer students. Try them out, and move them into part time work in the fall when they go back to school.
- Take it as given that people will move on when they need a higher salary.
- Look for idealistic people.
- Consider hiring newcomers to Canada: often they are highly skilled workers.
- Be prepared to train the right people for the job. Take the approach that staff will need to learn (on the job).
- Recognize that administrative, kitchen, and support staff have different qualities.

- Offer a comprehensive benefits package even if your salary levels are lower than other drop-in centres.
- Use a manager and a member of the drop-in centre staff on the hiring committee (or a member of the board instead of a manager for the smaller centres with hands-on boards of directors).
- Have policies and procedures for hiring documented in the personnel manual, with different processes in place depending on the level of the position.

Opportunities for sector collaboration with respect to recruitment and selection of staff include:

- Improving communication about jobs in the sector through a web site managed by TDIN.
- Increasing sector-wide communication through a listserv of drop-in centre contacts.
- Seeking agreement on what the qualifications of drop-in staff should be, sharing information and moving towards more consistent job descriptions from agency to agency.

#### **4.2.2 Retention of Staff**

High turnover of staff was mentioned as a concern across drop-in centres of various sizes and staffing levels. Various reasons were given to explain the difficulty in retaining staff including the nature of the employment (low salary, contract jobs, no benefits) and a lack of professional development or advancement opportunities. Burnout and vicarious trauma were also mentioned as concerns in drop-in centres of all sizes and in some cases were linked to retention problems or the opposite problem: long term staff becoming desensitized, becoming ill and burning out but unable to move on to other opportunities.

Management in some drop-in centres noted that difficulties can occur for staff when clients work staff off one against the other or when there is tension between community development work and basic services. The existence of a sub-culture that can develop among staff was also mentioned as an issue.

A few drop-in centres specifically noted that retention is not a problem and linked this to their good salary and benefits packages.

In other jurisdictions, retention of staff was identified as an issue for drop-ins in both the City of Ottawa and the Province of British Columbia. In Ottawa, low salaries were identified as the main cause of difficulties in attracting and retaining staff. In British Columbia, our respondent did not identify inadequate salaries as a cause for high turnover, as most drop-in centre staff are unionized and paid reasonably well, particularly when compared with shelter staff. In B.C., staff retention problems were linked more to the physical and emotional stress of the

job. Staff retention was not identified as an issue in New York City, as the drop-in sector is relatively well-funded.

The following human resources practices were mentioned by Toronto respondents as ways to improve staff retention:

- Offer good salary and benefits packages: these are key to retaining staff. Include graduated pension benefits, graduated sick time, long vacation time.
- Have a short term and long term disability program in place: staff coming back to work too quickly after a health crisis can over time affect staff-management relations and ultimately staff retention.
- Make training available for eager staff who express interest in an issue. Ensure budget is adequate to support staff development.
- Provide staff with training opportunities twice a year and training to help long term staff move on. (For example grief counselling after five or more years).
- Provide staff with opportunities to work in a related project (example: have drop-in centre staff attend drop-in network meetings or participate in internal committees).
- Organize team meetings which put drop-in staff in touch with each other and/or with other staff in the agency. Reduces isolation of drop-in workers who are part time staff within a larger organization.
- Encourage drop-in staff to move onto relief work in other parts of the agency.
- Do a lot of management by walking around. See what staff are dealing with, hear their issues, commend them on their work.
- Maintain appropriate staffing levels on the floor. Switch off staff on the floor and rotate responsibilities. Schedule time for programmed activities as well as reactive time. Identify specialized work for each staff person.
- Make sure job opportunities in other departments are available to drop-in centre staff so they have career advancement opportunities and a chance at a higher salary.
- When you have 'high performers who go the extra mile on the job' make sure they also experience flexibility on the job. For example (informally) make time off available for them.
- In smaller drop-in centres with a hands-on board, work to keep the board responsive to staff needs. Have policies and procedures in place to support staff.
- Value the work staff do: people feel good when they feel that their work is respected.
- Give a person a day off every two weeks to lower burn-out rate.

Opportunities for City and sector collaboration related to staff retention include:

- Sharing ideas and strategies among drop-in centres as to how to retain staff in the sector.
- Making the case with funders for a regular percentage increase in salary every year to reward staff and keep up with inflation.
- Ensuring the sector is adequately funded and recognizing the job that drop-in centre staff do.
- Moving towards core funding and multi-year funding would make some jobs more stable.
- Coordinating a sector-wide response to staff who are experiencing trauma. Organizing same day service and supports which can be offered sector-wide (possibly through Toronto Hostels Centre).
- Having trained experts and support groups accessible for staff.
- Having an Employee Assistance Program accessible to drop-in staff across the sector. Consider having the drop-in network try to broker these services for staff.

#### 4.2.3 Compensation

Data from the City of Toronto interviews indicate that the director, supervisor, or manager positions of drop-in centres have a salary range of \$35,000 to \$60,000.<sup>30</sup> Drop-in workers are in the \$30,000 to \$44,000 range.<sup>31</sup> Specialized positions such as harm reduction or addictions workers are in the \$35,000 to \$39,000 range.

Feedback from the interviews and the sector consultation is that wages in the drop-in sector are lower than the community health sector, despite many similarities in the skill sets required of staff. Most jobs in community health settings were reported to offer \$10,000 more in salaries than the drop-in centres. Supportive housing providers were mentioned as paying \$5,000 to \$15,000 more for similarly skilled staff. Lower wages and poorer benefits in the drop-in sector make staff recruitment and retention more difficult than in other sectors and contributes to the poor working conditions that are often associated with the community services sector.<sup>32</sup>

An area for further investigation is whether or not funders are underestimating the cost of staff benefits. As one senior manager in the drop-in sector explained:

*If the compensation package in an agency starts at 16 percent of salary and goes to 22 percent, funders can be stuck at 18 percent, which may be the average...not the ceiling. Funders should not bat an eye if benefits are 20 percent of salary. If an agency goes in too low, for example at 15 percent, then that*

---

<sup>30</sup> 17 agencies reporting.

<sup>31</sup> 20 agencies reporting.

<sup>32</sup> CSPC of Toronto 2006: 24

*should be a concern for the funder. The City should put on a new floor, people should demonstrate that they are investing in their staff.*

#### **4.2.4 Training**

From the literature,<sup>33</sup> staff training is suggested to address the following topics:

- Safety, CPR, first aid, infection control
- Characteristics of the clientele served by the drop-in
- Concurrent disorders
- Criminal justice system
- Income support programs
- Staff-client boundaries
- Community services
- Involuntary hospitalizations
- Client/member rights, confidentiality
- Harm reduction
- De-escalation
- Cultural competency

Discussions about training for drop-in sector workers in Toronto need to take into account the offerings available through the Toronto Hostels Training Centre (THTC). The first THTC course was offered eight years ago and since then a THTC homelessness certificate program was introduced. The two-year-old certificate program is currently geared to be post-hire professional development and drop-in workers are taking advantage of this training to some extent at least.

The Toronto Drop-in Network is a second source of training opportunities for drop-in staff. With the launch of training through the network and its continuing development, there are signs of growing sector interest in training as suggested by this comment from a senior manager in a multi-service organization:

*At the outset, the network paid for the course and the relief time. Now, drop-ins have more relief staff and more recognition of the value of training. They build it into the budget. We are seeing a sea change with respect to the value of training, relief budgets....*

Drop-in centres report that they organize training for staff in a variety of ways, including on-site learning and job shadowing and off-site training through THTC, TDIN, Public Health, Centre for Addictions and Mental Health, Wellesley Institute, RENT, and Hincks Dellcrest. Differences appear across the sector in the apparent frequency of opportunities for training and professional development, from some smaller centres where training appears to be ad hoc or infrequent to larger centres where every staff meeting includes a training component.

Consistent topics for staff training were noted across the drop-in services sector in the City's interview data. These ranged from working with clients with complex

---

<sup>33</sup> Crammond et al. 2006: 35-36

needs, safe food handling, first aid/emergency/crisis response, sensitivity training, anti-oppression training, and managing volunteers. Refer to Appendix Six for a complete listing of training topics mentioned for drop-in centre staff.

Small, medium and large sized drop-in centres reported that they currently have a need for staff training in addictions issues. Smaller drop-in centres also reported a need for staff training on housing as well as sensitivity training for working with “high maintenance clients.” On a related theme, medium to large drop-in centres also reported the need for staff training in mental health issues. While mental health and addictions training was widely reported to be needed, participants at the consultation noted that there are very few training resources of this type focused on the drop-in sector. Furthermore, agencies operating drop-in centres can’t afford to pay for the training that is already available in the community health sector. Existing training geared to mental health professionals needs to be tailored to the drop-in sector.

The sector consultation asked participants if some training should be mandatory. Some participants suggested that CPR, first aid, food handling, crisis intervention, harm reduction, and addictions training are examples of training which could be mandatory. For others, the choice about what training should be mandatory depends on the activities of the drop-in. A caution coming out of the consultation was that mandatory training cannot exist without adequate resources for funding it, including funding for relief staff to fill in when other staff are at training.

A number of challenges and pressures were reported related to staff training including:

- Different levels of formal training between staff
- Huge learning curve for new staff
- Staff not having the skill set to handle the complex needs of client/members
- Lack of ability to provide for staff development.

The following human resources strategies were mentioned by interviewees and participants in the sector consultation:

- Use staff evaluations to develop individual learning plans for each staff member and pay for staff training costs.
- Make use of training opportunities that are available through other drop-in centres.
- Make use of training opportunities that are available through other organizations (TDIN, THTC, Public Health etc).
- Require that all staff have certain types of training (e.g. Food Handlers and Breaking the Chain THTC certificates).
- Offer in-house or external training opportunities on a regular basis.

- One drop-in allowing staff from another drop-in to join their in-house training if time permits.

Opportunities for greater sector collaboration to respond to the challenges of training staff in the drop-in sector include:

- Promoting the development of a community college program for shelter staff and drop-in workers. (The existing community worker program is very general.)
- Using Toronto Hostels Training Centre (cost is reasonable) and other training already available through TDIN, RENT.
- Exploring ways to collaborate with training initiatives emerging from particular drop-in centres. For example: Parkdale Activity and Recreation Centre is willing to partner with other agencies around training for supervisory staff (training on supervision practices) and training on concurrent disorders is starting up at Fred Victor.
- Encouraging staff to make use of the standard training program that is available: Drop-in 101 and 102.
- Looking at opportunities for one person in a drop-in to take a course and then train other staff.
- Organizing an annual or bi-annual conference for the drop-in sector where staff can access training through conference workshops.
- Continuing to develop curricula tailored to the drop-in sector. Develop a variety of tools to assist drop-in centres with training. Consider videos and on-line training as well.
- Identifying service needs of clients that are not being addressed elsewhere (e.g. Getting clients into Post Traumatic Stress Disorder programs is impossible). Then look at how the sector can provide support and training to address these needs.
- Coordinating mobile training (i.e. training that can go to multiple sites).
- Collaborating sector-wide around conflict resolution training, anti-harassment training, first aid/CPR, and food handling.

#### **4.2.5 Performance Planning and Management**

The literature suggests that in drop-in centres, supervision and staff support need to address issues such as engaging participants versus enabling self destructive or other behaviours, staff-client boundaries, legal considerations, harassment and discrimination.<sup>34</sup>

Some drop-in centres included in the City interviews are part of a multi-service organization and are well supported by performance management policies and procedures. Other drop-in centres, however, report not having formal systems in place to support performance management or professional development.

---

<sup>34</sup> Crammond et al. 2006: 35

The following human resource strategies were mentioned:

- Have a formal performance management system in place and a job evaluation process that is related to the compensation package.
- Have a job description for each position. Identify the supervisor for each position.
- Implement an annual performance evaluation system: have a standard template for all employees.
- Implement a system for staff recognition.
- Organize two staff social parties each year.
- Hold special ceremonies for long service employees.
- Have policies to support professional development, vacation and retirement planning.
- Dedicate 1 percent of payroll (\$250 per person approx) to professional development. Pay 50 percent of tuition upon completion of a course.
- Organize tours of all agency sites and the neighbourhood for new staff as part of orientation.
- Implement a complaints procedure.
- Have staff sign a document that affirms that they understand the drop-in centre's safety guidelines.
- Develop an anti-discrimination policy and guidelines for appropriate behaviour along with a volunteer manual.
- Unionize part time staff if possible. It helps to codify what the agency needs to do with respect to performance management and staff support. The collective agreement will spell out the disciplining process and the requirements for performance review. The tools for performance management with full time staff do not really work with part time staff.

The following opportunities for sector collaboration were mentioned:

- Using the Network as a means for looking at organizational issues such as performance management.
- Identifying how smaller drop-in centres can learn and benefit from what larger ones have already done in terms of performance management systems.
- Trying to better understand how smaller organizations are having difficulty meeting the obligations of funders and responding to these difficulties.

#### **4.2.6 Use of Relief Workers**

Some drop-in centres in the study actively use and support the concept of relief workers and others do not, preferring instead to put relief dollars towards the hiring of full time staff.

