

Overview of Toronto's Shelter System and Support for People Experiencing Homelessness

Toronto Shelter and Support Services
Presentation to the Housing Rights Advisory Committee
May 13, 2024



OUR VISION

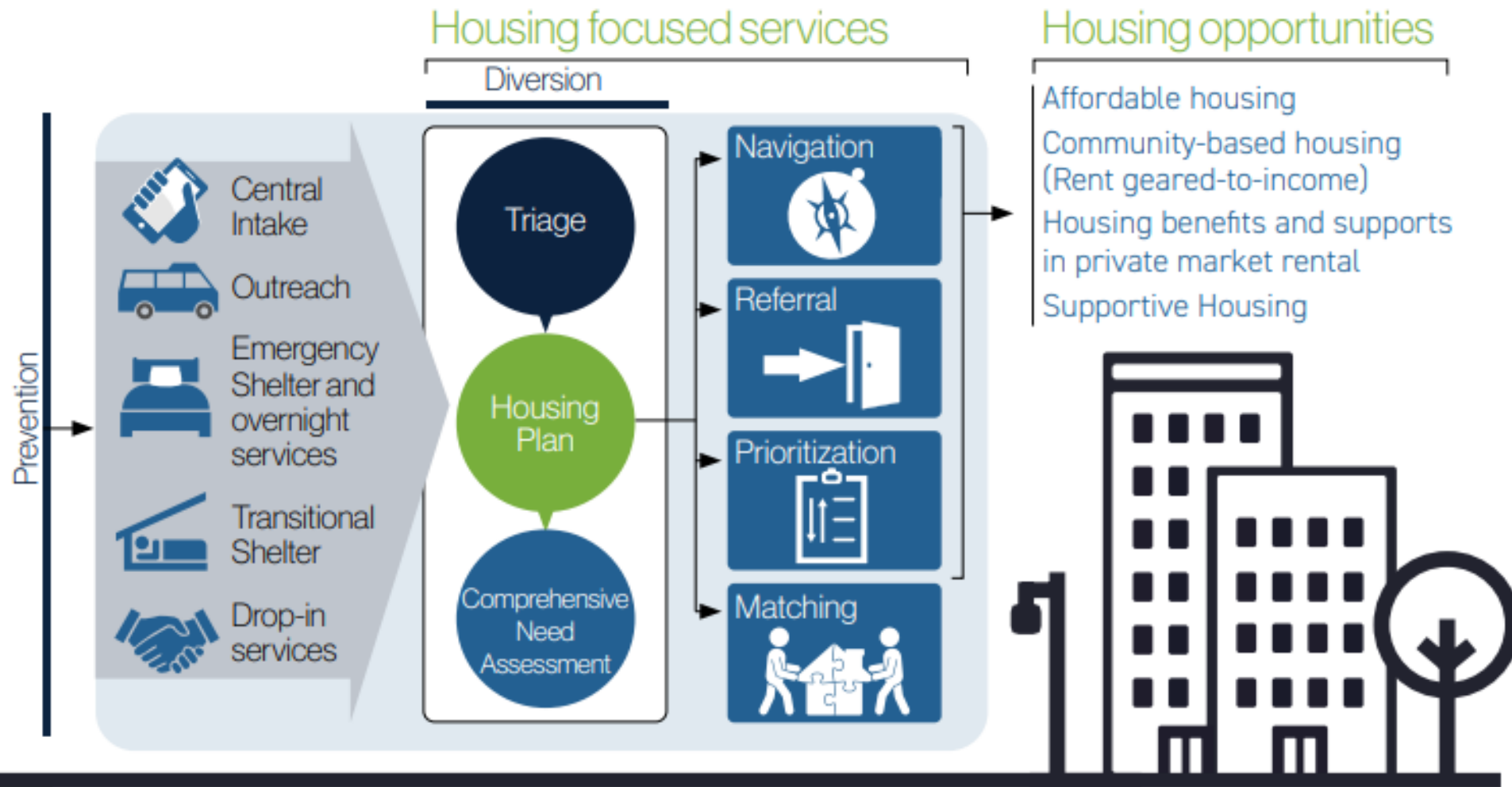
Toronto is a city where homelessness is rare, brief and non-recurring, and where people experiencing homelessness are supported using a Housing First approach.



