

# COMMUNITY HOMELESSNESS REPORT SUMMARY

Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo  
(2019-2020 & 2020-2021)

## COORDINATED ACCESS AND HOMELESSNESS MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (HMIS) SELF-ASSESSMENT

### SUMMARY

The table below provides a summary of the work the community has done so far to implement Reaching Home's minimum requirements for Coordinated Access and an HMIS.

How many of the Reaching Home minimum requirements has the community:

Met	Started	Not yet started
16	1	1

## SUMMARY COMMENT

Are there particular efforts and/or issues that you would like to highlight for this reporting period related to your community's work to achieve the Reaching Home minimum requirements? In particular, please describe your community's efforts to set-up or improve the Coordinated Access governance structure, including processes to ensure that policies and protocols, as approved by the governance group(s), are being implemented across the system as intended to achieve desired results.

Under Directive number 3, (Planning and Public Reporting), the community has made large reductions in chronic homelessness since the start of the Reaching Home Agreement. The community continues advocating for extra funding, so when the community was provided with the extra COVID-19 funding, systems were set into motion and the number of participants on the By Name List (BNL) declined; 99 chronic in January 2020 vs an average of 30 chronic in February 2021 which is a 62% reduction. Working with Built for Zero multiple milestones were achieved. The first milestone was achieved in May 2020 where a quality BNL was attained. At the time, there were 41 unique individuals experiencing chronic homelessness on the BNL. The second milestone with Built for Zero was in August 2020. The community has made a 10% reduction in chronic homelessness for three consecutive months. The next milestone the community is working to achieve, is a 50% reduction in chronic homelessness indicating 21 or fewer active chronic homeless individuals for three months consecutively. The community is currently working towards that goal by increasing capacity, rapidly housing individuals, and creating new programming. Another milestone that we are aiming to achieve is Functional Zero. Functional Zero refers to when a community has ended chronic homelessness, this would mean that Fort McMurray would need to have three or less chronic individuals on the BNL for three consecutive months. The final milestone that the community is focusing on is reaching Functional Zero for Veteran Homelessness. This will mean that Fort McMurray has ended veteran homelessness when the number of veterans experiencing homelessness is less than or equal to the number of veterans a community has proven it can house in a month. As of April 6th, 2021, there were two veterans identified on the BNL. The CE is working in collaboration with the local Royal Canadian Legion to ensure all veterans identified have the resources needed.

Under Directive number 4, Coordinated Access, the CE began the planning for the Coordinated Access System (CAS) in in collaboration with partners in early 2019 and was fully functioning by September 2021. Shortly before the implementation of CAS, the governance model was developed by forming a committee that created policies and protocols and ensure that all gaps were addressed and all community residents are given the opportunity to housing supports.

The Coordinated Access System Team (CAST) was formed in June 2019. This team is made up of a group of experts from within our community who work directly and primarily with individuals and families experiencing homelessness or at risk of

homelessness. The team members are best identified for their knowledge, insight, and ideas on how to end chronic homelessness. Many of the partnering agencies that are members of CAST are coordinated access points within the region. The lead organization that manages and organizes CAST is the Wood Buffalo Wellness Society (WBWS). The WBWS is the agency that is provided with all the completed referrals from Coordinated Access Points (CAP) and will add the participants to the BNL and to the Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) database. This standing team focuses on the CAS service delivery within our region. Decision making, sharing information, education, awareness, identifying emerging issues related to homelessness, advocacy, and identifying opportunities and strategies for addressing these issues are vital to the success of the team in the initial steps of developing how the CAS should work and will remain valuable to the continuation of the team. The CAST can provide housing supports to participants throughout the region, expanding the community's capacity in providing supports. Participants can access housing supports in 13 different locations in the region, and some CAP's are mobile, and can meet participants in the community when requested. The CAS utilizes the Vi-SPDAT assessment tool and a referral and matching process for all individuals who are searching for housing supports.

Under Directive number 5, the CAB known as Homelessness Initiatives Strategic Committee (HISC) was formed in 2000 to achieve the Community Plan on Homelessness priorities in relation to identifying gaps in services and supports for individuals experiencing homelessness. In September 2020, HISC came together to update the terms of reference to align with the Federal directives. In October 2020, the HISC came together to review their roles and responsibilities. Through this work five priority areas were highlighted: 1. Public Awareness Campaign, 2. Data Management, 3. Institutional Collaboration, 4. Response to COVID-19- Community needs, and 5. Sustainable Funding. A subcommittee was also created to focus on recruitment onto HISC to ensure all levels of community are on the board. Since the committee was created, HISC recruited an Indigenous organization, groups from the private sector, and health organizations.

