

**Homelessness
In the NWT**

**Recommendations
To Improve the GNWT Response**

October 2005

**Health and Social Services
Education, Culture and Employment
NWT Housing Corporation
Justice**

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Introduction

In June 2004, the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) released its Strategic Plan outlining the government's direction for the next 10 years. The vision and goals adopted in the Strategic Plan focus on self-reliance of the territory and its people and a shared responsibility for health and prosperous communities. One of the first priorities listed is to address housing shortages and homelessness.

The Ministers and Deputy Ministers of the Social Programs Departments are the steering committee for this project. The involved Departments include Education, Culture and Employment (ECE), Health and Social Services (HSS), Justice, and the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation (NWTHC).

The steering committee recognizes that homelessness affects citizens in our larger urban areas, and our smaller communities. As Non-Governmental Organizations' (NGO) representatives said at a workshop held in Yellowknife "without shelter, everything in your life goes into chaos".

A suitable and affordable home is fundamental to a healthy and productive population. The steering committee has directed that this report examine the factors that contribute to homelessness, by pushing those at risk of being homeless into a state of homelessness, and by preventing those who are currently homeless from achieving an adequate state of housing.

The purpose of this report is to identify the gaps, overlaps and challenges in the system of existing programs and supports that contribute to homelessness, and to make recommendations that will improve the Social Programs Departments' response. The information upon which this report is based was gathered through interviews and workshops with NGOs, municipal government and the GNWT representatives.

It is important to note that GNWT Departments do not directly deliver any programs that are specifically designed to assist the homeless. There are many government programs and services that homeless persons may access, but these programs have been designed for broader populations, and are not targeted specifically for the homeless. However, there are many NGOs in the NWT that do operate programs specifically for the homeless and many of these receive their funding from GNWT Departments. An example is funding for Emergency Shelters, provided by Education, Culture and Employment.

This report identifies the services that support homeless northerners. This report is not an evaluation of those services or the agencies that provide them. The Social Programs Departments appreciate the participation of the NGO representatives in interviews and workshops. They gave their time generously and shared valuable information. Departments are thankful for the tremendous dedication shown by NGOs and individual volunteers providing services to assist the homeless.

While this report concentrates primarily on the issues of homelessness in the NWT's larger communities, the Social Program Departments recognize that homelessness has an effect on all communities, large and small. Over the next 18 months, additional projects will be identified and undertaken to improve the Social Program Departments' overall understanding and response to homelessness issues across the territory. This report is the first project.

Definition of Homelessness

Homelessness, for the purpose of this report, is defined as *men, women, youth and/or families living without shelter, or temporarily at emergency shelters or in government-sponsored transitional housing*. This definition has certain limitations, as it does not capture those who reside in overcrowded or those who “couch-surf”, relying on temporary accommodation at the home of an acquaintance. This report focuses on those living without permanent shelter. The departments intend to examine the issues associated with those who reside with others in temporary or overcrowded accommodations in future projects.

In addition, this report does not include a discussion of, or recommendations for, “transients” who are only temporarily passing through a community.

Long-Term Goal

The Social Programs Departments have identified the long-term goal of ensuring that there are supports in place to protect those at risk of homelessness, and to assist those who are homeless to achieve adequate and appropriate housing. As a first step, this report identifies the gaps, overlaps and challenges in the present approach to homelessness, and makes recommendations for change in order to achieve the long-term goal.

Overview of NWT Homelessness

The information gathered for this report came in large part from interviews conducted with representatives from NGO service-providers, municipal governments, the RCMP, and GNWT Social Programs Departments, Health and Social Services Authorities and Northwest Territories Housing Corporation district offices. Interviews took place in Yellowknife, Hay River and Inuvik.

Two workshops were held in Yellowknife, one each for NGO and GNWT representatives. During the interviews, respondents were asked to comment on common characteristics of homelessness in the NWT. There was a great deal of consistency in the classification of homeless populations, and significant agreement on the size of the populations in the three largest communities of the NWT. Common characteristics of the NWT's homeless are presented in the following sections under the headings single men and women, families with children, and youth.

As we proceed with work on addressing homelessness we need to consider:

- (a) That self-governments will acquire powers for the design and delivery of social programs. Their programming may impact the needs for homeless supports; and
- (b) That resource development may also impact on the needs for homeless supports. A further point to consider is how the recently agreed Socio Economic Impact Fund can be utilized to address the needs of the homeless.

Single Men and Women

Interview respondents have shared that, very often, the population of homeless singles has underlying addictions and/or mental health issues that exacerbate their inability to find, secure or keep a permanent residence. Many have been through the correctional segment of the judicial process; many fail to qualify for the full range of income supports on an ongoing basis because of their inability to make and sustain productive choices; and others no longer qualify for Public Housing because of arrears or past eviction, and have no good reference to offer a private landlord. Single men and women may have children, but not in their care when they are homeless.

Typically, members of this group have attempted to access every available government program, often with the advocacy and assistance of NGOs. These individuals either fail to qualify for assistance, or have their assistance level reduced and possibly terminated when they fail to meet program requirements. Single men and women tend to have a very low rate of success achieving independent living in public or private housing. The Centre for Northern Families estimates that only 10% of the homeless women it works with ever succeed in escaping homelessness permanently.

Emergency housing options for this group include the hospital, RCMP holding cells or emergency shelter facilities. Individuals are admitted to Stanton Hospital's Psychiatric Unit for observation if they pose a threat to themselves, to the RCMP holding cells if they are causing a disturbance, or are intoxicated and pose a threat to others, or emergency shelters if they are intoxicated or sober, and pose no threat to themselves or others.

Several NGOs have stated that the *Protection Against Family Violence Act (PAFVA)*, which came into force in April 2005, has caused homelessness for men ordered out of their home by an Emergency Protection Order (EPO).

Under the *Act*, an EPO may be issued if a Justice of the Peace is convinced that family violence has occurred, or that there is immediate danger of it occurring. The EPO can direct police to remove a violent person from the home, and can grant sole use of the home to the applicant.

Prior to the *PAFVA*, an abusive family member could be ordered out of the home as a result of criminal charges, a peace bond, or a restraining order. These options remain, but are now complimented by the addition of the EPO.

Many respondents have stated that family violence has forced many women and children from their homes. By forcing the violent partner from the home with an EPO or other official tool, the woman and children who would otherwise have fled to an emergency shelter remain in the home, and the violent partner who would otherwise have remained in the home is forced out. Though data on EPO use is not yet available, it is likely that the use of EPOs and other such tools has had no net effect on homelessness numbers.

The Salvation Army reports there are an average of 45 men in their overnight shelter in Yellowknife on any night of the year. The Centre for Northern Families, which provides shelter for single women in Yellowknife, reports an average of 25-30 women per night. Since 1999, the number of individuals using emergency shelters in Yellowknife has tripled, according to the Salvation Army.

In Inuvik it is reported that there are from 5-12 homeless single men and women at any time throughout the year.

In Hay River, the population of homeless single men and women was estimated to be quite small, perhaps less than six who are permanent residents of the area. Summer transients were identified as a particular group of homeless in Hay River, often stranded in town while on their way to Yellowknife in pursuit of employment. Transients tend to remain in the community for a brief time, often not more than one night.

Families with Children

Homeless families made up of a mother and father with children tend to rely on friends and family for temporary shelter, where possible, or they must access one of only five emergency shelter units available in Yellowknife at Rockhill Apartments, a facility operated by the YWCA.

There are five emergency shelters in the NWT for homeless women with children fleeing abuse. They are located in the communities of Fort Smith, Hay River, Inuvik, Tuktoyaktuk and Yellowknife. Shelters in the territory's three largest communities have reported their admissions figures, demonstrating the size of the population of homeless women and children. They have shared that:

- in 2004, the YWCA-run Alison MacAteer women's shelter in Yellowknife provided shelter to 106 women, 66 of whom were accompanied by their children;
- Hay River's Family Support Centre had 114 admissions of women and children fleeing abuse in 2004, up from 67 in 2002; and
- the Inuvik Transition House averages five women and eight children in its emergency shelter every month.

NGOs have suggested that there may be a hidden population of homeless mothers who shy away from accessing services for fear if they come forward to access supports, their children will be apprehended by Child Protection Workers. It is not known how many women and children remain hidden out of this fear.

Youth

Respondents spoke of homeless youth, and all agreed that the size of this population is very difficult to estimate. Youth who have left their parents' home, or that of a foster family, may have a network of friends or acquaintances with whom they stay for short periods of time "couch-surfing". While these youth are not homeless according to the definition used in this report, they are in need of more appropriate housing options.

While many "street youth" do have a home to return to, they choose not to for a variety of reasons. Common causes include being kicked out by frustrated parents or foster families, and fleeing family violence or abuse. Service providers have shared that many homeless youth have substance abuse issues, and may have undiagnosed mental health issues such as FASD and depression.

All agreed that homeless youth are a particularly vulnerable population. Youth between the ages of 16-19 years tend to fall between the cracks, as few services exist to meet their needs. Because youth, by definition, have not reached the legal age of majority, barriers such as additional insurance requirements, and having to take responsibility for a minor, prevent many

service organizations from being able to provide services to youth. When NGO facilities do accept youth, they take on substantial risk.

Examples of housing barriers that exist for youth include:

- there are no overnight emergency shelters for youth in the NWT;
- emergency shelters for men and women, in all but the most critical situations, do not take in youth age 18 and under;
- income support eligibility is limited to those over the age of 19;
- Child Protection Workers cannot apprehend youth over the age of 16, and can only offer services with the consent of the youth in question; and
- Male children age 16 and over cannot accompany their mother to a women's shelter.

The Side Door Youth Centre in Yellowknife was funded to run a five-week overnight program for youth age 16 – 18 in early 2005. They report that over a dozen youth accessed the program during that time.

