

# Meeting in the Middle: Update on Implementation

Steve Teekens, Executive Director, Native  
Men's Residence

Mary-Anne Bedard, General Manager  
Shelter, Support & Housing Administration

Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee Meeting  
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# Shelter, Support and Housing Administration

- City of Toronto Service Manager and Community Entity for homelessness and housing services for Toronto
- Work directed by Housing Stability Service Plan:
  - Improving access and equity – accessible and responsive services for specific client groups, including Indigenous people
  - Strengthening partnerships and collaboration



## OUR VISION

Toronto is a city where everyone has a safe and affordable place to call home



## OUR MISSION

SSHA manages a coordinated and effective system of shelter and housing services to improve the housing stability of people who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness in Toronto



# Toronto Indigenous Community Advisory Board

The Indigenous Community Advisory Board (CAB) is made up of Indigenous organizations providing housing and homelessness supports services.

The CAB assists the Aboriginal Labour Force Development Circle (the Toronto Community Entity administering federal Indigenous Reaching Home funding) in decision-making to ensure the needs of Indigenous people experiencing homelessness in Toronto are met.

## **CAB Member Agencies**

- Anduhyaun Inc.
- Gabriel Dumont Non-Profit Homes
- Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Employment & Training
- Native Canadian Centre of Toronto
- Native Child & Family Services of Toronto
- Native Men's Residence (Na-Me-Res)
- Native Women's Resource Centre of Toronto
- Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council
- Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre
- Wigwamen Inc.
- Toronto Inuit Association
- Toronto & York Region Métis Council

# Toronto Aboriginal Support Service Council

TASSC is made up of local Indigenous support service organizations and associates. TASSC provides community-based research, policy and advocacy on the social determinants of wellbeing for the First Nations, Inuit, Métis people living in Toronto.



## TASSC Member Agencies

- 2 Spirited People of the 1st Nations
- Aboriginal Legal Services
- Association for Native Development in the Performing & Visual Arts/Arts Indigena
- Miziwe Biik Employment and Training
- Native Women's Resource Centre of Toronto
- Na Me Res (Native Men's Residence)
- Native Child and Family Services of Toronto
- Native Canadian Centre of Toronto
- Nishnawbe Homes
- Thunder Woman's Healing Lodge Society
- Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre
- Toronto Inuit Association
- Wigwamen Inc.
- Aboriginal Labour Force Development Circle
- Toronto & York Region Métis Council
- Urban Indigenous Education Centre
- Ontario Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Strategy

# Our Shared Vision

Meaningfully address  
Indigenous homelessness in  
Toronto by addressing the  
City of Toronto's Statement of  
Commitments to Aboriginal  
Communities

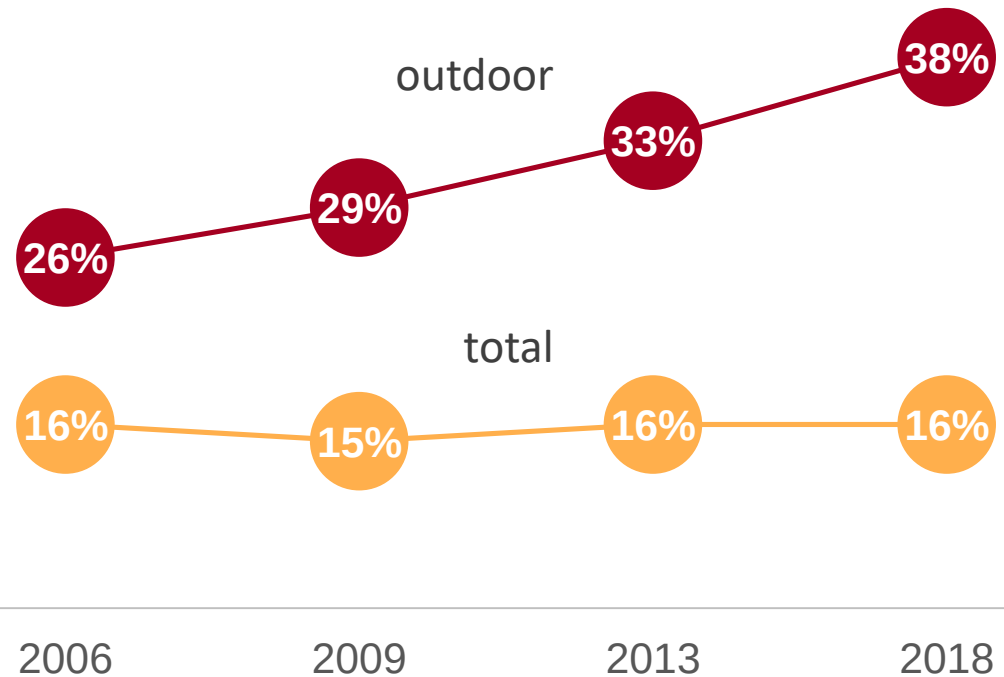
*Relationships are foundational  
to this work*



