

Reaching Home:

City of Abbotsford Community Plan

2021 – 2024

Note:

All communities receiving funding from Designated Communities stream are required to use this template in order to complete the community plan under Reaching Home. In completing this template, communities are encouraged to develop comprehensive community plans that reflect the contributions of all funding partners, including other orders of governments, not-for-profit organizations, and the for-profit sector.

Please note that in communities that receive funding from both the Designated Communities and Indigenous Homelessness streams, cross-stream collaboration is expected to promote the adoption of a community-wide planning process and support the achievement of community-level outcomes reflecting the needs of the whole community. To support communities in completing their community plans, a Reference Guide has been developed. It is recommended that this be reviewed prior to completing your community's homelessness plan to ensure understanding of the requirements and completeness.

The Community Plan for Reaching Home must be approved by the Community Advisory Board (CAB) of the Designated Community before it is submitted to Service Canada. If your community is developing a joint plan with the Indigenous Community Entity, both Community Advisory Boards must approve the community plan.

In addition to the core requirements provided in this template, communities may also wish to include other components that provide insight into the community's housing and homelessness context or contribute to community-level homelessness challenges, such as a map of the community's current homelessness services and/or gaps in homelessness services or infrastructure (e.g. housing stock). Communities have full flexibility in drafting these sections.

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Introduction

In June 2020, the City of Abbotsford officially became a “Designated Community” under the Federal Government’s Reaching Home Program, which brings with it over \$3.3 million in funding over four years to address homelessness in Abbotsford. In accordance with the requirements of the Reaching Home Program, this Plan has been developed

- to guide decision-making regarding the allocation of annual funding to sub-projects to achieve Reaching Home objectives, and
- to communicate the steps that are being taken to establish a Coordinated Access system in Abbotsford by March 2023.

It is expected that this Plan will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis by the Abbotsford Reaching Home Community Advisory Board and City of Abbotsford as the Community Entity.

1. Community Engagement

In developing this plan, the City of Abbotsford relied on information from and consultation with major community stakeholders, including shelter and supportive housing operators; health and social service providers; BC Housing and the Fraser Health Authority. Input was also received from Indigenous (First Nation and Metis) organizations and non-Indigenous organizations that provide Indigenous cultural supports. Engagement took place primarily through group discussion, building on existing committees and complementary initiatives, as well as through a survey that was distributed to members of the CAB and additional directly related community organizations.

Stakeholder	Why they were engaged	How we engaged them	What did we hear
Community Advisory Board (CAB)	CAB members represent diverse perspectives across the homeless-serving sector and the CAB approves the Community Plan and Investment Plan (funding allocations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presented overview of the Reaching Home Program, CAB purpose, Call for Proposals process and considerations, and future opportunities for engagement over the course of 4 separate CAB meetings (April 1, May 6, May 13, July 7) • Survey distributed to solicit input on funding priorities and CFP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of transparency and clear guidelines for Call for Proposal (CFP) process • Opportunities for multi-year agreements under Program

Stakeholder	Why they were engaged	How we engaged them	What did we hear
		considerations (July 12 – 18)	
Indigenous (First Nation, Inuit, and Metis) Partners	To ensure collaboration and coordination so that data, ideas and results from an Indigenous perspective directly inform the Community Plan and future Calls for Proposals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting held with the Abbotsford CAB Indigenous (First Nation, Inuit, and Metis) Sub-Committee – Lu'ma Native Housing Society to support/facilitate engagement (July 9) • Survey distributed to solicit input on funding priorities and CFP considerations (July 12 – 18) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of multi-year agreements to avoid disruption to meaningful services • Importance of partnerships among Indigenous stakeholders to provide Indigenous-led funding applications • Ability to use RH funds to leverage other opportunities • Indigenous housing is a high priority • Future opportunities for Urban Indigenous community space (i.e., Friendship Centre, or culturally relevant connection point)
People with Lived and Living Experience (PWLLE) CAB Sub-Committee	To ensure collaboration and coordination so that data, ideas and results from a PWLLE perspective directly inform the Community Plan and future Calls for Proposals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting held with PWLLE Sub Committee representatives to support/facilitate engagement (July 12) • Survey distributed to solicit input on funding priorities and CFP considerations (July 12 – 18) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation includes follow up, and to honor voices represented • Being on the outside and “knowing” is not the same as living within the current • Client centered versus system centered • Need for people implementing to know the people who are living it • There is an echo for communication, collaboration, and transparency. • Identify opportunities to fund programs that fill gaps versus doing the same thing over and over again if not working

