



REACHING HOME

CANADA'S HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

Reaching Home Leadership Enhancement Workbook

About the Reaching Home Leadership Enhancement Workbook

The *Reaching Home Leadership Enhancement Workbook* was developed by OrgCode Consulting Inc. for homeless-serving sector leaders, including Community Entity (CE) representatives and Community Advisory Board (CAB) members.

Launched in February 2020 at a forum for Reaching Home CEs hosted by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), the Workbook is intended to support leaders with engaging in important topics related to preventing and reducing homelessness. More specifically, the Workbook includes a series of 50 questions that can be used to help frame discussions at the local level under three themes: Leadership Capacity and Momentum; Funding and Performance; and Systems-Based Leaderships and Partnerships.

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It is available upon request in multiple formats (large print, Braille, MP3, audio CD, e-text CD, DAISY, or Accessible PDF), by contacting 1 800 O-Canada (1-800-622-6232). By teletypewriter (TTY), call 1-800-926-9105.

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Part A) Leadership Capacity and Momentum

Motivation for Change

As a leader, it is very important – especially during times of transition – to be able to communicate to others why the way things are now, must change. Knowing your personal “why” helps you to find the courage to take necessary risks and stay motivated, despite setbacks and disappointments. Also, knowing the community “why” can help to bring others on-board and stay committed to the change initiative.

1. Why do you do this work?

2. Why does your community want to prevent and reduce homelessness?

Understanding Your System

According to the [Reaching Home Coordinated Access Guide](#) (2019), a housing and homelessness response system refers to “all of the service providers within a geographic boundary that help individuals and families with their housing challenges”. In an integrated system with Coordinated Access, these providers most often use the same Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS).

Having a good understanding of your system will help to inform your approach to supporting transformational change and tailor your key messages.

3. How do you describe your system to people that do not engage with the services every day?

4. Describe the purpose or mandate of your system. What do you do?

5. What values are important to you and your system? What do you believe?

Vision Setting

“The best vision is one that challenges organizations – and the people within them – to move to what they want. This means leaving behind, changing, leveraging, or adding on to what they already have.”

A vision describes the ideal state or picture of the community as people would like it to be. It forms the foundation for the change initiative by guiding the broader strategy and inspiring people to take action.

6(a) What is the vision for preventing and reducing homelessness over the next 3-5 years?

6(b) To realize this vision, what does the response to preventing and reducing homelessness look like in 3-5 years? Make the description vivid.

6(c) Name up to 5 audacious goals that will be achieved over the next 3-5 years that will move your community closer to realizing this vision.

Goal #1:

Goal #2:

Goal #3:

Goal #4:

Goal #5:

Collective Impact

Collective impact brings people together, in a structured way, to achieve social change. Successful collective impact initiatives share five conditions:

- **Common Agenda:** Coming together to collectively define the problem and create a shared vision to solve it.
- **Shared Measurement:** Agreeing to track progress in the same way using data, which allows for continuous improvement and mutual accountability.
- **Mutually-Reinforcing Activities:** Coordinating collective efforts with a joint action plan and differentiated activities, to maximize the end result.
- **Continuous Communication:** Consistent and open communication that builds trust and relationships among all participants.
- **Backbone Support:** Having a team dedicated to convening participants and coordinating the work of the group.

7. Identify one action for each collective impact condition that will help your system to strengthen its outcomes.

Collective Impact Condition	Improvement Action
Common Agenda	
Shared Measurement	
Mutually-Reinforcing Activities	
Continuous Communication	
Backbone Support	

Leaderful Practice

Leaderful practices share the following four elements:

- **Concurrent.** Having more than one leader at the same time in an organization; leaders willingly and naturally share power with others.
- **Collective.** Knowing leadership does not come from individual influence; it comes from the process of people working together for a common purpose.
- **Collaborative.** Where all members, not just the position leader, contribute to the common good of the organization through open dialogue and discussion.
- **Compassionate.** Commitment to preserving the dignity of others and the belief that everyone has value.