The following benefits of having relief staff were discussed in the interviews with executive directors and managers.<sup>35</sup> Relief workers:

- Bring different ideas, skills and abilities to the program
- Are a pool to draw from when regular staff leave
- Can help with the workload of regular staff
- Provide a chance for those who are new to the sector to test out the job
- Can free up time of the regular staff for more programming or networking

Pressures associated with using relief staff were noted to be:

- Offering only occasional shifts means the relief staff have no significant commitment to the agency
- Having limited resources to train relief workers
- Needing infrastructure in place to manage relief workers
- Not being able to offer more regular hours
- Needing relief workers to be equipped to deal with housing issues
- Lack of funding for relief staff
- Using relief workers leading to a sense of disconnectedness and a lack of continuity in developing rapport with clients
- Finding recruitment and retention of relief staff is difficult when the agency can only offer a short shift (2 hours a day) or is unable to guarantee hours

While management of drop-in centres of all sizes specifically noted the need for a centralized pool of relief workers, barriers to having a shared relief pool were also identified. These barriers include unions and collective agreements, different populations served across the sector, lack of clarity about who would pay for coordination of the relief workers, and whether someone working in multiple drop-in centres could realistically integrate with all the different staff teams. Agencies also noted that they need relief workers who are already skilled as they cannot afford to offer much training. Planning for relief workers also means planning for training opportunities and implementing a performance appraisal system for them.

#### **4.2.7 Legislative Compliance**

The interviews conducted with drop-in centre management following the consultation meeting asked respondents about the policies and procedures they had in place to ensure compliance with relevant legislation.

One drop-in centre reported that the coordinator position in their organization is responsible for policies related to the building as well as health and safety, public

---

<sup>35</sup> Refer to Appendix Seven for a summary of the results of the City's interviews on the question of relief workers.

health, fire safety, kitchen safety, and hot and cold weather alerts. This position is in addition to their drop-in manager position and does not have a client caseload. Their duty is to the program as a whole. They are a back up for floor staff and also organize and train volunteers.

Other comments received about legislative compliance:

- Having a manual of human resource practices is a best practice. Spell out all relevant practices, vacation time, sick leave and so on.
- The treasurer follows the employment law. The board president is responsible for other areas of compliance. But there are some areas where we have no clue....privacy legislation as it pertains to volunteers for example.
- All kitchen staff require food handling certificate.
- The agency has a health and safety committee.
- One area for increased sector collaboration would be to look at TDIN as a vehicle for sharing information on policy areas and what we went through to arrive at these policies. This sharing could be informal and driven by the needs of those at the table.

#### **4.2.8 Staff to Client Ratios/Staffing Levels**

This review of people management practices has not identified any clear direction from the drop-in sector on appropriate staff to client ratios for different kinds of activities within drop-in centres.

*As a drop-in, we have a minimum number of staff “on the floor” at all times and this doesn’t change whether we are full or half empty.*

*Volunteers are helpful, but do not replace our minimum staff levels.*

Manager of a Toronto drop-in centre, Oct. 07

The sector interviews and consultations found that some centres report that it is difficult to manage their drop-in with current staff to client ratios and it is hard to run any programming. Smaller centres report that a lot of staff time is taken up with kitchen related duties, which leaves little opportunity for one-on-one engagement with client/members. The life crises that happen in drop-in centres can change the whole dynamic of the day-to-day activities. Day-to-day duties become hard to deal with when staff and client/members are dealing with crisis issues. This has an impact on what an effective staff to client ratio would be.

From data provided by the City from the survey of drop-in centres, a staff to client ratio was calculated based on the approximate number of clients per day, and the range across the centres was from 1:3 to 1:110. This data is deemed to not be very reliable because it does not take into account the types of activities or levels of service occurring at the drop-in centre, how long people stay in the centre at one time, or peak times of the day, week or month.

Feedback from the consultation provided some insight into why a wide variation in staff to client ratios may exist. Different kinds of work have caseloads of different sizes. Traditionally housing staff have worked with large numbers of people at once, and a trusteeship program may have one worker for 30 clients. An addiction counselor may have many open files but within that caseload, the clients can vary widely in how much support they need, in particular if they are on a waiting list for a residential treatment program. A large meal program may run with one staff and many volunteers, and many client/members may be only using the drop-in at meal time.

The particular situation (physical layout) of a drop-in centre can also affect the staff to client ratio: operating in a basement has challenges that a main floor or storefront location does not. Variations in temperature, client participation and type of client will also affect what staff to client ratio is needed.

A more thorough examination of staff to client ratios in the future could ask questions such as how many staff (or staff plus volunteers plus peer workers) does a drop-in centre need to operate safely? Or what are maximum and minimum staffing levels to operate safely, giving consideration to the responsibility carried by staff and opportunities to offer creative programming? While volunteers can rarely replace the need for staff, how does the use of volunteers in a drop-in affect the staff to client ratios needed to safely operate the centre? What planning tool could be available to help drop-in centres evaluate their human resource needs?

#### **4.2.9 Use of Volunteers and Peer Workers**

Volunteers and peer workers are additional human resources commonly associated with drop-in centres.

##### **Volunteers**

Looking at data from 31 centres on the number of staff and volunteers used for drop-in operations, a significant reliance on volunteers becomes apparent. This data set showed 140 staff full-time equivalents (FTEs) and the equivalent of 96 volunteer FTEs.<sup>36</sup> While some drop-in centres have not reported any volunteer assistance, others report the equivalent of 10 FTEs or more in volunteer hours.

While the Toronto drop-in sector may appear to rely heavily on volunteers, a comparison with Ottawa shows that the seven drop-in centres funded by that City have a total FTE staff count of 40.8 and have volunteer contributions that equal 88.9 FTEs, suggesting that proportionally drop-in centres in Ottawa rely even more heavily on volunteers for operations than do centres in Toronto. Our interview respondent in Ottawa identified the coordination of volunteers as one of the key human resources issues facing drop-ins. Because this can be a time-

---

<sup>36</sup> The formula used to convert volunteer hours into full-time equivalents is from Statistics Canada's *National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating*. The formula is based on 40 hours per week for 48 weeks per year. (Region of Halton, 2006)

consuming but critical function, many of the centres have identified the need for a volunteer coordinator over and above their current staffing levels.

Significant reliance on volunteers in the drop-in sector points to the issue of the economic value of volunteers in drop-in work. If volunteers were not contributing to this sector, what would be the additional cost to the City and other funders to ensure that drop-in services are available at their current levels?

Small and some medium-sized drop-in centres in Toronto mentioned pressures related to operating drop-ins with volunteers. Volunteers can be unreliable and it is impossible to secure a long-term commitment from them. The turnover rate is high. Staff resources are needed to coordinate and manage volunteers and volunteers need to be trained for drop-in work. Volunteers can put a strain on the budget. One centre reported that in terms of volunteer recognition, the most valued gesture was giving volunteers TTC tokens. Overall reliance on volunteers can mean a lack of consistency of service in the drop-in centre.

In many drop-in centres volunteers are former service users. Volunteering is part of their own healing process or may be a way for the individual to give something back to the community that helped him or her. Some individuals volunteer at drop-in centres to fulfill work hours required by Ontario Works.

Other drop-in centres make use of volunteers from the surrounding neighbourhood and local faith communities. One manager noted that drop-in centres seem to fall into two camps: those who use volunteers from the local neighbourhood and those whose volunteers are former service users. Staff may be choosing to keep the volunteer focus on former service users (as the drop-in centre is a safe and welcoming space for them to develop their skills and experience a sense of empowerment), but the result is the agency loses a good opportunity to build good will and good relations within the neighbourhood.

The following human resource practices were noted with respect to managing volunteers:

- Have opportunities for volunteer recognition.
- Place volunteers in jobs where they do not have to enforce the rules with client/members or give out resources, such as clothing.
- Schedule more volunteers than you think you will need to compensate for those who miss their shifts.
- Organize agency training for all volunteers and include drop-in centre volunteers in that. The result is the volunteers come to know about the agency and its values, anti-oppression training, as well as program specific training. Train volunteers in conflict resolution.
- Have a designated staff (other than the drop-in coordinator) who is responsible for calling and scheduling volunteers. The same staff

person could be the volunteer liaison during their shift. Remove these responsibilities from the drop-in coordinator or manager.

- Make sure volunteers have a chance to feel valued and know they are needed. Make sure they have opportunities to meet one another. Be intentional about showing appreciation for volunteers.
- Use a volunteer orientation and one-on-one meeting with drop-in coordinator to screen applicants for volunteer positions.
- Have job descriptions for each volunteer position in the drop-in centre.
- Be prepared to specifically recruit for volunteer and board members with particular skills (e.g. fundraising).

Opportunities for sector collaboration in supporting volunteers include:

- Collaborating around volunteer training
- Organizing joint volunteer appreciation events
- Using a network website to let volunteers know about other opportunities in drop-in centres or to help recruit volunteers for specific centres
- Collaborating with other drop-in centres to train client/members for volunteer positions, within a context of leadership development among client/members.

### **Peer Workers**

Feedback from the interview and consultation process suggests that the drop-in sector is divided on the use of peer workers and how to manage this resource in the sector. While management in one drop-in centre may bluntly say it is dangerous to hire a peer worker who is a previous service user at the same drop-in, another manager at a drop-in will say “we hire from our own membership.” Former service users may be hired in part time, full time or casual positions and this practice is tied to the agency’s philosophy about employment, community development and the value of the drop-in centre.

Concerns about hiring peer workers from a drop-in centre’s membership include the individual being pressured to break rules or go out partying with members. This can be alleviated if peer positions are recruited from another setting or neighbourhood. Human resource pressures when hiring client/members relate to increased costs: in terms of time for recruitment, supervision, support, salary, and training needs.

The literature suggests that client/members as staff can add the following dimensions to the operation of the drop-in: <sup>37</sup>

- Knowledge of the system of services for homeless and vulnerable individuals
- Knowledge of street life

---

<sup>37</sup> Crammond et al. 2006: 26

- Alternative approaches to the work of the drop-in
- Ability to engage with participants and offer peer support
- Positive role modelling
- More tolerance of unusual behaviours and more empathy for individuals with mental health issues
- Opportunity to fight stigma.

Challenges in hiring former client/members include:

- Having an individual's former status as homeless revealed can lead to discrimination
- Making the shift from participating in a drop-in to being on staff can be difficult for the client/member to do
- Re-negotiating personal relationships with other client/members can also be difficult when those relationships are not appropriate for staff-client/member interaction.

A number of human resource practices pertaining to peer workers were mentioned during the executive director interviews and consultation. These include:

- Planning for educational and training opportunities for the staff team to promote acceptance of client/members as staff
- Providing one-on-one supervision and offering support to allow the former client/member to discuss challenges
- Allowing accommodations in work responsibilities to be made to reflect the needs and situation of the peer worker.

#### **4.2.10 Activities Outside of Drop-in Hours**

Drop-in centres across all size categories reported a variety of administrative, food service, client service, organizational, and staff development activities that take place in addition to the actual services and activities of the drop-in centre. In many centres, these activities take place when the drop-in is not open. (See Appendix Eight for more detail.)

Data from the City's interviews with executive directors and managers and the survey data included 34 interview responses. The analysis of the survey data compiled by the City suggests that drop-in centres dedicate from 0 to 6 hours per day for the planning and follow-up tasks related to operating drop-in centres. A minority of drop-in centres (3 out of 34 in the survey) report that all of their preparation and follow-up work is done during drop-in hours. From the analysis of the survey data, administrative functions were found to account for less than 10 percent of total drop-in operating budgets.

Strategies mentioned by drop-in centre executive directors and managers for managing total workload associated with running a drop-in centre:

- Hold staff meetings in an area that is accessible to the drop-in space, allowing it to stay open.
- Schedule daily hours 'off the floor' for the staff or schedule one day per week that each drop-in staff is 'off the floor' to take care of preparation, follow-up and other activities required by the organization.
- Have staff rotate between 'office duties' and 'on the floor' duties during their shift.
- Shorten drop-in hours to allow staff to do their follow up and preparation work.

Opportunities for City and sector collaboration that were mentioned include:

- Have the City (and other funders) reduce reporting requirements. Consider less frequent reporting, reducing the amount of data required, looking at the relevancy of data required for reporting, and looking at the policy relevancy of the data requested.
- Work with the City to provide agencies with the tools to easily collect and track the data that is required of them. (E.g. a signing in tool and web based tools to facilitate data collection and reporting). Give consideration to the reality that not all drop-in centres collect data the same way.
- Move away from year to year (project) funding and work towards a more simplified application process.

### **4.3 Summary Considerations**

This review of people management strategies was largely based on a series of interviews and a consultation process. While the results of the review do not constitute a comprehensive inventory of current practices in human resource management in the drop-in services sector, the findings do point to a wide range of staffing issues of immediate concern to the sector. Examples of current practices noted in this report span the themes of recruiting and retaining staff, performance management, compensation, training, and the use of volunteers, peer workers and relief staff.

Dozens of ideas for increased sector collaboration are noted, as are ideas for increased collaboration between the City and the drop-in sector. Key opportunities for City-sector collaboration include:

- Sharing the findings and ideas contained in this report
- Seeking to widely distribute the tool kit and encourage drop-in centres to make use of the resources
- Developing more simplified application and reporting processes for drop-in centres applying for and receiving City funds and consider online tools for data collection

- Continuing to support the Toronto Drop-in Network as a vehicle for coordinating training and some human resource activities
- Facilitating the development and training of a pool of relief workers
- Supporting the funding of drop-in centres to improve staff salary and benefits packages and make them more competitive within the community services sector
- Exploring the feasibility of more precise data collection on staff to client ratios, with a particular focus on the ratio of staff (and volunteers) to clients required to ensure safe operation of drop-in centres and minimum and maximum staffing levels
- Assessing the feasibility of developing planning tools which assist drop-in centres in determining their human resource needs.

The Toronto Drop-in Network is keenly interested in furthering the development of the drop-in sector. This includes facilitating opportunities for increased collaboration within the sector. Many of the ideas expressed in this report aimed at responding to human resources pressures appear to be within the scope of TDIN's mandate to consider. Given adequate access to funding and resources, the network could be in a position, in the future, to support or spearhead some of the sector initiatives identified through this research process.

