

THE ACTION FRAMEWORK  
FOR



NOVEMBER 2012



**All Roads Lead to Home:  
The Homelessness to Housing Stability Strategy  
for Waterloo Region – Action Framework**



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## Acknowledgements and Endorsements

All Roads Lead to Home: The Homelessness to Housing Stability Strategy for Waterloo Region – Action Framework (Action Framework) was made possible through the involvement of many people in the community.

### Report Contributors:

People contributed to the Action Framework in two main ways: through the research and writing process of its ten background reports (released between 2008 and 2011) and/or through the community consultation process (throughout 2011 and 2012). Community consultation included three open community forums (with more than 40 attendees at the first two forums and more than 60 at the third forum), more than 30 meetings with organizations and groups from the housing stability system, opportunities to provide feedback on-line and additional meetings with people and groups to discuss their feedback. We want to acknowledge the STEP Home Agency Advisory Group for their review and insightful feedback on the draft document. Special thanks to Sean Puckett (who worked in partnership with The Working Centre) for contributing his photos. Thank you to everyone who invested their time and provided their invaluable insights.

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Twenty-nine organizations and groups have endorsed the Strategy Policy Framework that has informed this Action Framework. **These community organizations and groups recognize that a shared approach to social change is required to end homelessness in Waterloo Region.** The Strategy serves as their guide in this important work.

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## Quick Reference Guide for the Strategy (2012)

<p><b>What Is It?</b></p>	<p>All Roads Lead to Home: The Homelessness to Housing Stability Strategy for Waterloo Region (Strategy) is a guide for the community that <u>supports a shared approach to ending homelessness</u> .</p> <p>The updated Strategy (2012) summarizes two complementary frameworks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Policy Framework</b> (released January 2012) provides guidelines for thinking about ending homelessness: the essential elements and other key concepts, who is working on it, what resources are available and key policy directions for the future.</li> <li>• <b>The Action Framework</b> (the current document) supports the community to take action to end homelessness by identifying what needs to change, how change should be supported and what measures should be used for evaluating the impact of change over time.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Who Developed It?</b></p>	<p>With support from the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, stakeholders in the housing stability system developed the Strategy and will take a lead role in its implementation. The housing stability system includes organizations, groups and individuals with a mandate to support people who are experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss.</p>	
<p><b>Who Uses It?</b></p>	<p>The Strategy is intended to be used by all orders of government, businesses, not-for-profits, groups, landlords and residents of Waterloo Region, as everyone has a role to play in ending homelessness.</p>	
<p><b>POLICY FRAMEWORK</b></p>	<p><b>Where Are We Going?</b></p>	<p>Stakeholders in the housing stability system developed the following vision :</p> <p>Waterloo Region is an inclusive community where everyone has adequate housing, income and support to make a home.</p>
	<p><b>What Guides Us?</b></p>	<p><u>Housing Stability System Values:</u></p> <p>Collaboration – Accessibility – Respect – Excellence (CARE) Principles to Guide Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on housing stability to promote the vision for the future.</li> <li>• Promote accessibility to meet people “where they are at”.</li> <li>• See adequate housing as a right.</li> <li>• Tailor approaches according to strength of “association with homelessness”.</li> <li>• Promote strategic investments to end homelessness in Waterloo Region.</li> </ul>

		<p><u>Primary Goal of the Strategy:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To end homelessness in Waterloo Region.</li> </ul> <p><u>Secondary Goals for the Housing Stability System:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support a shared approach to ending homelessness.</li> <li>Support people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss to increase housing stability:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase housing retention.</li> <li>Reduce the length of time people experience transitional homelessness.</li> <li>End persistent homelessness.</li> <li>Increase community inclusion.</li> </ol> </li> <li>Strengthen the housing stability system.</li> </ol>
<b>ACTION FRAMEWORK</b>	<p><b>How Are We Going To Get There?</b></p>	<p>The Action Framework identifies 40 actions, organized by four focus areas and eight strategic directions. Within each action, both associated issues and potential activities are included. The actions are designed to reach the goals identified in the Policy Framework.</p> <p>Progress with implementation of the Strategy depends on strategic investments and requires dedicated, collaborative effort among <i>all</i> orders of government and partners in the community.</p>
	<p><b>How Will We Monitor Our Progress?</b></p>	<p>An implementation progress report will be released that covers the period January 2011 through to 2013.</p> <p>Processes to facilitate implementation of the actions, progress monitoring, communication and evaluation activities for these plan(s) beyond 2013 are pending finalization of local implementation plans for the Provincial Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy and the new <i>Housing Services Act, 2011</i>.</p>
	<p><b>How Will We Know We Made A Difference?</b></p>	<p>Initial indicators of collective impact are identified in the Action Framework. Progress with meeting these indicators will be part of the 2013 implementation progress report.</p>
	<p><b>How Will We Share What We Learned?</b></p>	<p>Progress with communicating the release of the Strategy (2012) will be part of the 2013 implementation progress report.</p>

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Homelessness has many personal and societal costs – ending it is both humane and cost-effective. *All Roads Lead to Home: The Homelessness to Housing Stability Strategy for Waterloo Region* (Strategy) was developed as a response to the need for a collective voice, calling for a shift in *thinking* and *doing* to end homelessness in Waterloo Region.

The first Strategy was released in 2007 and implemented with great success: 90% of the 92 actions were either completed or in-progress by the end of the three-year implementation period (2007-2010). However, there is more work to do. To support continued efforts and to capture new learning since 2007, the policy elements and actions of the first Strategy have been updated. The Strategy (2012) summarizes two complementary frameworks – the *Policy Framework* (released January 2012) and the *Action Framework* (released November 2012):

- The Policy Framework of the Strategy (2012) provides a common point of reference and guidelines for *thinking* about how to end homelessness, including a comprehensive review of the essential elements for ending homelessness and other key concepts, who is working to end homelessness, what resources are available and key policy directions for the future.
- The Action Framework of the Strategy (2012) supports the whole community to take *action* to end homelessness. It identifies what needs to change, how change should be supported and what measures should be used for evaluating the impact of change over time.

This document is the **Action Framework** of the Strategy (2012), providing guidance for taking action to end homelessness.

**Please refer to the Policy Framework for the following additional information:**

- Background to the Strategy
- Housing stability governance
- Housing stability program data highlights
- Factors that influence housing stability
- Housing stability groups

### ACTION FRAMEWORK – HIGHLIGHTS

The Action Framework is organized by the following four focus areas:

1. Supporting Community Systems to End Homelessness
2. Supporting Community Members to End Homelessness
3. Supporting the Housing Stability System to End Homelessness
4. Supporting People to Feel “At Home”

Under these four focus areas are eight strategic directions and 40 actions. The focus areas, strategic directions and actions are outlined on the following page.

## Action Framework – Highlights

<b>FOCUS AREA #1 : SUPPORTING COMMUNITY SYSTEMS TO END HOMELESSNESS</b>	
<b>Strategic Direction #1</b>	<b>Actions</b>
<p>Promote a shared approach to ending homelessness with <b>community systems serving people with disabilities</b>.*</p> <p>*Recognizing people accessing these services are often at a higher risk of housing loss.</p>	<p><i>Support the following community systems to assist people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Addictions and Mental Health</li> <li>2. Developmental Disability</li> <li>3. Physical Disability and Acquired Brain Injury</li> <li>4. Concurrent disorders, dual diagnosis, and other complex issues</li> </ol>
<b>Strategic Direction #2</b>	<b>Actions</b>
<p>Promote a shared approach to ending homelessness with <b>community systems that serve specific population groups</b>.*</p> <p>*With a focus on people within these groups who may be at a higher risk of housing loss.</p>	<p><i>Support the following community systems to assist people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Aboriginal</li> <li>6. Families</li> <li>7. Immigration</li> <li>8. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered and/or Queer (LGBTQ)</li> <li>9. Older Adults/Seniors</li> <li>10. Rural</li> <li>11. Sex Trade Workers</li> <li>12. Veterans</li> <li>13. Violence Against Women</li> <li>14. Youth</li> </ol>
<b>Strategic Direction #3</b>	<b>Actions</b>
<p>Promote a shared approach to ending homelessness with <b>community systems that provide key resources related to housing stability</b>.</p>	<p><i>Support the following community systems to assist people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15. Education</li> <li>16. Income Assistance</li> <li>17. Employment Support</li> <li>18. Emergency Social Services</li> <li>19. Health Care</li> <li>20. Justice</li> </ol>
<b>FOCUS AREA #2: SUPPORTING COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO END HOMELESSNESS</b>	
<b>Strategic Direction #4</b>	<b>Actions</b>
<p>Promote a shared approach to ending homelessness with the <b>support of individuals, groups, and other sectors</b></p>	<p><i>Support the following individuals, groups and other sectors to end homelessness:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>21. Business</li> <li>22. Funders/investors</li> <li>23. General public</li> <li>24. Media</li> <li>25. Private market landlords; and</li> <li>26. Support a coordinated approach to engagement with community partners</li> </ol>

## Action Framework - Highlights

<b>FOCUS AREA #3: SUPPORTING THE HOUSING STABILITY SYSTEM TO END HOMELESSNESS</b>	
<b>Strategic Direction #5</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Provide housing stability services to end homelessness.	<i>Provide the following programs:</i> 27. <i>Emergency Shelters</i> 28. <i>Street Outreach</i> 29. <i>Housing Retention and Re-Housing</i> 30. <i>Time Limited Residence</i> 31. <i>Supportive Housing</i>
<b>Strategic Direction #6</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Tailor approaches according to people's strength of "association with homelessness".	32. Explore strategies to reduce the length of time that people experience transitional homelessness. 33. Explore strategies to end persistent homelessness.
<b>Strategic Direction #7</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Support housing stability system-level initiatives designed to end homelessness.	34. Increase access to information about resources to support system navigation. 35. Participate in national, provincial and local initiatives and networking opportunities. 36. Increase housing stability program staff capacity (including peer capacity) to end homelessness. 37. Support the Region's role as Service Manager for Housing and Homelessness. 38. Support the Region's role as Community Entity for the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS). 39. Support the Region's role as Community Coordinator for the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS).
<b>FOCUS AREA #4: SUPPORTING PEOPLE TO FEEL "AT</b>	
<b>Strategic Direction #8</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Promote community inclusion to support long term housing stability.	40. Increase community inclusion.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Following release and distribution of the Strategy (2012), work will begin to identify local leadership for activities within each of the actions. Progress with implementation of the Strategy depends on strategic investments and requires dedicated, collaborative effort among all orders of government and partners in the community.

The Region will facilitate the production of a Strategy progress report that covers the period January 2011 through to 2013. The Strategy 2013 progress report will increase understanding around both what was accomplished (progress with each of the 40 actions) as well as what difference it made (outcomes related to the goals of the Strategy). It will also share progress with communicating the release of the Strategy (2012).


Finally, part of the implementation of the Provincial Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy (2010) and the new Housing Services Act, 2011 includes the requirement for submission of ten year housing and homelessness plans by January 1, 2014. The Region will submit the Strategy (2012) [including both the Policy Framework and the Action Framework] as well as the updated Community Action Plan for Low to Moderate Level Housing (expected to be released in 2013) to the Province to meet this deliverable.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

*The primary **goal** of the Strategy is to end homelessness in Waterloo Region.*

The first Strategy was released in 2007 and implemented with great success: 90% of the 92 actions were either completed or in-progress by the end of the three-year implementation period (2007-2010). However, there is more work to do. To support continued efforts and to

capture new learning since 2007, the policy elements and actions of the first Strategy have been updated. The Strategy (2012) summarizes two complementary frameworks of *All Roads Lead to Home: The Homelessness to Housing Stability Strategy (2012)* – the Policy Framework (released January 2012) and the Action Framework (this document):

- 
- The **Policy Framework** of the Strategy (2012) provides a common point of reference and guidelines for *thinking* about how to end homelessness, including a comprehensive review of the essential elements for ending homelessness and other key concepts, who is working to end homelessness, what resources are available and key policy directions for the future.
  - The Action Framework of the Strategy (2012) supports the whole community to *take action* to end homelessness. It identifies what needs to change, how change should be supported and what measures should be used for evaluating the impact of change over time.

**Please refer to the Policy Framework for the following additional information:**

- Background to the Strategy
- Housing stability governance
- Housing stability program data highlights
- Factors that influence housing stability
- Housing stability groups

This document is the **Action Framework** of the Strategy (2012), providing guidance for *taking action* to end homelessness.

### Development of the Action Framework

Following the release of the Policy Framework, this Action Framework was developed. The process used to develop the Action Framework was informed through both a number of background documents and community consultation.