8. Identify one action for each element of a leaderful practice that will help your system to strengthen its leadership capacity and momentum.

Leaderful Element	Improvement Action
Concurrent	
Collective	
Collaborative	
Compassionate	

Equality, Equity and Justice

Homelessness often highlights disparities in a community, where certain groups of people face different challenges than others. While responding to the day-to-day crises of homelessness, it is necessary to also identify and respond to these disparities.

Some disparities relate to how community members access resources that help to address homelessness. Access to resources can be framed in several ways, such as:

- **Equality:** Everyone accesses the same level and type of community resources (a “one size fits all” approach). Housing outcomes may not be the same for each individual or family, depending on their circumstances.
- **Equity:** People get access to different services based on their individualized needs, helping to ensure that people with different circumstances achieve similar housing outcomes (a tailored approach, including prioritization).
- **Justice:** People have an equal right to access housing and other resources that meet their basic needs (a rights-based approach).

9(a) Does your community take more of an equality approach or equity approach or justice approach to addressing homelessness?

9(b) How do you think this influences your community’s response to homelessness and the results of the work to prevent and reduce homelessness?

10. As a leader, what is your role in ensuring that your system is representative, inclusive and responsive to disparities?

11(a) Name three disparities that you and your community need to focus on during this round of federal investment in homelessness. What change do you want to see in the next 3-5 years?

Priority Disparity	Change in 3-5 Years
1.	
2.	
3.	

11(b) Select one disparity. What strategies will you use to make progress over the next 3-5 years to resolve this issue?

Getting Upstream to Homelessness Prevention

There are many competing demands for resources in a community. While responding to the day-to-day crises of homelessness, it is necessary to also focus upstream to prevent homelessness.

Homelessness prevention can include things like funds to cover rent arrears, which help individuals and families to avoid homelessness when they are facing an eviction. Working further upstream can include efforts to support better discharge planning with coordinated access to housing and supports before people leave the child welfare, health care or correctional systems or offering outreach in schools to ensure that youth experiencing housing instability are well connected to resources before they lose their housing.

12(a) What are three upstream activities that you and your community need to focus on during this round of federal investment in homelessness? Why do these tasks need to be a priority?

Upstream Activity	Why Is It Important?
1.	
2.	
3.	

12(b) Select one upstream activity. What strategies will you use to make positive change in this area?

Change Leadership

There are different styles of leadership and all have their place in a community's efforts to prevent and reduce homelessness. Three common styles are:

- **Transformative Leaders:** Feel dissatisfied with the status quo. See the potential for radical realignment and work to achieve their vision.
- **Servant Leaders:** Focus on the people that do the work, rather than the specific tasks of a change initiative. Support their teams behind the scenes.
- **Thought Leaders:** Analyze social policy and programming in order to design effective strategies and plans of action. May not have all the tools to implement the change initiative; need transformative and servant leaders to bring their ideas to life.

13(a) Who is providing **transformative leadership** in your community's work to prevent and reduce homelessness?

13(b) What are they accomplishing through that transformation?

14(a) Who is providing **servant leadership** in your community's work to prevent and reduce homelessness?

14(b) What are they accomplishing through that service?

15(a) Who is providing **thought leadership** in your community's work to prevent and reduce homelessness?

15(b) What are they accomplishing through those thoughts?

Creative Tension

Most communities have instances where projects and programs are not fully aligned with the local strategy to prevent and reduce homelessness. There is often work to be done to improve that alignment.

16(a) Are there any examples of misalignment in your community?

16(b) What strategies will you put in place to address this misalignment?

Naming and Addressing Conflict

Change can create new conflicts and/or make existing conflicts worse. There are different kinds of conflict that may need to be addressed:

- **Task Conflict:** Disagreement on what will be done.
- **Process Conflict:** Disagreement on how it will be done.
- **Relationship Conflict:** Disagreement with each other.