**COMMUNITY-LEVEL DATA for 2019-2020**

What is the date range for available data from the List for this fiscal report?

• First date in reporting period:	2019-04-01
• Last date in reporting period:	2020-03-31

Complete the Population Groups table below using the date range indicated for this fiscal report.

Number of unique individuals (or households where not available) in each Priority Population Group who:

Priority Population Groups	Were homeless <b>(Measures Cumulative Homelessness)</b>	Were new to homelessness <b>(Measures Inflow)</b>	Returned to homelessness from housing (one or more times) <b>(Measures Inflow)</b>	Returned to homelessness from transitional status (one or more times) <b>(Measures Inflow)</b>	Returned to homelessness from unknown status (one or more times) <b>(Measures Inflow)</b>	State changed from inactive to active (one or more times) <b>(Measures Inflow)</b>
Overall homeless	147	99	47	0	0	unknown
Chronically homeless	112	75	37	0	0	unknown
Indigenous peoples	89	53	36	0	0	unknown
Priority Population Groups			Moved from homelessness to housing (one or more times) <b>(Measures Outflow)</b>	Status changed from homelessness to transitional (one or more times) <b>(Measures Outflow)</b>	Status changed from homelessness to unknown (one or more times) <b>(Measures Outflow)</b>	State changed from active to inactive (one or more times) <b>(Measures Outflow)</b>
Overall homeless			68	0	61	Unknown
Chronically homeless			67	0	39	Unknown
Indigenous peoples			42	0	35	Unknown

Complete the Prior Living Situations table below for all individuals (or households where not available) that were homeless for the date range indicated for this fiscal report.

	Public Institutions	Transitional Housing	Permanent Housing	Unknown	Total
New to homelessness	9	0	0	90	99
Returned to homelessness	0	0	0	60	60
Total	9	0	0	150	159

## COMMUNITY-LEVEL DATA for 2020-2021

What is the date range for available data from the List for this fiscal report?

- |                                   |            |
|-----------------------------------|------------|
| • First date in reporting period: | 2020-04-01 |
| • Last date in reporting period:  | 2021-03-31 |

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Overall homeless	169	119	48	2	0	Unknown
Chronically homeless	113	76	35	1	0	29
Indigenous peoples	100	66	33	0	0	Unknown
Priority Population Groups			Moved from homelessness to housing (one or more times) <b>(Measures Outflow)</b>	Status changed from homelessness to transitional (one or more times) <b>(Measures Outflow)</b>	Status changed from homelessness to unknown (one or more times) <b>(Measures Outflow)</b>	State changed from active to inactive (one or more times) <b>(Measures Outflow)</b>
Overall homeless			91	2	71	Unknown
Chronically homeless			68	1	41	71
Indigenous peoples			52	0	45	Unknown

Complete the Prior Living Situations table below for all individuals (or households where not available) that were homeless for the date range indicated for this fiscal report.

