

Supporting Unhoused Rights Holders Working Group Meeting 5 – October 15, 2025

HRAC Members

Diana Chan McNally (Working Group Chair)
Elizabeth McIsaac
Lindsey Lemieux
Bee Lee Soh

City Staff

Lauren Kimura, Manager, Toronto Shelter and Support Services
Adwoa Afful, Policy Development Officer, Toronto Shelter and Support Services

Housing Secretariat Support

Meredith Kratzmann
Asha Sivarajah

The meeting of the Housing Rights Advisory Committee's Supporting Unhoused Rights Holders Working Group started at 4:30pm.

Notes

1. Chair Updates

- Chair provided an overview of the agenda and noted further discussion of a few relevant motions that impact HRAC's work and key priorities.

2. Consultation: Draft Access to Shelter Framework - Toronto Shelter & Support Services

- **Overview:**
 - In alignment and response to ([CC28.2](#)), Staff from Toronto Shelter and Support Services (TSSS) requested a consultation with HRAC's Supporting Unhoused Rights Holders Working Group on its draft Access to Shelter Framework, which aims to ensure that new shelter eligibility changes are aligned with the Toronto Housing Charter and the City's commitment to progressively realize the right to adequate housing.
- **Staff Presentation**
 - The purpose of the Framework is to assess equity impacts in the event that the City needs to make a change to shelter eligibility.
 - Staff outlined key components of the draft Framework including methods to assess alignment with the principles of the Toronto Housing Charter.
- **Working Group Discussion**
 - **Questions & Answers**
 - Can you provide an example of a scenario where shelter eligibility may change?
 - Anyone experiencing homelessness can access the shelter system; some programs may have additional requirements like

- age, sector (e.g. men's, women's, co-ed/mixed, family, etc.) or specialized programming (e.g. 2SLGBTQ+).
 - Based on jurisdictional scans, certain Violence Against Women (VAW) shelters in other jurisdictions have limits on shelter stays.
 - The City wants to ensure there is a rigorous process should there ever be changes to shelter eligibility.
- If decision-making lies with Toronto Shelters, what is the accountability mechanism if there are disparate impacts to a certain group or community?
 - The objective of the Framework is to function as an accountability process to ensure any changes to shelter eligibility are based on evidence, data, and in alignment with a human rights-based approach.
- In certain instances, eligibility for shelter spaces may be based on existing shelter referral programs or due to population-specific shelters (women's shelters, youth shelters, etc.). Can this Framework be leveraged to assess existing program requirements for shelter eligibility?
 - In the future, there could be additional considerations on how the tool may be applied to existing shelter eligibility requirements.
- **Human Rights Outcomes**
 - Staff should consider the human rights-based outcomes that the Access to Shelter Framework is striving for.
 - **Non-Discrimination**
 - Each component of the Framework should include equity and human rights analysis.
 - For example: if staff are assessing operational impacts to a shelter eligibility change, this component should embed an equity and human rights analysis.
 - The Framework should include equity-based considerations and questions, for example:
 - Who is being left behind?
 - Is there an alternative pathway to housing or shelter being offered?
 - **Meaningful Participation**
 - If you are experiencing homelessness and are not able to participate in a process which determines your eligibility to access shelter and related supports, it undermines your right to adequate housing.
 - **Accessibility**
 - Existing shelter eligibility requirements should be embedded into the System Map [EC23.6](#), as directed by Council, which aims to clarify system navigation for people experiencing homelessness. This could help identify human rights outcomes for shelter users.
 - **Security of Tenure**
 - Shelter transfers can be very destabilizing for a person experiencing homelessness as it removes them from their community, support networks, etc.
 - If you're on a housing waitlist, you should have the option to stay in that shelter until you find housing.

- While there are [Toronto Shelter Standards](#), they are not always adequately or consistently implemented within shelters.
- Respect for human dignity should be centralized at all stages of a client's journey within the shelter system, especially if a client must be transferred to another shelter.

3. Update on Service User Advisory Group (SUAG) - Toronto Shelter & Support Services

- Staff from TSSS shared that the City released an [Expression of Interest](#) (EOI) for a non-profit organization to operate a Service User Advisory Group, in alignment with the City's [Homelessness Solutions Service Plan](#).
- The City hopes to share the successful operator in the coming months, who will put out a call for members shortly afterward.
- Working Group members shared interest in providing feedback and guidance on the model for SUAG to support improved opportunities for meaningful participation for people experiencing homelessness (sheltered and/or living outdoors).

4. Discussion & Planning

- **Outcomes of the City's Enhanced Outreach Model**
 - Per [HS7.5](#), HRAC has requested that City Staff provide an update in Q1 2026 on human rights outcomes advanced through the implementation of the Enhanced Outreach Model (EOM).
 - This motion arises from discussions during the HRAC September meeting on the City's response to the Dufferin Grove Encampment.
 - The objective of the City's encampment response should be getting people housed not clearing a park, as clearing a park is not a human rights outcome.
 - Members hope to receive information on the outcomes of the EOM, for example:
 - When the EOM is deployed, are encampment residents entering or returning to the shelter system?
 - How many encampment residents are able to access permanent housing?
 - What are the criteria for deploying the EOM and is this criteria grounded in a human rights based approach?
 - Why do encampment residents wish to stay in an encampment?
 - If there are systemic concerns around the shelter system, this should be addressed.
- **Letter to Federal Ministers of Housing and Immigration on IHAP Funding Cut**
 - Per [HS7.2](#), HRAC recommended that the Chair write a letter to the Federal Ministers of Housing and Immigration to express the Committee's concern regarding the funding cuts to the Interim Housing Assistance Program (IHAP) and the resulting impact on capacity in the City's refugee serving community and the wider City shelter system, jeopardizing the City's ability to meet its minimum core obligations to fulfill the human right to adequate housing.
 - The HRAC Chair shared that she has submitted her letter, this letter was also provided to the Committee.
- **System Map – Pathways from Homelessness into Housing**
 - Per [EC23.6](#), Council has directed staff to consult with HRAC on identifying human rights-based outcomes and clarifying system navigation for people experiencing homelessness by Q2 2026.

- Staff across divisions will be working on preparing a draft System Map for review and feedback from HRAC in 2026.
- **Winter Services Plan for People Experiencing Homelessness -**
 - In consideration of the weather getting colder and winter fast-approaching, members shared interest in understanding how the Winter Plan is deployed and what results are collected on clients.
 - What demographic data is collected on clients who access warming centers, respite sites, and additional surge spaces in the winter?
 - What additional resources should be deployed as part of the Winter Plan to support more people experiencing homelessness and protect them from the cold?
 - How are the Interdepartmental Protocol (IDP) and EOM integrated into the Winter Plan?

4. Next Steps

- The Working Group Chair plans to compile a living document of questions on the EOM for input from the Committee. This will be provided to Staff prior to their update to HRAC in Q1 2026 ([HS7.5](#)).
- Following TSSS' consultation on its Draft Access to Shelter Framework, members of the Working Group were invited to submit additional feedback on the Framework.
- In follow-up to discussions on Winter Services Plan, the Working Group will be requesting that Staff from TSSS provide an update on the activation of the plan, data collected on clients accessing services offered through the plan, and resource gaps required to better serve the needs of people experiencing homelessness.
- The Working Group Chair additionally plans to consider whether HRAC would like to put forward a formal statement in relation to the 2026 City Budget.
- HRAC Working Group members shared interest in providing feedback and guidance on the model for SUAG to support improved opportunities for meaningful participation for people experiencing homelessness.

Meeting ended at 7:03 pm.