

# **Community and Social Services:**

**Supporting Vulnerable Indigenous People in  
Toronto Beyond COVID-19**

**Presentation to the Aboriginal Affairs  
Advisory Committee**

**May 26, 2020**



# Supporting Indigenous Communities in Toronto During COVID-19

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Social Development, Finance & Administration

City of  
Toronto

Provincial  
Government

Federal  
Government

Community  
Sector

### HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

- Shelters
- Drop Ins
- Street Outreach
- Supervised Injection
- Rapid Rehousing
- Eviction Support
- Rent Support

### INCOME SUPPORT

- OW & ODSP
- Provincial Supports
- Federal Supports
- Youth Employment
- Financial Empowerment

### FAMILY SUPPORT

- Emergency Child Care Centres
- Parental Support
- Learning Activities
- Support for Seniors
- Prescription Delivery
- Medical Appointments

### FOOD ACCESS

- Food Banks
- Hamper Delivery
- Grocery Delivery
- Grocery Gift Cards
- Prepared Meal Delivery

## TO Supports



### MENTAL HEALTH

- Free Phones
- Free Counselling
- Online Group Workshops
- Bereavement

### SAFETY & WELLBEING

- Escalated Situations
- Critical Incidents
- Domestic Violence
- Child Abuse
- Funeral Planning
- Know Your Rights

### SOCIAL CONNECTION

- Volunteerism
- Donations
- Digital Access
- Online Activities

### COMMUNITY SECTOR SUPPORT

- City-Sector Coordination
- Networking
- Emergency Funding
- Workplace Safety
- Funding Sustainability
- Research

## SUPPORTING TORONTO'S COMMUNITIES



With the arrival of COVID-19, the community sector entered a new level of crisis management to meet the needs of Toronto's most vulnerable community members. Community organizations instantly changed to online social service delivery or used physical distancing measures. Daily coordination, information and resources are vital for agencies to help clients in real time. To make this happen, the City of Toronto and United Way created the Community Coordination Plan.

### CCP COORDINATES RESPONSES TO URGENT LOCAL ISSUES

CCP works with local community organizations to identify urgent issues and coordinate with one another to implement solutions quickly. CCP ensures there is communication between local community organizations and City of Toronto and/or United Way.



### IN THE FIRST SIX WEEKS (STARTING MARCH 23)



### DONATIONS



\*Total Value more than \$260,000

### THE COORDINATING TABLE



"The CCP has given us peace of mind that there is a strong coordinated effort to address residents' concerns."  
 -City Councillors' Office

"CCP provides agencies with a consistent point of access to relevant information, resources and peer exchange in a fast and responsive manner."  
 -Community Agency

"The cluster brings together different kinds of agencies (multi-service, food, seniors, employment). Having a cross sector network is a critical step towards meeting the needs of vulnerable people and fast."  
 -Cluster Coordinator



# TO Supports: Rapid Response for Indigenous Communities

## SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS ORGANIZATIONS



### Community Funding Support

- **\$175,000** allocation to Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council (TASSC) is recommended to support COVID-19 emergency response efforts in collaboration with member agencies through Social Development, Finance & Administration
- Indigenous Affairs Office engaged in supporting allocation of additional **\$800,000** in grant to Indigenous communities
- **Donations** secured to Indigenous-led organizations have included: hygiene kits, Uber Vouchers, Linder Chocolate donations, children activity kits and monetary donation of **\$1,500** to as specific organization

### Community Coordination Plan

- **Indigenous-serving Organizations Cluster** identified as one of 13 Clusters of the Community Coordination Plan involving Indigenous serving organizations represented by members of the Toronto Aboriginal Social Services Association (TASSC ) and its 18 members
- Anishnawbe Health Toronto is engaged in the **City-wide Cluster**

## MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS



- **Native Child & Family Services** as lead mental health partner supporting Indigenous communities in 1<sup>st</sup> phase of Mental Health Supports Plan
- A 2nd Indigenous-focused mental health partner and dedicated supports funds to support partner will be part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the Plan
- Launched mental health support services website and social media outreach plan that specifically **engages Indigenous communities** and provides specific Indigenous-focused resources

## TO Supports: Rapid Response for Indigenous Communities

### FOOD ACCESS



- **\$10,000** in grocery store gift cards and donations secured from Metro to support TASSC
- Coordinated the distribution and delivery of 223,000 cans of Labatt Water to the Toronto Drop-In Network of which **Native Child and Family Services of Toronto** and **Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre** are members
- Coordinating a prepared meal program in partnership with MLSE, Second Harvest and United Way to **deliver weekly prepared meals** to approximately 37 agencies, including Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre, Native Canadian Centre of Toronto, as well as the Native Women's Resource Centre and Native Child and Family Services through related Scotia Bank and Second Harvest Kitchen's

### DATA FOR EQUITY



- Leveraged existing Data for Equity work done in consultation with the Indigenous Affairs Office, Indigenous organizations and Indigenous researchers, to support Toronto Public Health to develop an approach to **collect data related during COVID testing**
- Identifying key service areas in which **disaggregated socio-demographic identity**, including Indigenous identity, needs to be collected and analyzed to support a robust recovery that addresses the specific needs of Indigenous people in Toronto



- Engaged TASSC in the **Social Services Working Group** chaired by Deputy Mayor Bailao to identify and articulate mid-to-long term recommendations to support the specific recovery needs of Indigenous led and serving organizations as part of the **Mayor's Economic Support and Recovery Task Force**
- Refocusing work on the development of an **Urban Indigenous Poverty Reduction Action Plan**