Homelessness in Small Communities

This report focuses on persons who are living on the street, in emergency shelters or in government-sponsored transitional housing. Regional centres such as Yellowknife, Hay River and Inuvik have emergency and transitional services, and Tuktoyaktuk and Fort Smith have emergency shelters for women and children. There are no emergency shelters or transitional housing options in the NWT's smaller communities. This report's consideration of homelessness in small communities is limited to cases of individuals and families who live on the street.

Emergency shelters and transitional facilities in Yellowknife indicate that many of their clients are recent migrants from smaller NWT communities. Though the reasons that individuals leave their home communities to travel to larger centres has not been assessed, several NGOs have suggested that their clients have come for the purpose of accessing services.

Many interview respondents stated that there are no individuals living on the street in smaller communities. An individual without a home will either be taken in by another household, or will travel to a community with a shelter. When the individual remains in the community, the situation of homelessness presents itself as overcrowding and couch-surfing. When a homeless individual move to a regional centre in search of services their issues become associated with the larger community. Homelessness appears to be an issue associated primarily with larger communities in the NWT.

The smaller community's issues of overcrowding, couch-surfing, and moving to larger centres need a closer look. The next steps for the homelessness project (see page 40) include examining these issues.

Inter-jurisdictional Research

Other provincial and territorial governments were surveyed for the purpose of determining what role they take in the funding and delivery of homelessness supports. The governments of Alberta (AB), Saskatchewan (SK), New Brunswick (NB) and Newfoundland (NL) provided information about the Departments involved and whether they deliver and / or fund homelessness initiatives.

All four jurisdictions report that more than one Department or Ministry has a responsibility for homelessness. The information provided appears in Table 1.

Table 1: Departments Involved in Homelessness Initiatives	
AB	Five Ministries, and one Commission: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alberta Seniors and Community Supports• Children's Services• Health and Wellness• Human Resources and Employment• Infrastructure and Transportation• Alberta Alcohol and Drug Addiction Commission
SK	Seven Departments involved, with lead taken by Community Resources and Employment, Housing Division.
NB	The Department of Family and Community Services acts as the provincial contact; other Departments also fund homelessness-related programs.
NL	Two Departments, one Corporation: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Human Resources, Labour and Employment• Health and Community Services• Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation

In the NWT, the Departments of Education Culture and Employment (ECE), Health and Social Services (HSS), Justice, the NWT Housing Corporation (NWT HC), and Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA) are the five Social Programs Departments.

None of the provinces responding to the survey *deliver* any programs designed to assist only the homeless.

All of the provinces *fund* others to operate homelessness programs. The information provided by the provinces is presented in Table 2 on the next page.

Table 2: Types of Programs Funded

AB	<p>Provides funding under the Homeless Shelters/Transitional Housing Initiative, and the Provincial Homeless Initiatives Grant.</p> <p>Funding under the Provincial Homeless Initiatives Grant is provided to community-based organizations in seven major urban communities on an annual basis, subject to budget constraints.</p> <p>Examples of funded initiatives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • purchasing housing units for transitional housing initiatives; • construction of new housing units; • damage deposit assistance programs; and • developing outreach teams to assist homeless individuals to locate and maintain housing.
SK	<p>Contributes funding to service agencies which provide services such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shelter space (no programs); • shelter space with supports; • safe shelters for domestic violence; • transitional housing with supports; • brief detox centres; • youth shelters with supports; and • family supports/outreach to keep people in their existing homes.
NB	<p>Provides funding to approximately 60 community volunteer agencies that operate food banks, clothing banks and soup kitchens. The province has taken a fairly “hands off” approach to the federal initiative.</p>
NL	<p>Funds a homeless shelter, operated by the Salvation Army, and contributes funding for a program for young people (age 16-29), operated by Choices for Youth.</p>

Across Canada, provinces are involved in homelessness initiatives insofar as funding non-governmental service agencies to provide targeted services. No provincial government surveyed runs, on its own, specific programming targeted at homelessness.

Federal Initiatives

The Federal Department now known as Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRDSC) announced its National Homelessness Initiative (NHI) in 1999. Originally intended to run for three years, the initiative was designed to ensure community access to programs, and services and support for alleviating homelessness.

There are six programs within the NHI:

- Homeless Individuals and Families Information System;
- National Research Program;
- Regional Homelessness Fund;
- Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI);
- Surplus Federal Real Property for Homelessness Initiative; and
- Urban Aboriginal Homelessness (UAH).

Projects sponsored in the initial phase focused on emergency shelter, and enhancing services such as food and furniture banks.

In the current phase, from 2003-2006, funding has been focused on longer-term supports such as transitional and supportive housing. At present, there have been more than 1,000 projects funded in 61 Canadian communities.

In 2001, \$1.54 million was announced for homelessness initiatives in Yellowknife. In August 2005, Canada announced that a further \$1.2 million would be contributed.

Most of the funds received from the NHI have been through the SCPI and UAH funds. The SCPI aims to increase the availability of, and access to, services and facilities along the housing continuum. SCPI funds must be matched by funds from other community sources. The UAH is designed to provide flexibility to meet the needs of homeless aboriginal people through culturally sensitive services. UAH funding does not require matched community contributions.

Existing Services in NWT

The Social Programs Departments do not run any programs designed to assist only the homeless, though they do operate a number of programs for a broader population that are also accessed by the homeless.

This section lists homeless supports offered by Social Programs Departments, NGOs, municipal governments and the RCMP. This list includes only those official programs run by governments and established organizations, and therefore, cannot be considered exhaustive.

Social Programs Departments, GNWT

Education, Culture and Employment (ECE)

Income Support

ECE is involved in homelessness supports primarily through its income support program. Booklets on *NWT Income Support Programs for Adults, Seniors, Students and Children* are available from ECE, and online at www.ece.gov.nt.ca. These information booklets provide all relevant program details.

Income support is a program of last resort that helps those with financial need. Income support provides three main benefits: food, shelter, and utilities, to those 19 years and older. Additional benefits are also available.

Benefits are needs assessed. Earnings of \$200 for individuals and \$400 for families are exempted from the needs-test calculation.

Income Support Workers are not social workers or counsellors. They have the role of determining eligibility for those who seek to access support.

There are four categories of client benefits (transitional, youth, adults, and community living) the details of which are presented below.

Transitional Benefit

The Transitional Benefit is intended for those who require assistance for a limited period of time, such as between jobs. The benefit provides support for food, shelter and utilities, can be paid for a maximum of two months, and does not require the recipient to be involved in a Productive Choice, such as:

- Employment;
- Education;
- Training;
- Hunting, trapping and fishing;
- Wellness;
- Community work; or
- Parenting.

Youth Educational Benefit

The Youth Educational Benefit is available to those aged 19-24 enrolled in school. The basic benefit provided for food, shelter and utilities. Additional benefits may also be provided for such costs as clothing, tuition and a security deposit.

Adult Benefit

The Adult Benefit, which is available to those between the ages of 25 and 59, requires the recipient to be involved in a Productive Choice such as employment, education, or parenting. A single adult may be eligible for up to \$750 per month for rental accommodation, and a family may receive up to the total monthly cost of rent.

Community Living Benefit

The Community Living Benefit is available to those over the age of 60 and those with a long-term disability. The basic benefit is provided for food, shelter and utilities, and additional benefits such as clothing, furnishings, and a security deposit may be provided.

Health and Social Services (HSS)

There are eight Health and Social Services Authorities that plan, manage and deliver a full spectrum of community and facility-based services for health care and social services. Each is governed by a Board of Trustees that make decisions based on the needs of the region.

Representatives from the Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority (YHSSA), the Hay River HSSA, and the Inuvik HSSA were interviewed and shared examples of the services they offer related to homelessness.

New Horizons Centre

The YHSSA operates the New Horizons Centre, a drop-in centre for adults 19 years and older with mental health issues. The Centre is a safe, comfortable place for adults to spend the day. Coffee is available to all, and shower and laundry facilities are available in special circumstances. Day programming is offered, including outdoor seasonal activities, and staff, a telephone and fax are available to assist with efforts to find employment.

The Centre opened in April 2004, and sees an average of 20 people per day in the summer and 35 in the winter. Though clients are not required to provide any personal information, it is apparent to staff that the majority are homeless, spending their nights at emergency shelters run by the Salvation Army or Centre for Northern Families.

Mental Health / Addictions Services

Community Wellness Workers and Mental Health/Addictions counsellors provide mental health, addictions and family violence services in communities across the NWT.

Community Counselling Programs provide assessment and referral services when needed. The counselling programs also provide prevention and educational initiatives around mental health, addictions, and family violence issues in NWT communities.

The NWT's residential addictions treatment centre is the Nats' ejee K'eh Treatment Centre located on the Hay River Reserve. The facility provides treatment services to adults who have been referred through the Community Counselling Program. Youth who require addictions services receive treatment at southern facilities.

Psychiatric Unit

There is a ten-bed in-patient unit located within Stanton Territorial Hospital for those with mental health issues who pose a risk to themselves or others. Patients tend to fall into one of the following four groups: psycho-geriatric, children and adolescents, transients, and those with addictions. The Unit ran at 55% capacity in 2004.

RCMP bring homeless patients requiring medical attention to the emergency unit, and if concerns exist for their mental health, they are admitted to the Psychiatric Unit for a 72-hour assessment period. If it is determined that the individual is able to function and can find shelter at an emergency facility, then they will be released from the Unit. If the individual has no demonstrated shelter options, and is deemed unable to function outside of the facility, then they may be kept in the unit for a longer period of time. Few patients stay longer than 90 days, as most are provided other adequate supports in that period of time.

Child Protection Services

Child Protection Services (CPS) within the HSSAs are responsible for providing services to families with children.

When CPS is concerned for the safety and well-being of children, workers have the authority to apprehend. Homelessness is related to the work of CPS, in that if a family is without a home and cannot provide for their children, CPS may step in. In instances where the barrier to securing housing is arrears to Public Housing or an inability to pay a damage deposit, CPS may cover the required payment.