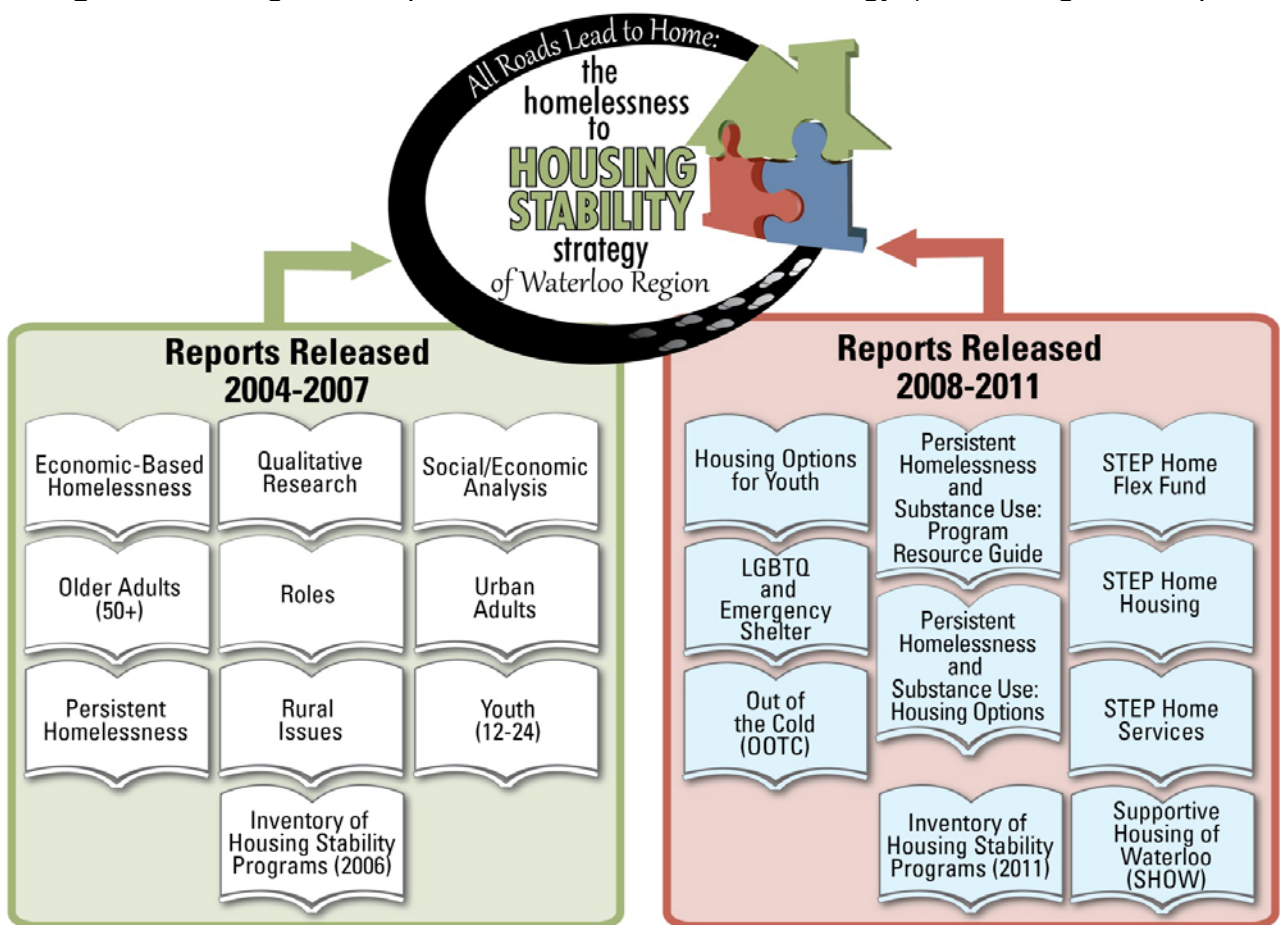
The following documents were used to inform this process:

- The report “All Roads Lead to Home: The Homelessness to Housing Stability Strategy for Waterloo Region 2007-2010 Final Report” was reviewed for relevant actions identified as in progress, not completed or to be considered for the Strategy (2012).

- In addition, actions from the first Strategy that were completed, but where additional efforts would be beneficial for ending homelessness, were also considered for the Strategy (2012).
- The second set of background reports were reviewed for relevant actions (see Figure 1).
- Materials identifying actions emerging through discussions at meetings of the STEP Home Collaborative were reviewed.
- Reports released by other community systems with recommendations that directly support housing stability were reviewed.

Community consultation for the Strategy (2012) included three open community forums (with more than 40 attendees at the first two forums and more than 60 at the third forum), more than 30 meetings with organizations and groups from the housing stability system, opportunities to provide feedback on-line and additional meetings with people to discuss their feedback. Finally, the STEP Home Agency Advisory Group served as a reference group reviewing and providing feedback on the final draft document.

**Figure 1.** Background reports used to inform the Strategy (“the background reports”)



## How the Action Framework is Organized

The Action Framework is organized into four chapters:

1. Chapter 1 provides general background information about the Strategy, including an overview of the development and implementation of the Action Framework.
2. Chapter 2 describes key local housing stability trends.
3. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the four focus areas, eight strategic directions forty actions, as well as associated issues and potential activities.
4. Chapter 4 outlines next steps.

Finally, Appendix A provides a list of the recommendations that complement the Action Framework that are included in reports released by other local community systems.

### **Notes:**

- The five program areas for the housing stability system are capitalized and italicized (i.e., *Emergency Shelter*, *Street Outreach*, *Housing Retention and Re-Housing*, *Time-Limited Residence* as well as *Affordable Housing and Supportive Housing*).
- Program names are capitalized (e.g., *Housing Counselling*).
- Formal report names and housing stability groups/committees are italicized throughout the report (e.g., *STEP Home Annual Report 2011-2012*, *Immigration Partnership and Settling Action Group*).
- Several reports listed are hyperlinked and can be accessed electronically.

## CHAPTER 2: KEY LOCAL HOUSING STABILITY TRENDS

This chapter highlights some of the key local housing stability trends in Waterloo Region. Data were collected largely by housing stability programs. Additional data may be accessed through the 2011 [Inventory of Housing Stability Programs for Waterloo Region](#), which provides several additional variables (featuring 2010 data) and the 2012 Homelessness and Housing Umbrella Group Report Card (2012) (featuring 2011 data).

### AT-RISK OF HOUSING LOSS

People with a fixed address are at-risk of housing loss when they are unable to access adequate housing, income and/or support. See page 17 of the Policy Framework for more information about being at-risk of housing loss.

The most recent data (2006) reported by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) estimates that 7,155 households<sup>1</sup>, or approximately 5%<sup>2</sup> of households in the Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge CMA<sup>3</sup> are at-risk of losing their housing (spending at least 50% of their income on shelter).

In 2011, at least 1,156 households who were at imminent risk of housing loss were supported to retain their housing in Waterloo Region. Of this total, 91% of individuals and 93% of families were prevented from losing their housing<sup>4</sup>.

### EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

People who do not have a fixed address are experiencing homelessness. People experiencing homelessness may rest, sleep or stay in a variety of temporary spaces, sometimes for only a few hours or one night before moving on. See page 18 of the Policy Framework for more information about the experience of homelessness.

The unique circumstances for people experiencing homelessness make it difficult to determine the precise number of people in this situation. However there are two reasonable substitutes for this number: the number of people accessing *Emergency Shelter*<sup>5</sup> programs and the number of overnight stays. Each is discussed further in the following section.

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<sup>1</sup> CMHC Custom run data, September 2012 based on *updated 2006 Deep Core Need Number of Households and Ratios by Service Managers and by Region*.

<sup>2</sup> [http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2011/schl-cmhc/NH18-23-110-017-eng.pdf](http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2011/schl-cmhc/NH18-23-110-017-eng.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> The Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge CMA includes five of the Region's seven municipalities; it excludes the townships of Wilmot and Wellesley (representing about 6% of the Region's population). It is assumed that the housing situation in Wilmot and Wellesley is similar to the CMA, and therefore this percentage would be fairly representative of the Region as a whole.

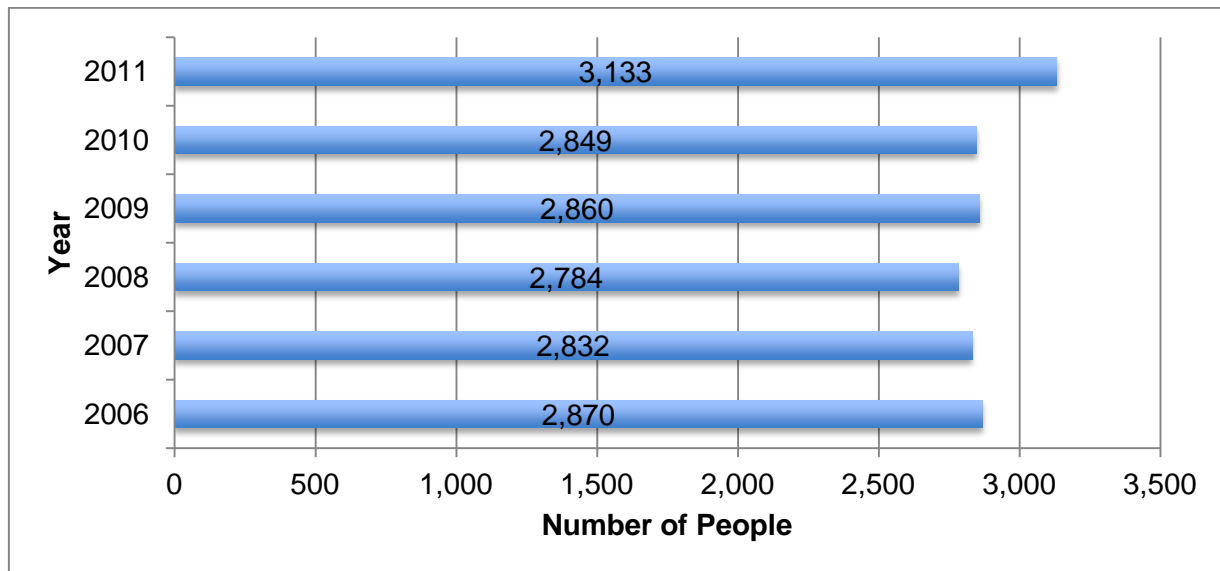
<sup>4</sup> This number includes the following programs administered through Lutherwood: Housing Counselling, Rent Bank & Eviction Program and Families in Transition support. The family numbers reported reflect one count for the family head. Therefore, the actual number of people supported is larger, as partners and dependents are not included in the count.

<sup>5</sup> Program areas for the housing stability system are italicized.

### People Accessing Emergency Shelter Programs

In 2011, 3,133 different people accessed Emergency Shelter programs in Waterloo Region. As seen in Figure 2, this number has remained fairly consistent between 2006 and 2010, with an increase of 10% between 2010 and 2011. This number does not include data from emergency shelters designed for women fleeing abuse or people who did not access an Emergency Shelter program (e.g., stay outdoors, with friends, with family, in a motel, in residential treatment, or in a Time-Limited Residence program).

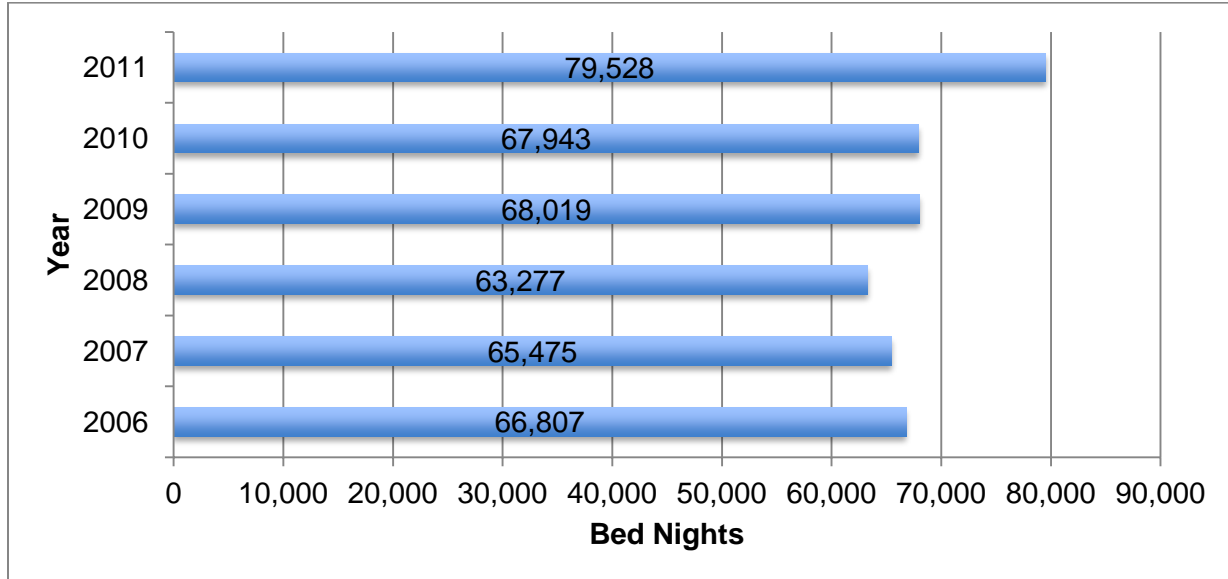
**Figure 2.** Number of people accessing Emergency Shelter Programs in Waterloo Region.



### Overnight Stays (Bed Nights) in Emergency Shelter Programs

The total number of overnight stays in Emergency Shelter programs (called bed nights) used throughout the year is another useful measure of homelessness. The number of bed nights takes into account the length of stay and returns for service within the year. Typically, emergency shelters have experienced a substantial number of days in overflow capacity; however, they also experience periods of under-capacity. As illustrated in Figure 3, between 2006 and 2010 the total number of emergency shelter beds nights used in all shelters fluctuated somewhat with an overall change of less than 2%. However, between 2010 and 2011, bed nights increased by 17%. It is believed that the recent economic downturn has contributed to this increase. Bed nights for families, in particular, were much higher in 2011 than in previous years.

**Figure 3.** Overnight stays in Emergency Shelter programs.



### ASSOCIATION WITH HOMELESSNESS

People who have lost their housing at some point in their lives do not all share the same experience. One way to understand the differences is to consider people’s strength of “association with homelessness”. Two levels have been identified: transitional homelessness (less association with homelessness) and persistent homelessness (more association with homelessness). See pages 19-22 of the Policy Framework for more information.

In 2011, 78% of people who accessed *Emergency Shelter* programs stayed for less than three weeks and did not return within the same year. Further, 74% did not return in more than one calendar year over the past five years<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> **Data note:** Percentage returning within 2011 includes data from the following sources: Argus Residence for Young People (2011 returning clients report from HIFIS), The Cambridge Shelter (2011 returning clients report from HIFIS), Charles Street Men’s Hostel (2011 returning clients report from HIFIS), and YWCA-Mary’s Place (2011 returning clients report from HIFIS). The number is an average of the four shelters’ percentages of residents with more than one “period of residence” in a year. For Argus Residence for Young People and YWCA-Mary’s Place, “one period of residence” is measured using the proxy of one intake in a year. For Charles Street Men’s Hostel, “one period of residence” is measured using the proxy of up to two intakes in a year. For The Cambridge Shelter, “one period of residence” is measured using the proxy of up to three intakes in a year. There are several thresholds because of the need to account for the different intake policies used at the shelters. Percentage returning in more than one calendar year over the past five years includes data from the following sources: Argus Residence for Young People (2007-2011 returning clients reports from HIFIS), the Cambridge Shelter (2007-2011 returning clients reports from HIFIS), Charles Street Men’s Hostel (2007-2011 returning clients reports from HIFIS), and YWCA-Mary’s Place (2007-2011 returning clients reports from HIFIS).

These trends – shorter lengths of stay and fewer returns for emergency shelter – are linked to transitional homelessness. In contrast, approximately one-quarter of people who access *Emergency Shelter* programs stay for longer periods of time and end up returning at some point in the future. These trends – longer lengths of stay and more returns to emergency shelter – are linked to persistent homelessness.