OUR MISSION

As Toronto's shelter service system manager, we oversee and coordinate shelter, support services, and outreach to connect people experiencing homelessness with housing.

Homelessness Service System



Housing First Principles:



Rapid
access to
housing



No housing
readiness
requirement



Individual
choice



Strengths-based,
person-centred
supports

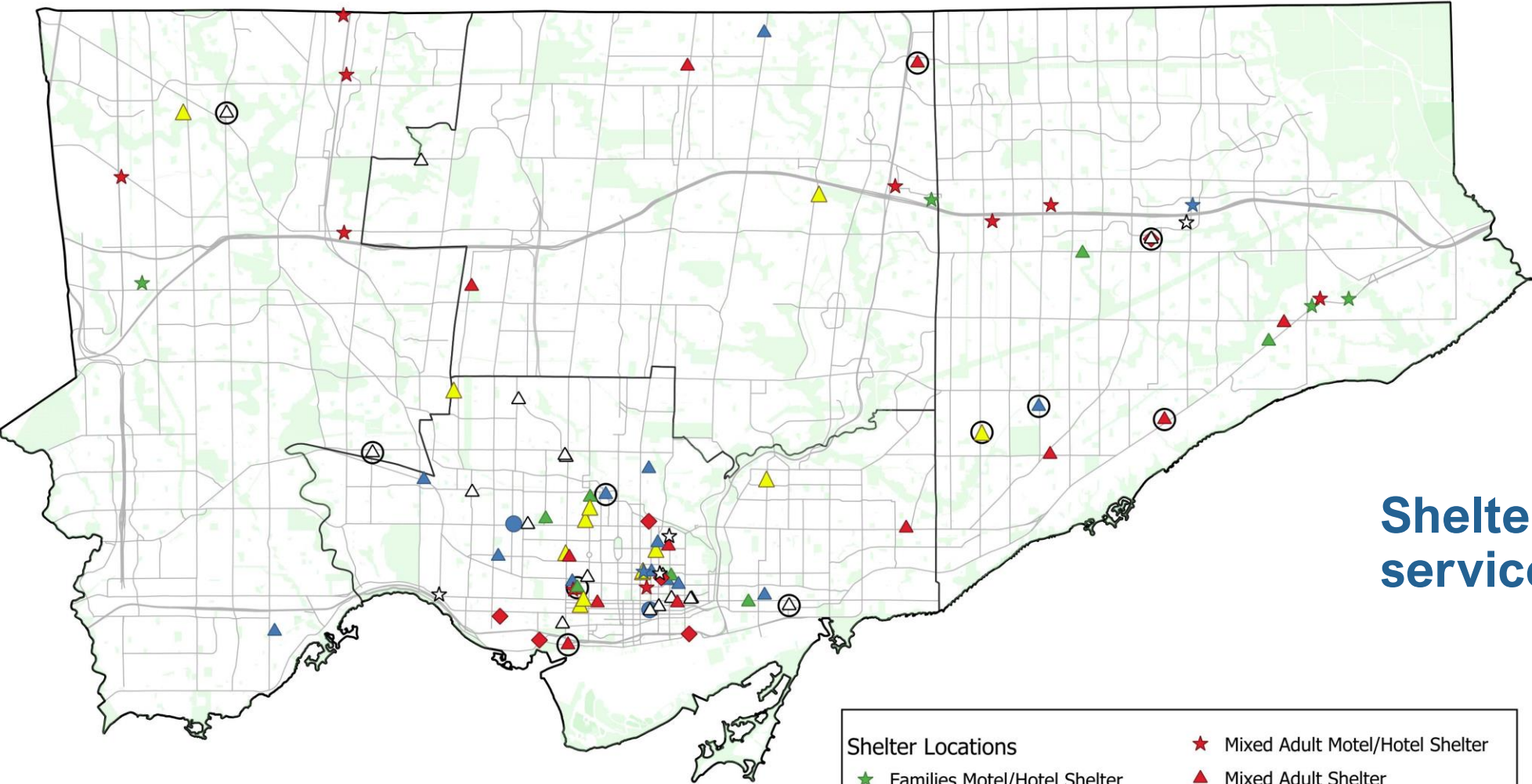


Community
integration

Toronto Shelter System

- Toronto Shelter and Support Services (TSSS) ensures that people experiencing homelessness have access to emergency shelter and wrap-around supports, while assisting them to develop permanent housing plans. Our services fall under three main areas:
 - Emergency shelter and support programs
 - Street outreach
 - 24-hour respite and drop-in programs