17(a) Which **task conflicts** need to be named and resolved to be successful in your community's work to prevent and reduce homelessness?

17(b) Select one task conflict and describe your strategy for resolving it.

18(a) Which **process conflicts** need to be named and resolved to be successful in your community's work to prevent and reduce homelessness?

18(b) Select one process conflict and describe your strategy for resolving it.

19(a) Which **relationship conflicts** need to be named and resolved to be successful in your community's work to prevent and reduce homelessness?

19(b) Select one relationship conflict and describe your strategy for resolving it.

Part B) Funding and Performance

Investing in Change; Spending on Impact

Funding is often used as a tool to help reorganize systems of care. Communities can choose to invest in the same things year after year and they will likely get the same results. Or they can make changes to their investment plan to support different outcomes.

Reaching Home offers a new opportunity for the community to reprioritize what they want to invest in and improve outcomes related to preventing and reducing homelessness.

20(a) What is the biggest change(s) you want to see happen in your community with Reaching Home funding?

20(b) Why is this change important?

20(c) What impact do you think it will make if this change is made?

Braiding Funding and Initiatives

In addition to federal funding, there is often provincial/territorial funding for preventing and reducing homelessness, and sometimes municipal/county funding as well.

21. What opportunities are there to enhance the work of braiding different funding sources together for greater impact?

22(a) Are there opportunities for alignment in outcomes, proposals, plans and/or reporting?

22(b) What is the strategy to get there?

Outcomes

Reaching Home outcomes include **reductions** in the following:

- Homelessness overall;
- Indigenous homelessness;
- Inflows to homelessness;
- Returns to homelessness; and,
- Chronic homelessness.

23. Which Reaching Home outcome are you most excited about? Why?

24(a) Which Reaching Home outcome will present the greatest challenge to your community? Why?

24(b) What strategies might you put in place to help mitigate those concerns?

25. As a leader, how do you go about embracing and supporting the Reaching Home outcomes when they were generated by a funder rather than named and owned specifically by your community?

26. What, if any, are your specific local outcomes that you have identified as wanting to tackle?

Dashboards

Leaders lead people, focusing on implementation of vision and strategy. Leaders monitor *outcomes* that describe progress with achieving the vision. For example, is chronic homelessness being reduced? Or, are fewer people coming into the system?

Managers lead projects, focusing on implementation of action plans and tasks. Managers monitor *outputs* and activities that describe *how* outcomes are being achieved. For example, how are people experiencing chronic homelessness being supported to find housing and stay housed? Can these successes be replicated in other parts of the system? Or, where are people still being referred for shelter? How can efforts be strengthened to prevent homelessness at these points?

From a **leadership** perspective (as opposed to a **management** perspective), there is great value in selecting 3-5 key **indicators** you want to keep track of on a regular basis. These high-level data points will measure your outcomes, helping you to know if the vision is being realized and your strategies are working.

27(a) Based upon the work you envision with Reaching Home, what are 3-5 indicators that you could monitor as your Leadership Dashboard?

27(b) Why are these the right indicators for your Leadership Dashboard?

28(a) Who will produce the indicators for your Leadership Dashboard?

28(b) How will they get the information they need to keep your Leadership Dashboard current?

Tracking Progress

Communities can use different kinds of measurement to track their progress:

- **Impact measures** track progress towards the mission and long-term objectives that drive organizational focus.
- **Activity measures** track progress towards specific goals and program implementation that drive organizational behaviour.
- **Capacity measures** track progress related to the ability to get things done at all levels of the organization.

29(a) As a leader, what information will help you to know if Reaching Home is having an **impact** in your community?

29(b) What 2 or 3 specific **impact measures** make the most sense for your community related to the work of Reaching Home? Why?

30(a) As a leader, what information will help you to know if Reaching Home **activities** are resulting in effective program implementation?