# SSHA's COVID-19 Response: Supporting Indigenous Communities in Toronto Beyond COVID-19

Mary-Anne Bédard, General Manager  
Shelter, Support and Housing Administration

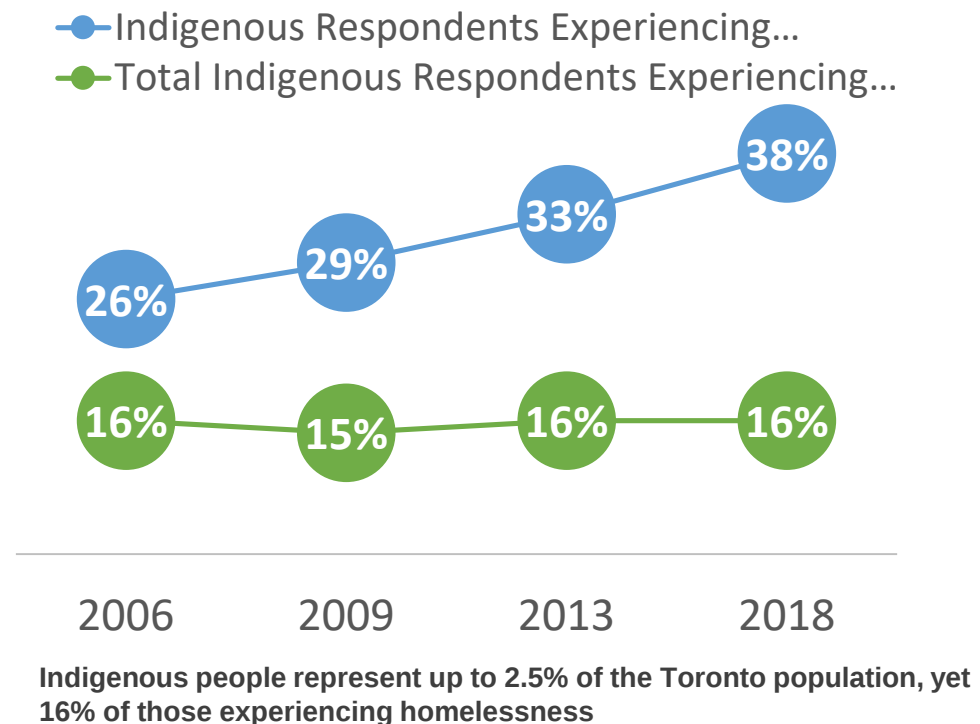
# Current Context

- Toronto has the largest shelter system in Canada with approximately 7,000 individuals provided shelter each night
- 30 new programs added to the system since beginning of COVID-19 pandemic
- People experiencing homelessness are at a higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 because of underlying health and socio-economic conditions
- As of May 18, 2020, there have been 355 confirmed positive cases among people experiencing homelessness and 9 active outbreak sites, representing less than 5% of clients



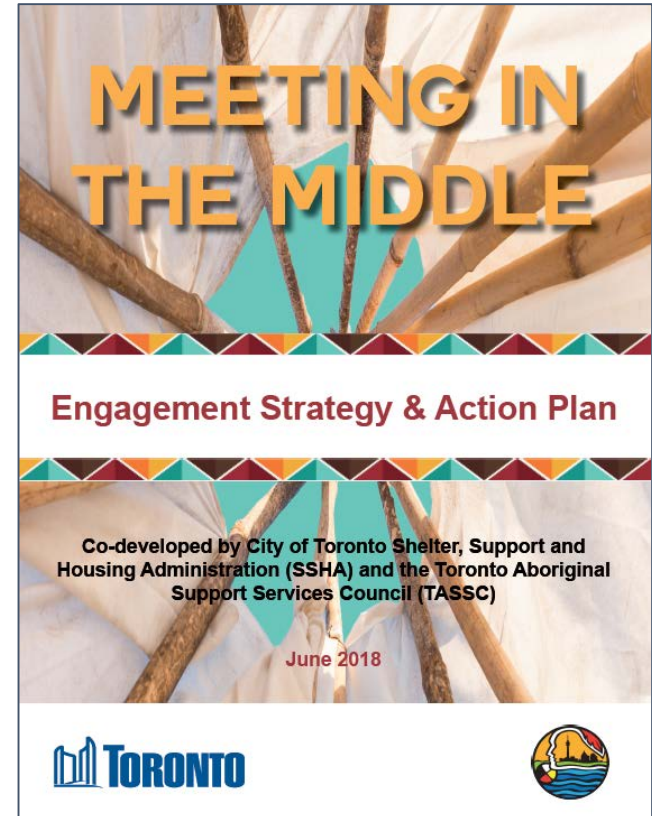
# Ensuring response meets needs of Indigenous communities

- 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



# Meeting in the Middle

- Co-created by SSHA, the Toronto Indigenous Community Advisory Board (TICAB), and Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council (TASSC)
- To foster better relationships between SSHA and Indigenous organizations and identify actions to more meaningfully address Indigenous homelessness in Toronto



# Three-Tier Response Overview

2 metres apart



## Prevention

Enhanced Infection Prevention and Control guidance  
Physical distancing in the shelter system  
Outreach and encampments



## Mitigation

Screening and testing for COVID-19  
Isolation program



## Recovery

Recovery sites  
Rapid rehousing  
Leveraging investments for permanent housing  
Ensuring housing stability

# Tiers 1 and 2 – Supporting Indigenous Agencies

- Provided approximately \$162K in funding to Indigenous organizations as part of our overall COVID-19 response
  - PPE, supplies and equipment, IPAC, staffing and salary supports
- Distributing supply of masks to Indigenous shelters to support daily use of masks by frontline shelter staff
- Worked with Indigenous organizations around existing or new hotel room projects to create opportunities for physical distancing
  - 40 hotel rooms provided to Indigenous organizations serving clients experiencing homelessness who require space for physical distancing
- Working with community partner outreach agencies, including Na-Me-Res, to refer clients staying in encampments to interim housing program