Stakeholder	Why they were engaged	How we engaged them	What did we hear
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the word “Home” rather than “Housing” services.
<p>Shelter System and Integrated Outreach Working Group Organizations serving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous Peoples • Women/families fleeing violence • Youth • Seniors • Newcomers to Canada • Individuals experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness 	<p>These organizations are well positioned to identify what is working and where the barriers and challenges to service delivery are, and as such positioned to provide valuable collaboration and contributions into RH Program direction, including the Community Plan and future CFP Process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solicited general input from participants at the Shelter System and Integrated Outreach Working Group (March 25) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to find solutions for where people can go during the day who are experiencing homelessness throughout different seasons and weather systems • Need for coordinated resources with APD and RPN/RN (i.e., Car 67) to support timely and effective supports to people experiencing acute mental health crisis • Need for coordinated approach to extreme weather and temporary response opportunities in Abbotsford

Survey

An online survey was conducted between July 12 and 18, 2021. Survey links were shared with the Community Advisory Board (listed below) and additional community representatives from the following organizations:

- Salvation Army, Abbotsford
- John Howard Society
- Phoenix Society
- Raven’s Moon Resource Society
- Native Court-worker and Counselling Association of BC
- First Nation Health Authority

Responses from the survey were collated and used to inform the investment priorities recommended by the CAB, as well as considerations to take throughout project Call for Proposals and implementation. Additional survey input included in the Table below.

	Housing Services	Prevention	Support Services	Capital	Coordination and Data
Overall Priority	2	3	1	4	5
Summary of engagement feedback	<p>Housing Services is the second most important area of investment. It is a critical element to access and maintain housing.</p> <p>Continuation of current eligible activities with more flexibility in the administration and disbursement of funds, incl. Longer-term and more substantial housing funding was raised.</p>	<p>Prevention is the next most preferred area of investment. It presents a crucial opportunity to interrupt the cycle of homelessness.</p>	<p>Support Services is the first most preferred area of investment. It presents a crucial opportunity to interrupt the cycle of homelessness.</p> <p>Notably, housing services, prevention and support services are closely intertwined.</p>	<p>Capital investments into all forms of housing, particularly supportive and transitional housing, are needed.</p>	<p>The Coordination of Research and Data Collection is an important focus area if it will improve the use of limited resources and client outcomes.</p> <p>However, it was not highlighted as a primary investment area.</p>
Types of Activities supported	<p>These main themes were highlighted in the surveys:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing placements was the most suggested idea by survey participants. Supportive housing and homing services that respect autonomy and multiple living units was the next most echoed response. Emergency housing funding and long-term subsidies helps close the gap particularly for people who experienced chronic homelessness. 	<p>Prevention activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> House placement and providing legal and financial literacy. People who experienced chronic homelessness in particular need to be empowered to achieve longer-term housing stability. This is a gap. Hiring more addictions and trauma counsellors to provide outreach and support for those transitioning out of care or institutions; 	<p>There was a consensus that support services be funded that can help break the cycle of homelessness (i.e., stabilizing clients in housing).</p> <p>This included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The provision of basic needs such as groceries and basic supplies. Investment into like skills, mental health and addictions services/supports where such services are lacking yet are critical to maintaining housing. Overall, health services are not culturally sensitive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a desire to see capital projects supported, including renovations, preserving existing housing stock and accessibility and amenity enhancements. Land designated for a homeless community-tiny homes, structures, a place to build community and reduce risks. 	<p>Through a focus on coordinated access (i.e. community service integration and coordination) The unanimous decision was more cross-agency collaboration to improve what works for long-term results.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing support workers was an idea people also voiced. 		<p>enough to respond to the rising need.</p>		
Concerns and Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhancing housing services that are deemed effective as per the detailed analysis of offerings was offered as an option to guide future investments. 	<p>In-reach activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening landlord liaison and mediation Emergency funds for rent, bill payments, rapid re-housing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community engagements in particular highlighted the desire for a culturally sensitive funded support and peer-led outreach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the long-term capital is the most important investment area to reduce homelessness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a detailed analysis of services to understand how effective they are within the framework of the five categories

2. Investment Plan

The table below, outlines planned allocation of the City of Abbotsford Reaching Home funding from 2021-22 to 2023-24 by activity area. These funding priorities may change over time and as such, will be re-evaluated on an annual basis.