### Persistent Homelessness in Waterloo Region

From 2008 to 2011, STEP Home supported approximately 350 unique individuals approaching or experiencing persistent homelessness (65% male and 35% female) in an intensive capacity. It is estimated that there are another 150 people currently experiencing persistent homelessness who could benefit from the support of STEP Home in Waterloo Region.

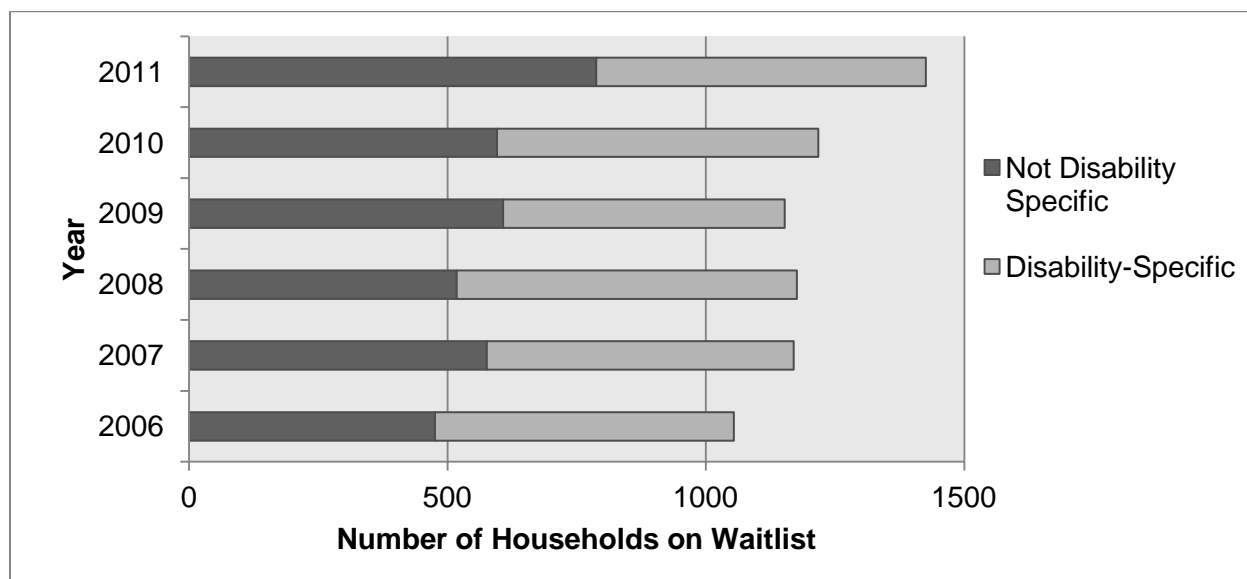
### DEMAND FOR SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

More resources for Supportive Housing programs are required in Waterloo Region, both now and in the future, as outlined below.

#### Current Waiting Lists for Supportive Housing Programs

Supportive Housing programs are defined as permanent housing complemented with a support program designated to a unit, building or neighbourhood (which may or may not include a rent subsidy). Some Supportive Housing programs are designed for people with a specific, diagnosed disability (disability-specific) and some are not (not disability-specific). As illustrated in Figure 4, the number of people on waiting lists for both categories of Supportive Housing programs has gradually increased since 2006, with an overall increase of 35%. Half of that increase (17%) occurred between 2010 and 2011.

**Figure 4.** People waiting to access a Supportive Housing program.



### Prevalence of Disabilities and Complex Issues

Local housing stability service providers generally report that all forms of disability/complex issues are represented in the people they support. In particular, a large number of people without a fixed address accessing housing stability programs have mental health and/or problematic substance use, as illustrated in Table 1 (based on 2010 program data from the 2011 Inventory of Housing Stability Programs in Waterloo Region). This information helps to inform the need for additional Supportive Housing programs.

**Table 1.** Prevalence of disabilities and complex issues.

Type of Disability	Housing Stability System Program Area				
	<i>Emergency Shelter</i>	<i>Street Outreach</i>	<i>Housing Retention and Re-Housing</i>	<i>Time-Limited Residence</i>	<b>General Population</b>
<b>Cognitive Disability</b>	32%	12%	20%	1%	2%
<b>Physical Disability</b>	18%	19%	28%	0%	ND
<b>Mental Health Issue</b>	23%	46%	14%	7%	2%
<b>Problematic Substance Use</b>	38%	52%	7%	0%	10%
<b>Concurrent Disorder</b>	31%	51%	10%	0%	ND

### Projected Future Unmet Need for Supportive Housing Programs

Population projections for Waterloo Region and waiting list data have been used to predict the potential unmet need for Supportive Housing programs over the next 20 years if no further Supportive Housing programs are created (see Table 2). The accuracy of these projections depends on how closely population predictions match actual population changes over the next two decades, as well as how closely waiting lists match current expressed need in Waterloo Region.

The accuracy of waiting list data, in particular, may be influenced by a number of factors. For example, although most organizations have systems in place to remove people from waiting lists, there may still be people on these lists that no longer require access to Supportive Housing programs. In addition, it is likely that some people may not place themselves on the waiting lists, especially those that are very long. Despite these limitations, without a more reliable community-wide tool to assess unmet need, waiting lists are the only source available to make such future predictions for general planning purposes. As illustrated in Table 2, the future unmet need is expected to grow by 28% for both disability-specific and not disability-specific Supportive Housing programs over the next 20 years.

**Table 2.** Projected future unmet need for *Supportive Housing* programs.

<b>Supportive Housing Category</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2031</b>
Not Disability Specific	788	906	1,009
Disability-Specific	638	733	817
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,426</b>	<b>1,639</b>	<b>1,826</b>



## **CHAPTER 3: FOCUS AREAS, STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS, ACTIONS, ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES**

This chapter presents the four focus areas, eight strategic directions, and 40 actions. Actions were drafted based on a review of numerous documents and background reports, two previous forums held in 2011, and over 30 meetings with organizations and groups. An open community forum to review and confirm essential actions to end homelessness was held in June 2012 and attended by over 60 people. A number of individuals and groups were further consulted on particular actions. The STEP Home Agency Advisory Group (representing 10 key housing stability organizations) served as a reference group providing feedback on the draft Action Framework document.

Within each of the 40 actions, associated issues and potential activities have been identified. While the issues and activities included are not necessarily exhaustive and may change over time along with the needs of the community and shifting landscapes (e.g., funding, policy changes, political support), the activities within the 40 actions will serve as a longer-term framework.

### **Notes:**

In order to reduce repetition within and between various actions:

- issues were not listed in actions where they do not provide further context and have already been addressed in a potential activity; and
- activities that could be appropriately placed in a number of actions have been placed in only one action and are not cross-referenced.
- Issues and activities carried forward from the first Strategy have the footnote “HHSS1” with the previous action number.

## **FOCUS AREA #1: SUPPORTING COMMUNITY SYSTEMS TO END HOMELESSNESS**

### **Context**

Waterloo Region has a broad range of community systems. A community system is defined as a network of organizations (including various orders of government, businesses and not-for-profits), groups and individuals that share a common mandate related to supporting people in the community. One of the ways that community systems fulfill their mandates is by offering programs designed to meet specific outcomes. Programs may be delivered by various orders of government, businesses and/or not-for-profits. Funding for these programs is acquired from a mix of sources, including fees-for-service, grants and fundraising. All community systems are influenced by social, political, environmental, and economic factors, and by each other.

While the housing stability system is the only system designated specifically to support people who are experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss, all community systems at least indirectly support greater housing stability and all have a role to play in ending homelessness. As such, all community systems should continue to advocate to the appropriate governing bodies to maximize current investments in the housing stability of people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss.

Strategic Directions 1 through 3 include actions for the housing stability system that support local community systems in their work to end homelessness.

### ***Policy Framework References***

- See pages 36-37 for more information about community systems in Waterloo Region and their role in ending homelessness.

## **STRATEGIC DIRECTION #1: Promote a shared approach to ending homelessness with community systems serving people with disabilities.**

### **Context**

Locally, there are four community systems that have a primary mandate to support people with disabilities. Programs provided through these community systems are designed for people with specific, diagnosed disabilities and are referred to as disability-specific programs. For a variety of reasons, people with disabilities are at a higher risk of housing loss. Community systems that support people from groups known to be at a higher risk of housing loss have a responsibility to ensure access for all people within their mandate (including those experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss) and where possible, to strengthen their support for housing stability. By implementing the following four actions, the housing stability system will support the four disability-specific community systems in their work to end homelessness by promoting greater access to housing stability resources for the people they serve who are experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss.

### Policy Framework References

- See pages 40-41 for more information about the provincial roles in supporting people with disabilities.
- See pages page 51-52 for more information about programs that are disability-specific.
- See pages 107-108 for more information about the connection between housing stability and disabilities.

ACTIONS	ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES
<p><b>Action 1(a):</b> Support the <i>Addictions and Mental Health</i> system to invest in housing stability for people with mental health issues.</p>	<p>Issues identified through community consultation (not necessarily exhaustive or further verified):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limited capacity to support people with mental health issues who are experiencing persistent homelessness.</li> <li>- Lack of affordable counselling for people who have experienced trauma.</li> </ul> <p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to advocate to the appropriate governing bodies to maximize current investments to support housing stability for people with mental health issues and to increase investments in the housing stability of people with mental health issues in areas such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Supportive Housing and Housing Retention and Re-Housing programs. <small>HHSS1 (4.6d)</small></li> <li>o Support for people who are experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss (e.g., through programs such as general and specialized outreach, support coordination services).</li> <li>o Counselling to address trauma, grief and loss for people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss.</li> <li>o Skills training to cope with day-to day stress for people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss who have also experienced trauma (e.g., the Dialectic Behaviour Program through Canadian Mental Health Association).</li> <li>o Support for people at-risk of housing loss with hoarding issues.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Create awareness of the activities and outcomes of the <a href="#">Mental Health Commission of Canada's At Home/Chez Soi Research Demonstration Project in Mental Health and Homelessness</a> and consider opportunities to implement successful strategies locally.</li> <li>- Participate in consultations and create awareness of the activities and outcomes of <a href="#">Open Minds, Healthy Minds: Ontario's Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy</a>.</li> <li>- Participate in consultations and create awareness of the activities and outcomes of the WW-LHIN's 2013-2016 Health Services Integration Plan.</li> <li>- Work in partnership with mental health facilities to develop discharge planning protocols for people with no fixed address who are being referred to the following</li> </ul>

ACTIONS	ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES
<p><b>Action 1(b):</b> Support the <i>Addictions and Mental Health</i> system to invest in housing stability for people with problematic substance use.</p>	<p>local residential program areas: <i>Emergency Shelter, Time-Limited Residence, and Affordable Housing and Supportive Housing</i><sup>7</sup>. HHSS1 (5.9)</p> <p>Issues identified through community consultation (not necessarily exhaustive or further verified):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of programs that support harm reduction approaches. HHSS1 (6.7c)</li> <li>- Limited capacity to support people with problematic substance use who are experiencing persistent homelessness.</li> <li>- Long waiting list for residential substance use treatment programs.</li> <li>- Challenges with accessing the local withdrawal management services (e.g., not enough beds – people have to wait to access services, lack of flexibility with access).</li> <li>- Lack of coordination between withdrawal management services and day programs for people seeking treatment for problematic substance use.</li> <li>- Lack of support for managed alcohol programs (Level 5).</li> <li>- Lack of support for managed drug use (e.g., there is no fixed site offering managed drug use services – Level 6).</li> </ul> <p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to advocate to the appropriate governing bodies to maximize current investments to support housing stability for people with problematic substance use and to increase investments in the housing stability of people with problematic substance use in areas such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o <i>Supportive Housing and Housing Retention and Re-Housing</i> programs with a priority for abstinence-based (Level 1) and managed alcohol (Level 5). HHSS1 (4.6e)</li> <li>o Residential options pre- and post-problematic substance use treatment. HHSS1 (4.4a)</li> <li>o Peer support (those who have used or are currently using substances) (formal and informal) for people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss. HHSS1 (6.7d)</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Support the <i>Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council</i> to facilitate implementation of the <i>Waterloo Region Integrated Drugs Strategy</i> (see Appendix A for the list of recommendations within the scope of the <i>Homelessness to Housing Stability Strategy</i>).</li> <li>- Work in partnership with problematic substance use treatment faculties to develop discharge planning protocols for people with no fixed address who are being referred to the following local residential program areas: <i>Emergency Shelter, Time-Limited Residence, and Affordable Housing and Supportive Housing</i>. HHSS1 (5.9)</li> <li>- Explore the need for <i>Supportive Housing</i> programs that would offer managed drug use services (Level 6).</li> </ul>

<sup>7</sup> Program areas for the housing stability system are italicized.

