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# Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy

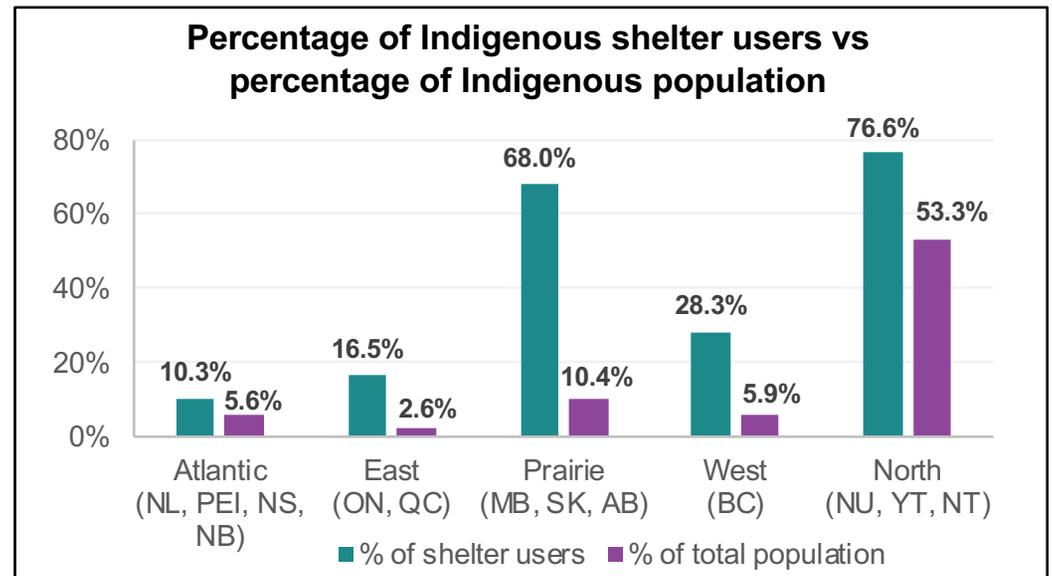
National First Nations  
Homelessness Symposium

June 8, 2021

# Indigenous Homelessness in Canada

- Indigenous peoples are overrepresented amongst the homeless population:
  - Ten times more likely to use a shelter than non-Indigenous peoples.
  - Make up ~30% of the homeless population, but only ~5% of the general population.

- Overrepresentation is a challenge **everywhere**.
  - The prevalence of Indigenous homelessness varies widely by region, however Indigenous peoples are overrepresented in shelters in **all regions and communities**.



- Point-in-Time Counts demonstrate that Indigenous overrepresentation is even larger in hidden homelessness (e.g., couch surfing), suggesting that shelter statistics under-estimate the size of this population.

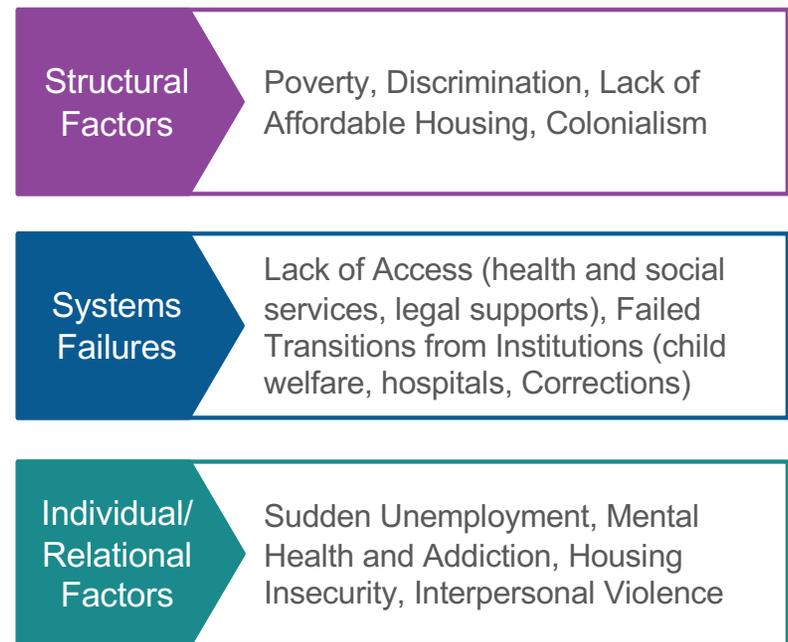
- Preventing and reducing homelessness nationally therefore requires a focus on addressing Indigenous homelessness.