Transient Bed

The Hay River HSSA took action in April 2005 to remove some of the burden of the transient population from NGOs in the community. When a person arrives in Hay River for a short period of time and can't afford a hotel room, the HSSA is able to provide a bed on a one-time-only basis. The bed, located within the hospital, is only available if it is not otherwise required for a medical admission. Community NGOs, including local churches, have been advised of the service, and are encouraged to refer transients to the HSSA office at the hospital for emergency accommodation.

Justice

The Department of Justice, through Corrections, deals with many of the long-term homeless in the NWT, primarily single men.

Corrections Facilities

According to staff, admissions to the North Slave Correctional Centre (NSCC) in Yellowknife tend to rise in the fall. Some Corrections workers and NGO representatives have suggested that homeless single men commit small crimes with the intention of being jailed for the duration of the north's harsh winter. The NWT's Corrections system does not consider its role to include providing shelter for the homeless, but staff concede that the system may be used in that manner by some inmates who have few other options.

Release Planning

Corrections engage in release planning for inmates. One consideration is whether the inmate should be released to their home community or to the community in which they were detained. Corrections staff encourage inmates to return to their home communities, but cannot force them to do so. Justice will provide transportation home to an inmate who chooses to be released to his/her home community. This is done in spite of the fact that the individual is not the responsibility of the Department of Justice once they have been released. If, for example, an inmate initially chooses to remain in Yellowknife, then changes their mind within a week of release, Justice will likely provide a one-way fare to their home community.

NWT Housing Corporation (NWTHC)

The NWTHC runs a number of programs designed to encourage and assist homeownership. The program most closely tied to homelessness issues is the Public Housing Program.

The NWTHC is in the process of handing over administrative and financial control of the Public Housing subsidy to ECE. However, because the Public Housing program has thus far been administered by NWTHC, it will be discussed as an NWTHC program.

Public Housing Program

The Public Housing Program was designed to provide subsidized rental housing to individuals, families and senior citizens in need. Need is based on the financial situation of an individual or family. Those who are unable to find adequate or suitable housing for less than 30% of their gross household income may be eligible for a Public Housing unit.

Public Housing is in limited supply in all communities, and in many there is a waiting list. The NWTHC attempts to maximize the usage of its housing stock, so a family will always have priority over a single person to receive a two or three bedroom unit. Because of changing demographics, there is presently a need for bachelor and one-bedroom units. The NWTHC is attempting to obtain more bachelor and one-bedroom units by disposing of larger, single-family detached units and applying the subsidy dollars to smaller units.

Rental rates for Public Housing units depend on the client's income and the community in which a client resides. The lowest monthly rental assessment is \$32, except for seniors whose monthly rental assessment is \$0.

Rental programs are operated by the 23 Local Housing Organizations (LHOs), which are responsible for providing, maintaining and managing housing programs for the residents of their respective communities.

Independent Housing Program (IHP)

The IHP assists low-income persons in eligible communities to obtain and/or repair a modest home. In larger communities such as Yellowknife, Inuvik, Hay River and Fort Smith, there are

limitations on the location and types of dwellings eligible for the program. While this program is not a support for those who are homeless, it may be of assistance to those who are at risk of homelessness, or who live in inadequate housing.

Elders on the Land Initiative

This initiative provides repairs or replacement units to persons who live on the land in substandard dwellings. The goal is to make elders' homes safer and healthier, while allowing them to maintain their traditional lifestyle. Those who live in substandard dwellings are not considered homeless by the definition used in this report, but they may be at risk of homelessness.

NGOs, Municipal Governments and the RCMP

Organizations that offer homelessness supports (other than GNWT Departments) are listed in this section in alphabetical order. A chart that identifies the community in which the organization is located, and the type of service it offers, is provided for quick reference in Table 3, appearing on the next page.

Table 3: Providers of Homelessness Supports

Organization	Location	Primary Homelessness Services
Centre for Northern Families	Yellowknife	Emergency shelter for single women Counselling
Churches	NWT-wide	Advocacy Emergency shelter in rare circumstances
Family Support Centre	Hay River	Emergency shelter for women and children
Inuvik Interagency Committee	Inuvik	Coordination of community initiatives
Inuvik Transition House	Inuvik	Emergency shelter for women and children
John Howard Society	NWT-wide	Advocacy for offenders
North Slave Housing Corporation	Yellowknife Dettah N'dilo	Social housing for aboriginal persons
NWT Council of Persons with Disabilities	NWT-wide	Advocacy and support for the disabled
Municipal Governments	Hay River Inuvik Yellowknife	Facilitation between territorial government and service-providers
RCMP (Yellowknife detachment)	Yellowknife Dettah N'dilo Gamèti, Behchokō Wekweèti Whati	Emergency shelter for intoxicated single men and women
Salvation Army	Yellowknife	Emergency shelter for single men Addictions services Counselling
Side Door Youth Centre	Yellowknife	Advocacy Emergency shelter for youth for five-week trial period in early 2005
Tree of Peace Friendship Centre	Yellowknife	Advocacy Education and training
Turning Point	Inuvik	Emergency shelter for single men and women
Yellowknife Homeless Coalition	Yellowknife	Coordination of community initiatives
Yellowknives Dene First Nation Housing	Dettah N'dilo	Social housing for Yellowknives Dene
YWCA	Yellowknife	Emergency shelter for women and children Transitional housing for families
Other NWT Women's Shelters	Fort Smith Tuktoyaktuk	Emergency shelter for women and children

Centre for Northern Families/ Yellowknife Women's Society

The Centre for Northern Families/Yellowknife Women's Society has a mandate "to support and assist women in empowering themselves so they can develop their goals, achieve wellness, enjoy equality and be recognized for the contribution they make in the community". The Centre runs many services accessed by its homeless clients. Information on these programs can be found on-line at www.theedge.ca/northernfamilies/.

Women's Emergency Shelter

The Centre for Northern Families operates a shelter for homeless women not accompanied by children. Though youth under the age of 19 cannot typically be admitted, in rare emergency circumstances they may be sheltered overnight until more appropriate accommodations can be accessed the next day.

The shelter will not turn women away if they are intoxicated at the time of their arrival. If, however, a woman poses a threat to herself or others, she will be asked to leave immediately, and other resources such as the hospital or RCMP will be accessed.

Clients are not required to pay for shelter, but are expected to contribute through volunteer work, and to participate in recovery endeavours such as addictions support, counselling or work experience.

The Centre indicates that the majority of its clients face addictions issues. Many have children who are no longer under their care.

Medical Clinic

A medical clinic is open one day a week, offering services to the residents of the emergency shelter and walk-in patients.

Travel Assistance Policy

The Centre delivers the Homeless Travel Assistance funding on behalf of HSS. Clients who are homeless in Yellowknife, and wish to return to their community where they have a home, may receive a one-way ticket.

Churches

Often, homeless individuals who know of no other place to turn will seek shelter at a church. This is more prevalent, or perhaps more noticeable in communities that have few other community-based organizations.

In Hay River, the churches have become *ad hoc* shelters particularly for transient homeless on their way to or from an employment opportunity in Yellowknife. While these individuals tend not to stay for long, often leaving town after one night, their volume has taxed the resources of the churches.

Clergy have opened church basements, and in some cases, their personal home and vehicle to provide the homeless with a place to stay.

In addition to providing temporary shelter in emergency situations, church funds have been used to purchase one-way fares for the transient homeless.

Family Support Centre (Hay River)

The Family Support Centre is Hay River's emergency women's shelter. The shelter has twelve beds, and has a policy to never turn away someone in need. If the shelter is at capacity, it will refer a client to trusted community residents who are known to have an empty room available, or to a local motel that is known to offer room and board in exchange for work, for those in need.

The shelter's maximum stay is six weeks, though discretion has allowed stays of longer duration.

The Centre operates a three-bedroom second stage home for families who are making a transition to independent living. The home is generally reserved for one family at a time.

Staff estimates that three-quarters of their work involves advocacy and referrals on behalf of clients. Typically, Centre staff help clients secure employment and an adequate apartment.

In 2002-03 the shelter recorded 67 cases, rising to 82 in 2003-04, and 114 in 2004-05. A "case" is a family, and may include more than one individual if a woman arrives with children.

The busiest months for the Centre are from September to December.

The Centre receives six-week lump sum funding to assist those who are leaving abusive situations. The Centre is not mandated to act as a homeless shelter, though in practice, homelessness issues affect many of those who rely on the Centre's services.

Inuvik Interagency Committee

The Inuvik Interagency Committee has existed for 20 years providing a forum for agencies to meet to discuss service gaps and how best to fill them. The Committee has an open membership, with approximately 30 groups represented at present.

The Committee operates initiatives such as the Justice Committee, a suicide hotline, and the local food bank. The Homeless Committee is a sub-committee. The Committee is presently examining options for a new homeless shelter with a focus on addictions prevention.

Inuvik Transition House

The Inuvik Transition House is an emergency shelter for women and their children who are leaving an abusive situation. Women may be allowed to remain at the shelter for a maximum of six weeks, though in some circumstances, an extension may be allowed.

The shelter has four bedrooms, and a maximum capacity of 14 individuals. Over the last five years, the shelter has averaged five women and eight children per month. Approximately 60% of those in the shelter have been from Inuvik, and the remaining 40% from other NWT communities.

Like other women's shelters, the Transition House has a policy of accepting male children only up to the age of 15.

The shelter provides food for its clients and basic necessities such as diapers for infants. If necessary, the shelter may provide a woman with a small comfort allowance if she is without any other source of funds and has a need. The shelter raises resources for its additional expenses through fundraising initiatives such as community bingo.

John Howard Society

The John Howard Society has an interest in effective, just and humane responses to the causes and consequences of crime. Though the Society does not run any programs specifically targeted at homelessness, the population it serves is often confronted by homelessness issues.

The Society employs one individual to participate in the Fine Options, Community Service, and Community Justice Committee programs run by the Department of Justice.

Through its staffed position, and many volunteers, the John Howard Society advocates on behalf of offenders and those released from correctional facilities who are often homeless, or at risk of being homeless.