ACTIONS	ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES
<p><b>Action 2:</b> Support the <i>Developmental Disability</i> system to invest in housing stability for people with developmental disabilities.</p>	<p>Issues identified through community consultation (not necessarily exhaustive or further verified):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limited capacity to support people with developmental disabilities who are experiencing persistent homelessness.</li> </ul> <p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to advocate to the appropriate governing bodies to maximize current investments to support housing stability for people with developmental disabilities and to increase investments in the housing stability of people with developmental disabilities in areas such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o <i>Supportive Housing and Housing Retention and Re-Housing</i> programs. <sup>HHSS1 (4.6c)</sup></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 3(a):</b> Support the <i>Physical Disability and Acquired Brain Injury</i> system to invest the housing stability for people with physical disabilities.</p>	<p>Issues identified through community consultation (not necessarily exhaustive or further verified):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limited opportunities to access adequate housing that is accessible to people with physical disabilities.</li> <li>- Limited capacity to support people with physical disabilities who are experiencing persistent homelessness.</li> </ul> <p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to advocate to the appropriate governing bodies to maximize current investments to support housing stability for people with physical disabilities and to increase investments in the housing stability of people with physical disabilities in areas such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o <i>Supportive Housing and Housing Retention and Re-Housing</i> programs (including in-home attendant services and support with practical skills and personal care). <sup>HHSS1 (4.6f)</sup></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 3(b):</b> Support the <i>Physical Disability and Acquired Brain Injury</i> system to invest in housing stability for people with acquired brain injury.</p>	<p>Issues identified through community consultation (not necessarily exhaustive or further verified):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limited capacity to support people with acquired brain injury who are experiencing persistent homelessness.</li> </ul> <p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to advocate to the appropriate governing bodies to maximize current investments to support housing stability for people with acquired brain injury and to increase investments in the housing stability of people with acquired brain injury in areas such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o <i>Supportive Housing and Housing Retention and Re-Housing</i> programs (including in-home attendant services and practical skills and personal care). <sup>HHSS1 (4.6f)</sup></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 4:</b> Support the <i>Addictions and</i></p>	<p>Issues identified through community consultation (not necessarily exhaustive or further verified):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of programs that support harm reduction approaches. <sup>HHSS1 (6.7c)</sup></li> </ul>

ACTIONS	ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES
<p><i>Mental Health, Developmental Disability and Physical Disability and Acquired Brain Injury</i> systems to invest in housing stability for people with concurrent disorders, dual diagnoses and other complex issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limited capacity to support people with concurrent disorders, dual diagnoses and other complex issues who are experiencing persistent homelessness.</li> <li>- Lack of a coordinated, collaborative approach to supporting people with more than one disability (e.g., mental health and problematic substance use – concurrent disorders).</li> <li>- People with complex issues often have chronic health issues as well.</li> </ul> <p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to advocate to the appropriate governing bodies to maximize current investments to support housing stability for people with concurrent disorders, dual diagnoses and other complex issues and to increase investments in the housing stability of people with concurrent disorders, dual diagnoses and other complex issues in areas such as:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Supportive Housing and Housing Retention and Re-Housing programs (including an intensive one-on-one support model e.g., attendant care). <small>HHSS1 (4.6f)</small></li> </ul> </li> <li>- Increase capacity to provide flex fund resources for people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss with complex issues.</li> <li>- Create awareness of the activities and outcomes of the WW-LHIN's funded Extraordinary Needs Program.</li> </ul> <p>* Through the STEP Home Collaborative, the housing stability system offers tailored programs to people experiencing persistent homelessness who often have complex issues (see Focus Area #3, Strategic Direction #6).</p>

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION #2: Promote a shared approach to ending homelessness with community systems that serve specific population groups.**

\* See Strategic Direction 1 for actions related to people with disabilities.

**Context**

Some community systems have a primary mandate to support people from specific population groups. For a variety of reasons, people from certain population groups are considered to be at a higher risk of housing loss. Community systems that support people from groups known to be at a higher risk of housing loss have a responsibility to ensure access for all people within their mandate (including those experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss) and where possible, to strengthen their support for housing stability. By implementing the following 10 actions, the housing stability system will support these population-specific community systems in their work to end homelessness by promoting greater access to housing stability resources for the people they serve who are experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing.

**Policy Framework References**

- The first set of background reports (released between 2004 and 2007) includes information about populations at higher risk of housing loss. See pages 5-7 for a

general overview of these background reports and *Appendix B: Key Reports and Acts* for specific references.

- See pages 40-42 for more information about the provincial roles in supporting Aboriginal people, people who are connected to correctional and policing services, older adults/seniors and women fleeing abuse.
- See page 107 for more information about the connection between Aboriginal status and housing stability.
- See pages 109-110 for more information about the connection between life stage (youth, older adults, families) and housing stability.

ACTIONS	ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES
<p><b>Action 5:</b> Support the <i>Aboriginal</i> system to invest in housing stability for Aboriginal people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss.</p>	<p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to advocate to the appropriate governing bodies to maximize current investments in the housing stability of Aboriginal people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss.</li> <li>- Provide housing stability programs that are both culturally accessible and appropriate to Aboriginal people. <sup>HHSS1 (6.14)</sup></li> <li>- Design and implement projects funded through the <i>Homelessness Partnering Strategy</i> designed for Aboriginal people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 6:</b> Support the <i>Families</i> system to invest in housing stability for families experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss.</p>	<p>Issues identified through community consultation (not necessarily exhaustive or further verified):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limited opportunities to access adequate housing for larger families.</li> <li>- Limited awareness of local trends and the impact of these trends, potential gaps in service and funding opportunities to address them.</li> <li>- Limited funding for transportation costs to support dependents to continue to attend their home school while residing in emergency shelter.</li> <li>- Lack of support for dependents experiencing homelessness that have to switch schools. Children often feel very isolated in this transition.</li> <li>- Barriers with accessing housing stability programs for families with dependents, particularly programs designed to support people who engage in high-risk behaviours.</li> <li>- Limited support for dependents accessing a residential housing stability program.</li> <li>- Limited subsidized child care for families experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss.</li> <li>- Need for greater coordination among service providers supporting families experiencing homelessness. A coordinated approach should include a focus on diversion from emergency shelter and rapid re-housing.</li> <li>- Need for a better response when there is a large increase in the number of families experiencing homelessness in the community and existing resources are stretched beyond regular capacity to serve.</li> </ul>

ACTIONS	ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES
	<p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Produce and release a report that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o summarizes local data relevant to families, including information about programs and their capacity to serve (refer to the 2011 <i>Inventory of Housing Stability Programs in Waterloo Region</i> and access data from the <i>Homeless Individuals and Families Information System</i> where possible),</li> <li>o summarizes promising practices for supporting families experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss,</li> <li>o summarizes strategies for ending homelessness for families,</li> <li>o includes all service providers that provide housing stability resources to families in the consultation process,</li> <li>o identifies actions to address gaps in service and</li> <li>o includes a plan for implementation of the actions.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Update the <i>Homelessness to Housing Stability Strategy Summary Series</i> with a new summary sheet for families.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 7:</b> Support the <i>Immigration</i> system to increase access to adequate settlement and meaningful employment for immigrants experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss.</p>	<p>Issues identified through community consultation (not necessarily exhaustive or further verified):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is a growing number of new immigrants in Waterloo Region.</li> <li>- Limited opportunities for people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss to connect with their ethno-cultural communities.</li> <li>- Limited access to language interpreters.</li> </ul> <p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support activities of the <i>Immigration Partnership and Settling Action Group</i>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 8:</b> Support the <i>Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, and/or Queer (LGBTQ)</i> system to invest in housing stability for people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss who identify as LGBTQ.</p>	<p>Issues identified through community consultation (not necessarily exhaustive or further verified):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- People who identify as LGBTQ (particularly youth) experience discrimination and are victimized.</li> <li>- Lack of access to services for youth who identify as LGBTQ – especially transgendered, transsexual, gender-variant, etc. (e.g., need a safe space to go, greater access to housing stability resources).</li> <li>- Need to create safe spaces for people who identify as LGBTQ (e.g., welcoming signs, inclusive policies).</li> </ul> <p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- As part of the <i>Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI)</i> implementation and quality assurance activities for the <i>Emergency Shelter</i> program, consider the recommendations for policy amendments as outlined in the background report, <i>LGBTQ Populations and the Shelter System</i>. For example, the</li> </ul>

ACTIONS	ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES
	<p>report includes a checklist of inclusive service provision and recommends ensuring that at least one single-stall, private washroom and private shower are available for any resident who has safety concerns. Where appropriate, consider replicating these recommendations across all residential/ housing options in the housing stability system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Connect with the <i>Waterloo Region Rainbow Coalition</i> to identify further activities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 9:</b> Support the <i>Older Adults/Seniors</i> system to invest in housing stability for older adults/seniors experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss.</p>	<p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to advocate to the appropriate governing bodies to maximize current investments to support housing stability for older adults/seniors and to increase investments in the housing stability of older adults/seniors such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o <i>Supportive Housing</i> and <i>Housing Retention and Re-Housing</i> programs including long-term care for older adults/seniors experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss . HHSS1 (4.6a, 4.6b)</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Support implementation of the <i>Retirement Homes Act, 2010</i>.</li> <li>- Support the <i>Region of Waterloo Seniors Advisory Committee</i> to develop and implement the <i>Region of Waterloo Seniors' Strategy</i>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 10:</b> Support the <i>Rural</i> system to invest in housing stability for rural residents experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss.</p>	<p>Issues identified through community consultation (not necessarily exhaustive or further verified):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Need for increased affordable housing in rural areas – affordable housing is the driver.</li> <li>- Limited access to housing stability resources.</li> </ul> <p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assess capacity and demand, in consultation with the <i>Rural Realities Network</i> and/or other rural stakeholders, for housing stability resources for rural residents experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss (tailored based on the unique characteristics and cultural trends in rural areas) . HHSS1 (6.9, 6.11 and 4.1a)</li> <li>- Design and implement strategies to increase capacity to support rural residents to maintain housing stability over the long term in consultation with the <i>Rural Realities Network</i> and/or other rural stakeholders. HHSS1 (1.7)</li> <li>- Research the social and psychological effects of multiple generation cohabitation in the rural areas. HHSS1 (6.10)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 11:</b> Support the <i>Sex Trade Worker</i> system to invest in housing stability for sex trade workers experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing</p>	<p>Issues identified through community consultation (not necessarily exhaustive or further verified):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limited understanding about issues specific to sex trade workers and approaches for supporting greater housing stability.</li> </ul> <p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create dedicated outreach worker positions to support people involved in sex trade work.</li> <li>- Expand support services to include women involved in sex trade work who are not necessarily street-involved.</li> </ul>

ACTIONS	ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES
loss.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase community awareness of issues specific to women involved in sex trade work (e.g., annual “In Her Shoes” symposium).</li> <li>- Enhance collaboration with agencies/groups supporting sex trade workers (e.g., <i>Sex Workers’ Action Network</i> meetings)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 12:</b> Support the <i>Veterans</i> system to invest in housing stability for veterans experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss.</p>	<p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to advocate to the appropriate governing bodies to maximize current investments in the housing stability of veterans.</li> <li>- Monitor the activities and outcomes of the Federal Government’s “<i>Transitional Housing and Supports for Homeless Veterans Pilot Project</i>” and consider implementing successful strategies locally.</li> <li>- Revise data collection processes in the housing stability system to include veterans as a new demographic.</li> <li>- Update the <i>Homelessness to Housing Stability Strategy Summary Series</i> with a new summary sheet for veterans.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 13:</b> Support the <i>Violence Against Women</i> system to invest in housing stability for women (and their dependents) fleeing abuse.</p>	<p>Issues identified through community consultation (not necessarily exhaustive or further verified):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limited connections between the <i>Violence Against Women</i> community system and housing stability programs.</li> <li>- Lack of programs that support harm reduction approaches. <sup>HHSS1 (6.7c)</sup></li> <li>- Limited capacity to support women fleeing abuse who are experiencing persistent homelessness.</li> </ul> <p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to advocate to the appropriate governing bodies to maximize current investments to support housing stability for women fleeing abuse (and their dependents) (e.g., residential options, including those intended for women fleeing abuse who are active in their substance use).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 14:</b> Support the <i>Youth</i> system to invest in housing stability for youth experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss.</p>	<p>Issues identified through community consultation (not necessarily exhaustive or further verified):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of capacity to support youth to reconcile with their families when safe to do so. <sup>HHSS1 (3.3a)</sup></li> <li>- Lack of resources to support youth who are transitioning from the child welfare system and are at-risk of housing loss.</li> <li>- Lack of opportunities for youth experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss to participate in pre-employment and job readiness activities, with the longer term goal of securing sustainable employment. <sup>HHSS1 (2.7b)</sup></li> <li>- Lack of capacity to provide housing retention support for youth renting in the private market, particularly related to practical skills and crisis intervention during times of transition.</li> <li>- Lack of housing stability resources for female youth who are not pregnant.</li> <li>- Lack of housing stability resources for youth who identify as transgendered.</li> <li>- Lack of housing stability resource for youth with mental health issues and/or problematic substance use.</li> </ul>

ACTIONS	ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES
	<p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to advocate to the appropriate governing bodies to maximize current investments in the housing stability of youth experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss, particularly youth who are transitioning from the child welfare system and are at-risk of housing loss.</li> <li>- Enhance resources to provide respite and reconciliation supports to assist youth at-risk of leaving home (e.g., family mediation). Offer specialized support to families supporting youth with problematic substance use.</li> <li>- Provide additional housing stability resources to youth who are exiting the child welfare system (e.g., foster care, group homes) and are at-risk of housing loss.</li> <li>- Provide specialized family re-integration support to youth accessing <i>Emergency Shelter</i> programs, where returning home is a safe and mutually desired option for them and their guardians/parents.</li> <li>- Increase the <i>Extended Care Maintenance</i> from the current age limit of 21 years to 25 years.</li> <li>- Develop a resource guide for youth experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss that includes an inventory of alternative, youth suspension, trade, arts and post-secondary education/employment opportunities.</li> <li>- Increase capacity of landlords to provide housing retention support to youth.</li> <li>- Increase <i>Housing Retention and Re-Housing</i> programs for youth (e.g., housing stability workers who support youth during the transition to private market housing).</li> <li>- Increase <i>Supportive Housing</i> programs for youth (e.g., offer a <i>5 Beds to Home</i> program for females).</li> <li>- Consider adapting the STEP Home <i>Make It Home</i> program model for youth.</li> <li>- Design and implement programs to support rental opportunities for youth (e.g., a new program where youth rent space from a local family).</li> <li>- Support youth specific programs (16-24) to develop one year transition/discharge plans so that youth aging out of programs can re-establish relationships with new housing stability workers in programs designed for adults.</li> <li>- Improve connections between housing stability programs and public/separate school boards/schools.</li> <li>- Explore the value of re-establishing the <i>Youth Housing Stability Network</i> starting with youth-specific housing stability programs (at the Executive Director/Manager level).</li> <li>- Complement each youth-specific <i>Emergency Shelter</i> program with a <i>Shelters to Housing Stability</i> program (e.g., expand to include ROOF-PAR).</li> <li>- Increase capacity to provide youth-specific <i>Street Outreach</i> in Cambridge.</li> </ul>

### **STRATEGIC DIRECTION #3: Promote a shared approach to ending homelessness with community systems that provide key resources related to housing stability.**

#### **Context**

Locally, there are six community systems designed to provide key resources related to housing stability (education, income assistance, employment support, emergency social services, health care, and justice). By implementing the following four actions, the housing stability system will support these community systems to end homelessness by promoting greater access to housing stability resources for the people they serve who are experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing.