## 5.0 Service Level Analysis

An analysis of service levels was undertaken in an attempt to assess the impact of different staffing levels on the nature of activities that can be undertaken in Toronto's drop-in centres. Staffing costs represent a significant proportion of the budgets of most drop-in centres – on average, 62 percent of the total budget of the drop-in centres included in this analysis and over 90 percent of the budgets of some centres.<sup>38</sup> Analyzing the impacts of differing levels of service may provide some guidance to the question of what services can be expected at different levels of drop-in centre funding.

### 5.1 Approach

The analysis was based on data collected from 23 drop-in centres that provided sufficient information to calculate staff to client ratios and to analyze their impact on five variables. The starting point was recognition that the staff to client ratios used in this analysis are only a rough approximation of the actual ratios in a drop-in centre at any given time.

To calculate the ratio, we averaged the number of weekly participants in the drop-in by the number of days the drop-in was open and then divided that number by the total number of full-time equivalent staff. So, for example, if a drop-in centre had 200 participants per week and was open five days a week and had two full-time staff, they would have a staff to client ratio of 1:20 ( $200/5=40/2=20$ ). This does not mean that each time 20 clients are in the drop-in centre there is one staff person with them. However, it does provide a consistent way to compare staffing levels from one centre to the next.

This analysis does not include volunteers, although it is recognized that volunteers play a very significant role in many drop-in centres.

The following hypotheses were considered in this analysis:

- The higher the staff to client ratio, the more services are provided.
- Clients with greater health and housing needs are served in drop-in centres with higher staff to client ratios.
- Drop-in centres with higher staff to client ratios will have more specialized staff providing more intensive services.
- Drop-in centres with higher staff to client ratios will have higher total costs per client.

The analysis of service levels at four different staff to client ratios and sector reaction to this component of work are discussed in Section 5.3.

---

<sup>38</sup> Note that the average budget in any sub-group of centres (sorted by total budget) tends to be higher than the median because each sub-group contains at least one centre with a much higher than average ratio of staff cost to total budget.

The City's Streets to Homes policy calls upon drop-in centres to play a significant role in encouraging people to move to permanent accommodation and to support people who have made changes in their housing situations. This section also includes an analysis of the role played by drop-in centre staff to help clients obtain permanent housing and to retain it once they have moved in. This analysis is based on the results of executive director and manager interviews conducted by City staff. Specific issues reviewed include:

- Time spent by staff on providing housing support services to clients
- Nature of activities undertaken to assist clients to find housing and to keep their housing
- Barriers encountered by drop-in centres to assisting clients to find and keep their housing.

The findings of this analysis are outlined in Section 5.4.

The following discussion situates the issue of staff to client ratios and services levels in a broader context.

## **5.2 Lessons from Other Jurisdictions**

The literature review conducted for the City of Toronto found that:

*...the literature does not specify good practice staff to client/member ratios for drop-in settings. However, the literature on outreach services and individual support informs us about the high level of staffing needed to provide support to vulnerable homeless individuals in order to help them find housing. Morse identifies that a ratio of one staff to ten clients is needed for street outreach programs to effectively help vulnerable homeless people find and maintain housing.<sup>39</sup>*

This confirms our own limited review of drop-in centre funding and staffing in other jurisdictions.

In the U.K., Homeless Link is the national membership organization for frontline homelessness agencies with a mission to be a catalyst to help bring an end to homelessness. In January 2002, Homeless Link convened a meeting of interested London agencies to consider appropriate services and staffing needs for those serving homeless clients with multiple needs. Their work reported on four stages of work with homeless people in the process of resettlement and included some information about staff to client ratios for these kinds of activities.<sup>40</sup> Staff to client ratios in this study varied from 1:5 identified by one

---

<sup>39</sup> Crammond et al. 2006: 34

<sup>40</sup> Bevan and van Doorn 2002: 20-26

agency as needed in emergency accommodation, to 1:10 for casework in day centres serving people with multiple needs to 1:25 for outreach activities (assuming 10 clients are in crisis at any one time). It should be noted that these ratios were identified as what would be appropriate service levels, and not necessarily what was being provided by these homelessness agencies.

In the City of Ottawa, specific staff to client ratios are not used to determine funding of day programs in drop-in centres. Nor does the City measure the number of clients per day, but rather receives reports on the number of client visits to specific drop-in programs. We were able to estimate average ratios of staff to clients by dividing the number of client visits per day in 2005 by the number of staff-year equivalents in that year. This calculation yields an average staff to client ratio for the seven day programs funded by the City of Ottawa of 1:28, varying for individual day programs in drop-in centres between 1:8 and 1:114.<sup>41</sup>

Contacts in other jurisdictions did not yield any further information on staff to client ratios.

### **5.3 Analysis of Four Staffing Ratios**

Using data compiled from the City of Toronto, a sample of 23 drop-in centres was clustered into four categories:

- Centres with a staff to client ratio of 1:4 to 1:12
- Centres with a ratio of 1:13 to 1:30
- Centres with a ratio of 1:31 to 1:65
- Centres with a ratio of 1:66 or more.

In creating these clusters and assessing the services offered in each grouping, several limitations were apparent in the interpretation of the data. For instance, evidence of what enhanced services were offered had to be inferred from survey questions about common referrals and the delivery mechanism for commonly mentioned services. Concerns emerged about whether survey respondents were using common definitions for what constitutes case management, housing support or housing help services. Also, there appeared to be inconsistencies in agencies' approaches to describing their client group in terms of health status.

#### **5.3.1 Findings**

Table 7 summarizes selected characteristics of drop-in centres at four staffing levels.

---

<sup>41</sup> City of Ottawa 2006. The number of annual client visits was divided by 365 to calculate an average number of clients per day and the number of total annual staff hours was divided by 48 weeks per year and 40 hours per week to calculate annual FTEs.

**Table 7: Selected Characteristics of Drop-ins at Four Staffing Levels**

Variable	Staff to Client Ratios			
	1:12 or less	1:13 to 1:30	1:30 to 1:65	1:66 or greater
<b># of meals (includes snacks)</b>	97 to 4150 depending on the centre	31 to 2,780 depending on the centre	90 to 5,524 depending on the centre	280 to 1,388 depending on the centre
<b>Cost per hour</b>	\$24 to \$500	\$86 to \$452	\$82 to \$658	\$85 to \$647
<b>Basic services</b>	5/5 offer meals/ snacks 3/5 offer an address for mail to be received 5/5 offer a phone 1/5 provides laundry facilities 2/5 have showers 5/5 offer safe place to meet others/discuss personal challenges 5/5 have opportunities for members to participate in operation of the centre	6/6 centres offer meals /snacks 2/6 offer an address for mail to be received 5/6 offer a phone 3/6 provide laundry facilities 3/6 have showers 6/6 offer a safe place to meet others/discuss personal challenges 5/6 report opportunities for members to participate in the operation of the centre.	7/7 centres offer meals /snacks 5/7 offer an address for mail to be received 6/7 offer a phone 2/7 provide laundry facilities 2/7 have showers 7/7 offer a safe place to meet others/discuss personal challenges 5/7 have identified opportunities for members to participate in the operation of the centre.	4/5 centres offer meals /snacks 2/5 offer an address for mail to be received 3/5 offer a phone 2/5 provide laundry facilities 2/5 have showers 5/5 offer a safe place to meet others/discuss personal challenges 4/5 have identified opportunities for members to participate in the operation of the centre.
<b>Enhanced Services</b>	(data available for 4 centres) 3/4 offer case management 2/4 offer education/training 2/4 offer employment supports 4/4 offer social/recreational supports 4/4 offer housing support 3/4 offer housing help 2/4 offer a nursing clinic 3/4 offer mental health support 2/4 offer additions support 1/4 helps with income support 3/4 offer financial counselling 1/4 offer harm reduction services 1/4 helps with ID 1/4 offers trusteeship services 1/4 provides withdrawal management support 1/4 has a social enterprise	(data available for 5 centres) 2/5 offer case management 2/5 offer education/training 3/5 offer employment supports 2/5 offer social/recreational supports 3/5 offer housing support 3/5 offer housing help 3/5 offer a nursing clinic 3/5 offer mental health support 2/5 help with income support 1/5 offer financial counselling 3/5 offer harm reduction services 1/5 offers trusteeship services 1/5 provides withdrawal management support	(data available for 5 centres for item 1 and 4 centres for rest) 4/5 offer case management 1/4 offers education/training 2/4 offer employment supports 3/4 offer social/recreational supports 4/4 offer housing support 2/4 offer housing help 1/4 offer a nursing clinic 1/3 offer mental health support 1/4 offer additions support 3/4 help with income support 1/4 offer harm reduction services 2/4 helps with ID	(data available for 3 centres) 1/3 offer case management 1/3 offer education/training 2/3 offer social/recreational supports 2/3 offer housing help 1/3 offers a nursing clinic 1/3 offers mental health support 1/3 offer support related to additions 1/3 offers a doctor

Across all four staffing levels, there was no apparent pattern in the number of meals served that could be linked to the staff to client ratio. Some centres in all four categories were serving thousands of meals and snacks per week and others, by comparison, were limited in their food service.

The cost to operate was found to be wide ranging within each category, from under \$100 per hour to operate to \$400 or more per hour. No pattern was observed that relates to staff to client ratios.

Two common threads that were noted related to opportunities provided at drop-in centres across all categories. They are:

- Drop-in centres are offering a safe space to meet and a place where participants can discuss personal challenges
- The majority of drop-in centres report offering opportunities for participant involvement.

Perhaps most surprising was the finding that there is no consistent provision of basic services among centres in any of the four categories. In other words the five basic services (meals, showers, laundry, phone, and an address to receive mail) were not found to be consistently provided among drop-in centres in any of the four categories.

With respect to enhanced services, the data compiled for this analysis suggests that centres with a staff to client ratio in the 1:12 category provide a greater variety of enhanced services than do drop-in centres with staff to client ratios in the vicinity of 1:66 or more. Also, a greater proportion of drop-in centres operating with a staff to client ratio around 1:12 were providing at least some enhanced services as compared to centres with a ratio at the other end of the spectrum.

In revisiting the four hypothesis set out for this analysis, the following conclusions were reached.

Hypothesis 1: *The higher the staff to client ratio, the more services are provided.*

To some extent this appears to be true and is especially noticeable in the number and variety of enhanced services offered through the drop-in centres.

Hypothesis 2: *Clients with greater health and housing needs are served in drop-in centres with higher staff to client ratios.*

Due to a lack of consistency in how client/member groups are described in terms of health, ability/disability, prevalence of addictions and need for support, it was impossible to substantiate this assumption. Also we recognize that for a variety of

reasons individuals may go to two or more drop-in centres for services and opportunities.

Hypothesis 3: *Drop-in centres with higher staff to client ratios will have more specialized staff providing more intensive services.*

There is some evidence to suggest that drop-in centres operating with ratios in the 1:12 and 1:13 to 1:30 categories are more likely to have staff positions that include addictions workers, housing workers, case workers, support workers and harm reduction workers. There are, however, examples of drop-in centres in the 1:66 category with housing workers and case management services available.

Hypothesis 4: *Drop-in centres with higher staff to client ratios will have higher total costs per client.*

The data compiled for this analysis does not give a clear indication of a relationship between staff to client ratios and costs per client served. This hypothesis could not be confirmed.

Reaction to the service levels analysis from participants at the November 14 consultation provided the following insights:

- Some individuals are concerned about lack of consistency in service across the sector.
- Agency decision-making about services to offer includes an analysis of what is already available in the community. Agencies do not want to duplicate great services that already exist for clients (e.g. phone service).
- In assessing staff to client ratios, there is a need to look at the TYPE of activity. As some activities need dedicated staff, look at ratios in discrete pieces such as what is required to maintain a safe space, access laundry, and access programs or services.
- In serving this target population, remember that people self select and some can't go anywhere else. In other words, there is a lack of predictability about who will be at what drop-in centre.
- The City could at least fund what we all do, and that is to provide a safe and secure space. Focus on what is required to create a safe environment.

### **5.3.2 Sector Perspectives on Assessing Service and Staffing Levels**

The consultation process provided an opportunity to explore a number of issues related to service and staffing levels with representatives from the drop-in sector. Through small group discussions, participants considered:

- Factors that influence service levels
- What services can be provided at different staffing levels

- Strengths and weaknesses of using staff to client ratios to determine service levels
- Other ways to determine service levels.

Participants identified the following factors that influence service levels in drop-in centres:

- Characteristics of the location and physical space, including building ownership, determines how much freedom there is to implement, change, or upgrade services
- Access to specialized staff
- Mandate, history, and philosophy of an agency
- Stability of funding, and whether funding is for core services or projects
- Extent and nature of partnerships
- Public and neighbourhood perception of the drop-in centre

When asked to comment on what services can be provided at different staffing levels, participants noted at lower staffing levels referrals can be made, but that sufficient time is needed. Similarly services can be enhanced through partnerships, but these take time to develop and manage. On a practical note, the number and needs of client/members can vary from day to day and week to week: these variations have an impact on what services can be offered at any one time.

A starting point in thinking about service levels is to define how many staff are needed to provide basic services, manage the floor, and ensure a safe environment. From this base, additional services can be built in along with the required staffing.

Some participants felt that using staff to client ratios as a way to determine service levels provides some insight into the issue. The concept of staff to client ratios appeared to be most relevant for assessing the number of staff needed on the floor at any given moment to ensure a safe environment. It would reflect the minimum level of staff required for a maximum number of client/members.

Use of staff to client ratios, however, does not reflect the impact of having access to specialized staff delivering enhanced services. Higher staffing levels are required to address complex issues among client/members. Further, staff to client ratios are not a vehicle for looking at the role that volunteers play in the operation of centre or the impact of community development and member leadership in drop-in centres.