# Why This Work is Important

- Persistent overrepresentation of Indigenous people in Toronto's homeless population, especially among individuals staying outdoors
- Direct result of colonialism, structural and institutional racism, government policies and practices, and intergenerational trauma

Indigenous people represent up to 2.5% of the Toronto population, **yet 16% of people experiencing homelessness**





# How We Got Here

- Challenges in understanding & approaching engagement with Indigenous partners
- Mutual recognition of the importance of Indigenous-led solutions and meaningful engagement to address Indigenous homelessness in Toronto



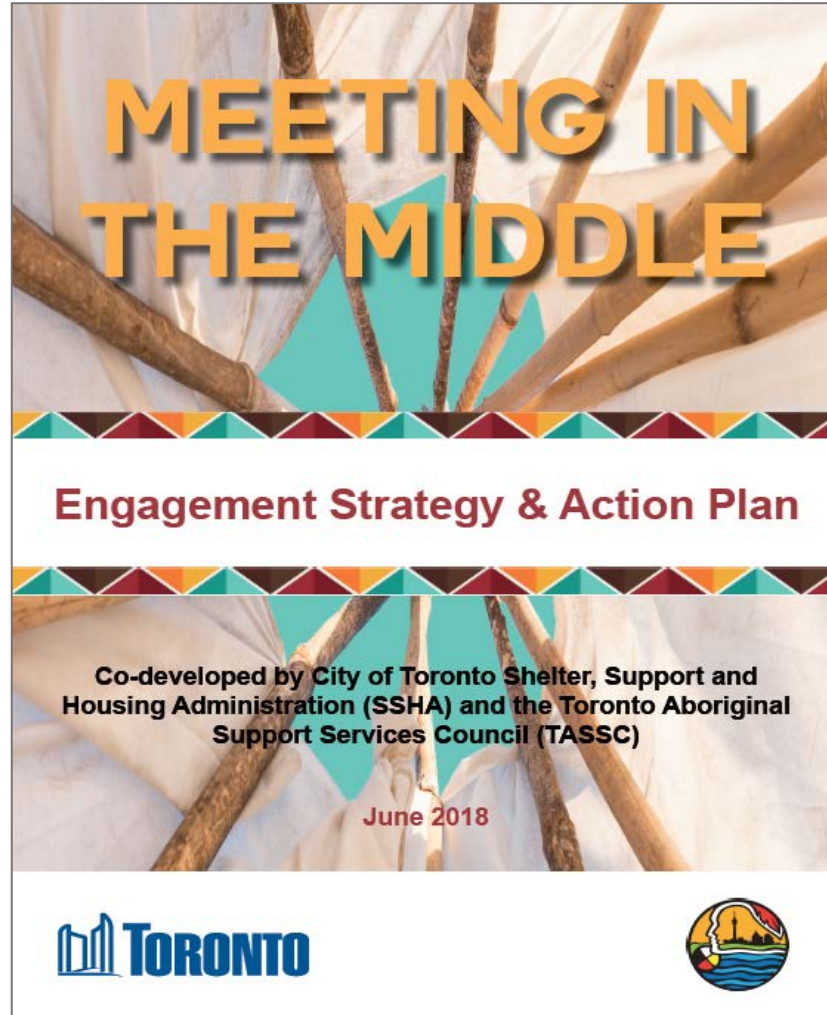
# Co-Creating *Meeting in the Middle*

- Three-day planning session, grounded in an Indigenous approach, with leaders from Shelter, Support & Housing Administration (SSHA), the Indigenous Community Advisory Board (CAB) and the Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council (TASSC)