#### **Policy Framework References**

- See page 40 for more information about the provincial role in financial and employment supports.
- See page 41 for more information about the provincial role in health care.
- See pages 103-106 for more information about the employment market, income trends and housing affordability in Waterloo Region.
- See page 108 for more information about the connection between housing stability and health.

<b>ACTIONS</b>	<b>ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES</b>
<p><b>Action 15:</b> Support the <i>Education</i> system to increase access to adequate educational opportunities for people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss.</p>	<p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Advocate to the appropriate governing bodies for affordable educational opportunities for people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss.</li> <li>- Increase opportunities to support completion of high school and post-secondary education for people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss.</li> </ul> <p><i>Refer to Action 6 for activities related to children and Action 14 for activities related to youth.</i></p>
<p><b>Action 16</b> Support the <i>Income Assistance</i> system to increase access to adequate income for people experiencing homelessness or</p>	<p>Issues identified through community consultation (not necessarily exhaustive or further verified):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inadequacy of social assistance rates (<i>Ontario Works</i> and the <i>Ontario Disability Support Program</i>).</li> <li>- Challenges specific to the <i>Ontario Disability Support Program</i>: people must have enough literacy skills to complete a very detailed application, painful to disclose past traumas, finding a doctor to assess the impact that a disability has on daily life, accessing medical records from other health professionals and having a doctor who has known the applicant as a patient for at least 2 years.</li> <li>- Limited support and flexibility within the legislative framework to provide income assistance for people experiencing persistent homelessness (e.g. for people</li> </ul>

ACTIONS	ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES
<p>at-risk of housing loss.</p>	<p>unwilling to sign paperwork, who have transient living conditions, who have challenges completing ODSP applications).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Additional support needed for people transitioning from income assistance to employment who continue to be at imminent risk of housing loss. <sup>HHSS1 (3.2b)</sup></li> <li>- Minimum wage is too low – it is not a living wage.</li> </ul> <p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to advocate to the appropriate governing bodies to maximize current investments in adequate financial and employment supports for people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss through <i>Ontario Works</i> and the <i>Ontario Disability Support Program</i>.</li> <li>- Participate in consultations and monitor activities and outcomes related to the <i>Social Assistance Review</i>.</li> <li>- Increase support for people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss to complete applications for the <i>Ontario Disability Support Program</i> and, where appropriate, to support the appeal process. <sup>HHSS1 (2.6)</sup></li> <li>- Support the Region in its provincial role as Service Manager of <i>Ontario Works</i> and to increase capacity within the <i>Intensive Case Management</i> program as it enables increased support and flexibility that is helpful when working with people experiencing persistent homelessness.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 17</b> Support the <i>Employment Support</i> system to increase access to adequate employment opportunities for people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss.</p>	<p>Issues identified through community consultation (not necessarily exhaustive or further verified):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of supportive employment opportunities (e.g., social enterprises that offer support to employees), particularly for youth and older adults experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss.</li> <li>- Limited access to small business loans for people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss.</li> </ul> <p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enhanced employment strategies and approaches to meet specific needs of people experiencing homelessness or at risk of housing loss e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Identify local businesses with greater flexibility in their working conditions (e.g., working hours, expectations) and offer them support to increase employment opportunities for people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss.</li> <li>o Increase support for job readiness activities for people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss (e.g., assistance with resume writing, increasing literacy skills, other training opportunities).</li> <li>o Increase opportunities for people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss to utilize their trade experience.</li> <li>o Increase opportunities for people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss to build relationships with local employers (e.g. volunteering).</li> <li>o Increase capacity to provide low barrier supportive employment (e.g., Job Café model).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

ACTIONS	ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES
<p><b>Action 18:</b> Support the <i>Emergency Social Services</i> system to increase access to adequate resources during and following an emergency for people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss.</p>	<p>Issues identified through community consultation (not necessarily exhaustive or further verified):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limited access to media outlets to receive emergency communication.</li> <li>- Limited resources to take risk reduction measures.</li> <li>- <i>Emergency Shelter</i> and/or housing stability programs that may be closed during the day.</li> <li>- Lack of transportation for evacuation.</li> <li>- Limited social support networks.</li> <li>- High prevalence of physical and mental health issues that require additional services/resources.</li> </ul> <p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create clear language flyers and brochures that provide information and actions to be taken in the event of an emergency (e.g., how to get emergency information, the location of <i>Emergency Shelter</i> programs, how to prepare emotionally for an emergency and what to expect, and how to look after a pet in an emergency). Collaborate with outreach and shelter providers to discuss information above with people experiencing homelessness.</li> <li>- <i>Emergency Shelter</i> programs to develop notification processes, communication channels, service continuity plans and emergency response plans for staff and people accessing services.</li> <li>- Engage outreach workers to form teams that can be quickly deployed to reach people on the street in the event of an emergency.</li> <li>- Train Reception/Evacuation Centre staff to respond to the anticipated needs of people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss, including the support of counselling and health resources.</li> <li>- Following the emergency and in the recovery phase, quickly restore treatment and counselling programs and funds to meet the basic human needs of food, shelter and clothing. Additionally, use this as an opportunity to house people in longer term housing rather than returning to <i>Emergency Shelter</i> programs (depending on the scope of the emergency).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 19:</b> Support the <i>Health Care</i> system to increase access to adequate health care for people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss.</p>	<p>Issues identified through community consultation (not necessarily exhaustive or further verified):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- People with physical health issues are remaining in the hospital for longer than required because they do not have access to adequate housing and/or support to meet their physical health care needs.</li> <li>- Lack of programs that support harm reduction approaches. <sup>HHSS1 (6.7c)</sup></li> <li>- Limited capacity to support people with physical health issues who are experiencing persistent homelessness.</li> <li>- Limited after-hours primary medical care options.</li> <li>- Limited access to opportunities to promote wellness (e.g., exercise, healthy food) for people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss.</li> <li>- When support needs change, assessment and/or resources to prevent housing loss are not always available.</li> </ul>

ACTIONS	ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES
	<p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to advocate to the appropriate governing bodies to maximize current investments to support housing stability for people with physical health issues and to increase investments in the housing stability of people with physical health issues in areas such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o On-site medical support at fixed street outreach, residential and <i>Supportive Housing</i> programs.</li> <li>o Medical support offered through mobile street outreach.</li> <li>o Residential options for people experiencing homelessness with short-term physical health issues (e.g., pre/post operative, post-acute, respite, palliative, medical stabilization).<sup>HHSS1 (4.5)</sup></li> <li>o Access to affordable prescription medication, medical supplies (e.g., syringes), medical aids (e.g., prosthetics) and costs related to dispensing, packaging and delivery services not covered through OHIP for people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss.</li> <li>o Access to affordable alternative/complementary health care (e.g., physiotherapy) for people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss.</li> <li>o Access to affordable dental care for people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss.</li> <li>o Access to affordable eye care for people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Work in partnership with physical health faculties (e.g., hospitals) to develop discharge planning protocols for people with no fixed address who are being referred to the following local residential program areas: <i>Emergency Shelter, Time-Limited Residence, and Affordable Housing and Supportive Housing</i>.<sup>HHSS1 (5.9)</sup></li> <li>- Clarify the role of <i>Waterloo-Wellington Community Care Access Centre</i> in providing assessment of care needs within <i>Supportive Housing</i> programs.</li> <li>- Strengthen connections between housing stability programs and <i>Waterloo-Wellington Community Care Access Centre</i>.<sup>HHSS1 (4.6h)</sup></li> <li>- Develop an extreme heat protocol/plan.<sup>HHSS1 (5.12)</sup></li> <li>- Update the <i>Homelessness to Housing Stability Strategy Summary Series</i> with a new summary sheet for people with physical health issues.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 20:</b> Support the <i>Justice</i> system to invest in housing stability for people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss who are connected to</p>	<p>Issues identified through community consultation (not necessarily exhaustive or further verified):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of programs that support harm reduction approaches.<sup>HHSS1 (6.7c)</sup></li> <li>- Limited capacity to support people connected to correctional and policing services who are experiencing persistent homelessness.</li> </ul> <p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to advocate to the appropriate governing bodies to maximize current investments in housing stability through its correctional and policing services.</li> <li>- Develop discharge planning protocols for people with no fixed address who are exiting provincial and federal correctional facilities and being referred to the</li> </ul>

ACTIONS	ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES
correctional and policing services.	<p>following local residential program areas: <i>Emergency Shelter, Time-Limited Residence and Affordable and Supportive Housing</i>.<sup>HHSS1 (5.9)</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explore the need to revisit existing loitering and panhandling by-laws and/or practices across the region to ensure that the rights of people experiencing homelessness are not being violated.</li> <li>- Update the <i>Homelessness to Housing Stability Strategy Summary Series</i> with a new summary sheet for people connected to the justice system.</li> <li>- Support the <i>Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council</i> to facilitate implementation of actions identified in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o <i>From Prison to a Place Called Home: Recommendations from a Forum for Federally Sentenced Women</i></li> <li>o <i>The Missing Pieces: An Assessment of Service Assets and Gaps for Offenders and Victims of Interpersonal Violence in Waterloo Region</i></li> <li>o <i>Waterloo Region Integrated Drugs Strategy</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>* Refer to Appendix A for the list of recommendations within the scope of the Homelessness to Housing Stability Strategy.</p>

## FOCUS AREA #2: SUPPORTING COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO END HOMELESSNESS

### Context

Community members have an important role to play in ending homelessness. Strategic Direction 4 includes actions for the housing stability system that support local community members in their work to end homelessness.

### Policy Framework References

- See pages 11-14 for principles that everyone can use when talking about housing stability, to help shift toward more supportive and respectful use of language.
- See pages 80-88 for more information about local principles to guide action.

## STRATEGIC DIRECTION #4: Promote a shared approach to ending homelessness with the support of individuals, groups and other sectors.

### Context

By implementing the following six actions, the housing stability system will support community members to end homelessness by providing resources that are tailored to their different roles in the community and by ensuring a coordinated approach across the region.

ACTIONS	ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES
<p><b>Action 21:</b> Support businesses to end homelessness.</p>	<p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify local business owners who can become champions of these activities.</li> <li>- Design strategies with the local <i>Business Improvement Associations</i> to enhance communication between downtown business owners and <i>Street Outreach</i> program staff around the level of support available/provided to people who are street-involved and opportunities for engagement by the business community.</li> <li>- Encourage businesses to support opportunities for their staff to volunteer within the housing stability system.</li> <li>- Design strategies to acknowledge the local businesses that are already providing support to people experiencing or at-risk of housing loss (e.g., an award). Promote these stories as a tool for motivating other businesses to get involved.</li> <li>- Organize education opportunities with businesses (e.g., to speak at staff meetings/events).</li> <li>- Connect with businesses that can provide free or low cost items to people experiencing homelessness so that they can establish their new housing (e.g., Value Village can provide access to household goods for free).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 22:</b> Support funders/investors to end homelessness.</p>	<p>Issues identified through community consultation (not necessarily exhaustive or verified):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Funding an effective housing stability system requires collaboration and collective action from all levels of government and other funders.</li> <li>- Funding is often provided on a time-limited basis. This creates instability in the housing stability system and, in turn, instability for people who require the programs</li> </ul>

ACTIONS	ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES
	<p>to find, establish and/or retain adequate housing that are not sustainable through existing funding sources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Funding opportunities tend to be very specific – there is a lack of flexibility in funding options and administration which makes it difficult to provide person-centred support and to be responsive to the changing needs in the community.</li> </ul> <p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strengthen the housing stability sector’s infrastructure (e.g., human resources, finance, technology, data, policy) to increase fundability as a viable sector with vital outcomes.</li> <li>- Increase understanding of the local funding landscape (e.g., create an inventory of investment opportunities for housing stability programs).</li> <li>- Work collectively to educate funders on the “business case” for housing stability.</li> <li>- Build on opportunities to coordinate applications for funding across housing stability programs.</li> <li>- Promote the availability of “flex funding” in funding envelopes for programs working with people with complex needs (e.g., share the <i>STEP Home Flex Fund Report - 2011</i>).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 23:</b> Support the general public to end homelessness.</p>	<p>Issues identified through community consultation (not necessarily exhaustive or further verified):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Most people cannot personally relate to the issue of homelessness.</li> <li>- People tend to believe a lot of the myths about homelessness and think about people experiencing homelessness in negative, stereotypical, stigmatizing ways.</li> <li>- People often fear what they do not understand. This fear can create an “us” versus “them” mentality making it difficult to support greater community inclusion.</li> <li>- Greater understanding will lead to greater support for investments in housing stability.</li> </ul> <p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Design strategies with local faith and service clubs.</li> <li>- Design strategies with students at all levels of the educational system – from elementary through to post-secondary institutions.</li> <li>- Develop a common calendar of housing stability events listed on the <i>Homelessness and Housing Umbrella Group</i> website. Ensure engagement opportunities are available during outside of regular daytime hours to encourage participation from volunteers and community members who work during the day.</li> <li>- Promote the <i>Homelessness and Housing Umbrella Group’s Teacher Toolkit</i>.</li> <li>- Develop <i>Homelessness and Housing Umbrella Group Housing Stability Report Cards</i> as a deliverable of Ontario Trillium funding.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 24:</b> Support the media to end homelessness.</p>	<p>Issues identified through community consultation (not necessarily exhaustive or further verified):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Media often print stories that include incorrect information and/or support a stereotypical message about homelessness.</li> </ul>