30(b) Of all of the specific **activity measures** you could collect and analyze, which ones best tell the story of the work being done? Why?

31(a) As a leader, what information will help you to know if Reaching Home has positively or negatively impacted local **capacity** to prevent and reduce homelessness?

31(b) When considering specific **capacity measures**, which ones best tell the story of the ability of service providers to prevent and end homelessness? Why?

32(a) What are your system's biggest challenges when it comes to data and how it is used in the work of preventing and reducing homelessness?

32(b) What strategies might you put in place to help address those challenges?

Part C) Systems-Based Leadership & Partnerships

Empowering Partners to Feel Ownership Over Goals

The more there is alignment in strategy and sharing of goals, the easier it is to distribute the workload for implementation and to share responsibility for results, whether positive or negative.

33. What strategies are you using to create collective ownership over the goals of the community's approach to prevent and reduce homelessness?

Prioritizing Investments

In order to get the change your community wants to see in preventing and reducing homelessness, decisions will need to be made. Some of those decisions will be difficult.

There are different kinds of decision-making approaches that can be used, depending on the circumstances:

- **Consensus Model:** Talk it through to the point where everyone agrees. The priority is to reach unanimous agreement.
- **Consultative Model:** Hearing everyone's input, but not necessarily having everyone agree with the final decision. The priority is to work through a process of discussion where people feel heard and there is open dialogue before a decision is made.
- **Command Model:** Making a decision without seeking input from others. The priority is to provide direction to people about what to do.

34. Thinking ahead, when might some of the decisions that need to be made lend themselves to a **consensus** model?

35. In what situations might **consultation** be more appropriate for decision-making?

36. In what situations will you need to take a more **commanding** approach?

Scarcity vs Abundance

In the work of preventing and reducing homelessness it is easy to focus on what a community does not have rather than the assets it happens to possess.

37. Name two assets in your community that you can leverage to meet the outcomes of Reaching Home (for a review of the outcomes, see question 23).

Making Tough Calls

Preparation and planning should lead you to a place where there are tough calls to make prior to implementation.

38(a) What is an example of a tough call that needs to be made in your community to realize the vision of Reaching Home?

38(b) Why is this call important to make? How will it better position your community to reach the outcomes of Reaching Home?

38(c) What will be your approach to making the call?

38(d) What do you anticipate will be the repercussions of making the call?

38(e) What will be your approach to dealing with these potential repercussions?

Alignment

Most communities have one or more areas where programs and initiatives are not aligned with the overall strategy or vision. Work to strengthen alignment will help to ensure that desired outcomes related to preventing and reducing homelessness are realized.

39. How do you describe the work of preventing and reducing homelessness in your community?

40. How do you ensure that everyone understands the work of preventing and reducing homelessness in the same way?

41. When your community discusses and/or plans action to prevent and reduce homelessness, what are the current areas of strong alignment?

42(a) Name 2-3 areas where there are opportunities to further strengthen alignment in local strategies or plans of action to prevent and reduce homelessness.

42(b) How can you make the most of these opportunities?

43. When your community discusses and/or plans action to prevent and reduce homelessness, what are the areas of debate or contention?

44(a) As a leader, what are your greatest challenges in trying to get service providers aligned to a vision where homelessness can be prevented and reduced?

44(b) What are your strategies for addressing these challenges?

Mediating and Navigating Conflict

Conflicts do not resolve themselves. To reach the outcomes that communities would like to see over time, it is quite likely that resolution of some pre-existing conflicts will be necessary. It is also possible that new conflicts will emerge during the process of moving forward with Reaching Home implementation.