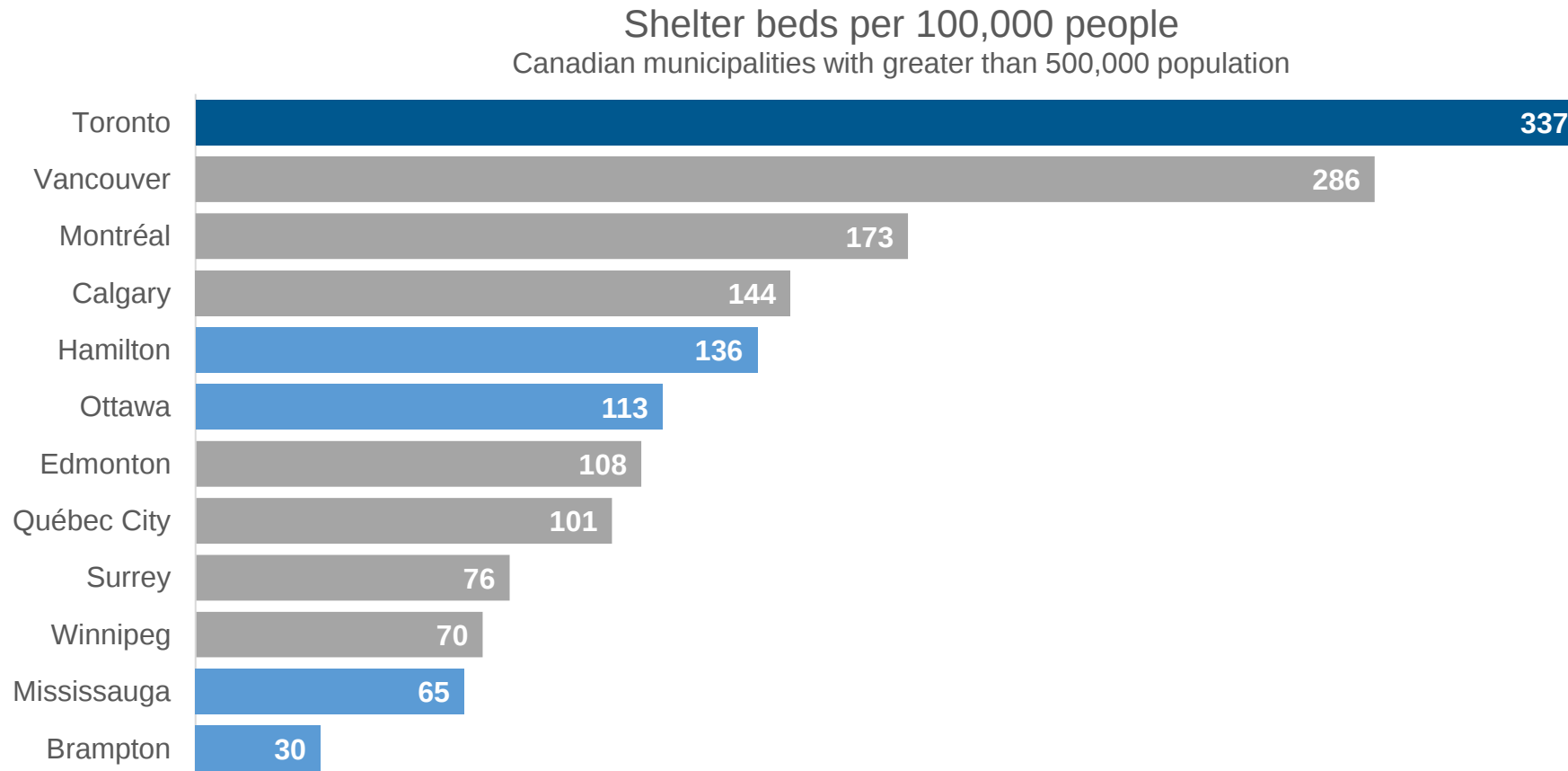
Toronto Shelter Locations by Sector & Overnight Service Type - March 2024