In thinking about appropriate staffing levels, some participants noted the need for a minimum of three staff to operate the drop-in with additional staff at a staff to client ratio of 1:25 to offer (and monitor) additional services such as showers and

laundry. There is acknowledgment that without the professional staff, the doors of a drop-in will not open.

A strong case was made for approaching the question of service levels from a starting point of safety and security combined with food security. From a holistic view of what a safe environment means (accountable, inclusive, accessible, and responsive to health issues), additional services and options can be added on to meet other needs of the target population.

## **5.4 Analysis of Housing-Related Activities**

Using data gathered by the City of Toronto on budgets and staffing activities of drop-in centres, we have examined the proportion of staff time that is spent providing housing supports. As specified in the glossary of terms for the drop-in survey, housing supports were defined as “direct link to listings and landlord liaising” and were not intended to include formal Housing Help services that were covered under “referrals.” For all centres where complete data are available, with only two exceptions, staff spend some component of their daily activity assisting clients with housing supports. On average staff spend 10 percent of their daily activity on housing supports, with a range from 2 percent to 28 percent of staff time. The cost of providing housing supports in staff time averages \$16,667 for all centres or an average cost of 67 cents per program participant.

Interview data from the interviews conducted by the City of Toronto with executive directors of drop-in centres identify the following kinds of activities are undertaken directly to assist clients to find suitable, permanent housing:

- Accompany clients to view units or search apartments
- Assist with lease signing and move-in
- Provide weekly postings of housing options and information about housing help
- Identify barriers to housing and develop plans to deal with issues
- Help with applications for subsidized housing
- Undertake matching for home sharing
- Provide education on tenant rights and responsibilities
- Advocate on behalf of clients with landlords
- Apply for Community Start-up Benefit from OW and ODSP
- Negotiate repayment for arrears
- Access the trusteeship program
- Counsel and encourage clients to regroup and refocus when obstacles are encountered
- Access rent loans through the Rent Bank
- Provide TTC tickets so clients can visit prospective apartments
- Provide information about the Furniture Bank
- Offer assistance with correspondence and mail address.

In addition to these direct activities undertaken by staff, they frequently make referrals and connections to other agencies in order to assist clients to access housing. Referrals are made to:

- Housing Connections
- Community housing agencies
- Special needs agencies
- Housing help
- Legal services
- Central Neighbourhood House, Street Survivors Program
- Streets to Homes Program
- Youthlink, Ecuhome and Shelters

Some clients of drop-in centres are already housed and staff undertake a range of activities in order to assist them to keep their housing. Direct actions taken by staff include:

- Offering trustee service
- Organizing direct payment of rent
- Contacting OW/ODSP
- Organizing start-up allowance
- Encouraging clients to keep coming to the drop-in
- Making medical services available to deal with mental health and addictions
- Providing basic necessities, such as dishes, furniture, food, and clothing so that funds need not be diverted from paying rent
- Counselling clients through the transition of accessing housing
- Negotiating social or contractual concerns for clients
- Offering community kitchens
- Providing access to phone, fax, laundry, shower, computers
- Offering programs to teach people about nutrition, health and safety
- Mediating and advocating with landlords
- Providing public education
- Developing life skills
- Taking people to medical appointments
- Giving people a positive environment, optimism, a sense of worth
- Attending the rental tribunal with clients
- Providing odd jobs and seasonal work to supplement incomes
- Following up with past clients on monthly basis.

Staff also refer clients to housing follow-up services, recreation and skill development services, legal services, and support services such as the Rent Bank, Winter Warmth Fund and Share the Warmth.

Executive directors were asked to identify what barriers existed for their staff in assisting their clients to access housing or remain housed. Of the responses

received from 34 executive directors and managers, the most common responses pertained to structural factors linked to the lack of affordable or appropriate housing (19) or to the lack of supportive housing (11) or support services (9). However, fully one-half of the respondents (17) identified staffing and funding constraints as an issue that prevented them from offering as much housing support as they would like. In addition to not being able to assist clients with finding housing, executive directors also identified the lack of follow-up with clients after they are housed as a key problem. One respondent noted that there is not enough recognition of the resources and supports that some people need to maintain housing – giving them a room is not enough to keep them housed. Yet it costs much less to provide support workers to keep people housed than to care for people who have lost their housing.

Other barriers that were identified by executive directors include resistance on the part of clients, often due to the client's mental health or addiction, as well as a bias against homeless clients in the community and among landlords. Only two drop-in centres identified that housing was not a key focus of their drop-in centre.

## **5.5 Summary Considerations**

The service level analysis, supplemented by a sector consultation, did not yield definitive information about the impact of staffing levels on the activities in drop-in centres which can be expected at different levels of funding. It did, however, point to a number of themes which provide a context for assessing service and staffing levels:

- Drop-in centres need and benefit from professional staff. In planning for safe drop-in centre operations, a minimum number of staff needs to be available to work the floor.
- Solely looking at staff to client ratios obscures the role that volunteers play in the operations of many drop-in centres.
- There are minimum requirements for drop-in centres to operate safely. One approach to assessing staffing and service levels is to identify what is required to offer a safe space and food security to client/members and then add more specialized services targeted to different client populations on top of this base level.
- An assessment of service levels within drop-in centres needs to reflect the opportunities and limitations within the drop-in environment related to assisting client/members to find, secure and retain their housing. The need for ongoing supports to many clients of drop-in centres to maintain stable housing is a planning and resource consideration that extends beyond the drop-in services sector.

## 6.0 Discussion and Concluding Remarks

The drop-in sector is a critical component of the City of Toronto's response to homelessness and plays a key role in fulfilling Council's direction to find permanent housing solutions and to help people retain their housing. Drop-in centres offer above all else a safe, secure environment, creating a sense of "place" for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. They can often serve as the point of entry for linking people to other needed supports and services. They combat social isolation and social exclusion which can characterize the lives of individuals living below the poverty line and without easy access to stable housing.

The City of Toronto provides approximately \$2 million in funding for drop-in services. Yet, for those agencies whose budgets were included in this study, other funding sources accounted for over \$8 million. This means that for each \$1.00 expended from City funds for drop-in services, \$5.00 in total services is made available to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Over and above the budgets of these drop-in centres is the role played by countless volunteers who supplement the services of paid staff. For the centres included in this study, the total paid staff of 140 full-time equivalents (FTEs) was supplemented by the equivalent of 96 volunteer FTEs. Again, the power of a dollar in City funding is magnified by the extensive use of volunteers in the drop-in sector.

The major purpose of this study was to establish the cost of delivering drop-in services and provide options to the City for how its ongoing funding of drop-in services can best be aligned to meet the Streets to Homes policy direction. Our cost analysis was inconclusive. We examined the data provided in numerous ways in order to establish patterns in the funding of drop-in services, but very few relationships were found. Numerous reasons for the lack of a rational basis for costing were suggested, ranging from data limitations to the diversity of the sector and the way it has been funded historically. Despite the difficulties in establishing with any precision the cost of delivering drop-in services, there are some conclusions that can be reached from having undertaken this analysis.

First, it is apparent that the City of Toronto is unique in its approach to designing and implementing an improved method of funding drop-in services. None of the other jurisdictions that we contacted had undertaken a rigorous cost analysis that would lead them to fund drop-in services according to specified formulas based on the costs of delivering services. Even in areas such as hostel services in the cities of Toronto and Ottawa, where more elaborate purchase of service agreements, service standards and accountability measures are in place, we did not find a funding formula that was based on an analysis of the cost of services.

Second, the drop-in sector is extremely diverse. While we did not explicitly evaluate the quality of service provided by specific drop-in centres, our

understanding of service systems for the homeless would suggest that diversity in service is an appropriate response to the diverse nature of the client group being served. Some standardization may assist in ensuring City priorities are met and that clients receive an appropriate quality of service. However, it is important to retain the distinctiveness and range of services provided by the spectrum of drop-in centres. In Ottawa, there is evidence that this is possible. The program requires the provision of specific services in order to be an eligible “day program” recipient, yet there continues to be a very wide range of staff to client ratios and costs per participant.

Third, there may be an opportunity to set cost standards for some components of drop-in budgets. For example, there was some commonality in responses of the sector to necessary levels of administrative costs – in the range of 15-25 percent of overall budget, depending on activities included in administration. Similarly, minimum staffing levels of 1:20 or 1:25 received a nod from many sector participants. Clearly, however, if such cost standards were to be proposed, there would be a need to reach, in consultation with the sector, an agreement about how such costs are to be defined and measured.

In the area of grant administration, our review of practices in other jurisdictions and in the City of Toronto has proffered several ideas that are worthy of consideration in funding drop-in centres. Likely the most significant of these is multi-year funding which has the potential to offer meaningful benefits to drop-in centres through enhanced stability, increased capacity for long-term staffing and funding commitments and a reduction in administrative costs.

Similarly, in the area of human resource management, numerous ideas for enhanced sector collaboration were raised during our review. Many of these proposals could assist the drop-in sector in dealing with the crucial areas of recruiting and retaining staff, training and development and dealing with job pressures leading to burn-out.

## References

- Bevan, P. and A. van Doorn (2002). *Homeless Link Multiple Needs Good Practice Briefing, an exploratory study*. Available at [www.homeless.org.uk](http://www.homeless.org.uk).
- City of Ottawa (2006). *Review of Day Programs*. Report to Health, Recreation and Social Services Committee, 18 June.
- City of Toronto (2005). *Quality Assurance Review of Shelters*, Consolidated Clause in Community Services Committee Report 6 to City Council, July.
- City of Toronto (2006). *2007 Funding Allocations for City of Toronto Homeless Initiatives Fund and Ministry of Community and Social Services Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program*. Staff Report to Community Services Committee, August 23.
- Community Social Planning Council of Toronto (CSPC) 2006. *On the Front Lines of Toronto's Community Service Sector*. With Family Service Association of Toronto.
- Crammond, R., S. Shewprasad, and T. Boston (2006). *Drop-in Services Sector Literature Review of Good Practices*. Prepared for the City of Toronto.
- Joint Accord Table of the Voluntary Sector Initiative (2002) *A Code of Good Practice on Funding* October available at [www.vsi-isbc.org/eng/relationship/order\\_tools.cfm](http://www.vsi-isbc.org/eng/relationship/order_tools.cfm).
- New York City Department of Homeless Services, *Critical Activities Report, 'Top Ten-Fiscal Year 2008'* available at [www.nyc.gov/html/dhs/html/home/home.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dhs/html/home/home.shtml)
- Region of Halton (2006), *Chairman's Roundtable on the Non-Profit and Voluntary Sector*. Prepared by Jody Orr, The Chrysalis Group, September.
- Service Audit Partnership, *Adapted NHF Framework Day Centre Version* Available at [www.serviceaudit.org](http://www.serviceaudit.org), "Day Centres"
- Thick, R. (2002) *Homeless Link: quality toolkit*. Association of London Government, available at [www.homeless.org.uk](http://www.homeless.org.uk)
- Toronto Community and Neighbourhood Services (2004). *Cracks in the Foundation*. Final Report of from the Community Agency Survey 2003. Toronto.

Toronto Drop-in Network (2007). *Good Practices Toolkit*. Produced by Paul Dowling Consulting, Good Practices Workgroup and Agora Foundation. Toronto.

## Appendix One

### Summary Notes Drop-In Services Sector Consultation on People Management Strategies September 25, 2007

**Facilitators:** Deborah Hierlihy, Joyce Potter

**City of Toronto Staff:** Rosemary Foulds, Kevin Lee, Sally Bryant and Michele Connell

**Participants:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Janet Rowe	519 Church Street Community Centre
Tim Hackborn	Christie-Ossington Neighbourhood Centre
Carolina Gajardo	COSTI Housing Help & Drop-In
Bob Price JoAnn Hislop	Evangel Hall
Monica Waldman	Eva's Satellite
Dave Snelgrove	Good Neighbours' Club
Jackie Rankine Thuan Ngo	Houselink Community Homes
Leanne Kloppenborg Vickie McNally	Mustard Seed: Fontbonne Ministries
Barry Brown	Our Place Community of Hope
Bob Rose	Parkdale Activity-Recreation Centre (PARC)
Terry Harris Tatjana Radovanovic	Red Cross - Scarborough
Karen Joseph Alison Coke	Second Base Youth Shelter
Terry Guerriero	Sistering
Lambrina Nikolaou	St. Christopher House - Meeting Place Drop-In
Tom Lafrance	St. Felix Community Centre - Lunch Program
Judy Ward David Walsh	St. John the Compassionate Mission
Robin Griller	St. Stephen's - The Corner Drop-In
Angela Dayes	Syme-Woolner Neighbourhood and Family Centre
Kathryn Scarf	The Stop: Community Food Centre
Michael Blair	Toronto Christian Resource Centre
Tracy Gomes	Toronto Friendship Centre
Ginelle Skerritt	Warden Woods Community Centre - Teesdale Drop-In
Ken Theobald Lang Moffat	Weston-King Neighbourhood Centre
Karen Bach	Yonge Street Mission - Evergreen Centre for Street Youth
Marie Muli	YouthLink Inner City
Anne Carruthers	Toronto Drop-In Network

The following summarizes input received from participants during three parts of the consultation:

1. Introductory comments when participants identified their organization's top human resources pressure over the next 12 months.
2. Discussion group 1 on recruiting and retaining staff, use of relief workers and activities outside of drop-in hours.
3. Discussion group 2 on staff qualifications and training issues as well as staff-client ratios.

