



Terms of Reference

Introduction

The Government of Canada is committed to helping those who are in need; addressing barriers to well-being faced by those who are experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of homelessness. Homelessness has a social and economic impact on every community in Canada and should be rare, brief and non-reoccurring. In response, the Government of Canada has implemented Reaching Home – the Government of Canada’s homelessness strategy that supports Canadians in making choices that help them live productive and rewarding lives, thereby improving Canadians’ quality of life.

Through Reaching Home, the Government of Canada is directing a community-based approach, delivering funding to municipalities and local service providers. Communities participating in Reaching Home are committed to working toward a 50% reduction in chronic homelessness over the next 10 years.

The Government of Canada requires participating communities to have a Community Advisory Board (CAB) which makes recommendations on funding allocations, provides advisement on strategic direction, and advocates for the community plan on homelessness. In the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB), the CAB is known as The Homelessness Initiatives Strategic Committee (HISC).

This Terms of Reference serves to define the role, responsibilities and composition of the Homelessness Initiative Strategic Committee in relation to and to align with the directives of the next federal homelessness strategy - Reaching Home.

Overview/History

The original HISC was formed in 2000 to facilitate the achievement of the Community Plan's priorities in relation to identified gaps in services and supports for individuals experiencing homelessness and at risk of homelessness. Since then the committee evolved into two separate entities, the HISC Executive and the HISC Interagency. During the meetings in (January 2009), both of these committees changed their names to better reflect their individual purposes. With input and direction from the members, the HISC Executive retained the acronym HISC while the HISC Interagency was changed to CHAT - Community Housing Agency Team. The CHAT has since disbanded and no longer meets. In 2019 the terms of reference were reviewed and updated based on research of other community advisory boards and input from the Community Entity (the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo) and HISC.

Purpose/Function

The Homelessness Initiatives Strategic Committee (HISC) is an action focused group which stewards and advocates for the community plan on homelessness. HISC is involved with strategic planning, funding, communication, research and best practice. It advocates for funding and policy change and are champions in the community that increase awareness of poverty and homelessness in the region. HISC advise the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo on the community plan on homelessness including strategic direction and program priorities. Additionally, HISC makes funding recommendations to the

Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo related to Federal and Provincial funding, complies with Provincial and Federal Agreements, identifies systems barriers and works collaboratively with Community to alleviate them.

RMWB Role in Relation to HISC

The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB) is the local administrator of the Federal and Provincial funding. The RMWB, through the Community Plan on Homelessness (CPH) team and the Community Investment Program (CIP) team housed in the Community Services Department, is the backbone organization for the community plan on homelessness and provide the administrative support to HISC.

Membership

HISC members attend regular meetings and participate in group discussion and activities. All members are expected to review meeting materials prior to the meeting and familiarize themselves with the community plan on homelessness and related programs, goals, objectives, and initiatives. Members are expected to champion the goal of ending homelessness in the community. Membership is delineated into two categories: Community Directors and Resource Experts. HISC membership consists of a minimum of 5 and not more than 9 voting members.

Chairperson and Vice Chairperson

HISC will select a chairperson and a vice chairperson in January of each year. The chairperson and vice chairperson must be voting members.

The chairperson will bring order and conduct the meetings. They may be expected to attend municipal, provincial or federal meetings, conferences and events with the RMWB CPH team.

In the event of equal division in decision making, the chairperson has the final decision.

The vice chairperson will act in the absence of the chairperson. If the vice chairperson position is vacant and the chairperson is not available, then another HISC voting member will be requested to chair the meetings until that position is filled.

Community Directors

- Must attend a minimum of 7 meetings per year and may not send a designate to HISC meetings in their place unless they have requested approval from HISC in writing and HISC has approved the request in writing.
- Each community director has one vote
- Should consist of the following:
 - Wood Buffalo Housing and Development Corporation (WBHDC)
 - United Way of Wood Buffalo
 - Alberta Health Services (AHS) – Addictions and Mental Health
 - Multicultural Association of Wood Buffalo (MCA)
 - FNMI – First Nation, Metis, Inuit
 - One or more of the following representatives:
 - Real Estate
 - FNMI – First Nation, Metis, Inuit

- Industry
- Youth
- Rural
- Senior
- Experience of Homelessness– Lived, Living, Learned
- LGBTQ2S+

Resource Experts – Non-Voting

- Do not have a vote
- May send a designate if they are unable to attend a meeting
- Include representation from the following organizations:
 - Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo – Community Services
 - Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo – Indigenous and Rural Relations
 - Government of Alberta – Housing and Homelessness Supports
 - Government of Alberta – Alberta Works
 - Government of Canada – Service Canada
 - RCMP

Subject Matter Experts – Non-Voting

- Attend meetings by invitation only and as required
- Do not have a vote
- Include representation from the following organizations:
 - Funded Agencies
 - Education
 - Salvation Army
 - COH
 - Wood Buffalo Wellness Society
 - YMCA
 - STHT
 - By Law
 - Alberta Children’s Services
 - Stepping Stones

Membership Recruitment

When there is a need or a vacancy in membership, current members may bring forward names of potential committee members. If the potential member expresses an interest in serving on the board, they will be given a nomination package to complete. The nomination package will consist of an application form, the Terms of Reference, community plan on homelessness and the most recent progress report. Upon completion of the application form the committee will review, score the application against a skills matrix and then vote on the application. If the applicant is accepted to the committee, they will be required to sign a conflict of interest and confidentiality agreement.