Shelter and overnight service locations

Shelter Locations	
★ Families Motel/Hotel Shelter	★ Mixed Adult Motel/Hotel Shelter
▲ Families Shelter	▲ Mixed Adult Shelter
☆ Men Motel/Hotel Shelter	● Women 24-Hour Women's Drop-in
△ Men Shelter	★ Women Motel/Hotel Shelter
◆ Mixed Adult 24-Hour Respite Site	▲ Women Shelter
✚ Mixed Adult Isolation/Recovery	▲ Youth Shelter
	○ NSSM Site

Toronto has the most shelter beds per capita of any large city in Canada

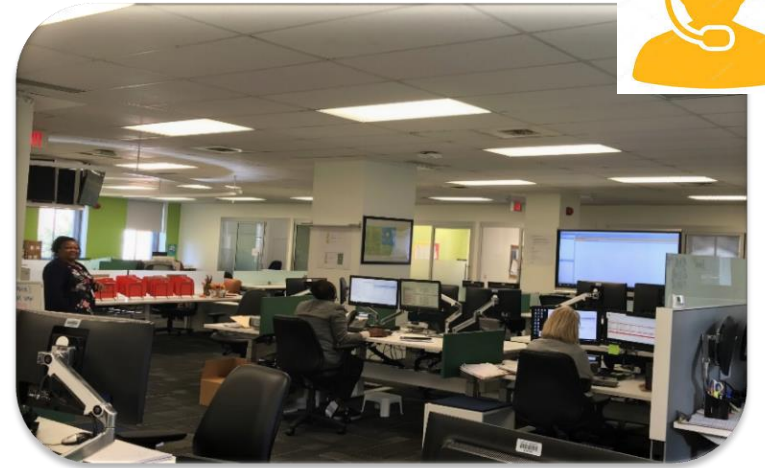


Toronto's Shelter System Occupancy

- System is at full capacity most nights.
- TSSS is currently accommodating more than 12,000 people.
 - More than 9,800 people are in the City's shelters and approximately 2,200 people are being supported outside the shelter system in bridging hotels and other programs run by the Canadian Red Cross.
- In Q1 2024, on average, every night there were 160 callers requesting shelter who could not be matched to a shelter space.

Central Intake

- Provides 24/7 telephone-based service that offers referrals to emergency shelter and other overnight accommodation, as well as information about other homelessness services
- Improved outcomes:
 - Faster and more efficient intakes
 - Reliable data
 - Improved visibility of system activity
 - Enhanced system oversight and operational reliability



Streets to Homes Street Outreach & Support Program

- Streets to Homes reaches out to people who are sleeping outdoors and experiencing homelessness
- Available 24/7, year-round
- Focuses on establishing supportive relationships as a first step in addressing immediate health and safety needs
- Provides supports to move into housing



Services include:

- Referrals to food programs
- ID and income supports
- Housing plan, referrals to Central Intake
- Harm reduction and mental health services
- Wellness checks and referrals to warming/cooling centres



Supporting the needs of people experiencing homelessness

Populations with distinct needs

Of people experiencing homelessness in Toronto:

15% identify as Indigenous

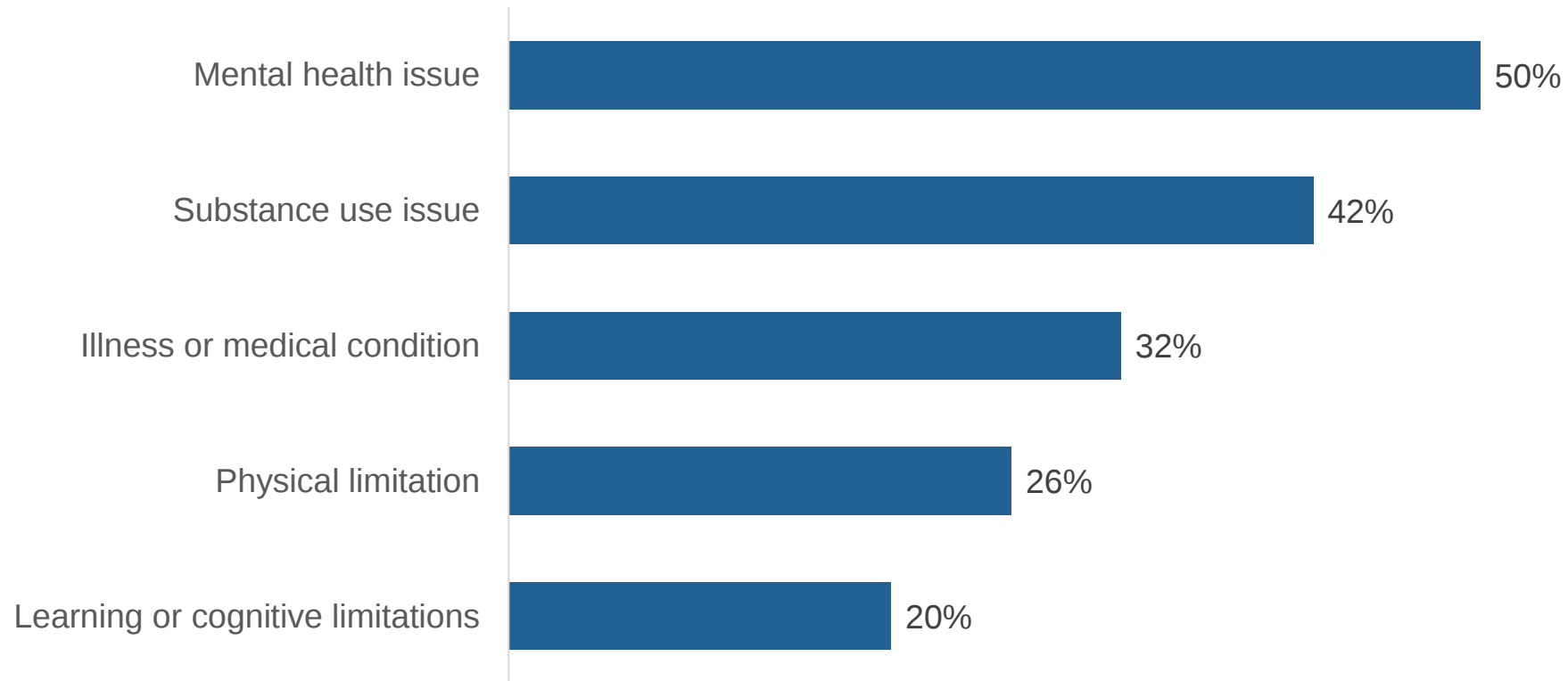
5% are Veterans

18% have experience in foster care

26% of youth identify as 2SLGBTQ+

59% identify as members of racialized groups

76% of respondents identified having one or more type of the following health challenges



Shelter Spaces

- Are open 24/7
- Offer access to community space
- Are client-centered
- Pet friendly
- Best practice design guidelines
- Integrated into neighbourhoods
- Meet green building standards
- Meet accessibility standards (AODA)
- Housing focused service model