### **1.0 Top Human Resources Pressure Reported by Participants**

The following were reported by participants as their top issues and concerns related to human resources in their organization for the coming 12 months:

▪ **Funding pressures** (13 mentions)

Including: need for more staff resources, need for capacity to carry out progressive programs and community development, ability to offer competitive salaries, wages, and benefits for the expertise required for the job, cost of living increases, need for core funding, insufficient staff resources to meet funding reporting requirements

▪ **Staff turnover and retention** (8 mentions)

▪ **Staff development** (5 mentions)

Including having trained staff to address the complex and changing needs of clients and funding for peer support

▪ **Staff-client ratio** (2 mentions)

▪ **Staff burnout**, too heavy a workload for staff (2 mentions)

▪ **Development of policies and procedures** (2 mentions)

The following pressures were also mentioned once each:

- Contract negotiations and possible layoffs
- Finding new space for operation
- Support/supervision of staff
- Retention of volunteers
- Reorganization – self care and change management

### **2.0 Discussion Group 1**

The key themes addressed during the first discussion group were:

- Recruitment and retention of staff
- Relief workers

- Activities outside of drop-in hours

For each theme participants were asked to:

1. Identify current human resources issues by reviewing and adding to background notes provided.
2. Identify ideas for new approaches to these issues either at an agency/organizational level or sector-wide (including new opportunities for interagency collaboration, sector-wide collaboration, collaboration between drop-in centres located in the same geographic area, and supports that can be garnered from existing organizations).
3. Identify challenges or obstacles to embracing new people management strategies in these areas and ideas for overcoming these challenges.

Additional questions for the first discussion group (addressed as time permitted):

4. Can some part time jobs be turned into full time jobs through sharing of staff or interagency collaboration?
5. What would make a pool of relief workers viable in the City? What are the obstacles to implementation and some ways to address these obstacles?
6. What are ways to minimize the staff time required outside of drop-in hours? Are there ways to complete the required tasks while allowing the drop-in to stay open longer? Could increased collaboration among drop-in centres affect the time required for activities such as soliciting donations, buying food, ordering supplies?

### **Recruiting Staff**

*Issues and concerns:*

- wages and qualifications are big issues when hiring case management staff
- can't compete with larger companies, health centres, and better positions for the same skill set
- opportunities for advancement are limited
- be aware of the sub-culture that can exist among staff
- clients work staff off one against the other
- tension exists between community development and basic services
- may obtain many applications but few qualified candidates
- need to hire for diversity
- hiring workers with a very low skill set is a challenge with a small staff team
- new recruits don't want to commit to a contract position

### *Strategies related to recruitment of staff:*

- use students just out of school, and don't expect anyone to stay
- hire for diversity and skill set
- hire part time staff before hiring full time staff (e.g. summer students)
- use drop-in network to circulate job ads
- use relief staff to fund full time positions
- post ads for weekend workers and part time staff
- set minimum salary levels
- take the approach that staff will need to learn (on the job)
- focus on university/college grads
- use HRSDC program to hire summer students. Try them out, and can move them into part time work in the fall when they go back to school.
- take it as given that people will move on when they need a higher salary
- look for idealistic people
- consider hiring newcomers to Canada: often are highly skilled workers
- hire part time staff to get the diversity you need among the staff team

### **Retaining Staff**

#### *Issues and concerns:*

- wages and qualifications are big retention issues – offering low wages for drop-in positions
- staff do not have enough time to spend one-on-one with members/clients
- dealing with what happens during drop in time can mean a limited ability to make strategic decisions
- difficulty retaining case management staff
- staff get scooped up by school board
- staff leave for better positions
- all staff doing everything and possibly burning out and others having to pick up the slack
- staff becoming desensitized, getting sick, burning out
- small centres not have staff and larger centres having staff that after many years don't step back or move on (also a problem in small centres).
- In a unionized environment, hard to adjust a job description when you need to at time of staff turnover
- Keeping a pool of volunteers is an issue: the turnover is frequent and training is a big issue

#### *Strategies related to retaining staff*

- a) salary and benefits:
  - time off and good length vacation times help retain workers
  - permanent, core funding would be preferable to short-term project funding
- b) training and supports:
  - be prepared to meet the needs of the worker

- organize two training opportunities for staff per year
  - provide training – to help staff move on (e.g. after 5+years: grief counseling)
  - work towards standardization in training across the sector, building on the good initiatives of Toronto Hostels Training Centre (THTC) and Toronto Drop-In Network (TDIN)
- c) managing and supporting staff
- staff and volunteers may have to rotate jobs
  - switch off staff on floor
  - maintain appropriate staffing levels on the floor
  - schedule time for program activity as well as reactive work
  - identify specialized work for each staff member – more intentional work – (including sector wide initiatives?)
  - give staff different job activities such as participating in internal committees: helps improve on the job satisfaction
  - value the work staff do: people feel good when they feel like their work is respected
- d) responding to trauma and burnout among staff
- co-ordinate a sector-wide response to staff who are experiencing trauma
  - organize same day service and supports which can be offered sector-wide (possibly through Toronto Hostels Centre)
  - have trained experts and support groups accessible for staff
  - have an Employee Assistance Program accessible to drop-in staff across the sector. Consider having the drop-in network try to broker these services for staff.
  - give a person a day off every two weeks to lower burn-out rate

*Strategies related to volunteers:*

- provide training for volunteers: look for ways for the sector to collaborate on this
- use members as volunteers (many are doing hours required by Ontario Works)
- with the volunteer requirement for a police check, you have to make a judgment about what comes back (drop-ins may be pretty liberal)
- some drop-in centres provide a letter to OW for members who are doing their hours there but they are unwilling to actually track the individual hours worked
- make sure volunteers feel comfortable
- require police check for some volunteers
- be aware of the safety issues of using volunteers for kitchen staff
- more member involvement in decision making
- organize annual or semi-annual training for volunteers

## **Relief Staff**

### *Issues and concerns related to relief staff:*

- need a pool of trained, quality relief staff

### *Strategies for managing and supporting relief workers*

- provide training for relief workers
- explore options for in-house training, perhaps provided through drop-in network
- need a list of people available to work with information about where they have worked and their experience

### *Barriers to having a shared pool of relief workers in the drop-in sector*

- unions and collective agreements, organizational barriers, different populations served,
- unclear who would pay for the co-ordination of the relief pool
- unclear whether a person working in 6 or 7 different places can integrate with all the staff teams
- getting to the drop-in program early on Sunday mornings (no subway service)
- restrictions in collective agreements
- have support system put in place in order to open hirings to members of the drop-in centre
- sharing part-time relief staff – different perspectives, sharing ideas
- downside – spread of disease
- issues - we need to hire experienced individuals as we cannot afford or have person to train them
- relief money – to invest in people when taking training
- need for relief workers
- reduce operating hours to offer staff more support time – admin, clean up...

## **Activities Outside of Drop-in Hours**

- close down drop-in to do additional duties
- reporting requirements NEED to be reviewed – now often the size of a report

## **3. 0 Discussion Group 2**

### **Key themes for discussion:**

- Training
- Staff/client ratios

### **Questions for discussion:**

1. Should some training be mandatory? If yes, what types? What training should be standard for all drop-in centres?

2. Is there a need to better organize the training available to the drop-in services sector? (For example is there a comprehensive listing of all the available training for a particular month and registration details? Is there information readily available about which drop-in centres are prepared to offer training to other drop in centres?)
3. Are there opportunities to collaborate on the training of new staff, volunteers, and relief staff?
4. What human resources practices or innovations related to the delivery of training would you like to see more widespread at an agency/organizational level, or as a sector? What challenges need to be overcome to introduce changes in training practices? Identify possible solutions to these challenges.
5. What staff/client ratios are the norm in drop-in centres and is there a standard that is acceptable in the sector? Is the desired staff/client ratio dependent upon the characteristics of the client group served? If yes, please explain with examples.
6. What are the reasons for a wide range in staff-client ratios among drop-in centres? Findings show that the range is from 1:4 to 1:96. What conditions would exist to explain very low or very high ratios? What are the key factors to consider in analyzing staff to client ratios?

**Question 1: Should some training be mandatory?**

- CPR, first aid, food handling, crisis intervention, harm reduction, and addictions training are examples of training which could be mandatory.
- Choices about what training should be mandatory will depend on the activities of the drop-in.
- Some training, such as approaches to community development should not be mandatory but could be highly recommended.
- There should be limited standards –[with training that is] readily available

*Other Comments:*

- Mandatory training cannot exist without adequate resources for funding it
- Mental health and addictions training is needed but there are very few resources focused on drop-in sector: agencies can't afford to pay for the training that is already available in community health sector. Existing training geared to mental health professionals needs to be tailored to the drop-in sector.
- Floor staff need training in non-violent intervention
- Critical areas for training include community development approaches, group facilitation skills, cultural competency, and conflict resolution.

- Training can be a way to build community amongst staff: gives them time together
- If training is mandatory we pay for it for staff; relief staff must be available to cover for the person attending

*Human Resources practices and strategies:*

- Have one training per month for staff
- Identify ways to entice staff to take courses, including offering to pay for them
- Debrief at the beginning of the day; 3 minutes to describe experiences; keep them up to date with development
- Send potential staff person from another section of the organization for training (that way a 'new hire' is already known to the organization)
- Push for training for volunteers and recompense them for time/expenses, but recognize training can't always be available for volunteers.
- Recognize that training should be mandatory and that staff come with some skills and some need to be upgraded. Training related to power, racism, anti oppression, and chronic homelessness is especially critical.
- When staff attending training, build in time for one person to present a summary to the team as a report back

*Opportunities for City/Sector Collaboration:*

- Make use of work of TDIN: implement TDIN recommendations, and include them in RFPs
- TDIN certificate is highly recommended
- Use Toronto Hostels Training Centre (cost is reasonable)
- PARC is willing to partner with other agencies around training for supervisory staff (training on supervision practices)
- Training on [concurrent?] disorders is starting up at Fred Victor
- A standard training program is available: Drop-in 101 and 102; these courses should be taken and we need to advertise that these courses are available
- Possibility of one person in a drop-in taking a course and they train the others
- Explore the ways that west-end agencies (including drop-ins) are already sharing/collaborating
- Training for relief staff that is standard for the sector is a way to help establish some commonalities between the drop-in centres

**Question 2: Ways to better organize training**

- Organize an annual or bi-annual conference for the drop-in sector: will help to strengthen a fragmented sector. Staff can access training through conference workshops. Workshops can have a train the trainer focus that allows staff to go back to their organization and train other staff, relief workers and in this way contribute to overall agency development. Training delivered in a conference setting can be more cost effective than

each agency organizing its own training. Model a drop-in sector conference after similar offerings in housing, employment and health care sectors.

- Have top-notch resources; continue to develop curricula tailored to the drop-in sector.
- Use a “train the trainer” approach
- Parallel training for staff with training for members: focus on support for member leaders, opportunities for members to learn new skills (such as conflict resolution) and use them at the drop-in. Member leadership training has a personal healing effect and relates to the most basic drop-in practices. Think about member training in the context of community development.
- Make use of training available through Resources Exist for Networking Today (RENT), TDIN, THTC; training offerings could lead to ongoing stability for TDIN.

#### **Questions 3/4: Ways to collaborate within the drop-in sector to deliver training**

- As a sector, we need to identify service needs that our clients have that are not being addressed elsewhere. (e.g. Getting clients into Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) programs is impossible). Then look at how we can provide support for these needs—and use training to equip staff to support clients.
- Train the trainer approach
- Look at enhancing partnerships with hospitals for greater access to services/training
- One drop-in centre offers a John Howard Society program focused on aboriginal trauma/healing
- Local Health Integration Networks are looking for feedback and ideas for potential pilot projects. Gaps in services in the drop-in sector would be of interest to them.
- TDIN could be a clearing house for initiatives related to community development
- Mobile training (training that can go to multiple sites could be coordinated for the sector)
- Healing programs and community development programs could be shared between multiple sites.
- TDIN could coordinate the administration and funding to send people on training
- identify sector training issues – and bring people in as trainers
- could collaborate around conflict resolution training, anti-harassment training, first aid/CPR, food handling
- need to pay for relief staff and need to pay staff training costs

### **Questions 5/6: Staff/Client ratios**

- The question to ask is how many staff (or staff plus volunteers plus peer workers) do you need to operate safely? The ratio for case management is different than for serving meals or working the floor.
- The particular situation (physical layout) of a drop-in can affect the staff to client ratio: operating in a basement has challenges that a main floor or storefront location does not. Variations in temperature, client participation and client issues will also affect what staff to client ratio is needed.
- Ratios of staff to clients can fluctuate during the month, depending on how attendance fluctuates (e.g. before and after cheque week.)
- Can think about ratios in terms of maximum and minimum levels, and in terms of safety, the responsibility carried by staff, and opportunities to offer creative programming. Ratios are a strategic decision, requiring strategic planning.
- Can rarely replace staff with volunteers: due to issues related to safety, recognition, and liability
- In analyzing staff to client ratios, make sure you are comparing apples to apples
- With concerns about violence, attendance may be capped.
- not certain whether drop-in should have ratios
- if we have defined staff/client ratios, support service delivery would be better defined
- depending on type of service, service model can impact that ratio
- staff level depends on the client type
- all staff use walkie/talkie to keep in contact for issues
- sometimes space or crowding are issues
- never seems to be enough staff
- life crisis issues happen and change the whole dynamic of the day-to-day activities; day-to-day duties are hard to deal with when dealing with crisis issues
- constantly dealing with client/member issues
- safety is pivotal
- need something in place to evaluate our people requirements

### *Other comments and questions from participants at consultation:*

- case management drop-in services? Is that standard?
- how is case management defined? Implication is a different approach to work and recruitment
- There is duplication in reporting – definitions are unclear (i.e. housing actions)
- Is there peer mentoring through TDIN?
- Toronto Harm Reduction Network has a number of tools, forums available to agencies such as training tools, etc.