ACTIONS	ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES
	<p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Build relationships with local journalists from each local publication (e.g., The Record, Cambridge Times, Grand River Living) and hosts of local television shows (e.g., Rogers Daytime, Province Wide) to increase coverage of housing stability.</li> <li>- Develop small “sound bites” that capture the content of the Policy Framework (e.g., vision, values, guiding principles, importance of language) and ask the media to use them in their publications.</li> <li>- Submit short stories about the impact of housing stability programs and initiatives.</li> <li>- Submit short and varied “requests to the public” that give specific direction for how people can contribute to ending homelessness.</li> <li>- Publish a series of articles that illustrate the dynamic nature of housing stability.</li> <li>- Coordinate efforts to submit letters to the editor about housing stability issues in the region.</li> <li>- Support a person to experience life as if they did not have a fixed address and then to share their story with the media.</li> <li>- Develop educational tools to increase knowledge about housing stability issues (e.g., persistent homelessness, harm reduction, cost of keeping people without adequate housing versus providing adequate housing and/or support).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 25:</b> Support private market landlords to end homelessness.</p>	<p>Issues identified through community consultation (not necessarily exhaustive or further verified):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Private landlords often believe that renters with low income or renters who need support are a higher “risk” than other renters – this is more a myth than reality.</li> <li>- Housing developers/landlords may not be aware of the advantages of building affordable housing.</li> </ul> <p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify landlords who can become champions of these activities.</li> <li>- Offer new training through the <i>Housing Stability Training Centre</i> tailored to private market landlords to support increased housing retention for their tenants.</li> <li>- Design an information resource for private landlords, so that they know where to call for help (e.g., on-call outreach support). Encourage them to reach out when they first encounter challenges with tenants.</li> <li>- Develop a Private Landlord Network where landlords can access resources and support (e.g., between landlords renting to people with complex needs).</li> <li>- Design strategies to acknowledge landlords that are already providing support to their tenants that helps them to retain their housing (e.g., an award). Promote these stories as a tool for motivating other landlords to get involved.</li> <li>- Develop educational tools to increase knowledge about housing stability issues and housing stability resources that they and/or their tenants can access to increase housing retention in order to encourage more landlords to rent to people with low income (e.g., related to subsidies/supplements, direct deposit options, trust accounts, support for housing stability, rental rights and responsibilities). Consider both print and electronic media (e.g., brochure, website).</li> </ul>

ACTIONS	ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES
<p><b>Action 26:</b> Support a coordinated approach to engagement with various community partners.</p>	<p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organize a list of available speakers with lived experience of homelessness, representatives of housing stability programs and initiatives, as well as community champions who hold different roles (e.g., business owner, landlord, economist). HHSS1 (1.1)</li> <li>- Provide the following resources to support a coordinated approach: HHSS1 (1.1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o A common set of presentation tools (e.g., PowerPoint slides, handouts) and reference materials (e.g., tip sheets on how to access more information and get involved, reports, brochures).</li> <li>o Training.</li> <li>o Tailored materials to key audiences and around specific topics.</li> <li>o Honorariums and other resources to support the involvement of people with lived experience of homelessness.</li> <li>o A list of people that can offer their specialized skills (e.g., support with technology) to support speaking engagements.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Increase the variety of approaches used to communicate about housing stability (e.g., photo-voice, videos, You Tube, websites, art projects, Twitter, Facebook, logos/program banners, photo projects displayed in public locations).</li> </ul> <p>Materials to support a coordinated approach should highlight:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Non-identifying stories that highlight both the personal impact of homelessness and being at-risk of housing loss as well as the personal strengths that people have which helped them to increase their housing stability. The issue needs to have a “face” so that people can identify with it.</li> <li>- Local quantitative data.</li> <li>- Costs of homelessness (e.g., cost of “keeping someone without adequate housing” versus providing supportive housing).</li> <li>- Benefits of investing in housing stability.</li> <li>- Importance of using the guiding principles to end homelessness.</li> <li>- Personal and community health impacts of homelessness.</li> <li>- Local examples of inadequate shared housing accommodations.</li> <li>- Who is taking action to end homelessness in Waterloo Region and what they are doing.</li> <li>- How people can get involved.</li> </ul>

## **FOCUS AREA #3: SUPPORTING THE HOUSING STABILITY SYSTEM TO END HOMELESSNESS**

### **Context**

People tend to meet their need for adequate housing, income and support through a mix of informal connections (e.g., family and friends), private markets/businesses (e.g., real estate, employment markets and homemaking services) and formal community systems (see Focus Area #1). Collectively, these are referred to as housing stability resources. For a variety of reasons, some people cannot access the housing, income and support they need through informal connections or private market/businesses. As a result, they may be experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss and require access to a housing stability program provided by the housing stability system.

The housing stability system is a network of organizations, groups and individuals that share a common mandate to support people who are experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss. To be identified as a housing stability program, at least 50% of the activities supported by the program must be dedicated to housing stability – supporting people to find, establish and/or retain adequate housing and/or increasing opportunities for people to fully participate in community life. The 2011 Inventory of Housing Stability Programs in Waterloo Region is a community resource that catalogues all of the housing stability programs in Waterloo Region. In 2011, there were 107 local housing stability programs; programs belong to one of five complementary program areas (i.e., Emergency Shelter, Street Outreach, Housing Retention and Re-Housing, Time-Limited Residence and Affordable Housing and Supportive Housing). There are also several local groups (some of which are referred to as committees) that support the community to end homelessness.

Strategic Directions 5 through 7 includes actions for the housing stability system that increase its capacity to fulfill its mandate in Waterloo Region.

### **Policy Framework References**

- See pages 47-49 for more information about housing stability resources accessed through informal connections and private markets/businesses.
- See pages 50-75 for more information about housing stability resources accessed through the housing stability system.
- See page 76 for a map of all housing stability resources.
- See Appendix E: Housing Stability System Timeline on pages 115-119 to review the development of the local housing stability system, which began in 1905.
- See page 46 for a diagram that shows how the different groups fit together and Appendix D: Housing Stability Groups on pages 111-114 for descriptions of each group.

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION #5: Provide housing stability services to end homelessness (residential/housing options, financial assistance and support).**

**Context**

The Policy Framework includes five principles to guide action, one of which is: “We promote strategic investments to end homelessness in Waterloo Region”. Through its five program areas (i.e., Emergency Shelter, Street Outreach, Housing Retention and Re-Housing, Time-Limited Residence and Affordable Housing and Supportive Housing), the housing stability system provides community members with essential housing stability resources that, as a whole, are designed to end homelessness. Housing stability programs use two main approaches to end homelessness:

1. **Housing Retention:** Supporting people at-risk of housing loss to retain their current adequate housing and/or to find and/or establish more adequate housing without experiencing homelessness. Where risk of housing loss is more imminent (e.g., people are within one month of housing loss), all housing options are explored before accessing an Emergency Shelter program (this is sometimes referred to as diversion).
2. **Rapid Re-housing:** Supporting people living without a fixed address to find and/or establish adequate housing as quickly as possible, with support as needed and desired for long term housing stability. Rapid re-housing shortens the length of time that people experience transitional homelessness and, in so doing, prevents persistent homelessness in Waterloo Region.

As long as people are unable to access the adequate housing, income and support they need from other sources (informal connections, private markets/businesses, other services and supports), housing stability programs will continue to be in demand. The housing stability system will continue to evolve as it implements the principles to guide actions in the Policy Framework.

**Policy Framework References**

- See pages 80-88 for more information about the principles to guide action.

ACTIONS	ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES
<p>Action 27: Provide Emergency Shelter programs.</p>	<p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explore promising practices and opportunities to enhance diversion and rapid-re-housing programs linked to emergency shelter.</li> <li>- Explore emergency shelter funding model options as part of the new Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI).</li> <li>- Create tools and processes to enhance referrals to Emergency Shelter programs (e.g., updated referral protocols, referral guide, coordinated access, coordinated discharge protocols with hospitals and corrections, video tours accessible on-line).</li> <li>- Create consistent service restriction policies (both access to programs and involuntary discharge) that are consistent across the region and reflect the values</li> </ul>

ACTIONS	ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES
	<p>and principles to guide actions of the <i>Policy Framework</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explore the role of police services, withdrawal management, <i>Emergency Shelter</i> programs and fixed street outreach to offer a safe, temporary space where people under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs can stay and/or become sober.</li> <li>- Seek to address current identified limitations to emergency shelter service (e.g., capacity for couples without children to be sheltered together, access to private washrooms and showers, access to personal/quiet space at <i>Emergency Shelter</i> programs, safe and secure space to store belongings, supports for people with physical disabilities, support options for pets while their guardians are accessing emergency shelter).</li> <li>- Explore opportunities to complement <i>Emergency Shelter</i> programs with other services (e.g., street outreach, meal/hospitality programs, foot care, immunizations, tax clinics).</li> <li>- Update quality assurance processes and include increased opportunities for resident input.</li> <li>- Support Kitchener-Waterloo Out of the Cold, the housing stability sector and the broader community to better understand the <i>Kitchener-Waterloo Out of the Cold</i> program (i.e., services provided, the role they play, who is being served, needs, gaps etc.) and consider options for future direction.</li> <li>- Improve communications between volunteers of the <i>Kitchener-Waterloo Out of the Cold</i> program and other housing stability program staff who may be supporting the same participants (e.g., STEP Home, other emergency shelters), in order to ensure that support is complementary and coordinated.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 28:</b> Provide <i>Street Outreach</i> programs.</p>	<p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase capacity for people to access <u>fixed</u> outreach services (i.e., drop ins) every day of the week, in every urban area of the region throughout the year.</li> <li>- Increase capacity to provide adequate <u>mobile</u> street outreach services both within and outside of all core urban areas. <sup>HHSS1 (4.2b)</sup></li> <li>- Increase capacity to provide <u>mobile</u> street outreach services outside of regular workday hours. <sup>HHSS1 (4.2b)</sup></li> <li>- Increase capacity to access a variety of supplies related to harm reduction (e.g., safer crack use kits, overdose prevention).</li> <li>- Increase capacity to complement existing programs with peer support.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 29:</b> Provide <i>Housing Retention and Re-Housing</i> programs.</p>	<p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase capacity of the following programs to connect participants at-risk of housing loss with additional housing retention resources: social assistance, food banks, Waterloo Region Energy Assistance Program and/or Rent Bank loans, as well as the Community Housing waiting list. <sup>HHSS1 (3.2a, 3.2b, 3.5, 5.3)</sup></li> <li>- Explore program options under the new <i>Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI)</i> in relation to the loss of funding due to elimination of the Community Start Up and Maintenance Benefit (mandatory benefit under OW/ODSP), effective January 1, 2013.</li> <li>- Continue to explore the need for a coordinated landlord registry between organizations that currently maintain housing vacancy lists. Build on the findings</li> </ul>

ACTIONS	ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES
	<p>from the report published by Elkins, J. from Lutherwood on January 12, 2009, <i>Coordination of Landlord and Vacancy Information</i>. Identify landlords that have units suitable for larger families.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop a service model for Housing Help in Cambridge.</li> <li>- Increase opportunities for tenants to be informed of and advocate for their rights as identified in the <i>Residential Tenancies Act, 2006</i> (e.g., support RENT in their mandate, design peer-led models of support, design tools by peers, promote existing websites, promote resources available through the community legal clinic - such as drop-in support for tenants to review tenancy agreements and assist with landlord issues including housing/property maintenance issues).</li> <li>- Establish funding and/or processes that provide landlords with a guarantee of rent payment for at least the first year of tenancy for participants.</li> <li>- Increase access to rental assistance designated to people, not housing units. <sup>HHSS1 (4.9a)</sup></li> <li>- Increase access to voluntary financial trusteeships for people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss. <sup>HHSS1 (3.1)</sup> Build on the findings from the report published by Elkins, J. from Lutherwood on January 2, 2009, <i>Voluntary Trusteeship as a Tool for Eviction Prevention</i>. People transitioning from emergency shelter programs should have access to a program if desired (particularly youth).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 30:</b> Provide <i>Time-Limited Residence</i> programs.</p>	<p>Issues identified through community consultation (not necessarily exhaustive or further verified):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of community consensus regarding promising practices for this program area.</li> <li>- Lack of awareness of the impact of the <i>Residential Tenancies Act, 2006</i> on service provision.</li> <li>- Existing time-limited residential program vacancies are not advertised in a coordinated way.</li> </ul> <p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Research need and capacity to provide shorter term residential programs for people in transitional situations in the <i>Time-Limited Residence</i> program area. <sup>HHSS1 (4.4b)</sup></li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 31:</b> Provide <i>Supportive Housing</i> programs.</p>	<p>Issues identified through community consultation (not necessarily exhaustive or further verified):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community need for <i>Supportive Housing</i> programs outweigh existing resources.</li> <li>- People accessing <i>Supportive Housing</i> programs have increasingly complex needs and there is not always sufficient support available to meet these needs.</li> </ul> <p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase general <i>Supportive Housing</i> programs (i.e., not disability-specific), particularly models with high levels of flexibility (e.g., person-centred/self-directed support, self-contained units). <sup>HHSS1 (4.6g)</sup></li> <li>- Review the existing Domiciliary Hostel Program.</li> <li>- Explore and implement additional quality measures within general <i>Supportive Housing</i> programs.</li> </ul>

ACTIONS	ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explore the value of re-establishing the <i>Supportive Housing Network</i>.</li> </ul> <p>* NOTE: See Action 37(a) for issues and activities associated with Affordable Housing programs (i.e., Community Housing).</p>

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION #6: Tailor approaches according to people’s strength of “association with homelessness”.**

**Context**

The *Policy Framework* includes five principles to guide action, one of which is: “We tailor approaches according to people’s strength of ‘association with homelessness’”. People with lived experience of homelessness are not all the same. Organizations that consider strength of “association with homelessness” in their program planning are likely to be more effective in their service delivery because the programs and approaches will be tailored to meet the needs of people who are experiencing similar circumstances (i.e., transitional versus persistent homelessness). For example, people experiencing transitional homelessness may require less intense, shorter term and infrequent support in order to maintain housing stability over the long term. In contrast, people experiencing persistent homelessness may require longer term and more intensive support.

**Policy Framework References**

- See pages 19-22 for more information about strength of “association with homelessness”.
- See pages 84 for more information about the principle to guide action: ‘We tailor approaches according to people’s strength of ‘association with homelessness’”.

<p><b>Action 32:</b> Explore strategies to increase capacity to end transitional homelessness.</p>	<p>See issues and activities from Action 29: Provide <i>Housing Retention and Re-Housing</i> programs.</p>
<p><b>Action 33:</b> Increase capacity of STEP Home programs to end persistent homelessness.</p>	<p>Refer to the STEP Home Annual Report 2011-2012 for more information on STEP Home Actions and Priorities Envisioned (S.H.A.P.E.) STEP Home activities and priorities are organized by the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Additional <i>Supportive Housing</i></li> <li>▪ Increase Resources</li> <li>▪ Increase Connection Opportunities for STEP Home Direct Support Workers</li> <li>▪ Increase Opportunities to be Informed by Participants</li> <li>▪ Increase STEP Home Education Opportunities</li> <li>▪ Landlord Recruitment/Education/Engagement</li> <li>▪ Community Inclusion</li> </ul>

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION #7: Support housing stability system-level initiatives designed to end homelessness.**

**Context**

System-level initiatives are those that apply not just to one of the five program areas (i.e., *Emergency Shelter, Time-Limited Residence and Affordable and Supportive Housing*) but across the whole housing stability system. People within the housing stability system have an important role to play in ending homelessness.