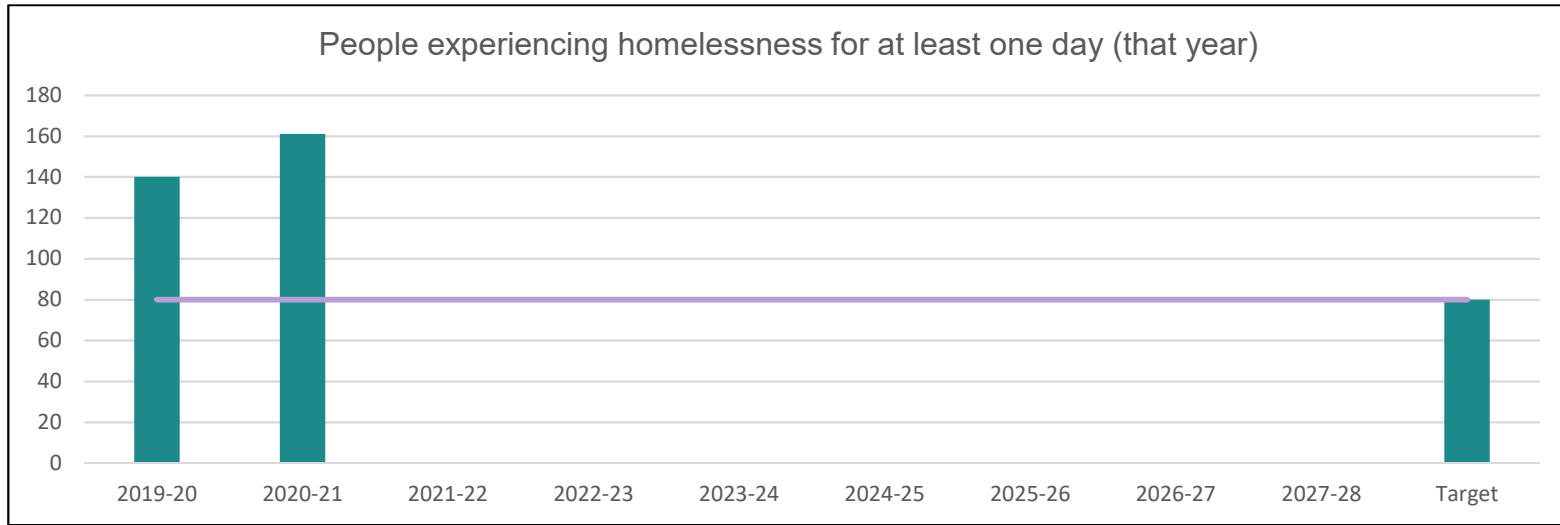
	Public Institutions	Transitional Housing	Permanent Housing	Unknown	Total
New to homelessness	6	0	0	113	119
Returned to homelessness	2	0	0	45	47
Total	8	0	0	158	166



## COMMUNITY-LEVEL RESULTS OUTCOMES - CORE OUTCOMES

### Outcome # 1: Fewer people experience homelessness overall (homelessness is reduced overall)

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	Target
People experiencing homelessness for at least one day (that year)	140	161	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	80



To make reductions in overall homelessness prevention is increased in our community. This includes a diversion program, eviction prevention program, and an outreach program to prevent individuals from entering future homelessness. With this community approach a reduction of overall homelessness of 50% is expected in the next few years.

**Outcome #2: Fewer people experience homelessness for the first time (new inflows into homelessness are reduced)**

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	Target
People experiencing homelessness for the first time (that year)	99	115	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	53



The Diversion Program started in June 2020. This program focuses on people as they are applying for entry into shelter, ensuring alternative and immediate housing arrangements are fully explored and supported where needed, before completing an intake for a shelter space. The Diversion Coordinator’s primary responsibility is to divert eligible adult men and women from accessing emergency shelter beds. During the first 10 months of operation, the program diverted 82 individuals from the shelter, on average about eight people a month are diverted from the BNL and diverted from the homeless system. This program has been deemed a priority in the community to reach Functional Zero, as the evidence now shows that without shelter diversion the BNL numbers would be significantly higher. With this program it is expected that a 50% reduction in people experiencing homelessness will be seen in the next few years.