North Slave Housing Corporation (NSHC)

The Corporation runs the federal Urban Native Housing program, and owns 75 units in Yellowknife, which are rented to aboriginal persons who meet an income cutoff test.

NSHC is not Public Housing, but affordable housing promoting home ownership. Clients are encouraged to budget their money wisely, and the Corporation reports that many former clients now own homes.

The base rental rate for a house is \$500/month, and slightly less for an apartment. The base rent is charged to clients who are not employed, or who do not produce proof of their income. For those who do provide proof of income, rent is assessed at 25% of gross income to a maximum of the base rate. Utility bills are charged to the client, less a NSHC subsidy of \$60/month. The Corporation charges only \$32 for a new tenant's first month in an effort to alleviate the burden of moving expenses. After that time, unless a client is disabled, rent rises to the assessed rate, to a maximum of \$500.

Clients are required to attend an evening seminar on tenancy expectations before they are eligible for housing. There is a six-month Yellowknife residency requirement for eligibility, which is waived for the disabled.

Clients on income support are permitted to remain in or on the waiting list for NSHC housing, in spite of the fact that by accessing income support, they are necessarily on a waiting list for NWT Public Housing.

The NSHC is examining options for selling a few of its houses to fund the building of units for the hard-to-house.

NWT Council of Persons with Disabilities

The NWT Council of Persons with Disabilities advocates on behalf of disabled residents of the NWT. The Council reports that many disabled persons are at risk of being homeless.

If the Council learns of a client who is in danger of eviction, the Council will attempt to intervene and advocate on the client's behalf.

Municipal Governments

Municipal governments have a broad legislative mandate that enables each to determine the scope of its involvement in homelessness initiatives. The municipal governments of larger

communities, such as Yellowknife, Inuvik and Hay River, often act as a facilitator between community groups and the territorial government.

The City of Yellowknife has become involved in the Yellowknife Homeless Coalition, with the mayor and often a staff person attending the Coalition's meetings, and by administering the Coalition's funds. The City of Yellowknife has also given annual core funding to the Side Door Youth Centre in support of the programs it runs for homeless youth in the City.

RCMP (Yellowknife Detachment)

The Yellowknife RCMP detachment reserves several holding cells for the intoxicated. The "drunk tank", as it is commonly known, often serves as a shelter to those who cannot access services at other agencies in Yellowknife. The RCMP have indicated that the cells are reaching maximum capacity.

According to the RCMP, crimes spike in winter months in Yellowknife and surrounding areas, and many individuals commit crimes in an attempt to secure shelter at Correctional Centres. There have been instances where individuals ask to be let in to the RCMP's drunk tank overnight during severe cold spells.

The RCMP in Yellowknife become involved in homelessness when they must accompany homeless individuals with severe mental health issues who pose a risk to themselves to Stanton Hospital for admission to the emergency ward and Psychiatric Unit.

Salvation Army

The Salvation Army owns a three-storey facility in downtown Yellowknife housing a men's emergency shelter, a detoxification program, and the Salvation Army's NWT Resource Centre. These programs and services are described below.

Men's Emergency Shelter

The Salvation Army operates a 44-bed shelter in Yellowknife for single men over the age of 18. From 1999 to 2005, the average number of homeless clients served residing at the shelter has tripled to 45 per day.

Shelter space is available for homeless persons, with bunks in two rooms reserved for those who are making productive choices, one room for those who are not intoxicated but are not making productive choices, and a room of 12 mats for those who are intoxicated but pose no threat to themselves or others. Young men, 18 years of age, are segregated from older clients.

The Salvation Army provides two meals for its clients, and offers washroom, shower and laundry facilities.

Withdrawal Management Services

The Salvation Army runs a six-bed Withdrawal Management program for men over the age of 19 who are referred by a recognized agency. Clients withdrawing from an addictive substance may stay in the facility 24-hour/day for up to two weeks. The average length of stay is 5-10 days. The program is not intended as a long-term rehabilitation support.

NWT Resource Centre

The Salvation Army's NWT Resource Centre provides a number of supports intended to assist the homeless. The Working Family Housing Assistance Fund may provide assistance to families

in which at least one parent is gainfully employed, for such expenses as security deposits, utility connections and arrears.

Caseworkers at the Resource Centre work with homeless clients to identify barriers to transitional housing, and assist in finding solutions.

Homeless Travel Assistance Policy

In December 2004, HSS introduced the Homeless Travel Assistance Policy. The Salvation Army is one agency that administers the funding in Yellowknife. Homelessness may result when an individual is stranded in a community unable to afford the cost of return travel to their home community. The Salvation Army may grant homeless persons, who wish to return to their home community and have a home to return to, a one-way ticket. An individual is only eligible for the program once.

Side Door Youth Centre

The Side Door Youth Centre facility was built in part with federal NHI funding, and is modeled after a successful facility operating in Winnipeg. The Centre receives annual core funding from the City of Yellowknife, and relies on additional support from churches and individuals.

Overnight Program

In February 2005 the Side Door was funded by the YHSSA to operate a five-week overnight program for youth between 16-19 years. There were over a dozen youth who accessed overnight supports while the program was in operation.

Two staff were on-site through the night, and counsellors were available in the morning to discuss any issues clients brought forward, and to provide information on other services available to youth.

Daily Supports

The Side Door Youth Centre offers a safe place for youth to go during the day, where they and their problems can be identified, and supports offered. Because the Side Door rents part of its facility space to other community groups in an effort to subsidize operating costs, it cannot be open to youth all the time. Whenever its doors are open to youth, there are staff on hand to offer counselling to youth should they seek it. Youth have access to shower and washroom facilities within the building, couches, and recreational games.

Tree of Peace Friendship Centre

The Tree of Peace Friendship Centre in Yellowknife runs a variety of programs designed to assist individuals to become employable. Centre staff report that homeless individuals access many of their programs. Programs include:

- Adult Education;
- Drugs & Alcohol;
- Culture & Employment;
- Summer camp; and
- Elders Activities.

Enrollment in the Tree of Peace's adult education program is considered a productive choice for the Adult Benefit offered by Income Support. Operated at a separate location in downtown Yellowknife, the program teaches curriculum up to Grade 12. Enrollment is capped at 16 students, and at any time there is waiting list of 6-20 individuals. Students are typically between

the age of 30 and 60 years, and may live in a range of situations, including emergency shelter and transitional housing. Students may also be taught driving skills in order to attain a driver's licence. The program receives funding from ECE.

HSS funds addictions worker positions at the Tree of Peace. The Tree of Peace runs programming for those addicted to substances, and encourages the participation of family. The four-stage program includes referrals to other services, education on the effects of addictions, counselling on the cycle of addictions, and provides skills to cope with recovery and guard against relapse.

The programs are open to all individuals, including First Nations, Inuit, Metis and non-aboriginals.

As of June 2005, there were six addictions workers at Tree of Peace. In the month of April 2005, addictions workers conducted 183 meetings with individuals seeking their services.

Turning Point

The Gwich'in Band Council has recently taken control of Inuvik's Turning Point homeless shelter. The shelter is intended for sober men and women age 19 and over. Those who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol are not accepted into the facility. The shelter is furnished with beds, and can house a maximum of eleven individuals, with men and women in segregated sleeping quarters.

Shelter residents have access to full washroom and shower facilities, and are provided breakfast and dinner.

The shelter is intended to be an emergency resource for the homeless, but there is no maximum length of stay enforced. Some clients have remained at the shelter for over a year. Those who have employment income are expected to pay nominal fees for room and board, but collection remains *ad hoc*.

The Band reports that there are five individuals who are dependent on Turning Point for housing, while several others use the facility from time to time.

Yellowknife Homeless Coalition

The Yellowknife Homeless Coalition was formed in January 2000 in response to the federal government's announcement of funds specified for homelessness. Coalition members include representatives from federal, territorial and municipal governments, and Yellowknife NGO service providers.

The Coalition's vision is to provide a seamless continuum of housing and support services for marginalized individuals and families living in or moving to the city of Yellowknife.

The Coalition has been instrumental in accessing federal funding which has contributed to the construction of the Side Door Youth Centre facility, and will be used for the planned building of a mixed-use facility for single men. The Coalition's funding comes in large part from Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRDSC) through the National Homelessness Initiative's Urban Aboriginal Strategy.

Yellowknives Dene First Nation Housing

The Yellowknives Dene First Nation – Housing Division is a legal agent of the NWT HC, funded by the GNWT to provide affordable housing to all residents of Dettah and N'dilo.

The YKDFN owns 73 units in Dettah and N'dilo. Rent is determined in the same manner as for NWT HC clients. The lowest monthly rate of \$32 is charged to those on income support. Units tend to be in high demand, and there is almost always a waiting list.

Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA)

The YWCA is the largest provider of emergency shelters and transitional housing for women and their children in Canada. Providing quality housing and support services for women and their families is the YWCA's priority.

Alison McAteer

The YWCA operates Alison McAteer House in Yellowknife, a 12 bed emergency shelter for women and their children fleeing abuse. In 2004, 106 women and 116 accompanying children were sheltered at the facility.

The shelter is only funded to provide services for those fleeing abuse, which may not cover every instance of homelessness. The shelter serves women over the age of 18 and their accompanying children. Male children can be accommodated only to the age of 15.

Those who use the shelter may only require one night's stay, while others may stay up to six weeks. Only in circumstances where other options do not exist will the shelter permit a stay of longer than six weeks.

Rockhill

Rockhill Apartments is a 39-unit complex in Yellowknife owned by the GNWT, but leased to, and operated by, the YWCA. Five units are reserved for families requiring emergency shelter. Families are permitted to stay in the emergency units for up to three months. No rent is charged to those in emergency units, as the YWCA receives specific funding for those units from the NWT HC and ECE. As of May 2005, the waiting list for these units was 60 families long. The remaining 34 units at Rockhill are transitional housing. Families (most often women with their children) are permitted to stay for up to one year, though the YWCA uses discretion to allow some to stay longer. Those in transitional housing must pay rent. Single room apartments are rented for \$1000/month, and two bedroom units for \$1200/month. All rooms are fully furnished, and utilities are included in the monthly rent. Rockhill Apartments has YWCA staff on-site to provide counselling and support. Security staff is always on duty between 8:00 pm and 4:00 am.