# Indigenous Homelessness in Canada

- The experience of colonialism and intergenerational trauma, as well as ongoing systemic discrimination puts Indigenous people at greater risk of experiencing the factors contributing to homelessness, and therefore to homelessness itself.
- In many cities across Canada, racism in the private rental market and a lack of affordable housing create significant barriers for Indigenous people to access adequate housing.
- There is an estimated housing gap on-reserve of 85,000 units. This leads to migration to urban centres for First Nations people experiencing precarious housing situations, and increases demand on the urban housing stock as well as homelessness services.

## Factors Contributing to Homelessness



# Indigenous Definition of Homelessness

- Recognizing the diversity of Indigenous Peoples in Canada, and that Indigenous Peoples may choose to refer to themselves in their own languages, the following definition of Indigenous homelessness is inclusive of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit, status and non-status persons, regardless of residency or membership status.
- For the purposes of Reaching Home, and subject to revision based on ongoing engagement and consultation with Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous homelessness refers to:

“Indigenous Peoples who are in the state of having no home due to colonization, trauma and/or whose social, cultural, economic, and political conditions place them in poverty. Having no home includes: those who alternate between shelter and unsheltered, living on the street, couch surfing, using emergency shelters, living in unaffordable, inadequate, substandard and unsafe accommodations or living without the security of tenure; anyone regardless of age, released from facilities (such as hospitals, mental health and addiction treatment centers, prisons, transition houses), fleeing unsafe homes as a result of abuse in all its definitions, and any youth transitioning from all forms of care”.



# Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy

- In November 2017, the Government of Canada announced a 10-year, \$40-billion National Housing Strategy (NHS).
- Reaching Home, launched in April 2019, supports a community-based approach aimed at preventing and reducing homelessness in Canada.
  - Provides direct financial support to communities across Canada to help them address their local homelessness needs
  - Comprised of four community-based funding streams: Indigenous Homelessness, Designated Communities, Rural and Remote Homelessness, and Territorial Homelessness
  - Includes funding for Distinctions-Based Approaches as well as Community Capacity and Innovation



# Reaching Home: Indigenous Funding

- **Indigenous Homelessness stream: \$145 million from 2019-2024**
  - This stream provides funding for the delivery of Indigenous-specific homelessness programming in 30 urban communities and 7 regions across the country for off-reserve, pan-Indigenous supports.
- **Territorial Homelessness stream: \$23 million from 2019-2024**
  - While not Indigenous-specific, the stream has a significant focus on Indigenous homelessness given the high proportion of Indigenous people in each of the Territories.
- Activities under these streams are overseen by a Community Advisory Board, which develops a community plan, recommends projects for funding, and supports the response to homelessness at the community level.
- Funding is delivered to a Community Entity (e.g. local Indigenous not-for-profit organization), which implements the community plan and is responsible for the selection, approval and management of projects in the local area.
- **Distinctions-Based Approaches: \$76 million for 2019-2024**
  - Priorities determined in collaboration with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis partners, including Modern Treaty Holders.



# Reaching Home: First Nations Distinction-Based Approaches

- Aligned with the Permanent Bilateral Mechanism established between the Government of Canada and the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), funding of **\$35.8 million over 5 years** (2019-2024) has been dedicated under Reaching Home for the co-development of First Nations distinctions-based approaches to homelessness.
- Discussions and co-development activities have been ongoing between Reaching Home and the AFN. To date, funding is supporting:
  - A systemic literature review to synthesize the data and research on First Nations homelessness and housing on- and off-reserve;
  - An environmental scan aimed at surveying the First Nations homelessness landscape;
  - A systems map with a goal to understand the actors involved in First Nations homelessness, including individuals, organizations and resources; and
  - This symposium, creating opportunities for dialogue and information-sharing on the unique needs of First Nations experiencing homelessness.
- Reaching Home funding will also be supporting:
  - Future engagement activities on the development of a national First Nations action plan on homelessness on- and off-reserve; and
  - Homelessness priorities, including service delivery projects, within First Nations communities.



# Reaching Home: Implementing Modern Treaty Approaches

- Over **\$12 million over four years** (2020-2024) in Reaching Home funding was also made available to Modern Treaty Holders who have provisions within their treaties related to the delivery of social services.
- This includes 18 First Nations governments in the Northwest Territories, Yukon, British Columbia, Manitoba and Quebec.
- To date, grant agreements to fund homelessness-related projects have been reached with 11 First Nations governments.
- Examples of projects being funded:
  - Basic needs and services
  - Transportation
  - Tiny home villages
  - Emergency housing units
  - Supported living facilities
- Discussions to identify homelessness priorities and specific activities continue with the remaining First Nations Modern Treaty Holders.