# Birthing *Meeting in the Middle* – June 2018



# Commitment 1 – Learning & Development

## Key Actions Implemented:

- Provided Indigenous cultural competency training to priority staff
- Promoted learning opportunities, events, and significant days to staff
- Delivered discussion sessions with staff on SSHA's commitment to providing a land acknowledgment
- Plaques mounted in all head offices and directly operated shelters





# Commitment 2 – Integrating Holistic Approaches

## Key Actions Implemented:

- Commitment to opening new Indigenous shelters
- Sub-committee of Indigenous CAB to guide development and implementation of Coordinated Access to housing and supports
- More responsive Request for Proposal (RFP) process
- Distinct consultations to inform design and technical guidelines to ensure shelters are culturally appropriate for Indigenous populations





## Commitment 3 – Supporting Capacity-Building

### Key Actions Implemented:

- Council approval to develop an Indigenous funding stream, in partnership with Indigenous community, targeting 20% of SSHA's grants funding
  - Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining how groups will collaborate
- Targeted 20% of provincial Home for Good supportive housing funding to Indigenous agencies
- Provided \$120,000 one-time grant to TASSC to enhance capacity to more deeply engage with the City and Indigenous communities

# Commitment 4 – Meaningful Engagement

## Key Actions Implemented:

- Partnership with Indigenous CAB and TASSC on the 2018 Street Needs Assessment count and survey of homelessness in Toronto
- Holding distinct engagement sessions with Indigenous partners
- Development of guide for SSHA staff outlining protocols and practices for engagement with Indigenous communities





# Commitment 5 – Employment Practices

## Key Actions Implemented:

- Development of Indigenous counsellor position at directly operated shelter to ensure shelter staff reflect population they serve; representation from Indigenous community on hiring panel
- "Knowledge of working with Indigenous populations and/or lived experience as an Indigenous person" included in all job postings
- Targeted outreach to Indigenous organizations to increase recruitment of Indigenous staff within SSHA



# Commitment 6 – Opportunities for Collaboration

## Key Actions Implemented:

- Sharing with SSHA staff, City Divisions, and community partners the process for co-creating and implementing *Meeting in the Middle*



# Commitment 7 – Action & Accountability

## Key Actions Implemented:

- Providing quarterly updates to the Indigenous CAB on progress on implementation of actions
- Senior management regularly attending Indigenous CAB and Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee meetings
- Annual gathering, October 28, inclusive of ceremony, to recommit to partnership and review and assess progress





# SSHA Priorities for 2020

- Implementation of the Indigenous Funding Stream
- Meaningful engagement in 2020 Street Needs Assessment
- Exploring an employment and training contract with Indigenous organization (e.g., Miziwe Biik)
- Collective advocacy around National Housing Strategy
- Indigenous input into SSHA's next 5 year Service Plan
- Continue collaboration with Indigenous CAB on Coordinated Access
- Development of an Indigenous data sovereignty strategy/protocol





*"If we want to serve the community in the best way,  
we need to ensure we work together in a good way"*

*"... two sides coming together ... one side has a lot of  
work to do – education, awareness, understanding –  
to come back to the middle"*

*"This will not be a straight path ... but the  
opportunity is huge if we can get there"*

*"We've listened to each other ... it was a  
meeting of the minds"*

Leaders from the Toronto Indigenous Community Advisory Board, Toronto Aboriginal  
Support Services Council and Shelter, Support and Housing Administration

*Chi Miigwetch*  
*Nia:wen Kowa*  
*Marsee*  
*Thank you!*

# For more information:

Steve Teekens  
Executive Director  
Native Men's Residence  
416-651-6750 x 2227  
[steekens@nameres.org](mailto:steekens@nameres.org)

Linda Wood  
Manager, Operations and Support Services  
Shelter, Support and Housing Administration  
416-397-1423  
[Linda.Wood@Toronto.ca](mailto:Linda.Wood@Toronto.ca)

*Meeting in the Middle* is available at:  
[www.toronto.ca/housingresearch](http://www.toronto.ca/housingresearch)