Supported/Independent Living

In February 2005 the YWCA opened a psychiatric group home for individuals with mental health issues who have no alternative accommodation. The home can accommodate five clients, and has a trained staff on site 24 hours/day. Presently, there is no maximum length of stay. The home is funded by the YHSSA, and residents must be assessed and referred to the facility by YHSSA staff. Residents are free to come and go as they please.

The YWCA owns and operates two houses in which a total of eight clients reside. These clients have mental health issues that necessitate assisted living arrangements. Rent charged for these units is \$750/month for a single room, which is the limit of income support's shelter allowance. If not for this service, clients would be at risk of homelessness.

The YWCA has set a goal of purchasing one house per year for the assisted living program.

In addition to the group homes run by the YWCA, there are 27 individuals living in private residences in Yellowknife who receive periodic support from the YWCA. These individuals are able to maintain their independent households with the support of the YWCA.

Women’s Healing and Recovery Program

The YWCA in Yellowknife receives funding from YHSSA to deliver a healing and recovery program designed for women dealing with trauma (including sexual abuse and domestic violence) and addictions. The program incorporates educational programs on life skills and parenting.

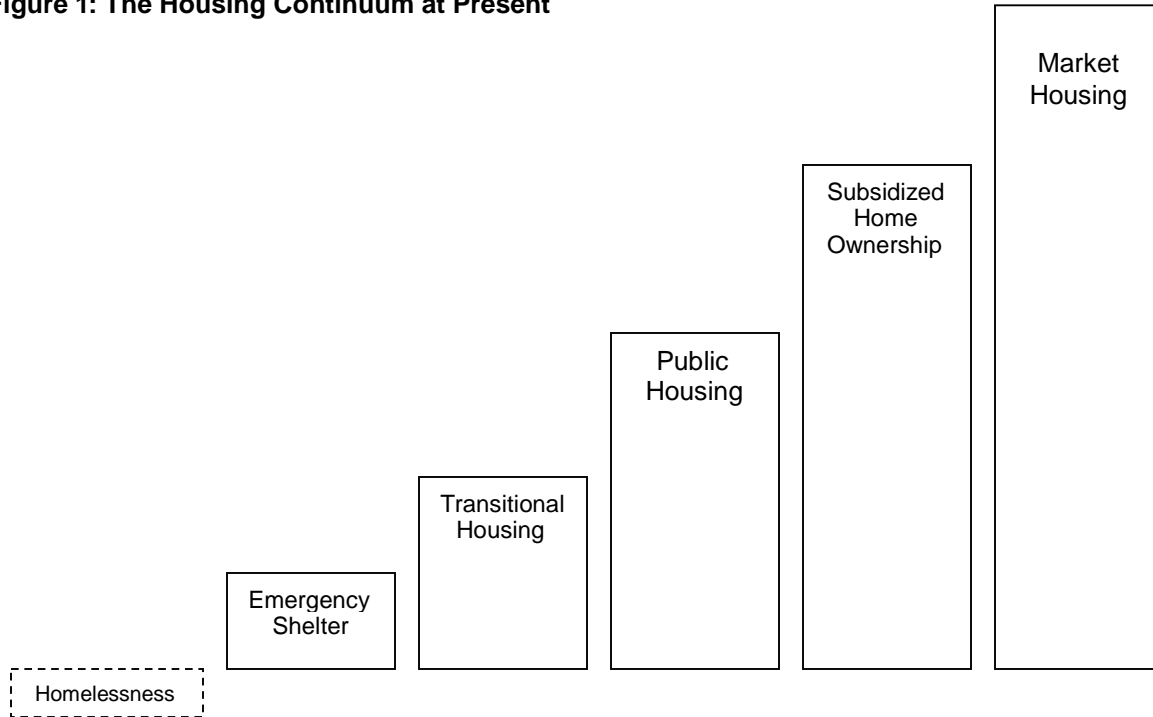
Other NWT Women’s Shelters

In addition to the shelters in Yellowknife, Hay River and Inuvik, there are additional shelters in both Tuktoyaktuk and Fort Smith. The Tuk Women’s and Children’s Centre and Fort Smith’s Sutherland House are facilities which provide emergency shelter to women and their children who are fleeing abusive situations.

Homelessness Services - Problems Encountered and Solutions Suggested

The following figure represents the current state of the housing continuum in the NWT. From a state of homelessness, there are only two steps of support on the path to Public Housing, another step to achieve subsidized home ownership programs, and then a further step to access private market housing. The continuum is not, in fact, continuous, as there are gaps between steps that may cause an individual to fall back to a state of homelessness.

Figure 1: The Housing Continuum at Present



Over the course of the interviews and workshops conducted with representatives from the territorial and municipal governments and community organizations, many gaps and challenges, and a few overlaps in the Social Programs Departments' response to homelessness were identified. In most instances, the parties who identified a problem suggested potential solutions.

The issues discussed throughout the interviews and workshops are described in this section, and following each is a summary of the solutions proposed by those who raised the issue. The issues are listed according to the group of homeless affected, starting with those that apply to all groups under the heading "General".

General

Housing Continuum	
Problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transitional housing such as that run by the YWCA is limited to families. Single men and women with no dependents have no available housing option between emergency shelter and Public Housing, which they cannot easily obtain given their low priority in the system. • Low-income individuals and families living in transitional housing are unlikely to be able to secure or afford private housing. • Those with mental health or addictions issues tend to face difficulties that prevent them from accessing or succeeding in existing programs. • Few individuals have success transitioning from a state of homelessness to securing adequate housing.
Solutions Suggested	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GNWT and NGO representatives have suggested that a housing continuum, in which transitional housing plays an important role, is necessary. • The Yellowknife Homeless Coalition is planning to build a mixed-use facility, including transitional housing for single men, and the support of the GNWT is encouraged. • NGOs are unanimous in their assertion that no more emergency shelter spaces are required in Yellowknife. Instead, they have suggested that more transitional housing options are required across the territory. • Some individuals with physical disabilities, mental health issues or addictions require long-term supported housing, NGOs have suggested. • Some NGOs have suggested that “near market” housing options are required to bridge the gap between transitional and private market housing. • Several NGOs have suggested that those in transitional housing should have expenses such as utilities, childcare and higher rent introduced gradually. • One NGO suggested that a rent bank be established from which tenants could borrow up to two months rent, as is done in some southern communities. • Many respondents suggested that day programs are required for the homeless, particularly during the hours in which emergency shelters are closed. • Several NGOs suggested that supportive housing would be helpful for women and their children who have left emergency shelters. The specific need cited was for a less-communal living arrangement, so women could gain independence.

Addictions Treatment	
Problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is only one residential treatment centre in the NWT, located on the Hay River Reserve. Individuals from other communities must travel to either Hay River or Yellowknife to access treatment services. • Detoxification programs, such as the Withdrawal Management program in Yellowknife, focus only on short-term treatment, and there is little follow-up treatment to ensure that the addiction is conquered. • The NWT does not have a residential treatment program for children or youth located within the NWT.
Solutions Suggested	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both NGO and GNWT representatives felt that detoxification services are not enough, as a chronic alcoholic cannot detoxify in only 48 hours. It was suggested that the NWT requires more residential treatment facilities. • Several NGOs suggested that supportive housing is required for persons coming out of addictions treatment facilities. These individuals need a safe and supportive place to go while they learn to cope without the use of addictive substances. • It was suggested by one NGO that the former residential healing school on the road to Dettah could serve as a Half-Way house for those returning from addictions treatment. • NGOs and GNWT representatives thought that Half-Way houses and supported living arrangements are required for those recovering from addictions. • On the land programs would assist those in recovery to develop pride in themselves and their culture, several NGOs suggested. • Representatives from an NGO and a GNWT Department suggested that a program run in Gallup, New Mexico showed promise for assisting those with addictions. In essence, a person arrested for public intoxication can be held for 72 hours during which time then can be checked into a detoxification program run by the local Band.

Public Housing Eligibility	
Problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those living in emergency shelters or transitional housing are eligible for Public Housing. However, these units are allocated on the basis of need. Individuals/families living in transitional housing may be on the waiting list longer than those who are homeless and cannot access transitional units.
Solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some NGOs have suggested the NWTHC revisit policies with regard to eligibility. • Since some NGOs feel that those in shelters or transitional units are not eligible for public housing, it is important for the NWTHC and the LHOs to ensure that their eligibility criteria are clearly communicated to NGOs providing services to the homeless.

Income Support Eligibility	
Problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be eligible for the full accommodation benefit under the income support program, an individual must either be in, or on the waiting list for, Public Housing. An individual who has been evicted from Public Housing, who is in arrears to the NWT HC, or who is residing in emergency shelter cannot access the full accommodation benefit under the income support program.
Solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NGOs have suggested that those living in transitional housing should be eligible for the full accommodation benefit under the income support program.

Income Support Claw-Back	
Problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While on income support, an individual is allowed to earn \$200, and a family \$400, before their income support payment is reduced. Any earnings over the allowable amount reduce one's income support payment at 1:1, which may discourage recipients from seeking employment. This issue requires further examination and analysis.
Solutions Suggested	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NGOs had several suggestions for changes to the policy governing earned income for those on the Adult Benefit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One NGO representative suggested that a six-month grace period should be introduced, during which time earned income does not reduce the income support payment. During a workshop, several NGOs agreed that a graduated earned income clawback would be an improvement. Specifically, they suggested a possible schedule where income between \$400 and \$1,000 for a family could reduce income support by 25%, and income from \$1,000 to \$1,500 by 50%, etc.