**Policy Framework References**

- See pages 57-58 for more information about the supportive approach adopted by stakeholders within the housing stability system.
- See pages 78-80 for a review of the core values of the housing stability system.

<p><b>Action 34:</b> Increase access to information about resources to support system navigation.</p>	<p>Issues identified through community consultation (not necessarily exhaustive or further verified):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- People do not always know where to find information about key housing stability resources (i.e., <i>Emergency Shelter, Time-Limited Residence and Affordable and Supportive Housing</i>).</li> </ul> <p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase capacity to provide access to 24/7 information about and referrals to local housing stability resources (e.g., 211, distress centre, other community information lines). <sup>HHSS1 (5.6)</sup></li> <li>- Seek to better understand existing programs (e.g., through inclusion in future versions of the <i>Inventory of Housing Stability Programs in Waterloo Region</i>) and to increase capacity where needed for people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss in the following areas:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Provision of free or low cost furnishings;</li> <li>o Provision of free or low cost appliances and/or repair of appliances;</li> <li>o Provision of free or low cost household items (e.g., towels, bedding, kitchen supplies);</li> <li>o Provision of free or low cost storage;</li> <li>o Provision of free or low cost assistance with moving; and</li> <li>o Provision of free or low cost support for hoarding and to prepare and/or treat bed bugs.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Maintain and enhance housing stability information resources (e.g., brochures, referral guides).</li> <li>- Develop a catalogue of residential programs (e.g., with profiles, photos and video footage of the properties).</li> <li>- Evaluate the community impact of the existing seven housing stability brochures. Revise processes and materials as needed to increase the value of these resources.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Action 35(a):</b> Participate in <i>national</i> initiatives and networking opportunities.</p>	<p>Issues identified through community consultation (not necessarily exhaustive or further verified):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Need to increase local awareness of national networking opportunities and resources.</li> <li>- Need to increase capacity to monitor issues at the national level that impact housing stability and actively engage existing local networks to respond in a timely way to advocacy opportunities.</li> <li>- Need to raise the profile of the local housing stability system as a leader at the national level in order to build relationships, share promising practices and capitalize upon emerging opportunities.</li> </ul> <p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Connect with federal housing stability organizations/groups (e.g., <i>Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, Canadian Housing and Renewal Association, Raising the ROOF, Canadian Homelessness Research Network</i>).</li> <li>- Participate in the initiative to develop a national definition of homelessness through the <i>Canadian Homelessness Research Network</i>.</li> <li>- Submit local materials to the Homeless Hub. <sup>HHSS1 (8.4)</sup></li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 35(b):</b> Participate in <i>provincial</i> initiatives and networking opportunities.</p>	<p>Issues identified through community consultation (not necessarily exhaustive or further verified):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Need to increase capacity to monitor issues at the provincial level that impact housing stability and actively engage existing local networks to respond in a timely way to advocacy opportunities.</li> <li>- Need to raise the profile of the local housing stability system as a leader at the provincial level in order to build relationships, share promising practices and capitalize upon emerging opportunities.</li> </ul> <p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Connect with provincial housing stability organizations/groups (e.g., <i>Ontario Municipal Social Services Association Homelessness Network, Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association etc.</i> ).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 35(c):</b> Participate in <i>local</i> initiatives and networking opportunities.</p>	<p>Issues identified through community consultation (not necessarily exhaustive or further verified):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Need to increase capacity to monitor issues at the local level that impact housing stability and actively engage existing networks to respond in a timely way to advocacy opportunities.</li> <li>- Need to raise the profile of the housing stability system as a local leader in order to build relationships, share promising practices and capitalize upon emerging opportunities.</li> </ul> <p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to support the Homelessness and Housing Umbrella Group as Waterloo Region's primary homelessness and housing group functioning as an umbrella and connecting group for all other community groups working on issues of homelessness and housing in Waterloo Region.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Connect with other local community systems/networks (e.g., <i>Addictions and Mental Health Network, Immigration Partnership, Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council</i>).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 36:</b> Increase housing stability program staff (including peer capacity) capacity to end homelessness.</p>	<p>Issues identified through community consultation (not necessarily exhaustive or further verified):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limited funding opportunities for peer support programs.</li> <li>- Limited awareness of existing peer programs.</li> </ul> <p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conduct a survey of housing stability stakeholders to support planning for the future of the Homelessness and Housing Umbrella Group's <i>Housing Stability Training Centre</i>. Consider the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Training opportunities in a variety of methods (e.g., self-directed, on-line, video-conferencing, in-person).</li> <li>o New training topics (e.g., volunteer training; overdose prevention; harm reduction including an overview of managed alcohol (Level 5) and managed drug (Level 6) programs; basics of how to offer peer support; basics of STEP Home support; Stages of Change theory and practice; basics of supporting people who have experienced trauma; Motivational Interviewing theory and practice; basics of supporting people who have experienced bereavement and loss; basics of Housing First; basics of supporting people who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, and/or Queer; basics of supporting Aboriginal people; basics of supporting people with disabilities such as acquired brain injury; basics of offering a flex fund within programs that support people who experience a number of barriers in accessing resources).</li> <li>o Opportunities to gain credits, certificates and other forms of recognition (e.g., awards to organizations where all of their staff have attended Housing Stability 101).</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Increase access to information about training opportunities available outside of the Homelessness and Housing Umbrella Group's <i>Housing Stability Training Centre</i>.</li> <li>- Increase access and awareness of timely information about local housing stability resources (e.g., post common "Frequently Asked Questions" and bulletins about local resources to the Homelessness and Housing Umbrella Group listserve and through the current email contact list for housing stability programs, hold a "fact finding" contest with prizes to be won).</li> <li>- Develop new skills with research and evaluation (e.g., participate in training and accreditation opportunities, collaborate with post-secondary institutions and other research bodies). <sup>HHSS1 (8.1)</sup></li> <li>- Build on research findings outlined in the background report, <i>Hearing the Voices: Learnings from Kitchener-Waterloo Out of the Cold</i> related to interviewing people with lived experience of homelessness.</li> <li>- Develop and implement hiring tools (e.g., policies and promising practices) that can be used by the housing stability system to assist with hiring staff with the skills, knowledge, attitude and experience required to support people to maintain housing</li> </ul>

	<p>stability over the long term, particularly people with more complex issues. <sup>HSS1 (7.2)</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Update the <i>Homelessness to Housing Stability Strategy Summary Series</i> with new summary sheets for system-level tips (e.g., common acronyms, review of governance and funding sources).</li> <li>- Increase understanding of peer programs and their effectiveness.</li> <li>- Develop and share tools to support peer programming.</li> <li>- Increase peer support opportunities.</li> <li>- Increase opportunities for peers to access training for skill and leadership development.</li> <li>- Design tools by people with lived experience of homelessness to help peers gain access to housing stability resources (e.g., education/(re)training opportunities, adequate rental housing, financial assistance).</li> <li>- Utilize the peer research model where researchers partner with peers through the entire project period as outlined in the background report, <i>Hearing the Voices: Learnings from Kitchener-Waterloo Out of the Cold</i>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 37(a):</b> Support the Region's role as Service Manager for Housing and Homelessness (<i>Housing</i>).</p>	<p>Context: In 2001, the Province designated the Region of Waterloo as the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (SM) for Housing and transferred ownership to the of 2,557 former Ontario Housing Corporation units to the Region along with financial and administrative responsibility for approximately 5,500 additional Community Housing units (nonprofit, co-operative housing and rent supplement) in Waterloo Region. As SM for Housing, the Region has a lead role to play in determining the state of housing in the region and developing strategies to address these needs, including the delivery of affordable housing programs. The Region addresses housing issues of low to moderate income households through its Community Action Plan for Housing (CAPH). The CAPH (now called the Community Action Plan for Low to Moderate Level Housing) is in the process of being updated and is expected to be completed in 2013. Since 2001, through the Affordable Housing Strategy, the Region has assisted in creating over 1,900 new rental and supportive housing units, affordable home ownership opportunities and rent supplement units. The following issues and activities will be considered in the update of the CAPH.</p> <p>Issues identified through community consultation (not necessarily exhaustive or further verified):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of adequate housing (e.g., subsidies and rental units with lower rent amounts) that is affordable to people living with fixed, low incomes.</li> <li>- Lack of range in new supply – too much focus on building single-detached homes.</li> <li>- Lack of range and supply of <i>Supportive Housing</i> programs.</li> <li>- Lack of adequate housing options that are physically accessible (e.g., for people who use wheelchairs) and/or that accommodate physical health challenges. Ensure that new housing follows the build environment standards set by the <i>Accessibility of Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2007</i>.</li> <li>- Lack of adequate housing that is also energy efficient and opportunities to reduce the burden of energy costs for tenants and homeowners.</li> <li>- Limited opportunities for people living with fixed, low income to move from private</li> </ul>

	<p>rental market housing to home ownership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of access to adequate housing for people with histories that illustrate the potential for a higher level of risk (e.g., rental arrears, poor credit, police record). For example, families cannot access <i>Community Housing</i> if they have rental arrears from a previous tenancy and there are few other options for affordable housing. In addition, requiring a “co-signer” on a tenancy agreement creates barriers for many people who may not have access to someone willing to fill this role.</li> <li>- Challenges for <i>Waterloo Region Coordinated Access System</i> to communicate with people on the who are living without a fixed address – may consider processes to use alternate points of contact, such as local service providers.</li> <li>- Lack of portable rental subsidies that are payable to the landlord and exempt income/asset requirements of social assistance.</li> <li>- The need for actively promoting inclusionary zoning and encouraging it in all new housing developments (e.g., revising distancing provisions).</li> <li>- The need for more incentives to build affordable housing and to increase the level of diversity in housing types (e.g., waiving developmental charges).</li> <li>- Lack of flexibility with regulations related to creating affordable housing (e.g., secondary suites, zoning by-laws).</li> <li>- Assess the housing conditions and levels of housing diversity in the rural areas. HHSS1 (6.12)</li> <li>- Develop a better understanding of boarding home/rooming house sector of private rental market and seek opportunities to address identified issues in this sector.</li> <li>- Challenges with resolving housing/property maintenance issues in the private rental market. For example, certain private market rental units/buildings in the community are known for having maintenance issues that are not resolved by the landlords. Currently, the burden is on vulnerable tenants to advocate and address these issues, with very little support. New landlord licensing may create some positive changes in this area.</li> </ul> <p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Update the <i>Community Action Plan for Low to Moderate Level Housing</i>. Consider the <i>Homelessness to Housing Stability Strategy (2012)</i> in the process.</li> <li>- Participate in the implementation of the Provincial <i>Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy</i> and the new <i>Housing Services Act, 2011</i>.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Submit the <i>Homelessness to Housing Stability Strategy</i> and <i>Community Action Plan for Low to Moderate Level Housing</i> to the Province as the local 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan.</li> <li>o Design a process to facilitate implementation of the actions, monitor progress, and support communication and evaluation of the plan(s).</li> <li>o Consider opportunities for further housing and homelessness integration.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Continue to advocate for a national housing/housing stability strategy.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Action 37(b):</b> Support the Region's role as Service Manager for Housing and Homelessness (<i>Homelessness</i>).</p>	<p>Context: In 1999, the Province designated the Region of Waterloo as a Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (SM) for Homelessness and over the years has provided a variety of programs and/or funding to the Region to administer. As part of the <i>Provincial Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy</i>, these programs are being consolidated for the Region to administer through the new <i>Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI)</i> effective January 1, 2013. The Region also serves as the Community Entity for the federal <i>Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS)</i> and Community Coordinator for the <i>Homeless Individual and Family Information System (HIFIS)</i>. As SM for Homelessness, the Region has a lead role in planning, funding allocation and quality assurance/accountability for housing stability programs and plays a planning and support role to the housing stability system as a whole. The Region facilitates community planning related to housing stability through <i>All Roads Lead to Home: The Homelessness to Housing Stability Strategy for Waterloo Region</i>. As of 2011, the Region funds 31 community programs through 20 different organizations/operators that serve approximately 2,000 people annually. The Region supports the overall housing stability system (identified to include 107 community programs serving approximately 25,000 people in 2010).</p> <p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Advocate to all levels of government (in particular the federal and provincial governments) to invest in implementation of the <i>Homelessness to Housing Stability Strategy</i><sup>HHSS1 (2.1)</sup>.</li> <li>- Participate in the implementation of the <i>Provincial Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy</i> and the new <i>Housing Services Act, 2011</i>.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Submit the <i>Homelessness to Housing Stability Strategy (2012)</i> and updated <i>Community Action Plan for Housing</i> to the Province as the local 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan.</li> <li>o Design a process to facilitate implementation of the actions, monitor progress, and support communication and evaluation of the plan(s).</li> <li>o Facilitate implementation of the new <i>Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI)</i> effective January 1, 2013 through the following activities:                 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Phase I – Pre-Planning and Immediate Needs (2012)</li> <li>- Phase II – Planning (2013)</li> <li>- Phase III – Implementation (2014 and beyond)</li> </ul> </li> <li>o Consider opportunities for further housing and homelessness integration.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Produce and disseminate a <i>Homelessness to Housing Stability Strategy (2012)</i> implementation progress report that covers the period January 2011 through summer 2013. Future reporting to be determined as part of 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan.</li> <li>- Revise Agreement processes to ensure alignment with the Strategy (2012).</li> <li>- Design and implement revised quality assurance processes for all residential/housing options funded by the Region ensuring alignment with the Strategy (2012).</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop and utilize a system component checklist to measure improvements towards creating an effective housing stability system.</li> <li>- Implement Part II of the Data Integration Project (<u>Data Collection</u>).             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Phase I: Complete outstanding activities from the Part I of the Data Integration Project. <sup>HHSS1 (8.3)</sup></li> <li>o Phase II: Move from the current system of collecting aggregate data from programs using Microsoft applications to a common database system (e.g., implement the <i>Homeless Individuals and Families Information System 4.0</i> with all housing stability programs funded by the Region). Develop a comprehensive <i>Data Entry Guide</i> and <i>Data Integrity Guide</i> (e.g., based on local materials developed to support earlier versions of the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System).</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Implement Part II of the Data Integration Project (<u>Meaning Making</u>).             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Phase I: Develop processes to measure and enhance the value and impact of housing stability investments (e.g., determining return on investments for the community). Align evaluation with the goals outlined in the Strategy (2012).</li> <li>o Phase II: Develop a comprehensive communication plan (e.g. data summaries, annual report to the community that profiles key housing stability data).</li> <li>o Create a “story bank” of non-identifying stories and quotes that can be used to support data, education and awareness.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Explore opportunities for further system integration (e.g., complementary intake, support and discharge policies and practices for participants accessing housing stability programs funded by the Region). Ensure practices align with the goals, values, principles to guide actions and supportive approach outlined in the Strategy (2012).</li> <li>- Increase understanding of the impact of new legislation on local housing stability programs (e.g., <i>Retirement Homes Act</i>, 2010).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 38:</b> Support the Region’s role as Community Entity for the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS).</p>	<p>Issues identified through community consultation (not necessarily exhaustive or further verified):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Concern that HPS program and funding may end March 2014.</li> </ul> <p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Submit a Community Plan for further <i>Homelessness Partnering Strategy</i> funding for 2011 to 2014. Serve as the Community Entity 2011 to 2014.</li> <li>- Advocate to <i>Homelessness Partnering Strategy</i> to continue funding past 2014 and invest in implementation of the <i>Homelessness to Housing Stability Strategy</i>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 39:</b> Support the Region’s role as Community Coordinator for the Homeless Individuals and</p>	<p>Issues identified through community consultation (not necessarily exhaustive or further verified):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Concern that national support for <i>HIFIS</i> program and Community Coordinator funding may end March 2014.</li> </ul>