## Appendix Two

### Summary Notes Drop-In Services Sector Consultation on Funding and Staffing Issues November 14, 2007

**Facilitation:** Paul Connelly, Deborah Hierlihy, Joyce Potter

**City of Toronto Staff:** Katherine Chislett, Kevin Lee, Rosemary Foulds, Sally Bryant and Michele Connell

#### Participants:

Name	Organization
Morag Perkins	Eva's Initiatives
Lang Moffat	Weston/King Neighbourhood Centre
Hanna Mlodzianowska	COSTI Housing Help and Drop-in
Wendy Lancashire	Davenport Perth Neighbourhood Centre
Rob Aversa	Davenport Perth Neighbourhood Centre
Nikki Sedore	416 Community Support for Women
Leanne Kloppenborg	Fontbonne Ministries (Mustard Seed)
Thuan Ngo	Houselink Community Homes
Bob Rose	Parkdale Activity Recreation Centre
Dave Snelgrove	Good Neighbours Club
Susan Noakes	Wychwood Open Door
Terry Harris	Red Cross Scarborough
Ken Theobald	Weston/King
Anne Carruthers	Toronto Drop-in Network
Michele Heath	Fred Victor Centre
Mary Middleton	Woodgreen Community Service
Hyonson Ko	416 Community Support for Women
Katherine Chislett,	City of Toronto
Lambrina Nikolao	St. Christopher House
Robin Griller	St. Stephen's Community House
Angela Dayes	Syme-Wooler
Michael Blair	Toronto Christian Resource Centre
Anselm Ikiebey	Toronto Friendship Centre
Karen Bach	YSM Evergreen Centre for Street Youth
Sandra Van	Lakeshore Area Multiservice Project Community Health Centre
Janet Rowe	The 519
Terry Guerriero	Sistering
Tim Hackborn	Christie-Ossington
Tatjana Radovanovic	Red Cross
Jackie Rankine	Houselink
Gael Gilbert	Agincourt Community Services Association

## 1. Initial Round Table Questions and Comments

Background materials were emailed to participants prior to the meeting. Reflecting on these materials, participants raised a number of questions at the outset of the meeting. They were as follows.

- Will there be changes to funding as a result of the research?
- Is it helpful for the funder to view admin cost set as a percentage of the budget?
- Is there room to compare staffing costs with other sectors?
- Are there consistent definitions in terms of how people responded to survey? How is data affected by this?
- Caution is needed around assumptions being made e.g. with reference to project expenses and possible reasons for variations
- Will funding open up for the drop-in sector?
- It seems like you are comparing 'apples and oranges.'
- In some cases the drop-ins have services that are provided by other partners. These services, therefore, are not reflected in our budgets.
- The 'hours per week' of doors open does not equal hours per week of service. Client service also happens when drop-in is not open.
- Different drop-ins are doing very different work and with very different pay levels. For example, consider those funded by MOH.
- The reader needs more context to understand the data. For example, need to be able to distinguish between multi-service agencies and others.
- The different models of drop-ins need to be reflected. For example some operate as community centres – some offer supportive housing

## 2. Cost Analysis

Paul Connelly presented an overview of the findings of the cost analysis using data gathered by the City. Rosemary Foulds of the City provided a 'rapid fire response' to Paul's presentation and the questions and comments coming from the floor.

The following is a sampling of the feedback and discussion among participants following the presentation on the cost analysis.

- When a measure is cost per hour that the drop-in is open, the result reflects poorly on drop-ins with a heavy case management load with many "off hours" pressures.
- An area for future work is to look at and quantify what is required to design and maintain a secure environment. This is a very particular thing in drop-ins and it would be good to describe it in its own right. Safety is a big issue and is at the root of the enhanced services. Offering a secure

environment as a basic service requires resources, strategic thinking and different responses in different locations.

- This research makes the sector nervous: any cost analysis has value/judgement attached. Down the road people may look to it to assign value.
- Agencies have been given the message over the years to keep admin costs down. Admin and management are not paid for by many funders. The good practices tool kit recognized the importance of management dollars. One result is that management and admin work is still being done but after hours and not paid. Admin hours put in by board members and others in small drop-ins also not being captured.
- It would be useful to look at how much bang the city gets for each of their dollars? (e.g. for each city \$ spent, get \$10-20 in service back due to other partnerships, other funders)
- TDIN will be looking at evaluation issues, how we define and do our work, and why services make a difference
- This research needs to ask about hours of overall service, e.g. outside of drop-in hours and use that for the analysis.
- Will there be a next step in the research in terms of what \$ contribution drop-ins make to the community?
- The value of volunteer hours is not included in the analysis – volunteer hours as a \$ contribution needs to be factored in. Also acknowledge that some volunteers bring specialty skills e.g. IT skills
- It is critical to note the importance of community development/skill development among members: they help us deliver services –this links to the overall importance of volunteers (including past participants) and board members.

### **3. Small Group Discussion**

The task for participants was to identify costs for a hypothetical drop-in centre, with consideration to the following questions:

*What are the factors influencing costs?*

*What are reasonable admin costs?*

*How much do basic services cost?*

*What are costs of enhanced services?*

*What is your group's reaction to the Cost Analysis presented by the consultants?*

The following were identified as factors influencing costs.

*Factors influencing facility cost:*

- owning property vs. renting or leasing
- geographic location in city
- control and design of environment for drop-in

- organizing for storage space, quiet space, kitchen, showers, laundry facilities etc.
- physical design of space (e.g. size, arrangement, basement location, or multi-level)
- neighbourhood environmental factors i.e. poverty, housing
- fostering positive neighbourhood and community relations
- maintenance, repair, including equipment such as stoves, fridges
- capital cost
- cost of utilities
- technology costs (IT, computers, phones, fax)
- hours of operation (weekend open?)

*Factors influencing staffing costs:*

- salaries
- benefits (approximately 24% of salary costs required for full time employees, benefits to include RRSP and pension contribution)
- need for competitive salaries and cost of living increases
- unionized environments (higher salaries, better benefits)
- staffing model (frontline, management); type of staff needed: floor staff versus case co-ordination staff, case management, cleaners, maintenance staff
- staff qualifications required (e.g. higher staffing costs for case management qualifications)
- training requirements
- health and safety requirements
- hiring costs (posting, interviewing, training)
- volunteers (volunteer training, including staff support)

*Factors influencing programming and development costs:*

- start up costs higher depending on environment
- target group (who are we serving? Needs of target population?), number of individuals being served
- availability of in-kind supports (volunteers, food banks)
- other funds (direct/indirect) in place already to support program
- programming specific to community development
- food programs (food staples)
- health and hygiene supplies, detergent, supplies for kitchen (staples)
- history of organization
- mission
- available funding and criteria

Reasonable admin costs were suggested to be between 15 and 25 percent of overall budget. The following additional comments were noted:

- Size of program and client group can have a big impact on admin costs
- Smaller drop-ins may have disproportionately high admin costs

- Admin costs in the 15-20% range in larger program makes some sense.
- A standard administration cost would mean less measuring, reporting
- Need a global definition within all funders
- 15-20% of budget is the minimum range for admin costs, depending on whether the organization is unionized or not
- Fundraising is a legitimate admin cost
- Costs of being a good neighbour need to be added to admin category
- All funders are under-funding the cost of benefits (funding is at the 18% level instead of 20-23% which more accurately reflects costs)
- Does training/professional development fit into the calculation of admin costs?

The minimum staffing level proposed during the small group discussions were 1:20 or 1:25, with the understanding that there would be a minimum of two staff on the floor. Additional staff would be dictated by the number of participants.

Base salary for drop-in staff was suggested at the \$40,000 to \$42,000/year level for full time, with benefits.

Basic services identified for the 'hypothetical' drop-in were as follows:

- secure environment, meals, laundry, phone, messages, shower, mail
- could include consideration of community development
- volunteer management
- dedicated staff support in each activity area

One group proposed a budget for the 'hypothetical' drop-in, suggesting the following provisions:

- lunch meal (for 100 participants) \$5,000\* plus donations from Second Harvest and Daily Bread Food Bank *\* unclear if this is assumed to be per month)*
- afternoon snack (100 participants) \$500\* (*\* unclear if this is assumed to be per month)*
- 1:20 staff client ratio
- 5 front line staff (full time) \$40,000 + benefits per staff (\$200,000 + benefits)
- 1 supervisor (\$50,000 + benefits)
- cleaner \$24,000 no benefit
- building cost \$2,600 /month
- utilities \$1700 /month
- internet access
- phone
- laundry
- maintenance: daily cleaning materials and supplies \$200 /month
- set up costs: equipment, maintenance, tables and chairs

*Participant and small group reactions to the cost analysis:*

- People don't understand what drop-in centres do.
- Cost analysis may not be useful and may be used in a way that is harmful.
- There is a problem with context that is not apparent from the cost analysis.
- The results showed the diversity of network.
- I'm wary that funders may misuse numbers.
- The cost analysis is not accurate.
- The sector is still grappling with the drop-in model.
- For us the community development model is key: "community development is what separates a drop-in from a crappy waiting room"
- It would be possible to cost out some of the drop-in services and activities and stages of community development (e.g. and art activity becomes an art project).
- There are concerns about homogenization of two sectors in the Streets to Homes policy statement.
- We recognize that Drop-in Review is part of a whole system review of Streets to Homes.
- Many are nervous about the housing focus attached to drop-ins; it is unclear as to what will be seen as housing or non-housing activity.
- It is harder to measure community development and other things that may have great benefit down the road.
- Homogenizing services in the drop-in sector would be catastrophic.

#### **4. Service Standards and Funding Administration**

Joyce Potter presented an overview of the results of the research undertaken on service standards and funding administration. Rosemary Foulds of the City provided a 'rapid fire response' to Joyce's presentation and fielded questions and comments from the floor. The following summarizes feedback and discussion among participants:

- The examples of standards don't obviously link to outcomes such as housing – and may not respond to sector pressures.
- What is the expectation about what drop-ins are providing? e.g. housing work – need to look at subtleties of what is going on (e.g. client's need to access addiction services).
- How do you measure the value of access to a shower? Service standards may be a stupid thing to focus on.
- Linear perspectives miss the subtleties in outcome measurement.
- Standards are often implied to be measurable but the way it is talked about can be problematic – standards could discourage new drop-ins or smaller drop-ins from operating.
- The examples of standards shown are from areas where sector resources are a lot better. We can't do standards without better resources in sector.
- Need resources to ensure existing organizations can meet standards.

- Need to unpack the standards and see how they affect clients (e.g. issue of nutrition and impact on people's lives).

## 5. Service Levels

Deborah Hierlihy presented an overview of the results of the research undertaken on service levels, using data provided by the City. Rosemary Foulds of the City provided a 'rapid fire response' to Deborah's presentation and fielded questions and comments from the floor. The following summarizes feedback and discussion among participants:

- There is concern about lack of consistency across the sector.
- When an agency makes decisions about services to offer, we don't want to duplicate great existing services (e.g. phone service).
- Re: staff to client ratio –you need to look at TYPE of activity – some activities need dedicated staff, so look at ratios in discrete pieces e.g.
  - to maintain a safe space
  - access laundry
  - access to programs/services
- Take into consideration the target population – people self select and some can't go anywhere else. Result is there is a lack of predictability about who will be at the drop-in.
- The City could at least fund what we all do – which is provide a safe/secure space.
- There are differences in the target groups – need to make resources available to smaller organizations.
- Not counting in volunteers complicates the findings.
- Go back to an analysis of what is required to create a safe environment.

## 6. Small Group Discussion

Participants were given a set of questions to address in discussion with their peers. The following summarizes the comments made in the report-back to the whole group.

### 1. *What are the factors influencing service levels?*

- physical space and building ownership affects how much freedom we have to implement/change/upgrade services
- impact of specialized staff on ability to deliver services
- agency mandate/history/philosophy
- funding stability
- project vs. core funding
- partnerships
- public perception/neighbourhood perception
- location
- cultural displacement of people places demands on services

2. *What services can be provided at different staffing levels?*

- different workers with different skills
- impact of volunteers
- consumer input
- at lower staffing levels referrals occur, but this takes time
- identify staffing required to provide basic services
- need for partnerships – take time to develop and maintain
- define how many staff needed to manage the floor
- need additional staff for enhanced services
- safety – ensure secure space
- determined by mandate
- start with core number of staff – build services on that
- needs of clients and changing numbers affect services therefore what services can be provided varies

3. *Does it make sense to use staff to client ratios to determine service levels?*

- ratios offer some insight
- staff:client ratio should be of staff needed on the floor at any given moment – should be minimum level of staff, then specialized staff
- ratios are not capturing the impact of professionalized/specialized expertise
- would be OK to see standard of minimum # of staff and maximum # of clients on the floor
- some use volunteers to do some of these services
- prescribing particular staff to client ratios could negatively affect smaller drop-in centres: these centres need to have flexibility and a variety of options for example when working with individuals with mental health issues
- staff ratios may be relevant to creation of safe secure environment
- more staff allow for more flexibility
- importance of “place” for homeless people
- staff:client ratios need to consider role of members in “ownership” or member leadership – that is how this issue needs to be viewed i.e. community development perspective
- minimum 3 staff to open the door then additional 1:25 – minimum to provide safety
- clients like to have choice about where they go for services
  - space is a factor
  - stay away from shelter-type standards
  - look at many variables e.g. what services are available in area
- would not want to go down the road of having to report the number of clients that go through each day
- important to talk about what the “base” is
- as work becomes more complex ratios differ

*4. If not, what other measures should be used to determine appropriate staffing levels for particular services?*

- 3 staff minimum + 1:25 ratio on top of that for additional services such as watching showers, laundry
- base cost to open the door, then specialized services
- hours of operation, physical capacity, # of clients
- value having lots of different service models in different drop-ins

*5. Reaction to the consultants' analysis*

- if given better definitions could answer questions more consistently
- would have been useful if participants had had an opportunity to meet and agree on definitions before today
- how do staff ratios impact the services drop-in is able to provide any given moment
- safe = accountability, inclusiveness, accessibility, health issues
- safe space = community for clients – needs emerge (i.e. end of life)
- acknowledge that without the professional staff, doors won't open
- value having different service models in drop-ins
- identify a base for safety and security and food security each with multiple options
- don't lose sight of impact on drop-ins on social isolation
- problem to put numbers on things, need to tell stories

## Appendix Three

### Key Informant Interviews Among Funders of Drop-in Services

Toronto Public Health	Barb MacPherson, Acting Manager Health Promotion - Urban Issues
City of Toronto Social Development, Finance & Administration Division	Kin-Wah Siu Agency Review Officer Community Funding Programs Unit
Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network (LHIN)	Bill Manson Senior Director, Performance, Contract and Allocation
Ontario Arts Council	Bushra Junaid Community and Multidisciplinary Arts Officer
United Way of Greater Toronto	Lorraine Duff Director of Community Resources

## Appendix Four

### Most Significant Staffing Pressures. Summary Results from City Interviews with Drop-in Sector Executive Directors and Managers. Winter 2006/2007. Responses from 34 Drop-In Centres, Grouped by Size of Operating Budget .