Three – Month Leases	
Problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several NGOs have suggested that fixed term leases are sometimes used by LHOs as a means to avoid involvement of the Rental Office in the event the LHO finds it necessary to pursue an eviction.¹
Solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several NGOs felt strongly that the practice of issuing three-month leases should cease. GNWT representatives have suggested that the purpose of using fixed-term leases be clarified with NGOs who provide services to homeless individuals.

Supports for the Disabled	
Problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is little in the way of accessible housing and supports for the disabled in most NWT communities, so often, the disabled often must go to Yellowknife, where they will likely be placed on a waiting list for accessible Public Housing. They may have a home in their community, but it is not suited to their needs.
Solutions Suggested	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NGOs suggested that increased supported living options would benefit many disabled who have difficulty operating a home on their own. One NGO mentioned that the earned income clawback for those receiving the Community Living benefit should be reexamined, as many disabled persons would like to work, but see no benefit from work if it reduces their income support benefit 1:1. One NGO suggested that disabled persons should have access to Public Housing without having to be a recipient of income support.² One NGO suggested that the government should encourage private builders to construct houses with level entries.

¹ Fixed-term leases are sometimes used by all LHOs as a housing probationary period or as an interim measure for emergency housing allocations. The duration of the fixed-term lease is at the discretion of the LHO. Tenants are given 30 days notice that their lease will not be renewed, along with the reason for the decision.

Leases are always renewed unless there are issues of arrears, damages or disturbances. Tenants may appeal their eviction to the LHO Board.

Following an initial fixed-term lease, or probationary period, most tenants in all LHOs are provided with longer-term leases.

² Disabled persons do not have to be on income support in order to become a Public Housing tenant. Depending on the disability and because of the limited number of appropriate barrier-free units, disabled persons may have to occupy a non-barrier-free unit until an appropriate barrier-free unit becomes available.

Shortage of Affordable Housing	
Problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a shortage of affordable housing in the NWT. The private market is unable to keep up with the demand for housing, leading to the inflation of private market rental rates and housing prices. The NWTHC, in conjunction with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), has offered to make contributions to private development projects in exchange for ten years of lowered rental rates, however no developer has taken up the offer, because the private housing market is more lucrative.
Solutions Suggested	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several NGO representatives suggested that the government should explore other incentives to increase affordable housing starts. • Some NGOs suggested that the government should fund hostels in larger centres that see many transients and short-term/seasonal workers. • One NGO noted that the housing stock set-aside for teachers and nurses in small communities should be used to its potential. If vacant, units should be given to those on Public Housing waiting lists.³ • NGO and GNWT representatives advocated for creative solutions to housing shortages, such as making use of a barge for sale in Yellowknife, or purchasing camp modules which are able to house ten or more single individuals.

³ The NWTHC advises that Public Housing units are reserved for individuals and families with low incomes who are in need. The maintenance costs of these units are cost-shared with CMHC and the rent is heavily subsidized. The Market Housing units are set-aside for teachers and nurses in small communities. There is no subsidy attached to these units. Their rent is based on a full cost-recovery system. Vacant Market Housing units could be utilized for public housing units, only if another Government Department would be willing to pay the full cost recovery rent.

Life Skills	
Problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many homeless, including those who are living in emergency shelters and transitional housing, lack the skills required to be good tenants. Tenancy skills include respecting the right of neighbours to enjoy a quiet and peaceful environment, and being responsible for the actions of the guests in one's home. • Many homeless have a limited familiarity with budgeting financial resources. They face huge obstacles that prevent them from accumulating the funds necessary to secure a rental apartment, and often those who have homes are challenged, on their own, to pay utilities and rent on time. • In terms of employable skills, many long-term homeless feel they are unable to secure work because of illiteracy, lack of a formal education and lack of driver's license.
Solutions Suggested	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some NGOs suggested that prior to signing a lease for Public Housing, tenants should be required to attend a brief seminar on good tenancy practices, as the North Slave Housing Corporation requires.⁴ • Some NGO representatives suggested that a Tenant Relations position should be established, with a mandate to make tenants of Public Housing aware of the consequences of their actions before eviction is sought, and to counsel or otherwise assist tenants.⁵ • A couple of NGO representatives suggested that the Public Housing base rate of \$32/month should be increased gradually as tenants gain experience budgeting their money. • NGOs suggested that financial literacy should be incorporated in school curriculum. • One NGO suggested that full-time aboriginal language programming should exist in all NWT schools.

⁴ All LHOs provide one-on-one counselling to potential tenants. In addition, many LHOs have written resource materials for tenants. For example, the Yellowknife Housing Authority provides a brochure to all applicants, explaining their obligations. The Tenant Relations Officer explains the Residential Tenancy Agreement to all tenants, clause by clause. The lease describe the tenant's obligations in detail. The Program Officer then describes the financial obligations of a tenancy and the consequences of avoiding those obligations. The Program Officer then establishes a home visit/inspection approximately two months into the tenancy.

⁵ Each LHO has a Tenant Relations Officer position or equivalent. The purpose of this position is to ensure that tenants are aware of and understand their obligations. In addition, the Rental Officer provides advice and guidance upon request.

Consistency and Collaboration	
Problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The service an individual receives when he or she visits a government support worker is not always consistent. Government personnel have varied levels of familiarity with the programs and services available, so the level of service received depends upon the individual seen. As a result, those in need of services may become discouraged while seeking assistance from the territorial government. • There is a lack of consistency between Child Protection Services within the HSSAs and Income Support regarding the coverage of damage deposits and the payment of arrears and rent. ECE's policy is to provide a damage deposit to a client only once. ECE will not provide payment for arrears or rent if a client has been evicted from Public Housing. However, the HSSAs may pay off assessed damages or provide a damage deposit, arrears or rent if these barriers prevent a family with children from securing housing.
Solutions Suggested	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGO and GNWT representatives suggested that Departments should review the purposes of their various policies, and reexamine those that work at cross- purposes to those of another Department. • NGO representatives advocated a common policy between GNWT Departments and agencies that would assist the homeless to move upward through the housing continuum. • One NGO suggested that the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA) should be involved in government decisions affecting homelessness. • One individual, a former representative of a GNWT Department, suggested that the Social Programs Departments should each maintain representation on the Yellowknife Homelessness Coalition. • NGO and GNWT representatives suggested that a single point of entry to access government services such as income support, mental health and addictions counselling and Public Housing would benefit those who fail to access the present system. • Representatives of NGOs and a municipal government suggested that a single government body with a responsibility for homelessness should be established, so that agencies and individuals need only communicate with one government contact. • One NGO suggested that an inter-department group should be established with a mandate to be aware of homelessness issues and available programs. • One NGO suggested that GNWT Departments should consult with service-providers when developing policies that will impact homelessness.

Single Men and Women

Adult Benefit Requirements	
Problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Income Support Adult Benefit requires that an applicant enter into a Productive Choice in order to continue to access support. The reporting requirements for clients include proof of attendance at school, if education is the selected productive choice, and monthly statements of income. Many persons in need of income support lack the cognitive abilities to meet these requirements, but cannot be easily identified as having a disability that would make them eligible for the Community Living Benefit. As a result, they are excluded from income support.
Solutions Suggested	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Several GNWT and NGO representatives suggested there should be general practice social workers whose function it is to help those on income support with the reporting requirements, and other issues they may have.• Several respondents suggested there should be a single point of entry for GNWT social supports, so that those who require assistance don't have to visit staff at various Departments.

Support for Released Inmates	
Problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals may, on release from a correctional facility, leave with a small amount of money that they have earned, but they often lack sufficient resources to get back on their feet. They may book an appointment with an Income Support worker, but the appointment may not be until days later, during which time the individual is likely homeless. • Individuals released from a correctional facility find it extremely difficult to secure market housing, particularly in a housing market as tight as that in the NWT. With vacancy rates approaching 0%, private landlords are able to find tenants to fill their units without having to rent to individuals with no references and a completed sentence. • Those with a cognitive disability (perhaps FASD) are reported to respond well to the structure and rules in place in correctional facilities, but struggle to make productive choices once released.
Solutions Suggested	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGOs suggested that Income Support workers should make regular appointments at Correctional facilities so that inmates have supports in place as soon as they are released. • It was suggested that Halfway houses for released inmates should be established. An appropriate facility would be non-judicial, but with rules and structure. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ GNWT staff suggested that land beside the North Slave Correctional Centre could be used to build a Halfway house. ○ NGOs suggested that a Halfway house should be located away from the jail. • Better release planning for inmates was suggested by NGO representatives. • A GNWT representative suggested that releasing circles within communities might assist some former inmates to integrate successfully. • One NGO representative suggested that creative sentencing options such as on-the-land programs would be more successful than a jail term for the rehabilitation of some offenders.

Public Housing Priority Placements	
Problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Housing stock is assigned with the intention of filling units to capacity. A three-bedroom unit will always go to a family with children if a family is on the waiting list. Single persons on the waiting list have a much lower priority, even for bachelor and one-bedroom units of which there are few. As a result, it is very difficult for single men and women to access Public Housing.
Solutions Suggested	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NGOs have suggested that more affordable housing stock is required, including more Public Housing. In greatest need are bachelor and one-bedroom apartments, which are adequate for the needs of many single men and women.⁶ Some GNWT representatives suggested that there is adequate Public Housing stock, but what is needed is a mechanism to ensure that units are distributed according to need. For example, families whose children have moved out are occupying units larger than they now require, but there is no way for the NWT HC to move them to a smaller, more appropriate unit.⁷ Some GNWT and NGO representatives suggested that building basic housing (nothing fancy) would meet the needs of many hard-to-house.⁸

Families with Children

Access to Childcare	
Problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GNWT and NGO interview respondents drew attention to the fact that families in emergency shelters and transitional housing have limited access to adequate childcare. It was stated that many private childcare providers are hesitant to accept clients receiving a childcare subsidy, as reporting requirements are onerous, and there are payment delays. Further, there are few spaces in licensed facilities for infants. As a result, single mothers, in particular, are unable to take employment or attend educational/training programs.
Solutions Suggested	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GNWT and NGO representatives have suggested that childcare within transitional housing facilities would assist those in the facilities to look for employment, or to attend educational and life skills programs. NGOs have suggested increasing the childcare subsidy to income support recipients.