**Outcome #3: Fewer people return to homelessness from housing (returns to homelessness are reduced)**

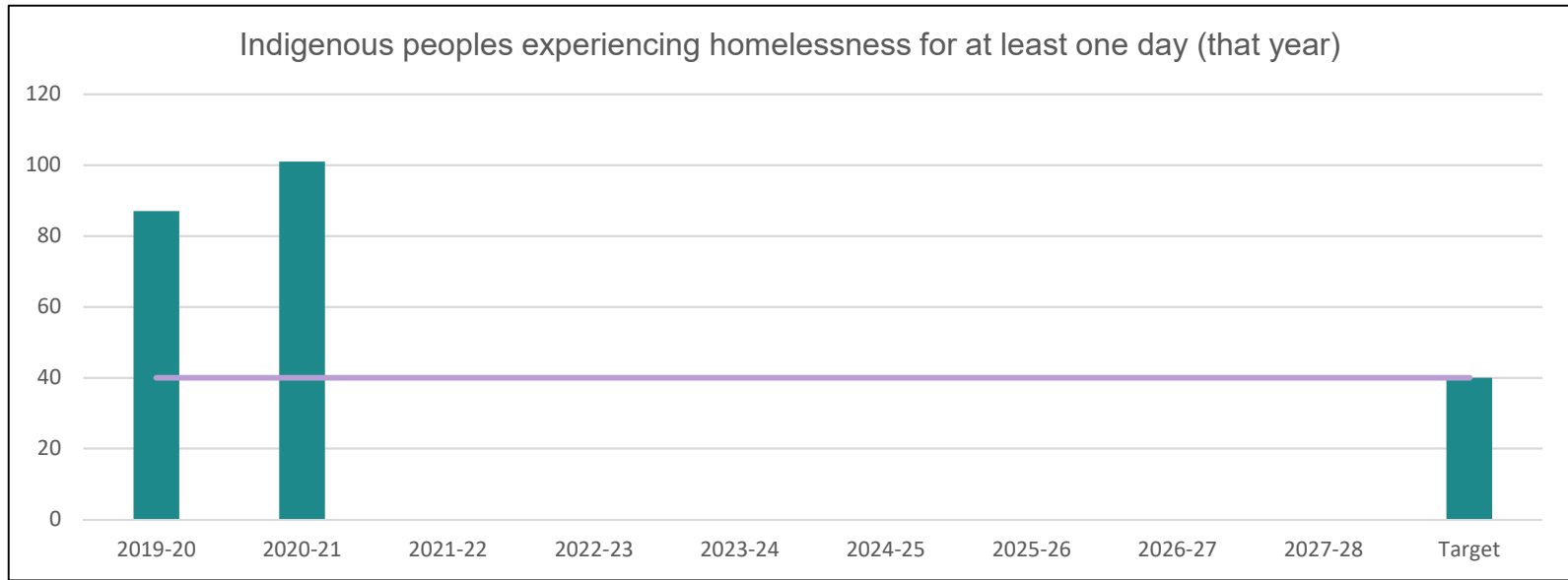
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	Target
Returns to homelessness from housing (that year)	41	46	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20



With a CAS in place and the CAB, CE, funded agencies, community and government working collaboratively and in partnership, there is a strong understanding of the homelessness serving system. Through this community approach, gaps and barriers are being identified and wrap around services are being provided to prevent individuals and families from returning to homelessness. A gap that was identified was a permanent supportive model for chronic individuals who have high recidivism rates. Another gap that was identified is a need for more supportive living for individuals who fall between Intensive Case Management (ICM) and Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH). There is a CAB subcommittee in the initial steps of being formed to identify services that will close these gaps.