Families Information System (HIFIS).	Activities may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Continue to advocate to the appropriate governing bodies to continue local implementation of the <i>Homeless Individuals and Families Information System</i>.</li><li>- Increase sustainability of the local Community Coordinator role.</li><li>- Develop tools to enhance data integrity and data reliability.</li><li>- Implement <i>Homeless Individuals and Families Information System 3.8</i>.</li><li>- Implement <i>Homeless Individuals and Families Information System 4.0</i>.</li></ul>
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## FOCUS AREA #4: SUPPORTING PEOPLE TO FEEL “AT HOME”

### Context

Community inclusion is considered to be one of the five “essentials” for ending homelessness in Waterloo Region.

The community as a whole has an important role to play in supporting people in their efforts to maintain housing stability over the long term and strengthen their attachment to the space they call home. An inclusive community ensures that everyone can fully participate in community life. It means that participation in community life is accessible to everyone and the community is designed to support people in their efforts to be included.

### Policy Framework References

- See pages 26-32 for more information about community inclusion.
- See page 33 for more information about the five essentials for ending homelessness.

### STRATEGIC DIRECTION #8: Promote community inclusion to support long term housing stability.

<p><b>Action 40:</b> Increase community inclusion.</p>	<p>Issues identified through community consultation (not necessarily exhaustive or further verified):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- People want options for meaningful activity, to be included in the community and/or to connect with others.</li> <li>- Limited informal support connections can lead to isolation.</li> <li>- People living in low income experience community exclusion.</li> </ul> <p>Activities may include:</p> <p><u>General:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support the implementation of the Region's <i>Comprehensive Approach to Poverty Reduction</i>.</li> <li>- Support the community to engage in broad-based efforts to reduce poverty.</li> <li>- Develop a community inclusion inventory (e.g., that catalogues all low cost/no cost programs available in the areas of education, transportation and recreation).</li> <li>- Increase capacity to provide affordable replacement of identification across the region. Explore providing services at new sites in the community.</li> <li>- Gather people's stories that demonstrate the link between community inclusion and increased housing stability.</li> <li>- Enhance understanding of the use of flex funds to support community inclusion opportunities through STEP Home.</li> <li>- Design and implement a process to recognize community inclusion activities across the region (e.g., award).</li> </ul>
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	<p><u>Contribution:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expand opportunities for pre-employment activities for people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss geared toward specific support needs (e.g., life skills, social activities, volunteering).</li> <li>- Design and implement a program(s) for people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss to build skills transferable to the labour market, offer education opportunities (e.g., GED) and promote community inclusion.</li> <li>- Increase capacity of housing stability programs to provide low-cost or free bus tickets and bus passes to people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss (e.g., the <i>Region's Transit for Reduced Income Program – TRIP</i>).</li> </ul> <p><u>Cultural:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop a social marketing campaign to promote the importance of community inclusion similar to the <i>Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council "Say Hi"</i> campaign (e.g., promote the idea that "downtown spaces are for everyone").</li> </ul> <p><u>Financial:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support the <i>Money Matters Collaborative</i> to increase understanding and awareness of financial inclusion as well as capacity to support people with financial inclusion.</li> <li>- Increase access to financial literacy training for people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss. <sup>HHSS1 (3.1)</sup></li> <li>- Create a <i>Financial Inclusion Inventory for Waterloo Region</i> and continue to promote awareness of the programs and initiatives identified in the document (e.g., banks, credit unions, community education and support programs, identification supports, income tax support, trusteeships).</li> </ul> <p><u>Political:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase capacity for inclusion of people with lived experience of homelessness or at-risk of housing loss in policy and program design and delivery (e.g., develop tools to support advisory groups of people with lived experience, increase the number of programs that consult with advisory groups of people with lived experience <sup>HHSS1 (1.5)</sup>).</li> <li>- Provide training and educational opportunities for members of advisory groups of people with lived experience of homelessness.</li> <li>- Design and implement a process to recognize the impact that advisory groups of people with lived experience of homelessness or at-risk of housing loss have in the community and their role in ending homelessness (e.g., an award).</li> </ul> <p><u>Recreation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Advocate to the appropriate governing bodies to maximize current investments in community inclusion of people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss (e.g., <i>Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport</i>, area municipalities for increase accessibility of libraries, neighbourhood centres, recreation programs and facilities).</li> </ul>
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	<p><u>Social:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Expand access to family relationship reconciliation/mediation services to support experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss to re-engage with family members.</li><li>- Increase access to electronic communication tools for people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of housing loss (e.g., telephones, computers/tablets, Talk 2 One service).</li></ul>
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## CHAPTER 4: NEXT STEPS

The Action Framework makes up one of the two complementary frameworks that inform the Strategy (2012). It brings the Strategy (2012) to life through the identification of 40 actions organized within four focus areas and 8 strategic directions, along with associated issues and potential activities.

**Everyone has a role to play in ending homelessness.** This document has been inspired through the commitment and dedication of all community partners in Waterloo Region. The Action Framework is locally generated and has been informed through extensive community input involving people with lived experience of homelessness, the housing stability system, as well as other community systems. It also includes information emerging from a number of background reports generated within and outside of the local housing stability system.

### **Strategy (2012) Implementation**

Following release and distribution of the Strategy (2012), work will begin to identify local leadership for activities within each of the actions. Progress with implementation of the Strategy depends on strategic investments and requires dedicated, collaborative effort among *all* orders of government and partners in the community.

As part of the implementation of the Provincial Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy (2010) and the new *Housing Services Act, 2011*, the Region will be required to submit a ten year housing and homelessness plan to the Province by January 1, 2014. It is anticipated that the Strategy (2012) (including the Policy Framework and Action Framework) as well as the updated Community Action Plan for Low to Moderate Level Housing (expected to be released in 2013) will be used to meet this deliverable.

Processes to facilitate implementation of the actions, progress monitoring, communication and evaluation activities for these plan(s) beyond 2013 are pending finalization of the local ten year housing and homelessness plan. Community consultation will inform these next steps.

### **Measuring Progress**

Prior to the initiation of the ten year housing and homelessness plan, the Region will facilitate the development of a Strategy progress report that covers the period January 2011 through to December 2013. This report will increase understanding around both what was accomplished (progress with each of the 40 actions) as well as what difference it made (outcomes related to the goals of the Strategy). To date, initial indicators of collective impact towards the Strategy goals for 2013, 2018 and 2023 have been identified in the Action Framework (see Table 3), while baseline measures and objectives will be included in the ten year housing and homelessness plan and/or the Strategy 2013 progress report.

It is also expected that there will continue to be a significant positive impact on the community as a result of the Strategy (2012) that is more difficult to quantify. Some examples may include the development of better ways to work together in the system

and the possibility of its influence on community awareness campaigns designed to educate people about homelessness and housing stability.

### Living Plan

Although the Action Framework serves as a longer-term plan toward the shared goal of ending homelessness in Waterloo Region, it is anticipated that the activities within the 40 actions will continue to evolve as a result of the following factors:

- Issues and activities are not necessarily exhaustive
- The need to adapt to changing needs and circumstances in the community
- Shifting landscapes (e.g., funding, policy changes, political support)
- The implementation of the Provincial Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy (2010) and the new *Housing Services Act, 2011*

**Table 3.** Initial indicators of collective impact

Initial indicator of collective impact		2013 Objective	2018 Objective	2023 Objective
<b>STRATEGY (2012) GOAL #1: Support a Shared Approach To Ending Homelessness.</b>				
Action areas have activities that are completed or in progress		Establish baseline and report where possible.	TBD	TBD
"Most Significant Change" (MSC) survey		Deliver MSC survey	Deliver MSC survey	Deliver MSC survey
<b>STRATEGY (2012) GOAL #2: Support People Experiencing Homelessness or At-Risk of Housing Loss to Increase Housing Stability.</b>				
a) Increase housing retention	Number of people served at imminent risk of housing loss who were prevented from losing their housing or experiencing homelessness	Establish baseline and report where possible.	TBD	TBD
	Percentage of households who retain their housing	Establish baseline and report where possible.	TBD	TBD
b) Reduce the length of time people experience transitional homelessness	Number of people accessing <i>Emergency Shelter</i> programs	Establish baseline and report where possible.	TBD	TBD
	Length of stay by individuals who repeatedly use <i>Emergency Shelter</i> programs	Establish baseline and report where possible.	TBD	TBD
	Number of families accessing <i>Emergency Shelter</i> programs	Establish baseline and report where possible.	TBD	TBD

Initial indicator of collective impact		2013 Objective	2018 Objective	2023 Objective
	Length of stay by families who repeatedly use <i>Emergency Shelter</i> programs	Establish baseline and report where possible.	TBD	TBD
c)	End persistent homelessness	Number of people experiencing persistent homelessness who have obtained permanent housing through STEP Home	Support 500 people to move to or retain more conventional housing. <sup>8</sup>	TBD
d)	Increase community inclusion	Indicators to be developed	TBD	TBD
<b>STRATEGY (2012) GOAL #3: Strengthen the Housing Stability System.</b>				
	System Component Checklist to measure improvements towards creating an effective housing stability system	Implement System Component Checklist	TBD	TBD

<sup>8</sup> Between 2008 and 2011, 321 people experiencing persistent homelessness have been supported to move to or to retain more conventional housing in STEP Home. It is anticipated that a further 179 people will be supported by the end of 2013 to total 500.

## APPENDIX A: COMPLEMENTARY REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

Several reports have been released by other local community systems with specific recommendations that complement the actions of the Strategy (2012). These report recommendations have been referenced as activities of certain actions in Chapter 3, where appropriate. They will be monitored for implementation progress.

1. Recommendations from [The Missing Pieces: An Assessment of Service Assets and Gaps for Offenders and Victims of Interpersonal Violence in Waterloo Region](#) within the scope of the Strategy (2012) include:

- Create emergency housing for elder abuse victims.
- Create more affordable and safe housing for domestic violence victims.
- Open a dry house in Waterloo Region.
- Open a half way house for women in Waterloo Region.

2. Recommendations from the *From Prison to a Place Called Home: Recommendations from a Forum for Federally Sentenced Women*:

- Open a halfway house for federally sentenced women in Kitchener/Waterloo.
- Correctional Service of Canada increase the per diem that is allotted for women's halfway houses in Ontario.
- More promotion of Private Home Placements be conducted in the community so people become aware of this option.
- Correctional Service of Canada reconsider the current Private Home Placement model to make it more feasible and less complicated for homeowners to apply to and access.
- More Private Home Placements for women offered in Ontario.
- Form a working group comprised of representatives from the prison as well as community organizations relevant to federally sentenced women that focuses on providing individualized, wraparound support for women leaving the Grand Valley Institute.
- Federally sentenced women be identified on community agencies' priority population lists so they have access to resources to help secure housing.
- Grand Valley Institute continue to work with local organizations to provide women with identification and necessary documentation prior to being released.
- Deliver information sessions about the resources available in the community that the women are returning to prior to release.
- Create and distribute specific reintegration packages to the women, detailing services available to them in the community they are being released to.
- Approve more 60 day Unescorted Temporary Absences for women close to their release date so they can slowly transition into the community they are moving to.
- Correctional Service of Canada provide permanent, stable funding to social support programs such as Stride and other volunteer-based social support programs.
- Provide supervised internet access to women in Grand Valley Institute for housing searches prior to release.

- Provide supervised internet access to the women in Grand Valley Institute for education and employment purposes.
- 3. Recommendations from the [Waterloo Region Integrated Drugs Strategy](#):
  - Increase availability and variety of longer-term housing stability program options that offer Level 1–4 support on the *Substance Use Services Continuum in the Context of Housing* (Appendix D) and also consider options along the *Medical Services Continuum in the Context of Housing* (Appendix D).
  - Establish a local managed alcohol program (Level 5 on the *Substance Use Services Continuum in the Context of Housing*) (Appendix E) and also consider options along the *Medical Services Continuum in the Context of Housing* (Appendix E).
  - Explore options for improved and coordinated community response for residences where people are engaged in problematic substance use.
  - Explore the capacity within the existing service system (e.g., police services, withdrawal management, fixed street outreach/drop-ins, emergency shelter) to offer a safe temporary space where people under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs who have encountered service restrictions from all other agencies can stay and/or become sober.
  - Refer the following housing stability recommendations to be considered within the update of the Strategy (2012):
    - Increase availability and variety of longer-term housing stability program options for people experiencing persistent homelessness with complex issues (e.g., mental health, substance use, physical health.).
    - Increase availability and variety of longer-term housing stability program options for youth.
    - Further explore and expand harm reduction services within the existing emergency shelter programs.
    - Ensure consistent approach and messaging related to length of stay based on individualized plans within *Emergency Shelter* programs.
    - Further explore the need for *Time-Limited Residence* programs that incorporate a harm reduction approach.

