



July 2012

## **Local Housing and Homelessness Plans – Starter Kit**

The Starter Kit is intended to give service managers who have not previously developed housing or homelessness strategies the basic tools to develop a basic draft of a housing plan which can be used to guide discussions in their local community. The sections included in the Kit are:

- Project organization
- Basics of consultation
- Assessing Needs
  - Data Pack
- Issues identification
- Developing Action Plans
- Draft Strategy

Other sources of information to help organize the development of a local housing and homelessness plan can be found in the CMHC report [CMHC Guide Local Housing Strategy](#) and the OPPI publication [OPPI - planning a community housing strategy](#)

### **Project Organization**

- Organizational Readiness
  - appoint a Project Manager
  - engage political leadership and find a project champion
  - establish a steering committee
    - include partners from other municipal departments
  - assemble Baseline information
- Develop a terms of reference
  - a statement of what the project is to achieve
  - project team governance and reporting structure
  - roles for committee members
  - identify the components of the work
  - include workplan - timelines and budget
- Assess resources
  - recruit internal support
  - hire outside consultants where appropriate
- References

- London's description of approach to the planning process: [London - Nov 2011 National Housing Day Presentation on LCHS reviewed by LS](#)
- Ottawa's timelines: [Ottawa - 10 Year Housing Plan timeline](#)
- Peterborough's project definition: [Peterborough-Housing and Homelessness Plan definition](#)
- generic terms of reference: [Regional Housing Strategy - terms of reference](#)
- York's terms of reference for hiring a consultant: [YORK - Community Consultation Scope of Work - July '12](#)

## **Basics of Consultation**

- Articulate the purpose of the consultation
  - means of engaging stakeholders
  - communication of ideas to increase public engagement
- Establish the principles governing the conduct of the consultations:
  - open and exploratory vs. focused and contained
- Create focus - what do you want the consultation to be about, such as:
  - what are the key challenges faced by populations identified
  - short comings of existing programs
  - what are the feasible options moving forward
- Identify stakeholders
  - create stakeholder database to ensure easy and complete communications
- Develop implementation plan
  - how will stakeholders be consulted
  - when will the consultations take place
  - what will be handed out before hand
  - develop methods
    - focus groups
    - community forums
    - workshops
    - surveys

## **Assessing Housing and Homelessness Needs**

A fundamental step to understanding what direction a Service Manager housing strategy should take is the understanding of what the housing current needs of the whole population and project how those needs will change over the period covered in the plan. A clear and complete needs assessment done at the beginning of the plan development process helps ensure all partners and stakeholders begin with a shared understanding of the issues before them.

Steps to assess housing need:

1. Assemble available data to develop a profile of the community. This includes demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the community as well as specific housing market indicators

- HHRC Data Pack (*under development - the HHRC is working with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and CMHC to consolidate publicly available data in a convenient form to assist Service Managers to create community profiles and identify some of the major housing and homelessness issues in their communities. This product will be available in the summer*)
  - [types and sources of data](#)
  - [HHRC - Needs Assessment questions](#)
2. Develop projections of future needs
  3. Identify major issues in the existing housing system
  4. Determine gaps across whole housing system, that is the difference between housing needs by type and cost and what will be available in the housing market
  5. Supplement with information available through consultation
  6. Identify and prioritize key issues

As many Service Managers have found the development of a needs assessment is a defined project which requires skills that are not normally available within a Service Managers staff and consequently can be successfully outsourced to a consultant.

### **Issue Identification**

It is important to identify all issues in the housing system that surface as a result of the analysis in the housing needs assessment. The Service Manager will not be able to address many of these issues, but a comprehensive statement of needs will allow partners and agencies in other sectors to become more involved and possibly begin problem solving in new and innovative ways.

Some of the key areas that should be addressed are:

- levels of affordability
- availability of appropriate housing for people with all types of resource needs
- condition of the housing stock

### **Draft the Strategy**

The development of a long term plan is a long and iterative process. Publishing a draft strategy will allow all members of the community to have a shared understanding of the challenges ahead and a starting point to contribute to future developments.

Steps:

1. Articulate vision - what you want to see happen as a result of this plan
  - make sure vision address the whole housing system and the full continuum of housing needs
  - make sure vision is inclusive and addresses the aspirations of all stakeholders in your communities
  - Who was involved in the development of the vision? Are all stakeholders represented?
2. Clearly articulate issues identified in the public consultation and needs assessment
3. Assess challenges

- has the information been used to describe the issues appropriate
- have all stakeholders had the opportunity to contribute
- have all externalities been identified.
- 4. Describe opportunities
  - link to needs of other identified agencies and stakeholders
- 5. Priorities
  - describe the 3 to 5 high level outcomes that will be the focus of your activities
  - identify what will be the result of your activities – can these results be described as a target
- 6. Implementation
  - communicate clear actionable high level outcome
  - ensure outcomes relate to the vision
  - identify is responsible for plan implementation
  - communicate how will success be measured and how will progress be monitored
  - describe how stakeholders will get involved

Strategy Checklist: [HHRC - Strategy checklist](#)

### **Developing Action Plans**

Often an overlooked element of a long term strategy is the development of the short and medium action plans. A long term strategy must set the vision for where the housing should go, and lay out a path for getting there. Action plans contain the short and medium term commitments which will start the community on the path to achieving the vision.

Steps:

- Identify the key issues to be addressed in the strategy
  - the results of the needs analysis and public consultation will have identified a series of issues across the whole housing system which require attention
- Develop options to address the key issues
  - explore resources ...
- Describe how the options will be developed, such as:
  - use of Government programs
  - development of partnerships
- Commit to outcomes that will result from these actions
  - set specific objectives and targets
  - set a schedule for the implementation
  - identify groups responsible for the implementation

Examples of good action plans:

- [Vancouver - Housing Homelessness Action Plan 2012-2014](#)