Budget under \$100,000	Budget \$100,000-199,999	Budget \$200,000-\$399,999	Budget \$400,000-\$699,000	Budget \$700,000+
<p><b>Concerns about Food Service</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ So much time spent in kitchen; little time for focussed time with members</li> <li>▪ Need a consistent person to buy and manage the food</li> <li>▪ Need a cook</li> <li>▪ Cook is only funded 12 hrs/week: hard to retain staff</li> </ul>	<p><b>Concerns about Food Service</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Need to have a second fulltime cook and/or qualified relief staff</li> </ul>	<p><b>Concerns about Food Service</b></p>	<p><b>Concerns about Food Service</b></p>	<p><b>Concerns about Food Service</b></p>
<p><b>Concerns about Volunteers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of consistency among committed volunteers</li> <li>▪ Unable to rely on volunteers</li> <li>▪ Drop-in overburdens the volunteers who are also board members</li> <li>▪ Can't keep them for extended periods</li> </ul>	<p><b>Concerns about Volunteers</b></p>	<p><b>Concerns about Volunteers</b></p>	<p><b>Concerns about Volunteers</b></p>	<p><b>Concerns about Volunteers</b></p>
<p><b>General Staffing Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Can't anticipate some situations in advance: staff have to stay alert</li> <li>▪ Staff not having the skills to deal with the complex issues clients face</li> <li>▪ Drop-ins requiring highly qualified staff to deal with mental health and addictions issues: hard to recruit qualified staff</li> <li>▪ Need more staff present in the drop in</li> <li>▪ Increased occupancy levels in the drop in</li> </ul>	<p><b>General Staffing Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Staffing levels: hard to run drop in and other programs; hard to do other duties such as check on lunch room or on clients outside</li> <li>▪ Would like to provide more 1 on 1 counselling and support to build long term relationships</li> <li>▪ Would like time to do program planning</li> <li>▪ Tough to retain skilled staff with contract jobs offering no benefits</li> <li>▪ We have no formal staff evaluation process in place or</li> </ul>	<p><b>General Staffing Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Not enough relief staff to allow regular staff to attend workshops or to cover for vacations</li> <li>▪ Burnout</li> <li>▪ Sometimes staff are unable to manage all the new cases that present themselves in a drop-in session</li> <li>▪ Not enough staff</li> <li>▪ Too much work &amp; staff taking on too many different roles</li> <li>▪ Staff not paid for all the</li> </ul>	<p><b>General Staffing Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Need more staff: currently staff are overloaded and don't take breaks</li> <li>▪ Finding the right people when hiring: hard to assess from résumé</li> <li>▪ Office space issues: it is all shared space...no storage and feelings of displacement</li> <li>▪ Need additional staff to improve the client to staff ratio</li> <li>▪ Have only 1 full time drop in worker</li> <li>▪ Burnout, stress among staff</li> <li>▪ With only one staff person, if the</li> </ul>	<p><b>General Staffing Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dealing with different levels of formal training among staff: some staff have long history with the organization but little formal training</li> <li>▪ Staff team and organization are in transition</li> <li>▪ Taking a logical and pragmatic approach to building a cohesive and trained staff</li> <li>▪ Getting the right fit (skills to do outreach and case management)</li> </ul>

<p><b>Budget under \$100,000</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Staff burnout</li> <li>▪ Have to close drop in for 5 months/year because staff need a break from doing everything</li> <li>▪ Staff turnover</li> <li>▪ Lack of relief staff or high turnover</li> <li>▪ Hard to recruit staff with housing experience</li> <li>▪ Lack of opportunity for promotion</li> <li>▪ Lack of staff: when a staff person is away, the manager, bookkeeper or other admin staff comes in to facilitate the drop-in</li> </ul>	<p><b>Budget \$100,000-199,999</b></p> <p>the ability to provide staff development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Supporting students is also a resource issue</li> <li>▪ Client/staff ratio is too high: drop- in would be unsafe without the other programs running on site</li> <li>▪ More opportunities for members to be involved is the biggest staffing pressure: complying with agency policy to recruit and support members in permanent, PT and casual positions in the agency</li> <li>▪ Crowd control and emergencies are taking up a lot of time</li> </ul>	<p><b>Budget \$200,000-\$399,999</b></p> <p>hours they end up working</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase in # of clients with dual diagnosis- requires a special skill set</li> <li>▪ Dealing with probation, parole, and clients with warrants pending</li> <li>▪ Clients losing their housing</li> <li>▪ Managing with a client/staff ratio of 60:1</li> <li>▪ No volunteer coordinator</li> <li>▪ Providing service to a difficult population and feeling a lack of support from the City in terms of political leadership</li> <li>▪ Safety of staff</li> <li>▪ Vicarious Trauma</li> </ul>	<p><b>Budget \$400,000-\$699,000</b></p> <p>coordinator is absent there is no replacement/substitute</p>	<p><b>Budget \$700,000+</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Building relationships with client group</li> <li>▪ Hard to recruit skilled staff</li> <li>▪ Hard to keep staff from becoming damaged (vicarious trauma is very real)</li> <li>▪ Have had a number of stress related leaves</li> <li>▪ Pressure in terms of numbers of clients: are seeing twice as many clients as planned for, with no extra money</li> <li>▪ Staff feel they aren't doing as good a job as they can</li> <li>▪ Members don't feel as good as they should be</li> <li>▪ Try to hire members, but this is costly in terms of funds and time (staff support and training)</li> <li>▪ Needing more relief staff to cover illness, holidays, mat leaves etc.</li> <li>▪ Not enough hours to get things done</li> <li>▪ Busy/hectic environment</li> <li>▪ Not enough time to do good hiring processes</li> <li>▪ Big learning curve for new staff</li> </ul>
<p><b>Financial Pressures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Uncertainty about funding</li> <li>▪ Salaries increasing in bargaining process but funding not</li> <li>▪ Salaries about \$10,000 /year lower than in health sector</li> <li>▪ Need adequate funding to provide competitive salaries and benefits</li> </ul>	<p><b>Financial Pressures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Budget pressures/ poor funding</li> <li>▪ Have had to cancel programs due to staffing costs or put on hold</li> <li>▪ Funding structure of the programs (no long term connections for staff and clients due to grant and project based funding)</li> <li>▪ With only 1 staff person- if a coordinator is absent, there is no replacement or substitute</li> <li>▪ No core funding and we need a FT EID and a program manager</li> </ul>	<p><b>Financial Pressures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Uncertainty of year to year funding</li> <li>▪ Poor funding to offer competitive salary levels</li> <li>▪ No funding for pension benefits: staff are working a second job</li> </ul>	<p><b>Financial Pressures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Low salary levels</li> </ul>	<p><b>Financial Pressures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Have a bargaining unit and there a funding pressures related to staff salaries</li> <li>▪ Current funding climate does not support salary increases</li> <li>▪ Having the budget to hire sufficient staff</li> </ul>

**Consultation questions:**

- Is there a mismatch between the training, experience and skill level required for drop in work and the type of PT or contract work available? How many of the drop-ins in the study only offer part time work? How can more part time jobs be turned into full time jobs? (e.g. Interagency collaboration, shared staff?)
- How much concern exists about staff, volunteer and client safety with current ratios? What staff/client ratios are the norm and is there a standard that is acceptable in the sector?

## Appendix Five

### Qualifications of Staff (Skills and Competencies). Summary Results from City Interviews with Drop-in Sector Executive Directors and Managers. Winter 2006/2007. Responses from 34 Drop-In Centres, Grouped by Size of Operating Budget

Budget under \$100,000	Budget \$100,000-199,999	Budget \$200,000-\$399,999	Budget \$400,000-\$699,000	Budget \$700,000+
<p><i>Interpersonal skills</i> Oral/written communication skills Counselling skills Listening skills Supervisory skills Conflict prevention skills Crisis intervention skills</p> <p><i>Other skills</i> Cooking Volunteer management Juggle multiple demands and prioritize; work efficiently Administrative skills Outreach skills Community and team building skills Grant writing Planning and organizational skills Record keeping Assessment/ case management skills</p>	<p><i>Interpersonal skills</i> Oral /written communication Counselling skills Conflict resolution/mediation Crisis intervention skills Problem solving skills Group facilitation skills</p> <p><i>Other skills</i> Cooking Planning skills Record keeping Assessment and case management skills</p>	<p><i>Interpersonal skills</i> Effective communication skills Listening skills Crisis intervention skills Ability to de-escalate conflict</p> <p><i>Other skills</i> Food preparation Referral skills Anti-oppression training Case management skills</p>	<p><i>Interpersonal skills</i> Strong communication skills Conflict resolution skills Listening skills Problem solving skills</p> <p><i>Other skills</i> Sensitivity training/cultural competency Computer literacy and typing skills Admin skills</p>	<p><i>Interpersonal skills</i> Behavioural management skills Crisis intervention skills Conflict resolution skills</p> <p><i>Other skills</i> Maintain good relations with other services to allow for referrals Budgeting Music, business, visual art: skills to use in programming Health and safety training Peer leadership skills Know how to run a safe workshop</p>
<p><i>Abilities</i> Able to be assertive, balanced, approachable Leadership ability Attention to detail Able to organize the work of others Able to engage at-risk youth Able to work in an anti-oppression framework</p>	<p><i>Abilities</i> Handle money Support members in their role in the organization Critically analyse Computer skills Check one's own assumptions Always ready to respond Able to debrief Engaging and trustworthy but not a friend Able to work in chaotic environment</p>	<p><i>Abilities</i> Speak a second language Knowledge of the law Able to do risk assessments for family violence Able to self-care under stress Able to set good boundaries Able to be objective Have creative outreach strategies</p>	<p><i>Abilities</i> Able to multi task Able to take on responsibility Able to follow rules and be a team player Able to work with a vulnerable population</p>	<p><i>Abilities</i> Multi-tasker: be a security guard, mediator, negotiator, diplomat Confront the impacts of poverty on a daily basis Work with those who are destitute Able to cope with vicarious trauma 1 on 1 counselling skills Integrate understanding of anti-oppression work in their practice Be self aware and know own triggers</p>

<b>Budget under \$100,000</b>	<b>Budget \$100,000-199,999</b>	<b>Budget \$200,000-\$399,999</b>	<b>Budget \$400,000-\$699,000</b>	<b>Budget \$700,000+</b>
<p><i>Personal Attributes</i></p> <p>Compassionate, empathetic Flexible Tolerant Interested in others Confident Respectful of the participants Self starter Resourceful Innovative/creative Harm reduction focus Non-judgmental At ease working with homeless</p>	<p><i>Personal Attributes</i></p> <p>Comfortable with diverse people Creative Empathetic/sympathetic Flexible Punctual Conscientious Altruistic Non judgemental/respectful Motivated to work with and understand client population Have a social justice perspective Commitment to team work</p>	<p><i>Personal Attributes</i></p> <p>Willing to work in a cross cultural community with clients experiencing mental illness, homelessness and poverty Understand cultural competency Embrace a prevention focus Team player and be willing to share knowledge Be a generalist willing to take on anything from food prep to programming Able to quickly build rapport Self awareness Have stamina, sense of humour</p>	<p><i>Personal Attributes</i></p> <p>Have genuine passion for the work Personal values aligned with agency values (respect, compassion, justice) Patient Flexible Assertive Non-judgmental Altruistic</p>	<p><i>Personal Attributes</i></p> <p>Being comfortable in environments where clients are comfortable Comfortable with street culture (eg. Drug dealing) Understanding that the agency is a faith based organization Sharing the same philosophy as the organization Able to engage participants Cultural affinity Respect for others</p>
<p><i>Knowledge</i></p> <p>Food handling practices Nutrition and menu planning Budgeting Social services, other drop in services, how to access resources and make referrals Youth culture, client needs, homelessness issues Mental health, substance use, harm reduction and addictions Infectious disease control</p> <p><i>Formal Training</i></p> <p>Diploma in community work or relevant field of study</p>	<p><i>Knowledge</i></p> <p>Know local community resources Understand mental illness, environments where drop in members live and social recovery model Understand low threshold client centered approach Understand homelessness, causes and systemic barriers</p> <p><i>Formal Training/Experience</i></p> <p>Diploma in social service work Post secondary education and relevant work experience Experience with mental illness</p>	<p><i>Knowledge</i></p> <p>Food handling and preparation How to access and advocate for client services How to support clients to more towards their own goals Characteristics of client group and barriers they face Harm reduction philosophy and practices Mental health issues</p> <p><i>Formal Training/Experience</i></p> <p>Community College diploma or equivalent combination of education and experience Education in change theory</p>	<p><i>Knowledge</i></p> <p>Health issues Poverty issues Mental health Drug and addiction issues Homelessness issues</p>	<p><i>Knowledge</i></p> <p>Community services Experience/understanding of homelessness Understand how mental health issues manifest themselves in the particular client group Poverty and gender issues</p> <p><i>Formal Training/Experience</i></p> <p>Child Youth Worker Diploma Several years work experience with client group Do not insist on academic credentials</p>
<p><i>HR Practices</i></p> <p>Try to have a staff team with mixed backgrounds</p>	<p>Admin, kitchen staff, and support staff have different qualities</p>			<p>Will train the right people</p>