# Tier 3 – Rapid Housing Initiative

- Partnership between the City and Toronto Community Housing
- Shelter clients are matched to available **rent-geared-to-income** units in TCHC through Coordinated access to create physical distancing
- Clients must be referred through shelter, require low level of support, be eligible for rent-geared-to-income housing and accept follow-up supports
- Collaboration with TICAB to ensure allocation of units for Indigenous shelter clients

# Tier 3 – SSHA Commitment to Indigenous Funding Program

- Memorandum of Understanding executed by SSHA, TICAB and Toronto Indigenous Community Entity in October, 2019
- Ongoing commitment to implementing an Indigenous funding program and dedicating 20% of grants funding as it becomes available, including any additional grant funding

# Tier 3 – Housing Benefits

## **Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB)**

- Portable housing benefit program paid to low-income households on/eligible for social housing waiting list to assist with rental housing costs; individuals must agree to be taken off centralized waiting list
- Indigenous people are a City of Toronto priority group for program
- Collaborating with TICAB and the Toronto Indigenous Community Entity to ensure maximum uptake of benefits for Indigenous people
- Additional COHB funding will be prioritized to Indigenous people

### **Ongoing Access to:**

- Toronto Transitional Housing Allowance Program
- Home for Good rent supplement funding

# Recovery Strategy Engagement

- Commitment to distinct engagement with TICAB in SSHA's recovery strategy planning
- Working with TICAB around long-term housing opportunities for Indigenous people experiencing homelessness
- Continued collaboration with TICAB and Coordinated Access Sub-Committee on the development of Coordinated Access system that meets the needs of Indigenous clients and organizations.

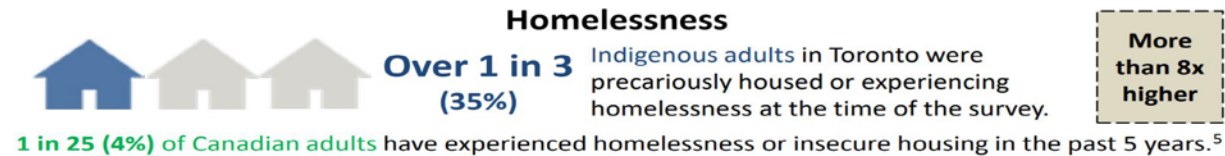
# Housing

## 2020 – 2030 Action Plan



**Housing & People Recovery Plan**  
**Moving forward with our Indigenous Partners**

# Data on Indigenous Housing Demand & Supply



**44%** of stably housed Indigenous adults in Toronto reported living in social housing.

## Rent vs. Ownership



## Repairs and Crowding



**Housing Costs**

Over **1/3** of Indigenous adults gave up key needs (e.g. groceries, transportation) to meet shelter/housing-related costs at least once a month.

**More than 3x higher**

**14%** of Indigenous adults lived in crowded dwellings.

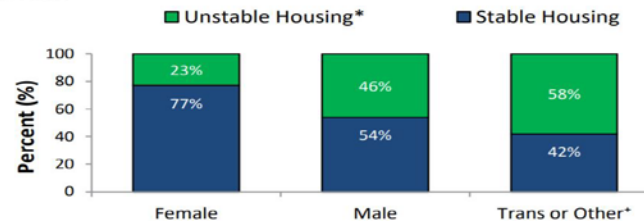
**4%** of non-Indigenous adults in Canada lived in crowded dwellings.<sup>7</sup>



Indigenous men and those who identified as Trans or Other in Toronto indicated living in unstable housing more often than Indigenous women.

