

Supporting Unhoused Rights Holders
Working Group 1 – Meeting 2 – December 19, 2024

Present

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Notes

Given the upcoming presentation by the Federal Housing Advocate at February's HRAC meeting on human rights-based responses to encampments, encampments were the thematic focus of this working group meeting.

1. Background – Encampments in Toronto & City's Response

- Documents shared:
 - [The City's Encampment Approach and Strategy](#)
 - [Housing First Approach for Encampments: Findings Report from Dufferin Grove Park](#)
 - [CCHR Joint statement: Ontario must respect the human rights of encampment residents, not deny them through the notwithstanding clause](#)
 - [Ombudsman Toronto - Investigation into the City's Clearing of Encampments in Summer 2021](#)
- Discussed how encampments are rooted in systemic failures to address the rights and needs of unhoused rights holders

2. Human Rights-Based Analysis – Encampments

- Two key human rights issues discussed included service gaps and community infrastructure
 1. Service Gaps Raised
 - People-centred approaches to housing placement are needed so housing solutions meet rights holders where they are at
 - For example: placements for former encampment residents may be based on vacancy in available housing and not their needs
 - There also needs to be supports provided during the transition from encampments to permanent housing
 2. Cultural Adequacy & Community Infrastructure
 - Encampment residents often form a community which is different from the communities that currently exist in supportive housing or community housing
 - Community may be fostered if you designate a supportive housing site for former encampment residents
 - For example: 321 Dovercourt modular housing site is predominantly occupied by former encampment residents, who have created their own community and feel safe

- Housing and furniture banks as well as peer-led support groups for former encampment residents can play an essential role in creating community and purpose

3. Ombudsman Report – Refugee Claimant Access to Toronto Shelter Systems

- Considered the following questions:
 - Are we ensuring rights holders have fair access to the services that are there?
 - Are we ensuring non-discrimination in City processes?
 - What are the mechanisms to uphold and continue to uphold our legal obligations?
- Denial of shelter access is a failure of all orders of government to adequately prepare and allocate resources towards the reception of refugee claimants
- Ombudsman report identifies failures as to how decisions were made at the City and provides recommendations about how it may be done otherwise
- Identified the importance of having policy guardrails, such as the Interdepartmental Protocol (IDP), to ensure that decisions made during emergency situations are aligned with our human rights obligations and laws

4. HRAC Meeting Considerations

- Acknowledged upcoming presentation by the Federal Housing Advocate on her office's systemic review of encampments in Canada
- If possible, interest in inviting a presentation by TSSS to speak about the Interdepartmental Protocol (IDP) to Encampments to provide an update on progress towards implementing the encampment response
- If possible, interest in inviting a presentation by the Ombudsman Toronto's office on its recent report and investigation

3. Working Group Key Priorities

- To be discussed at next Working Group meeting

4. Work Plan for Council Term

- To be discussed at next Working Group meeting

Working group ended at 1:50 pm.