

**Presentation to the Audit Committee
on June 28, 2019, Agenda Item AU3.14**

Opening Doors to Stable Housing: An Effective Waiting List and Reduced Vacancy Rates Will Help More People Access Housing

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Presentation Overview

1. Background, Audit Objectives and Scope
2. Key Themes from the Audit - **Video**
3. Key Audit Findings and Recommendations
4. Recap and Conclusion

Background: Importance of Stable Housing

City's Medical Officer of Health has reported:

“Housing that is affordable, good quality, and stable is key for promoting population health and reducing health inequities ...”

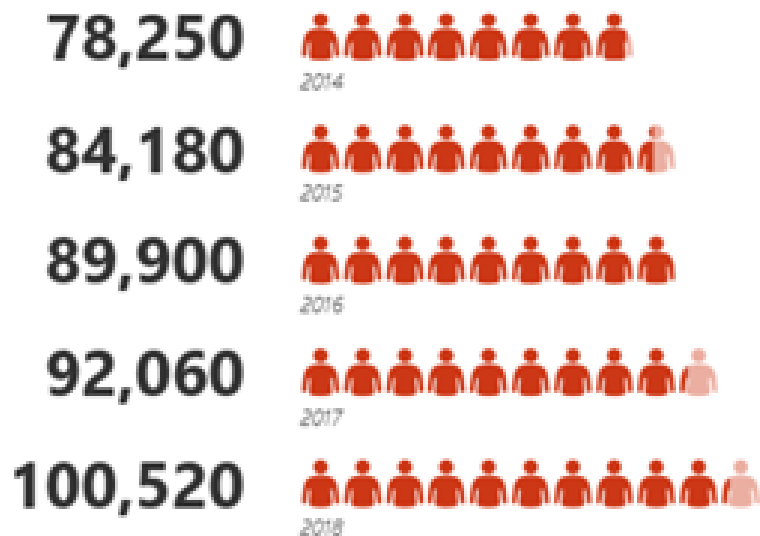
City's Housing Opportunities Toronto Action Plan 2010-2020 reported:

“It is clear that investing in housing results in savings in the health, education, criminal justice and social service system...”

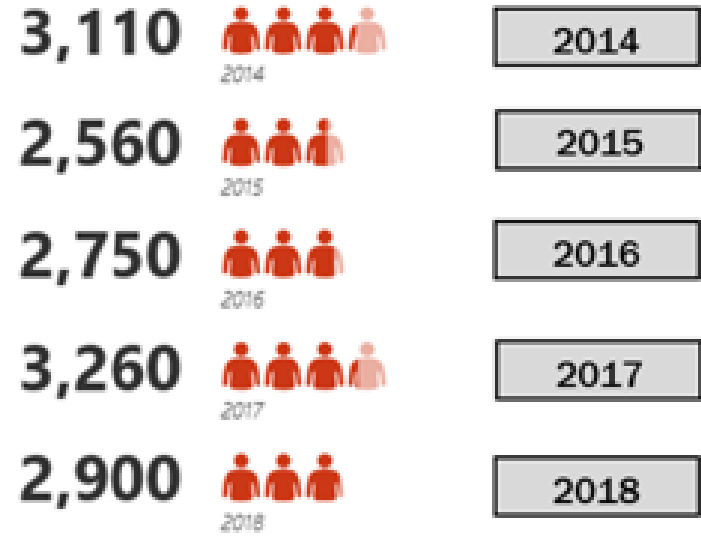
Background: Housing Continuum



Applicants Waiting



Housed RGI Applicants



Audit Objectives and Scope

1. Are applicants waiting for RGI assistance getting **timely and equitable access** – ensuring those with the **greatest need** are efficiently served?
2. Is the waiting list being **administered effectively** so that vacant subsidized **units are filled** as expeditiously as possible?
3. Is the City, as service manager, ensuring **compliance** with local rules and the legislation?