There are different kinds of styles for handling conflict:

- **Competing:** An aggressive, autocratic, confrontational, and intimidating style. Useful when you have to implement an unpopular or quick decision, the decision is vital in a crisis or it is important to let others know how important an issue is to you.
- **Accommodating:** Setting aside personal needs to please others, keep the peace and preserve relationships. Useful when one is wrong or when you want to minimize losses.
- **Avoiding:** Deliberately ignoring or withdrawing from a conflict rather than facing it. Useful when you need to delay responding, confrontation will hurt a working relationship or there is little chance of satisfying your needs.
- **Compromising:** Being willing to sacrifice some of your goals while persuading others to give up part of theirs (e.g., seeking a middle-ground position). Useful when you want to maintain the relationship and are not able/willing to invest the time required for collaboration.
- **Collaborating:** Viewing conflicts as problems to be solved where the goal is to find creative solutions that satisfy all the parties' concerns. Useful when you need to foster respect, trust, and build relationships.

45(a) What are 2-3 of the biggest conflicts in your community's work to prevent and reduce homelessness?

45(b) What are your strategies for addressing these conflicts?

45(c) What impact will there be on reaching the goals of Reaching Home if these conflicts are not resolved?

46(a) Are there any conflicts where you are uncertain as a leader in how to progress towards a resolution?

46(b) What are some strategies that you have thought of, but not yet tried?

47. As a leader, what is your most natural approach to resolving conflict?

48. Are there any opportunities to use a more **collaborative** approach (or more frequently use a collaborative approach) to addressing conflict?

Uncomfortable Conversations

To move forward with preventing and reducing homelessness in your community there is likely one or more awkward or uncomfortable conversations that you or the community as a whole need to have in order to move forward.

49(a) What is one awkward or uncomfortable conversation that you need to have?

49(b) When and how will you make it happen?

Self-Care for Leaders

Without self-care, the leader is less effective at leading. Leaders need to go through a regular process of self-reflection in order to be aware of the areas where self-care is needed. Self-care is a deliberate set of strategies that are used to ensure the leader is well and capable of harnessing the emotional energy needed to engage effectively with others, while also staying centred and balanced themselves. These strategies are personal and self-defined.

50. What are two strategies for self-care you are prepared to commit to over the next year?

Appendix A – Workbook Questions

- 1.** Why do you do this work?
- 2.** Why does your community want to prevent and end homelessness?
- 3.** How do you describe your system to people that don't engage with the services every day?
- 4.** Describe the purpose or mandate of your system? What do you do?
- 5.** What values are important to you and your system? What do you believe?
- 6(a)** What is the vision for preventing and reducing homelessness over the next 3-5 years?
- 6(b)** To realize this vision, what does the response to preventing and reducing homelessness look like in 3-5 years? Make the description vivid.
- 6(c)** Name up to 5 audacious goals that will be achieved over the next 3-5 years that will move your community closer to realizing this vision.
- 7.** Identify one action for each collective impact condition that will help your system to strengthen its outcomes.
- 8.** Identify one action for each element of a leaderful practice that will help your system to strengthen its leadership capacity and momentum.
- 9(a)** Does your community take more of an equality approach or equity approach or justice approach to addressing homelessness?
- 9(b)** How do you think this influences your community's response to homelessness and the results of the work to prevent and reduce homelessness?
- 10.** As a leader, what is your role in ensuring that your system is representative, inclusive and responsive to disparities?
- 11(a)** Name three disparities that you and your community need to focus on during this round of federal investment in homelessness. What change do you want to see in the next 3-5 years?
- 11(b)** Select one disparity. What strategies will you use to make progress over the next 3-5 years to resolve this issue?
- 12(a)** What are three upstream activities that you and your community need to focus on during this round of federal investment in homelessness? Why do these tasks need to be a priority?
- 12(b)** Select one upstream activity. What strategies will you use to make positive change in this area?
- 13(a)** Who is providing transformative leadership in your community's work to prevent and reduce homelessness?
- 13(b)** What are they accomplishing through that transformation?
- 14(a)** Who is providing servant leadership in your community's work to prevent and reduce homelessness?
- 14(b)** What are they accomplishing through that service?
- 15(a)** Who is providing thought leadership in your community's work to prevent and reduce homelessness?
- 15(b)** What are they accomplishing through those thoughts?