Abbotsford Reaching Home Annual Allocation for Sub-Projects

2021-2022: \$ 1,302,644

2022-2023: \$ 452,923

2023-2024: \$ 452,923

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Housing Services	23 %	30 %	30 %
Prevention and shelter diversion	18 %	23 %	23 %
Support Services	26 %	27 %	27 %
Capital Investments	25 %	10 %	10 %
Coordination of Resources and Data Collection	8 %	10 %	10 %

3. Cost-Matching Requirement

The table below outlines all funding for homelessness initiatives Abbotsford plans to receive from external partners from 2019 to 2024. This includes both financial and in-kind contributions.

Projected Funding towards Homelessness Initiatives				
Funder	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
City of Abbotsford	\$396,000	\$396,000	\$396,000	\$396,000
BC Housing Operations	\$9,500,000	\$9,500,000	\$9,500,000	\$9,500,000
Fraser Health Direct Support	\$2,233,000	\$2,233,000	\$2,233,000	\$2,233,000

4. Coordinated Access

While Abbotsford is a newly designated Community Entity it has led a federally funded Coordinated Intake and Referral Project prior to becoming a CE, which included receiving a Canada Research and Innovation funding contribution work with local stakeholders to research, design, launch, test, measure and evaluate a coordinated intake and referral model from the period of spring 2015 to fall 2018. This work resulted in the establishment of a Coordinated Access framework for individuals and families, who were experiencing homelessness and at-risk of homelessness to receive shelter, housing, integrated health, income assistance and community integration supports that will be used to inform the Reaching Home specific Coordinated Access Program.

In addition, BC Housing has established a coordinated access table (CAA) in Abbotsford for vacancy management and applicant selection for our supportive housing programs in the community. The table currently works with 3 supportive housing developments in Abbotsford, including:

- Hearthstone – operated by Archway Community Services
- Cole Starnes – operated by Lookout
- Legacy Manor – operated by the Elizabeth Fry Society

Current partners involved in the BCH facilitated CAA include representation from housing and emergency shelter, outreach and social service providers, health authority, and social assistance, and include:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| • Archway Community Services | • John Howard |
| • The Salvation Army | • MSDPR |
| • Lookout Housing and Health Society | • FRAFCA |
| • Cyrus Centre | • Phoenix Society |
| • SARA for Women | • Cedar Outreach |
| • Elizabeth Fry | • 5&2 Ministries |
| • Fraser Health/ACT/IAC | • Community Living BC (CLBC) |

Coordinating resources to ensure access to services also takes place through the Inter-Agency Care Team, and the Abbotsford Shelter and Outreach Working Group, both of which will inform the greater Reaching Home CAA system in the future.

As Abbotsford moves forward as the CE, additional work will be required to expand Coordinated Access to meet Reaching Home requirements by March 2023. Trilateral discussions are taking place between BC designated communities, ESDC, and BC Housing, with respect to Coordinated Access and Abbotsford will be following this closely in order to bring all of the pieces together with the use of a centralized information management system.

5. Community-Wide Outcomes

As the City of Abbotsford is a new CE, the Abbotsford Community Advisory Board has determined it will not establish additional outcomes *beyond those [mandated by Reaching Home](#)*, at this time which include:

1. Homelessness is reduced overall;
2. New inflows into homelessness are reduced;
3. Returns to homelessness are reduced;
4. Chronic homelessness is reduced (by 50% by 2027-2028).

This decision will be re-evaluated once the Coordinated Access and Assessment System has been established and can meaningfully inform our decision-making through data.

6. Official Language Minority Communities

The Government of Canada has a responsibility under the Official Languages Act to ensure that programs and services meet the needs of [Official Language Minority Communities \(OLMCs\)](#).

For Abbotsford as a CE documentation is provided in English based on community demographic information. The 2016 Census shows only 30 people out of 139,255 (0.02%) within Abbotsford speak French only; if it is determined in the future that there is a need to provide documentation in French, consideration will be made for the need.

Abbotsford, CY British Columbia [Census subdivision]			
	Data quality	Map	
	Change geography		
	Total	Male	Female
Characteristic	Counts (unless oth		
Knowledge of official languages 			
Total - Knowledge of official languages for the total population excluding institutional residents - 100% data 15	139,255	68,440	70,815
English only	125,175	62,275	62,895
French only	30	15	20
English and French	6,155	2,715	3,445
Neither English nor French	7,890	3,440	4,450