Key Themes

The City needs to:

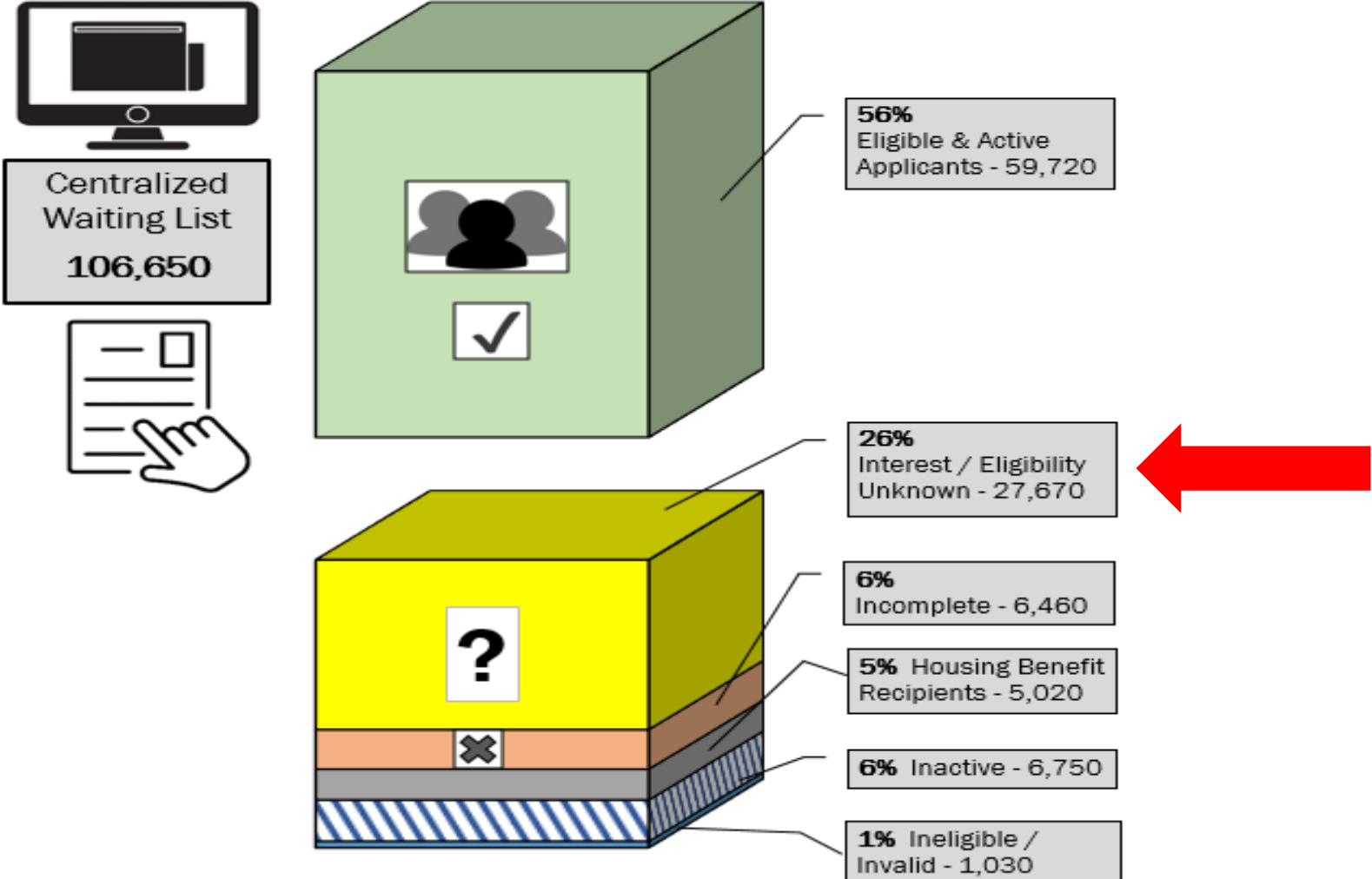
1. Improve **data integrity** to know who is actively waiting
2. Review **prioritization of applicants** to consider those most in need
3. Make **better use** of available housing units so **more individuals and families** can access stable housing
4. Strengthen **controls** and increase **service integration**