- 16(a)** Are there any examples of misalignment in your community?
- 16(b)** What strategies will you put in place to address this misalignment?
- 17(a)** Which task conflicts need to be named and resolved to be successful in your community's work to prevent and reduce homelessness?
- 17(b)** Select one task conflict and describe your strategy for resolving it.
- 18(a)** Which process conflicts need to be named and resolved to be successful in your community's work to prevent and reduce homelessness?
- 18(b)** Select one process conflict and describe your strategy for resolving it.
- 19(a)** Which relationship conflicts need to be named and resolved to be successful in your community's work to prevent and reduce homelessness?
- 19(b)** Select one relationship conflict and describe your strategy for resolving it.
- 20(a)** What is the biggest change(s) you want to see happen in your community with Reaching Home funding?
- 20(b)** Why is this change important?
- 20(c)** What impact do you think it will make if this change is made?
- 21.** What opportunities are there to enhance the work of braiding different funding sources together for greater impact?
- 22(a)** Are there opportunities for alignment in outcomes, proposals, plans and/or reporting?
- 22(b)** What is the strategy to get there?
- 23.** Which Reaching Home outcome are you most excited about? Why?
- 24(a)** Which Reaching Home outcome will present the greatest challenge to your community? Why?
- 24(b)** What strategies might you put in place to help mitigate those concerns?
- 25.** As a leader, how do you go about embracing and supporting the Reaching Home outcomes when they were generated by a funder rather than named and owned specifically by your community?
- 26.** What, if any, are your specific local outcomes that you have identified as wanting to tackle?
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- 32(b)** What strategies might you put in place to help address those challenges?
- 33.** What strategies are you using to create collective ownership over the goals of the community's approach to prevent and reduce homelessness?
- 34.** Thinking ahead, when might some of the decisions that need to be made lend themselves to a consensus model?
- 35.** In what situations might consultation be more appropriate for decision-making?
- 36.** In what situations will you need to take a more commanding approach?
- 37.** Name two assets in your community that you can leverage to meet the outcomes of Reaching Home (for a review of the outcomes, see question 23).
- 38(a)** What is an example of a tough call that needs to be made in your community to realize the vision of Reaching Home?
- 38(b)** Why is this call important to make? How will it better position your community to reach the outcomes of Reaching Home?
- 38(c)** What will be your approach to making the call?
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- 40.** How do you ensure that everyone understands the work of preventing and reducing homelessness in the same way?
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- 42(a)** Name 2-3 areas where there are opportunities to further strengthen alignment in local strategies or plans of action to prevent and reduce homelessness.
- 42(b)** How can you make the most of these opportunities?

- 43.** When your community discusses and/or plans action to prevent and reduce homelessness, what are the areas of debate or contention?
- 44(a)** As a leader, what are your greatest challenges in trying to get service providers aligned to a vision where homelessness can be prevented and reduced?
- 44(b)** What are your strategies for addressing these challenges?
- 45(a)** What are 2-3 of the biggest conflicts in your community's work to prevent and reduce homelessness?
- 45(b)** What are your strategies for addressing these conflicts?
- 45(c)** What impact will there be on reaching the goals of Reaching Home if these conflicts are not resolved?
- 46(a)** Are there any conflicts where you are uncertain as a leader in how to progress towards a resolution?
- 46(b)** What are some strategies that you have thought of, but not yet tried?
- 47.** As a leader, what is your most natural approach to resolving conflict?
- 48.** Are there any opportunities to use a more collaborative approach (or more frequently use a collaborative approach) to addressing conflict?
- 49(a)** What is one awkward or uncomfortable conversation that you need to have?
- 49(b)** When and how will you make it happen?
- 50.** What are two strategies for self-care you are prepared to commit to over the next year?