\*Unstable housing includes those living precariously housed or experiencing homelessness)

## Needs



# Partners Engaged in HousingTO

The following organizations were engaged in the HousingTO consultations

- Inuit of Toronto Urban Katimavvik
- Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Employment and Training
- Native Child and Family Services of Toronto
- Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council
- NA-ME-RES
- Wigwamen
- Native Community Centre Toronto
- Aboriginal Legal Services
- Toronto Council Fire Native Culture Centre\*\*
- Native Women's Resource Centre of Toronto\*\*
- 2-Spirited People of the First Nations\*\*
- Anishnawbe Health Toronto\*\*
- Indigenous Housing & Resource Collective of Tkaronto\*

\* - community partner attended dedicated Indigenous consultation and hosted their own community led consultation

\*\* - community partner provided a submission based on survey of 140 participants

# What we heard from Indigenous Partners

## Challenges & Barriers

- Buying land in Toronto to develop non-profit housing in Toronto is too expensive
- Housing is unaffordable – rent is too expensive, many cannot gather first & last month's rent
- Not enough funding to support developing transitional housing
- Lack of supports for Indigenous Peoples' facing homelessness
- Housing discrimination and lack of culturally appropriate housing options

## Ideas & Solutions

- Allocate a percentage of affordable housing units to Indigenous people and organizations
- Fund more projects geared to permanent affordable housing & less on rent subsidies
- Create “village type housing model” where elders, family members & youth belonging to the community can live together
- Deed City properties to Indigenous organizations with funding for capital repairs
- Explore modular housing as innovative rapid solution
- Build capacity in the sector
- Strengthen partnerships with Nishnawbe Homes and TASSC to tackle housing issue
- Create more family oriented development with more bedrooms
- Develop targeted solutions for Indigenous women, Indigenous youth

# HousingTO

## Housing & People Recovery Plan

- **HousingTO 2020-2030** was approved by Council in December 2019.
- Council approved 13 strategic actions to be taken to implement the Plan over the next 10 Years.
- **HousingTO 2020-2030** :
  - Is estimated to cost \$23.4 billion, with an approximate one-third cost share from each order of government over a 10 year period
  - Creates 40,000 new affordable rental homes, including 18,000 supportive homes
  - Includes actions to prevent homelessness and improve housing stability.

### HOW WILL IT BE DONE?

1. Adopt a revised "Toronto Housing Charter – Opportunity for All"
2. Enhance Partnerships with Indigenous Community Partners
3. Prevent Homelessness and Improve Pathways to Housing Stability
4. Provide Pathways to Support Women
5. Maintain and Increase Access to Affordable Rents
6. Meeting the Diverse Housing Needs of Seniors
7. Ensure Well-Maintained and Secure Homes for Renters
8. Support Toronto Community Housing and its Residents
9. Continue the Revitalization of Neighbourhoods
10. Create New Rental Housing Responsive to Residents' Needs
11. Help People Buy and Stay in Their Homes
12. Improve Accountability and Transparency in Delivery of Housing Services to Residents
13. Enhance Partnerships and Intergovernmental Strategy