⁶ Because of changing demographics, there is presently a greater demand for bachelor and one-bedroom units. The NWT HC is attempting to obtain more bachelor and one-bedroom apartments by disposing of larger, single-family detached units and applying the subsidy dollars to smaller units.

⁷ The NWT HC provides guidelines to LHOs for allocating units according to size. In some communities there are no smaller units to move people to. Transferring long-term tenants can be politically contentious and unpopular with advocacy groups.

⁸ Basic housing may meet the needs of the hard-to-house. However, the NWT HC notes that the cost to build such units is a small portion of the equation. The cost to operate and maintain any Public Housing unit is prohibitive.

Transitional Housing Bottleneck	
Problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is relatively difficult to access transitional housing because of lengthy waiting lists. Waiting lists are long because those in transitional housing tend to have a difficult time transitioning to Public Housing or market housing, and also because there are many more families in need of transitional housing than there are units. • Individuals living in transitional housing are eligible for public housing. However, public housing units are allocated on the basis of need. Consequently, individuals living in transitional housing may be on the waiting list longer than those individuals without access to even transitional housing; individuals who are absolutely homeless. • Transitional housing also comes with a system of supports to make clients more successful in everyday matters. Clients may become dependent on these supports, and subsequently, may fail to thrive in Public Housing or market housing where these supports do not exist.
Solutions Suggested	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents have suggested that more transitional housing options should be available, including options for assisted and supported living. In essence, more steps should be added, and gaps filled, to create a more seamless housing continuum. • Some NGO respondents suggested that transitional supports are required in the small communities, as it is better to access supports within one's home community.

Youth

Emergency Shelter	
Problem	There is no emergency shelter for youth between the ages of 16-19 years old.
Solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents have suggested that there is a need for a youth emergency shelter open 24 hours a day. • One NGO shared the opinion that an adequate facility need only provide a sofa in a safe environment.

Income Support Eligibility	
Problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eligibility for income support requires that an individual be over the age of 19, with the assumption that those under that age are the responsibility of their families and Child Protection Services. Youth, some with children of their own, do not qualify for income support, despite the fact they may not be residing with their parents.
Solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some NGOs suggested that ECE should revisit its policies with respect to Income Support eligibility for youths who do not live with their family.

Recommendations to Improve the GNWT Response

This section provides recommendations for GNWT action. Senior Managers of the Social Programs Departments consider that these recommendations should be discussed with NGO representatives and departments to determine if there is support for further work on their direction.

These recommendations are guided by the following assumptions:

- There will always be some homeless people who choose not to access support services.
- Homelessness is caused by a myriad of factors. People who are chronically homeless face many long-standing and hard-to-resolve challenges.
- GNWT Social Programs Departments would continue to provide the funding for identified programs and services, rather than undertake direct delivery of programs and services related to the homeless.
- Interested NGOs would be involved with the development of guidelines and other details defining new programs.
- GNWT Social Program departments will continue their efforts to coordinate their policies, programs and services.

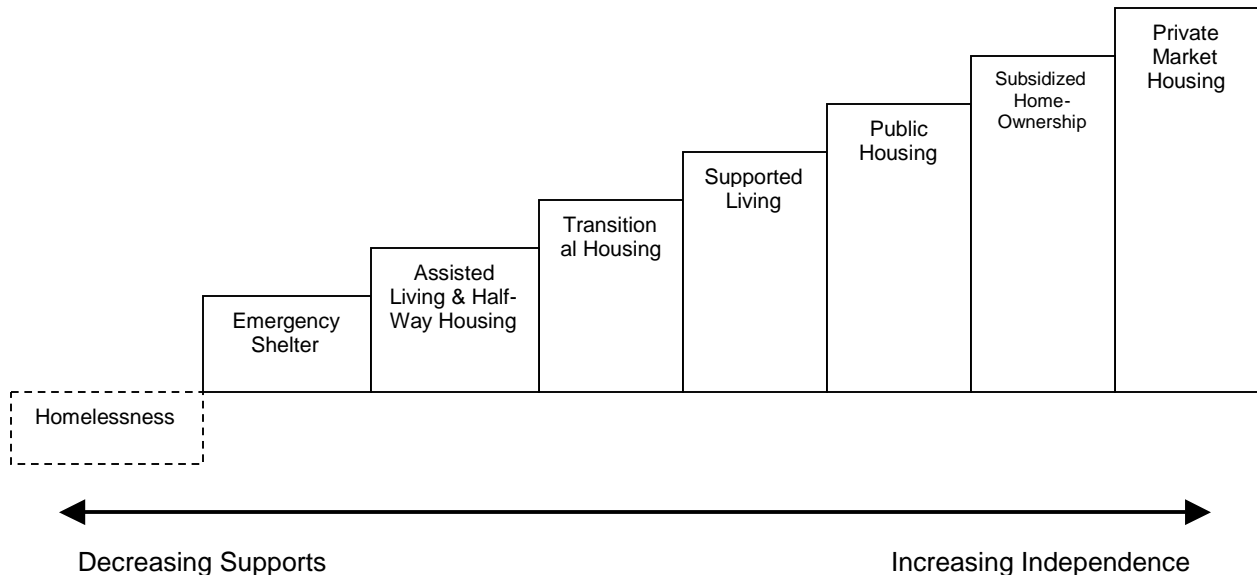
1. Expand the Options in the NWT Housing Continuum

It is recommended that the Social Programs Departments support the efforts of service organizations to provide more options in the housing continuum.

- A variety of supported and assisted living opportunities (as yet undetermined) from group homes to halfway houses
- Funded through contracts and contribution agreements with the GNWT
- Not in GNWT-owned facilities

Costs	Individuals Affected	Other Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Likely to be similar to other group home services supported by the GNWT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These kinds of assisted living services are likely to be located in Yellowknife and regional centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Likely a HSS roles and responsibility, through the Regional HSS Authorities

Figure 2: Proposed Improvements to the Housing Continuum



To improve the present situation, the housing continuum must include intermediate supports that are both easy to access, and transit out from. Currently, there are five steps in the continuum to market housing:

1. Emergency shelter;
2. Transitional housing;
3. Public Housing;
4. Subsidized Home-Ownership; and
5. Market housing.

While some assisted living options exist, they are few in number. The proposed housing continuum includes seven steps:

1. Emergency shelter;
2. Assisted living (Halfway housing and group homes);
3. Transitional housing;
4. Supported living;
5. Public Housing;
6. Subsidized Home-Ownership; and
7. Market housing.

Characteristics of these steps are described below.

Emergency Shelter

Emergency shelter is the first step on the housing continuum. Separate facilities must be available for the three groups of homeless: single men and women, families with children, and youth. This type of shelter is intended for the short-term, as an immediate support when an individual has become homeless.

Assisted Living (including Halfway Houses and Group Homes)

This is the second step on the housing continuum, and a new step between emergency shelter and transitional housing. Assisted Living facilities / Halfway Houses and / or Group Homes could accept individuals with mental health challenges, including those recovering from addictions. These kinds of housing arrangements can provide structure and supports for their clients. Individuals who reside in these facilities may be expected to progress to a stage of more independent living or they may require this type of assistance indefinitely.

Transitional Housing

This is the third step in the proposed housing continuum. Individuals who are homeless for reasons other than mental health or addictions issues may access this step directly from an emergency shelter. Existing transitional housing exists for families with children in Yellowknife. Waiting lists demonstrate that there is demand for more transitional housing.

Supported Living

This is the fourth step in the proposed housing continuum. At present, supported living exists in Yellowknife through the YWCA, but only for those with physical or minor cognitive disabilities. Support may be in the form of scheduled or random drop-in visits from a caseworker or mentor, and the frequency depends on the client's needs. Those who require supported living have a permanent residence that may be either Public Housing or a private residence. Supports are offered so that the individual or family can be successful in their living arrangement. In some cases, support may only be required for a short time while the recipient becomes independent. In other cases, support may be required for life.

Public Housing

The NWT HC and its Local Housing Organizations (LHO) own Public Housing in all NWT communities. Houses and apartments are rented to those who qualify according to an income-test. ECE sets public housing rent subsidies, while the LHOs will continue to have responsibility for the allocation of units and maintenance of the housing stock. The rental rate subsidy provided to clients is the only support that differs from the private rental market.

Subsidized Home-Ownership

The NWT HC offers several programs to assist eligible NWT residents to obtain a private home:

- The Expanded Downpayment Assistance Program provides clients with a downpayment to build or purchase a home;
- The Independent Housing Program provides assistance in the form of a subsidized loan towards the cost of purchasing and/or repairing a house. A portion of the loan is repayable based on income while the remainder is forgiven;
- The Loan Guarantee Program offers banks and other financial institutions a loan guarantee on behalf of a client for the purchase, building or repair of a private house "on land set aside for Indian use"; and
- The Sale of Public Housing Initiative encourages home ownership by providing long-term public housing tenants with an opportunity to purchase their unit.

Private Market Housing

This is the final destination of the housing continuum and independent living.

2. Support New Programs for Homeless Individuals including those with Mental Health and Addictions Challenges

It is recommended that NGOs and the Social Programs Departments consider the needs and opportunities for new supports to be developed and used. This includes research and other activities that could prevent or minimize the number of individuals and families becoming homeless. These activities would focus, as a priority, on those with mental health issues and/or addictions.

- Some adaptations specifically to the needs of the homeless could be undertaken to the Income Support program, the Emergency Shelter program, or to support the clients services of the NGOs.