## Appendix Six

### Summary of Staff Training. Responses from 29 Drop-in Centres, Grouped by Size of Operating Budget

Budget under \$100,000	Budget \$100,000-199,999	Budget \$200,000-\$399,999	Budget \$400,000-\$699,000	Budget \$700,000+
<p><i>Onsite Training</i> Job shadowing on procedures and reporting Volunteer training Basic computer orientation</p> <p><i>Food handlers</i> Drop In 101, Drop In 201 Food handling, Food storage</p> <p><i>Other Training Topics</i> First Aid/CPR Infectious Diseases Foot care How to navigate Toronto 211 Mental Health Issues Addictions Issues Gender and race issues Immigration issues Leadership Crisis Intervention Harm reduction Housing and social assistance systems Substance use, treatments, new mixes of substances Services and resources that are available Anger management THTC courses (shelter standards, documentation, WHMIS, motivational counselling, non-violent crisis intervention TPH courses (compassion, fatigue and burnout, infection control CMHA workshop (Understanding Mental Health)</p>	<p><i>Onsite Training</i> Orientation Review of job description</p> <p><i>Food handlers</i> Food handling/food safety</p> <p><i>Other Training Topics</i> First Aid/CPR Mental Health Issues Addictions Issues Harm reduction RENT workshops for housing workers Volunteer Resource Management Conflict mediation Crisis intervention Sensitivity training (developing cultural competency) related to trans, immigration, and refugee issues) TDIN support core course Hostels certificate at THTC Drop-in skills certificate at THTC</p>	<p><i>Onsite Training</i> Anti-homophobia Anti-oppression Harm reduction</p> <p><i>Food handlers</i> Food handling certificate courses</p> <p><i>Other Training Topics</i> CPR Infectious diseases Harm reduction RENT: training on eviction prevention Mental health follow up work</p>	<p><i>Onsite Training</i> n/a</p> <p><i>Food handlers</i> n/a</p> <p><i>Other Training Topics</i> First Aid/CPR Conflict Resolution Health related topics STDs Harm reduction Handling difficult clients Crisis intervention Toronto Public Health Courses WHMIS Volunteer management resources training</p>	<p><i>Onsite Training</i> New staff orientation (mental health issues, food, housing and understanding what helps to stabilize people) Anti-oppression training VAW training HIV/AIDS training</p> <p><i>Food handlers</i> n/a</p> <p><i>Other Training Topics</i> First Aid/CPR WHMIS Health and Safety Public Health workshops Legal Aid Mental health Concurrent disorders Attachment theory training Trauma and Recovery training Prevention and Intervention training (TDIN) Drop-in 101 Project management training Volunteer training and Financial training from Wellesley Institute Community development Anti-oppression training Behaviour Management Motivating Clients Pastoral counselling</p>

## Appendix Seven

### Benefits and Pressures of Employing Relief Staff. Summary Results from City Interviews with Drop-in Sector Executive Directors and Managers. Winter 2006/2007. Responses from 34 Drop-In Centres, Grouped by Size of Operating Budget .

Budget under \$100,000	Budget \$100,000-199,999	Budget \$200,000-\$399,999	Budget \$400,000-\$699,000	Budget \$700,000+
<p><b>Benefits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Bring different skills and abilities to the program</li> <li>▪ Hiring pool to draw from when regular staff leave</li> <li>▪ Can help with workload of regular staff</li> <li>▪ Staff coverage for sick leave</li> <li>▪ Relief staff can be among the best staff</li> </ul>	<p><b>Benefits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Relief staff would be available to cover during times of staff illness, vacations and large meetings etc</li> <li>▪ Relief work is a way for those who are new to the sector to test out the job</li> <li>▪ Use of relief workers could free up staff time for more programming/networking</li> <li>▪ Could mean extra support on the floor to engage participants more</li> <li>▪ Extra staff would be available to cover for staff when trips are planned for members</li> <li>▪ Relief staff bring good ideas from other places</li> </ul>	<p><b>Benefits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Free up staff to do more programming, networking</li> <li>▪ Relief Workers can be drawn from among their membership</li> </ul>	<p><b>Benefits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Good way to test out workers before a full time hiring</li> </ul>	<p><b>Benefits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Having relief staff means we don't have to reduce service when staff are absent</li> <li>▪ Relief staff have access to internal postings and are more likely to access FT positions</li> <li>▪ Being able to have staff on call</li> <li>▪ They allow staff to do more accompaniments, one on one work, and doing programming</li> <li>▪ Our relief staff are familiar with the agency, programs and participants. They are reliable, with little need for supervision</li> </ul>
<p><b>Pressures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Offering only occasional shifts means relief staff have no significant commitment to the agency</li> <li>▪ Hard to get someone to come in for a four hour shift</li> <li>▪ Limited training resources</li> <li>▪ Need infrastructure to manage relief staff</li> <li>▪ Ideally need more regular hours</li> <li>▪ Need to be equipped to deal with housing issues</li> <li>▪ No funding for relief staff</li> <li>▪ New face for the clients therefore lack of trust and</li> </ul>	<p><b>Pressures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Drop ins need to be adequately staffed so they are not running operations with relief workers</li> <li>▪ Relief staff cause disconnectedness: lack of continuity in developing rapport with clients</li> <li>▪ Hard to recruit and retain relief staff when only offered 2 hours a day</li> <li>▪ There would be ongoing costs for training relief staff</li> <li>▪ Need infrastructure to support relief staff at different stages of development</li> <li>▪ No budget for relief staff</li> </ul>	<p><b>Pressures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ongoing training costs for relief staff.</li> <li>▪ Need a centralized pool of relief workers to be available by collective agreement</li> <li>▪ Use of relief staff constrained by budget</li> <li>▪ Tough to maintain a roster when you only use them occasionally</li> <li>▪ Unable to guarantee relief hours</li> </ul>	<p><b>Pressures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ It is hard to find relief staff and have many part time jobs</li> <li>▪ Some don't take the job seriously and fail to show up</li> <li>▪ They don't know the clients, and would not be familiar with the rules</li> <li>▪ They may lack the necessary skills</li> </ul>	<p><b>Pressures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Do lose consistency of service: relief workers don't know all the protocols here</li> <li>▪ Hard to keep good relief staff</li> <li>▪ Constantly replenishing relief, so they are not trained</li> <li>▪ Lack of continuity: may have more staff in summer and winter depending on funding</li> <li>▪ Hard to find people who can work these hours</li> <li>▪ They don't have an</li> </ul>

<b>Budget under \$100,000</b>	<b>Budget \$100,000-199,999</b>	<b>Budget \$200,000-\$399,999</b>	<b>Budget \$400,000-\$699,000</b>	<b>Budget \$700,000+</b>
<p>more pressure on other staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Due to low levels of funding, can't afford to hire relief staff with social work background</li> <li>▪ Pressure to hire consumers which can increase the sense of chaos</li> <li>▪ Turnover among relief staff is high</li> <li>▪ Relief job is a difficult one</li> <li>▪ Hard to find qualified relief staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Used student placements in a relief worker capacity- but there were resource issues in supporting them</li> </ul>			<p>established relationship with the clients</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We recruit for our FT positions from within, so it does not take long to deplete the relief pool</li> <li>▪ Not always available when we need them (e.g. Summer and Christmas)</li> <li>▪ Unpredictable when we will need relief staff</li> </ul>
<p><i>Former Participants as relief staff:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In hiring clients or peers as relief without adequate preparation, have blurred the lines around skills sets and wages</li> <li>▪ Former members as relief staff come with trust and knowledge</li> </ul>				
<p><i>Other comments:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Some drop ins don't have relief staff</li> <li>▪ Others have 14 or 15 relief staff who are unionized</li> <li>▪ Having a pool of relief staff would be a benefit</li> </ul>		<p><i>Other comments:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No money for relief workers</li> <li>▪ They need to be knowledgeable about drop-in work</li> </ul>	<p><i>Other comments:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We have no formal relief staff.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Other comments:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No problem finding relief staff who don't want full time employment</li> <li>▪ Many relief staff are former FT employees here</li> <li>▪ Relief staff are shared through the agency</li> <li>▪ They need to receive an orientation or training before working in the drop-in</li> <li>▪ They are vital</li> <li>▪ Get students who are new to the field</li> </ul>
<p><b>Consultation questions/issues:</b></p>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What are HR responses to the issue that supporting staff, student, or relief staff development is reported to be beyond the resources of some small drop ins?</li> <li>▪ Is there concern about the different views of the role that relief staff would play (being extra staff versus being available to cover for staff in times of illness etc)?</li> <li>▪ What would make a pool of relief workers viable in the City? What are the obstacles to implementation and ways to address these obstacles?</li> </ul>				

## Appendix Eight

### Summary of Activities of Drop-in Staff When Centre Is Not Open. Summary Results from City Interviews with Drop-in Sector Executive Directors and Managers. Winter 2006/2007. Responses from 34 Drop-In Centres, Grouped by Size of Operating Budget .

Budget under \$100,000	Budget \$100,000-199,999	Budget \$200,000-\$399,999	Budget \$400,000-\$699,000	Budget \$700,000+
<p><b>Administrative:</b> Reporting to funders Record keeping Coordinate board meetings Banking, Reconcile petty cash Follow up phone calls Take inventory Order and organize supplies</p>	<p><b>Administrative:</b> Record keeping Managing budget Sourcing donations Order supplies, Invoicing Report writing Answer phone inquiries Conduct /analyse client surveys</p>	<p><b>Administrative:</b> Record keeping Organizing systems Report writing, data entry Reporting to funders Procuring funding Sourcing donations Ordering supplies</p>	<p><b>Administrative:</b> Returning phone calls Record keeping Invoicing Managing budget Sourcing donations Ordering supplies Conduct/ analyze client surveys</p>	<p><b>Administrative:</b> Record keeping Communications Sorting supplies Report writing Evaluating activities</p>
<p><b>Food service:</b> Plan menu Buy groceries/order food Arrange for food delivery Set up for drop in Cooking, Cleanup</p>	<p><b>Food service:</b> Plan menu Buy groceries/order food Arrange for food delivery Set up, Cleanup Prep and cooking</p>	<p><b>Food service:</b> Set up, Clean up, Food prep Food drives Food orders Arranging for food and supplies Helping with catering contracts</p>	<p><b>Food service:</b> n/a</p>	<p><b>Food service:</b> Ordering food Set up Prep food Solicit food donations</p>
<p><b>Client/member service</b> Case management, Accompaniment Follow-up with ill members Organize social/rec programs Clothing set up Follow up with referrals 1 on 1 meetings with clients Housing search/homelessness prevention</p>	<p><b>Client/member service</b> n/a</p>	<p><b>Client/member service</b> Accompaniment Appointments with clients re housing, counselling, assessment Group sessions (e.g. lifeskills ) Case management Follow up on client referrals Street outreach</p>	<p><b>Client/member service</b> Visitation, Advocacy Client conference meetings Referrals and assistance with social services, ODSP, CPP, OAS, GIS, Public Guardian/Trustee Clothing setup and distribution Counselling</p>	<p><b>Client/member service</b> Referral follow up, Advocacy Accompaniment Housing help, tenancy issues Case management Organize social-rec activities Program planning 1 on 1 meetings with clients Manage safety issues</p>

<b>Budget under \$100,000</b>	<b>Budget \$100,000-199,999</b>	<b>Budget \$200,000-\$399,999</b>	<b>Budget \$400,000-\$699,000</b>	<b>Budget \$700,000+</b>
<b>Organizational commitments:</b> Work in other ministries Follow up with volunteers Manage volunteers Liaise with local churches Work in housing, additions and harm reduction programs Community development work External meetings	<b>Organizational commitments:</b> Consultant to other programs Community development work Oversee student placements Coordinate members who run the drop-in Recruit new volunteers Attend/support some board or committee meetings	<b>Organizational commitments:</b> Property maintenance External meetings Participate in community networks and inter-agency activities Community development	<b>Organizational commitments:</b> Daily debriefings Weekly staff meetings Participate in TDIN Participate in org. planning Online communication/networking Recruit new volunteers	<b>Organizational commitments:</b> Daily debriefing Community meetings Updating case files Meetings with partner agencies Prep for groups and meetings Planning and coordination Recruit new volunteers Homeless/ community outreach
<b>Staff supervision, training and development</b> Team building/staff meetings Debriefings Attend workshops	<b>Staff supervision, training and development</b> Team building/staff meetings Attend workshops Daily debriefing	<b>Staff supervision, training and development</b> Staff, volunteer supervision meetings	<b>Staff supervision, training and development</b> Professional development Oversee student placement Attend workshops, training	<b>Staff supervision, training and development</b> Staff /team meetings Small group work Training, orientation Volunteer support