**Outcome #4: Fewer Indigenous peoples experience homelessness (Indigenous homelessness is reduced)**

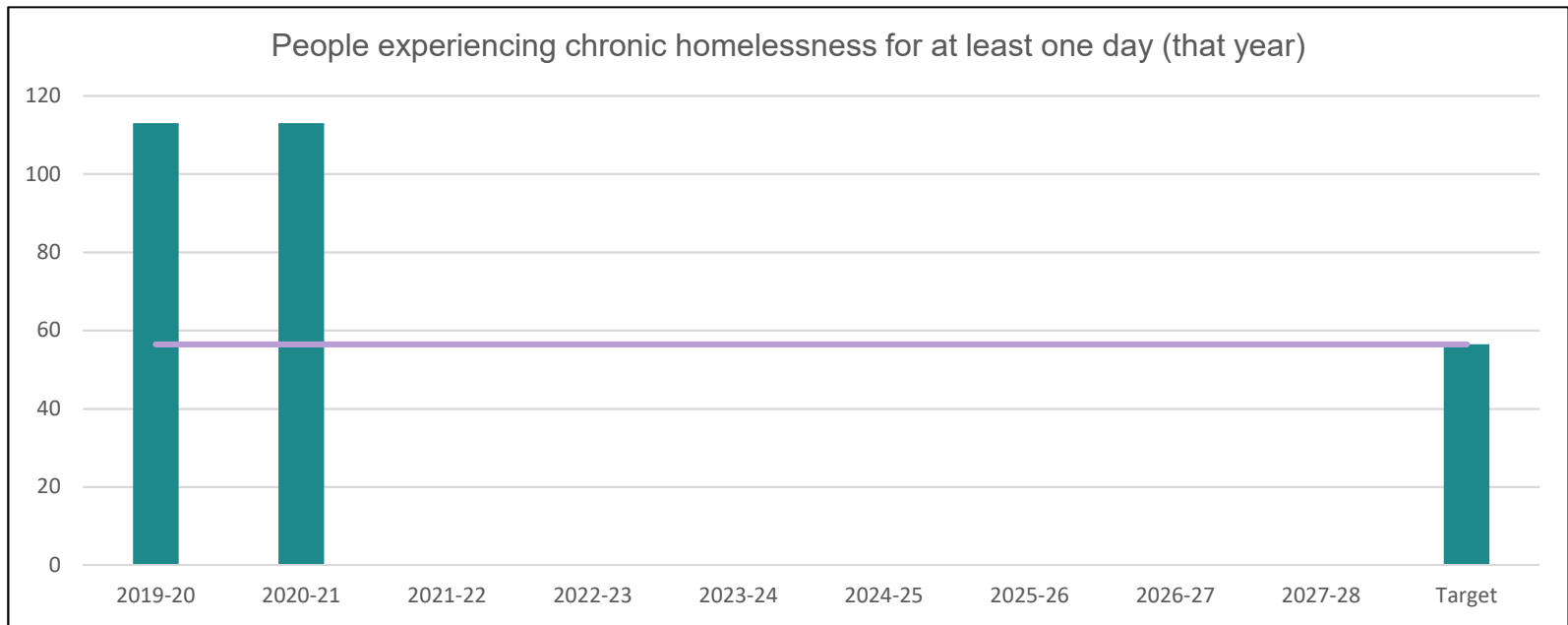
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	Target
Indigenous peoples experiencing homelessness for at least one day (that year)	87	101	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	40



With a focus on Indigenous homelessness in the community and the 49 Call to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the recommendation for allocation of the second increment of Reaching Home COVID-19 federal grant was approved on January 12th, 2021 funding the capital investment of the Tawâw project. The Tawâw (pronounced ta-WOW in Cree, meaning “come in,” “welcome”) Housing First Partnership is an innovative collaboration drawing upon the expertise, experience and networks of three established community organizations to create rapid access to 22 beds for Indigenous individuals and families experiencing homelessness or near homelessness. Best practices in Indigenous service delivery indicate that programming and models of housing are developed through an Indigenous world by Indigenous persons and delivered by Indigenous persons whenever possible. It is important to understand that homelessness from an Indigenous perspective differs from a linear western perspective of acquiring or losing a home. Through this initiative, it is expected the community will see a 50% reduction in overall Indigenous homelessness in the upcoming years.

**Outcome #5: Fewer people experience chronic homelessness (chronic homelessness is reduced)**

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	Target
People experiencing chronic homelessness for at least one day (that year)	113	113	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	56.5



In the upcoming months, the CAB and the homeless serving system are committed to reaching Functional Zero. The three identified goals and objectives are conducive for the community to move forward to reaching and sustaining Functional Zero for Fort McMurray:

Goal #1 - Reaching Functional Zero in Fort McMurray. Functional Zero refers to when a community has ended chronic homelessness. This would mean that Fort McMurray would need to have three or less chronic individuals on the BNL for three consecutive months to achieve Functional Zero. This will be achieved by building and increasing capacity in the HF programs to rapidly move chronic individuals off the BNL.

Goal #2 - Sustain Functional Zero in Fort McMurray. The community is focusing on preventing individuals from entering the homeless serving system by using prevention and diversion methods along with graduating individuals that no longer require ICM. Focusing on these methods will support ending chronic homeless and reaching Functional Zero within the RMWB. With extra funding for HF programming, Diversion programming, and a Graduation Program, the RMWB will be able to reach Functional Zero and sustain it.

Goal #3 - Long term sustainable funding for the Tawâw Housing First Partnership programming - With a focus on Indigenous homelessness, the Tawâw program will provide rapid access to 22 beds throughout two buildings so that homeless individuals can be housed quickly, using rental policies based on HF with providing an opportunity to create a unique, culturally sensitive and supportive environment based upon recovery-oriented wellness principles that will elevate residents and assist them in transitioning from lives of addiction, intergenerational trauma, impaired educational and employment outcomes, marginalization and hopelessness into a place of support, dignity, structure, community and cultural pride.