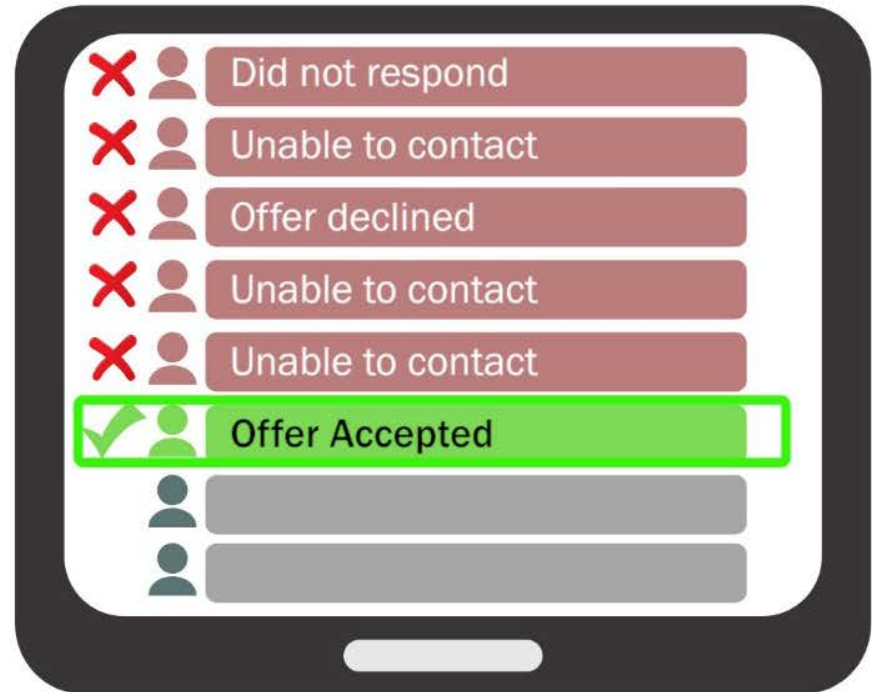
Link to Video:

<https://youtu.be/eGewl8pskbY>

1. Improve Integrity of Waiting List Data ... to Know Exactly Who is Actively Waiting



1. Improve Integrity of Waiting List Data ... to Help Providers Fill Vacancies Faster



- On average, it takes 6 offers to fill a vacancy
- 13% of offers are accepted
- \$7 million vacancy loss

1. Improve Integrity of Waiting List Data

– Key Actions

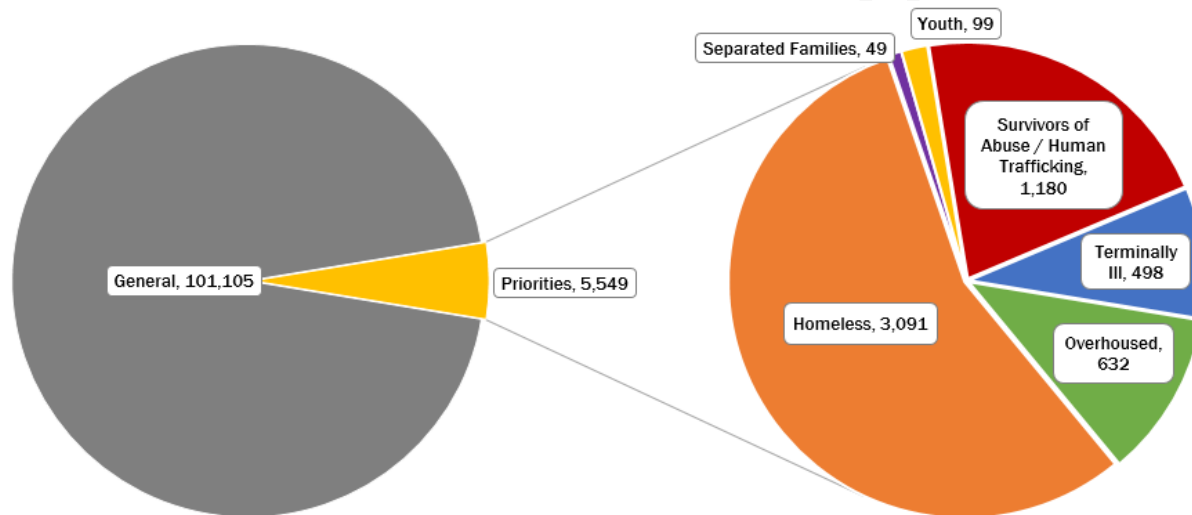
Short Term (within 6 months)