Membership Terms

Individual member positions shall be limited to a maximum of two (2) consecutive two (2) year terms. A member may rejoin HISC following a one-year absence. A member may be removed by a majority vote of the current voting members. Membership will be reviewed if a member misses three consecutive meetings without notice

Member Core Competencies

These are member qualities that will be considered assets in the HISC membership:

- **Collaborative Leader:** Demonstrated personal and/or professional leadership and a realization that change requires a web of interpersonal connections.
- **Committed to ending homelessness:** Passion and belief that homelessness can be ended, and dedication to making this happen. Focus on greatest impact for those experiencing or at risk of homelessness and the greater good of the Wood Buffalo region.
- **Decision-Maker:** Has the ability, authority and willingness to make and influence decisions that advances the goals of ending homelessness.
- **Diverse Perspectives:** Passionate and sensitive recognizing inclusion and equality in ensuring that the needs of individuals in a diverse community are addressed within homelessness.
- **Influential Communicator:** Ability to serve as a bridge and connector between various communities and groups who express and have an interest in ending homelessness, with a willingness and passion to share ideas and resources.
- **Knowledgeable:** Has demonstrated basic knowledge of the relevance and importance of ending homelessness.
- **Politically Astute:** Demonstrate a non-biased understanding of political and social issues influencing the public policy environment.
- **Practical:** Has the capacity to manage the details to accomplish goals and to “get things done”, while effectively managing shifting circumstances and arising risks.
- **Social Change Agent:** Aspire to deepening understanding of social and economic issues that require complex solutions and a willingness to take action to address these issues within their sphere of influence.
- **Strategic:** Familiar with the lay of the land and can work within it to advance collective strategies to ending homelessness.

Meetings

HISC will meet monthly or more often as required and called by the chairperson. A strategic planning session will be held annually during a special meeting.

Agenda items must be forwarded to support staff at least three working days prior to the next scheduled meeting. The chairperson makes the final decision regarding inclusion of agenda items, but members may raise an item under "other business".

Quorum

To conduct official business quorum must be met. Quorum is not less than one-half +1 of voting members. In the chair's absence, a vice chair will preside and ensure information is relayed to the designated Chair.

Voting

Members are required to make collective decisions in the best interest of the objectives of the community plan on homelessness and in alignment with the funding agreements. In the event of an equal division the chairperson has the deciding vote.

Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest shall be determined as any interest that might be construed as real, potential or perceived. Potential or perceived conflicts of interest will be discussed at the meeting and a decision will be made by a vote.

If an organization seeks funding under homelessness funding initiatives and has representation on the Homelessness Initiatives Strategic Committee, that representative must declare the conflict and then remove themselves from any of the meetings/discussions/votes where recommendations are being made. If an organization receives funding under the homelessness funding initiatives, that representative must resign from the committee.

All members shall disclose any association with an applicant organization who may directly or indirectly, benefit from an approval decision of the approving body.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality of sensitive issues and funding information must be maintained. A breach of confidentiality shall be reviewed by the committee. All members must sign an Oath of Confidentiality.

Key Duties

Planned Stewardship

The committee is responsible for stewarding the community plan on homelessness and advances the plan's goals by:

- providing advice on implementation
- identifying priorities
- advising the RMWB on challenges, gaps, and system barriers
- identifying opportunities and strategic solutions
- supporting the development, review, and approval of the community plan on homelessness
- increasing awareness of the plan in the community and across sectors

Funding

The committee will review project proposals submitted for funding under the community plan on homelessness to ensure that they address identified priorities. The committee ensures an effective and equitable process for the allocation of funds and forwards recommendations for these allocations to Council for final approval. The committee also advocates for funding and policy changes to support the community plan on homelessness.

Advisement

The committee advises the RMWB on community priorities based on up to date information and evidence. Members keep up to date on current policies and directives from funding bodies and ensure they are aware of community programs and initiatives. Members strive to consider all relevant factors and points of view when making decisions and considering the issues at play.

The committee bases its decisions on evidence. It gathers data on an ongoing basis from a variety of sources and meets regularly to re-evaluate past decisions based on the most recent evidence. The

committee uses this evidence to respond quickly to emerging issues and changing landscape. The committee shifts resources as needed to respond to emerging issues based on evidence.

Community Awareness & Partnerships

The committee raises awareness about the community plan on homelessness. Members act as advocates and champions in the community to raise public awareness around issues of poverty and homelessness in the region. Members attend events in the community and meetings meet with elected officials and senior government officials to advocate for the community plan on homelessness programs and initiatives.

Members connect with stakeholders in the region to increase awareness, collect information on challenges and opportunities, and to develop and strengthen relationships to enable cross-sectoral collaborations. The committee works with multiple stakeholders to collaboratively address homelessness throughout the region.

The committee updates the community on the progress of the community plan on homelessness, current programs and initiatives, and the impact on the community.

All media requests for information will be handled by the HISC Chair or an approved designate.

Terms of Reference Review

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed and approved by HISC every 2 years or sooner if a need is determined by HISC and/or the RMWB.

Terms of Reference Acknowledgement

I _____, have read the Terms of reference as they have been provided to me and will work to abide by its terms.

| | | |
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| Signed | Title | Agency/Organization |
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Date