Costs	Individuals Affected	Other Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs have not been determined • New funding would be required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likely to be relevant to residents in Yellowknife and regional centres. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

3. Support Youth Overnight Programs at Youth Centres

It is recommended that GNWT Social Programs Departments fund NGOs to operate overnight programs at youth centres, where there is a demonstrated need and community support.

- Seasonal programming – winter only
- Not emergency shelter – not beds, but sofas and TVs etc.
- Not for youth under 16 years of age

Costs	Individuals Affected	Other Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional staffing costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likely a demonstrated need now in Yellowknife, Inuvik and Hay River 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

4. Undertake Better Release Planning

It is recommended that release planning for inmates be improved.

- NGOs (such as the John Howard Society) need to be involved in release planning meetings;
- Scheduling Income Support meetings prior to release;
- Consideration should also be given to improving release planning from Stanton Territorial Hospital, when a patient to be released is facing housing challenges.

Costs	Individuals Affected	Other Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New funding is not likely needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals from all communities who are in Correctional facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs to be connected to the recommendation to Expand Options in the Housing Continuum.

5. Improve Understanding of Public Housing Eligibility Requirements.

It is recommended that the current policies of the NWT HC be better-explained and communicated to NGOs involved in providing support to those in transitional housing. Residents of transitional housing are eligible for Public Housing. However, residents of transitional housing have to meet the same requirements as all other applicants for Public Housing. It is clear from interviews that some NGOs do not fully understand the NWT HC's current policies.

Costs	Individuals Affected	Other Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NGOs and the 34 families in transitional housing in Yellowknife. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May need to consider how to give those in transitional housing a higher priority for Public Housing.

6. Support Childcare Programs at Transitional Housing

It is recommended that transitional housing operators provide subsidized childcare programs for clients.

Costs	Individuals Affected	Other Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approximately \$50K/year per daycare facility for staffing costs. Higher insurance premiums. Facility alteration costs may be necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 39 families with children at the YWCA's transitional housing facility in Yellowknife. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The disadvantages of increasing the client's reliance on transitional housing should be considered.

Impact of Recommendations on Small Communities

The recommendations made in this report focus on northerners who are without shelter, and those who reside in emergency shelter or transitional housing. Some of this report's recommendations are intended to improve support for service providers, all of whom operate within regional centres, at present.

This report is unable to focus on homelessness in small communities, which, as mentioned earlier, may show up as overcrowding, 'couch-surfing', and moving to regional centres in search of services.

The Next Steps for the government's response to homelessness in the NWT includes examining the issue in small communities to determine feasible solutions.

Next Steps

Follow up on this report:

- Circulate this report and listen to feedback about the recommendations from MLAs, NGOs and departmental and Authorities representatives.
- Meet with NGO representatives to identify the immediate priorities for action prior to the onset of winter.
- Identify the follow-up work for Ministers' approval. After that review, detailed budget and program planning and analysis can be undertaken for each recommendation.

Regional Centres:

- Identify other "Homelessness" projects, such as modifying the Housing Needs Survey to improve the count of homelessness.

Smaller Communities:

- Modifying the Housing Needs Survey to capture couch-surfing within smaller communities, etc.
- Communicate to NWT communities, Housing Authorities, and Health and Social Services Authorities that emergency funding is available for winter homelessness issues.

Appendices

1. Acronyms

CMHC	Canada Mortgage and Housing
CPS	Child Protection Services
ECE	Education, Culture & Employment (Department of)
EPO	Emergency Protection Order
FASD	Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
GNWT	Government of the Northwest Territories
HSS	Health and Social Services (Department of)
HSSA	Health and Social Services Authority
HRDSC	Human Resources & Skills Development Canada
IHP	Independent Housing Program
LHO	Local Housing Organization
MACA	Municipal and Community Affairs (Department of)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NHI	National Homelessness Initiative
NSCC	North Slave Correctional Centre
NWTHC	Northwest Territories Housing Corporation
PAFVA	Protection Against Family Violence Act
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
SCPI	Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (Canada)
SMCC	South Mackenzie Correctional Centre
UAH	Urban Aboriginal Homelessness (Canada)
YHSSA	Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

2. Interview / Workshop Participants

The following is a list of all individuals interviewed as part of this report. Italicized names are the individuals who attended one of two workshops held in Yellowknife in early June 2005.

GNWT

<i>David Waite</i>	ECE	Regional Superintendent
<i>Natasha Harris*</i>	ECE	Compliance Auditor
<i>Larry Jones</i>	NWTHC, North Slave	District Manager
Franklin Carpenter	NWTHC, Inuvik	District Director
Tom Makepeace	NWTHC, Hay River	District Director
Les Harrison	YHSSA	Director, Social Programs
<i>Heather Fikowski*</i>	YHSSA	Mental Health Social Worker
Sonny Kristensen	YHSSA	Manager, Mental Health Services
Pat Witty	YHSSA	Clinical Coordinator, Mental Health Services
<i>Shirley Wilkinson*</i>	YHSSA	Supervisor, Family Services
Lynn Foley	YHSSA	Special Needs Coordinator, New Horizons Centre
Keith Marhsall	Hay River HSSA	Director, Community & Allied Services
Jessica Carrier	Hay River HSSA	Manager, Community Counselling Services
Angela Jacobs	Hay River HSSA	Coordinator, Family Support Programs
Gerry Uswak	Inuvik HSSA	CEO
<i>Orrell Sheets</i>	Justice, NSCC	Warden
Guy LeBlanc	Justice, NSCC	Deputy Warden
Tom Hamilton	Justice, SMCC	Warden

NGO

<i>Kerry King*</i>	Centre for Northern Families
Arlene Hache	Centre for Northern Families
Crystal Ball	Family Support Centre (Hay River Women's Shelter)
Rev. Bill Bridal	Hay River Pentecostal Chapel
Yoenne Ewald	Inuvik Interagency Committee
Anne Kasook	Inuvik Transition House (Women's Shelter)
<i>Lydia Bardak</i>	John Howard Society
Bobbi Bulmer	North Slave Housing Corp
Cecily Hewitt	NWT Council of Persons with Disabilities
<i>Major Karen Hoeft</i>	Salvation Army
Ryan Peters	Side Door Youth Centre
Rev. Haydn Schofield	St. Andrews Anglican Church, Hay River
Diane Hrstic	Tree of Peace
Shona Barbour	Turning Point (Nihtat Gwich'in Council)
Leanne Shaw	Turning Point (Nihtat Gwich'in Council)
Gerry Cheezie	Yellowknives Dene First Nation Housing
Lyda Fuller	YWCA
Kate Tymstra	YWCA
<i>Kate Wilson</i>	YWCA, Rockhill (Emergency and Transitional Housing)
Lisa Quinlan	YWCA, Alison McAteer (Women's Shelter)

Other

David Devana	City of Yellowknife	Director, Corporate Services
Diana Ehman	Town of Hay River	Mayor
Ron Cook	Town of Hay River	Councilor
Insp. Roch Fortin	RCMP	
Susan Ashton	Former Manager (consultant) Stanton Psychiatry Unit	

* Attended workshop, but not interviewed.

3. Project Terms of Reference

Background

The Department of Health and Social Services is undertaking several projects over the next 2 years to identify recommendations to improve the GNWT's response to homelessness issues.

The department will undertake these projects with the collaboration of NGO's, municipal governments, and GNWT Departments and Authorities. The Ministers of the Social Programs Departments have supported the first project, which is described below.

"Homeless", for this project means men, women, youth and/or families living temporarily at emergency shelters or in government-sponsored transitional housing.

Additional projects will be identified later in 2005.

Deliverables for the First Project

The Department proposes to prepare a report, which will include:

- A glossary of basic definitions and terms related to homelessness
- An overview of NWT homelessness
- A review of relevant roles and policies of provincial governments
- A descriptive summary of the programs and services for the homeless, which are delivered by NGOs and municipal governments
- A description of GNWT programs and services related to homelessness, including their purpose and objectives
- A description of relevant federal programs related to homelessness
- The identification of gaps and conflicts between existing GNWT programs and services for the homeless
- A description of the major issues and challenges related to homelessness in the NWT
- Recommended GNWT actions (and their implications) to improve the GNWT's response to homelessness issues.
- Next Steps / Implementation Planning

Stakeholder Involvement for the First Project

The Department will actively engage stakeholders in this project, including the NGOs that operate programs and services to aid the homeless, the municipal governments of Yellowknife, Inuvik and Hay River, and GNWT Departments and Authorities with responsibility for related programs and services.

The Department wishes to gain a thorough understanding of the programs and services that assist the NWT's homeless, and to identify opportunities to improve the GNWT's approach to homelessness issues.

Schedule for the First Project

This project will begin in May 2005. The report is expected to be ready for review by GNWT Deputy Ministers in September 2005.

4. Stakeholder Questions: GNWT Representatives

The information provided in this interview will be attributed, with the exception of responses given to question #2.

1. Which departmental programs and services are connected to the needs of the homeless? (Can you provide the program name, purpose & objectives, a brief description of the program, budget/funding for previous fiscal year, type of clients served, and number of clients assisted?)
2. Where have you run into overlaps, confusion or conflicts between GNWT programs related to services for the homeless?
3. What do you think are the most important changes that could be made that would improve the programs and services related to the homeless?
4. Do you have any other suggestions/information on the GNWT approach to homelessness that you would like to share?

5. Stakeholder Questions: NGO representatives

The information provided in this interview will be attributed, with the exception of responses given to question #4.

5. What programs or services does your organization run to assist the homeless?
Specifically, program name; brief description of program; budget/funding for previous fiscal year; type of clients; number of clients.
6. How does the GNWT support your programs and services?
7. Do your clients also receive significant services from other agencies? If so, which agencies?
8. Where have you run into gaps, overlaps, confusion or conflicts between GNWT programs related to the services for the homeless?
9. What do you think are the most important changes that could be made to improve the GNWT approach to homelessness?
10. Can you identify other people we should talk with?
11. Do you have any other suggestions, information about the GNWT approach to homelessness that you would like to share?