- Immediately fill vacant units with people in need of housing - **bachelor units for seniors**
- Communicate by email, text or phone to ensure a timely response to offers
- Report successes on a quarterly basis
- Consult with Province on legislative changes

Medium Term (within a year)

- Identify incorrect applicant information that should be investigated and resolved
- Deactivate applications with no contact for over 24 months

2. Review Prioritization of Applicants



- Properly prioritize applicant – ensure applicants that are a priority *are given priority*
- City should review its priority rules – the current rules have been in place since 2002
- Supporting the vulnerable to achieve stable housing – integrating homelessness and housing support services
- Consider how portable housing benefits can be used where vacancies in the physical social housing stock are limited

2. Review Prioritization of Applicants – Key Actions

Short Term (within 6 months)

- Emergency shelter clients should receive appropriate designation as a priority
- Prioritize applicants based on need

Medium Term (within a year)

- Refresh local priority rules
- Clarify what conditions require accommodation
- Review how portable housing benefits
- Improve integration of homelessness and housing supports

3. Make Better Use of Housing Units

TCHC Data as at December 31, 2018	# of units	# of people impacted
Rentable and vacant RGI units– including bachelors*	1,020	1,600
Additional social housing units that are used for other purposes:		
Used by contractors	27	40
Used for other purposes (e.g., staff, recreation, community programs)	113	220
Opportunities to use social housing units for housing	1,160	1,860
Over-housed		1,550
<i>Additional people that can be housed at TCHC</i>		<i>3,410</i>

A 50% improvement *across the entire system* has the potential house an additional 2,200 people

3. Make Better Use of Housing Units

Possible opportunity to provide relief to the emergency shelter system

- 185 units in Regent Park and Lawrence Heights awaiting demolition
- Units we visited
 - have working kitchens, plumbing, electricity
 - need a thorough cleaning and some may need some minor repairs such as painting
- May potentially ease the City's reliance on hotels and house families in an emergency housing situation



3. Make Better Use of Housing Units

– Key Actions

Short Term (within 6 months)

- Review housing units used for storage
- Seek updates to legislation and local rules
- Determine feasibility of using tenant vacated TCHC units awaiting demolition as emergency or transitional shelters

Medium Term (within a year)

- Develop new strategies to move those who are over-housed
- Deactivate applications with no contact for over 24 months

Longer Term (more than 1 year)

- Implement new technology solution

4. Enhance Oversight and Strengthen Controls

1. Improving **oversight of RGI vacancies** filled by households that are not selected from the centralized waiting list
2. **Strengthening internal controls over eligibility reviews**, performing reviews of income and assets when people apply for RGI assistance, and correctly determining the amount of RGI assistance
3. Enhancing information system controls to **improve data integrity**
4. Speeding up and enhancing **Human Services Integration**

Re-cap

The City needs to:

1. Improve **data integrity** to know who is actively waiting
2. Review **prioritization of applicants** to consider those most in need
3. Make **better use** of available housing units so **more individuals and families** can access stable housing
4. Strengthen **controls** and increase **service integration**

Conclusion

1. The findings and recommendations will assist the City in **setting priority actions** to help more individuals and families to achieve stable housing
2. *City management have agreed to all 28 recommendations*
3. ***Focus on outcomes***
 - *Fill vacant units*

**AUDITOR
GENERAL**

TORONTO