# Housing TO

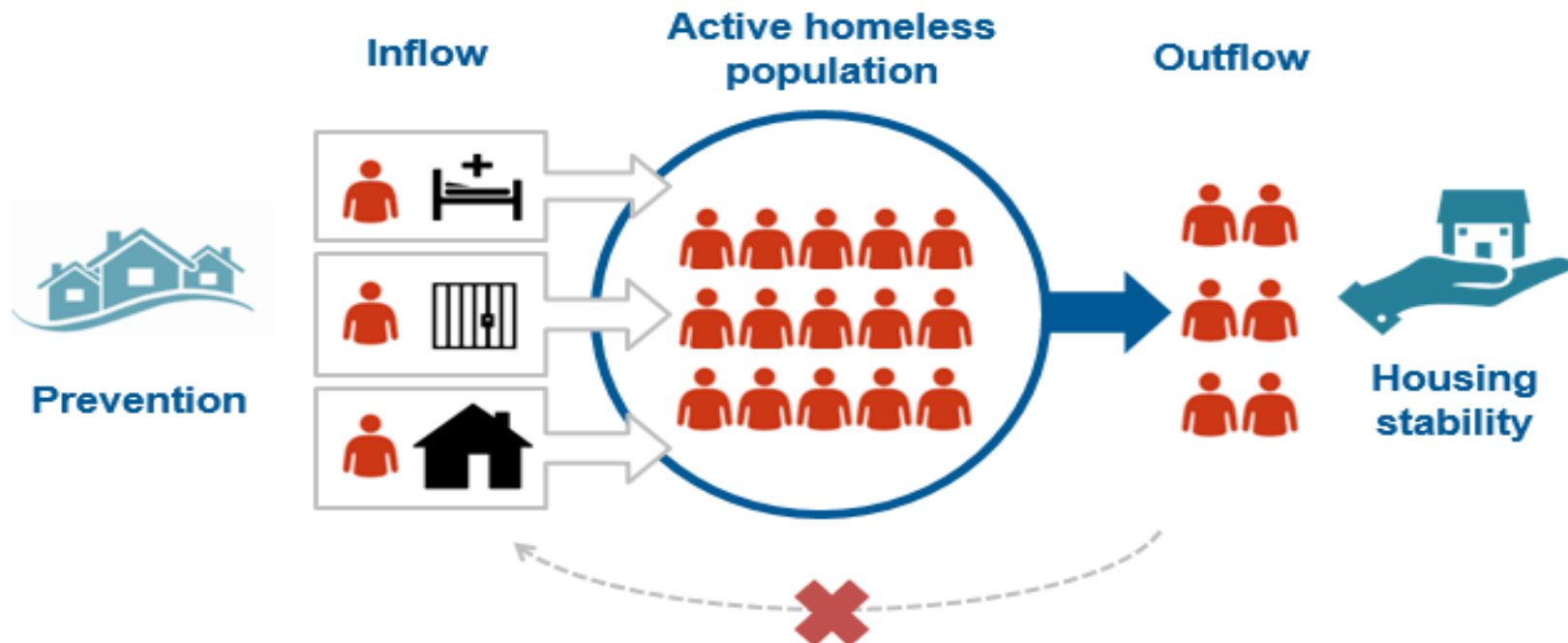
## Housing & People Recovery Plan

- Working with City's Advisory Group on the Protection of Affordable Rental Housing
- Social Services and Housing working group, led by Deputy Mayor Bailao
- Gathering feedback from both renters, landlords, private, non-profit including Indigenous partners regarding their most pressing issues
- Key concerns include:
  - immediate challenges renter households are facing to pay their rents
  - risk of delayed evictions for renters who will not be able to pay back multiple months of accrued rent when the moratorium on evictions is lifted.
- Support calls to expand rental assistance programs to provide relief in short and medium term to Renters
- Advocate for measures in place to prevent economic Renter evictions after the immediate crisis
- Created communication and outreach materials for both Renters and Property Owners to inform them of relevant health and safety guidelines and available social and financial support services.

# Housing TO

## Supportive Housing Supply

Supported by Federal and Provincial investments to implement the HousingTO 2020-2030, the City will work with partners to reduce homelessness by decreasing demand/inflow through prevention and increasing outcomes/outflow to supportive housing opportunities



# Housing TO

## Modular Supportive Homes

- For people experiencing homelessness and facing multiple physical, mental & addiction challenges
- “*Housing First*” Supportive, self-contained homes with 24/7 staffing
- Food program, commercial kitchen & shared amenities
- High quality and affordable
- Building code compliant
- Environmentally sustainable
- Rapid year-round delivery
- Relocatable & reconfigurable



# Housing TO

## Modular Supportive Homes



# Housing TO Modular Supportive Homes



# Some Next Steps

- Phase 1: 110 Modular Supportive Homes – RFP for Operators is imminent - public roll out June 2020
- Phase 2: 140 Modular Supportive Homes – Fall 2020
- On-going advocacy to Federal & Provincial Governments about importance of investment in Affordable Housing as part of recovery.
- Open Door call for proposals
- Support growth of capacity in Indigenous Affordable Housing Development sector
- In partnership, develop targeted solutions for Indigenous women, Indigenous youth