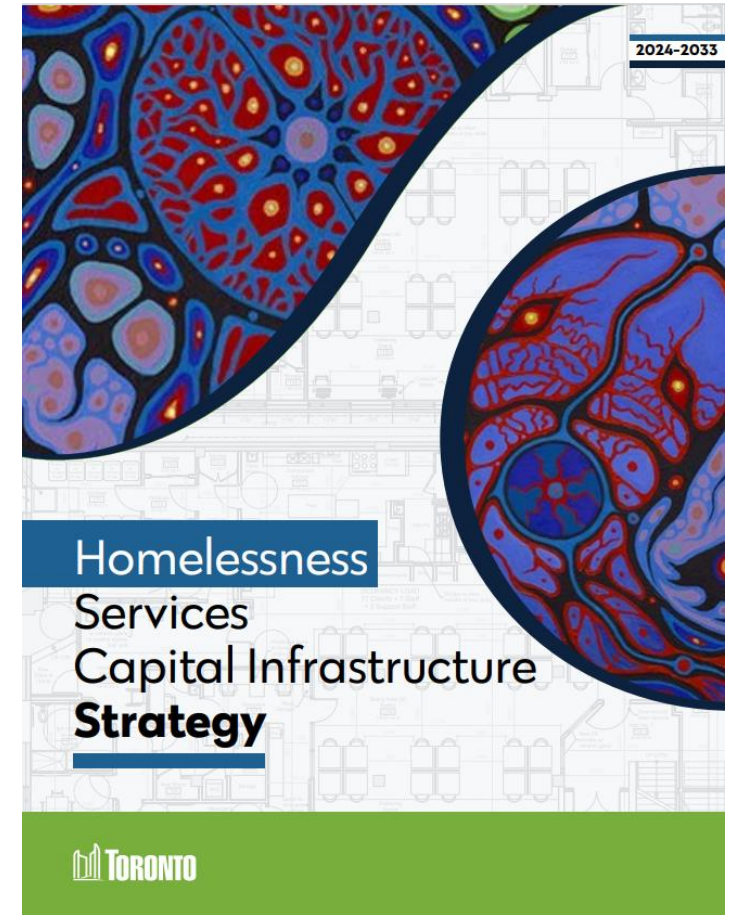




Priority Initiatives

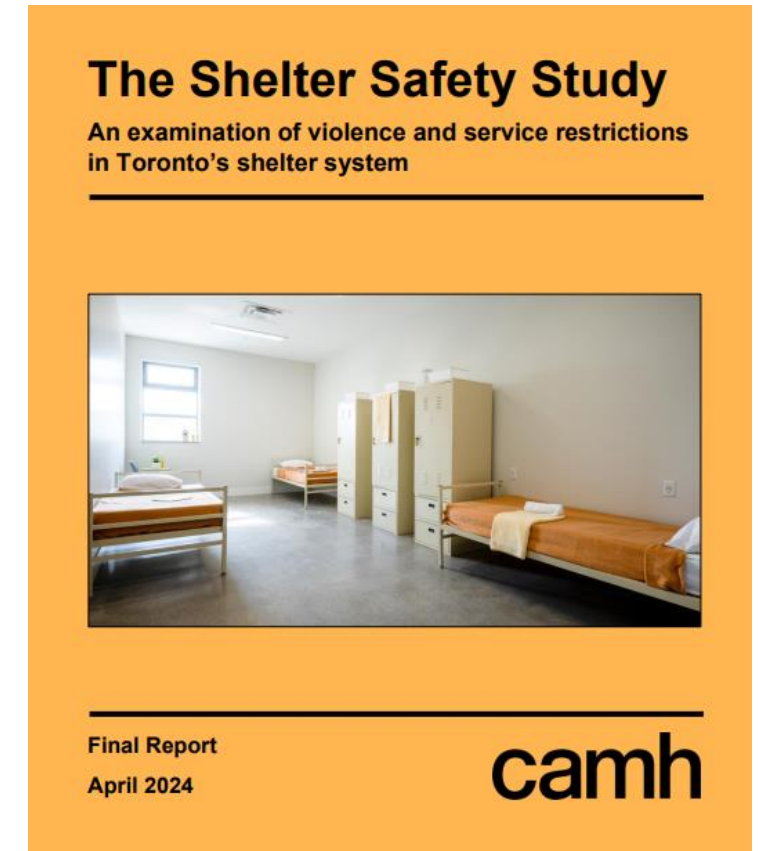
Homelessness Services Capital Infrastructure Strategy (2024-2033)

- In November 2023, Council approved the Homelessness Services Capital Infrastructure Strategy (HSCIS)
- 10-year roadmap to transition the City's shelter infrastructure from primarily emergency-focused responses to a system rooted in proactive, strategic capital planning and decision-making.
- Includes plan to develop 1,600 new shelter beds over the next 10 years.



Safety in the Shelter System

- In 2021, TSSS reached out to CAMH to support the issue of safety in the shelter system. This resulted in a two-year (2022-2024) study examining factors that contribute to physical and psychological safety in shelters for staff and service users.
- CAMH's Final Report proposes 22 recommendations to advance safety in the shelter system. The report was endorsed by ECDC on April 30, 2024.
- TSSS continues to prioritize improving shelter safety for staff and service users. This includes developing a Shelter Safety Action Plan which implements the CAMH study recommendations and in consultation with sector partners and people with lived experience.



Encampments and Interdepartmental Protocol (IDP)

- Implementation of Ombudsman Toronto's recommendations from their interim and final reports on the City's Process for Clearing Encampments.
- Updating the City's Interdepartmental Protocol (IDP) that outlines a clear, transparent, and coordinated process to guide City staff in responding to encampments on City-owned spaces.



Enhanced Housing-Focused Outreach and Supports Model

- Successfully applied at Dufferin Grove Park and Allan Gardens
- Enhanced outreach and supports, relationship building, addressing health and safety, and connection to shelter, supports and housing
- Allan Gardens (as of April 21, 2024)
 - ✓ 97 people housed (total)
 - ✓ 309 people referred indoors
 - ↓ 11 encampments (from high of 84)



Thank you!