



homeward trust
edmonton

Request for Expressions of Interest

Supported Referrals to Prevent Chronic Homelessness

Issue Date

March 13, 2017

Request for Expressions of Interest

Homeward Trust Edmonton (HT) is requesting Expressions of Interest (EOI) for agencies interested in organizations/agencies willing to partner in the work of ending homelessness through a “supported referrals” relationship (see Supported Referrals, below). The intended purpose of this approach is to support access to housing and connection to community supports for individuals and families who are currently experiencing homelessness, so that a prolonged experience of homelessness is prevented.

Edmonton is home to a number of organizations committed to working with vulnerable individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness. These agencies are often challenged by the lack of resources available to ensure their clients have safe, stable housing, as well as inclusive supports. Homeward Trust, meanwhile, has resources available to support housing outcomes and reduce chronic homelessness in our community. Through this EOI process, Homeward Trust intends to make funds available to agencies in need of resources to access housing for this population. Funds will be made available through a “supported referral” process.

The amount of funding available to a given agency will be confirmed through the EOI process, however funds would be available for a twelve-month period, beginning in **May, 2017**. This project may be renewed depending on future availability of funding and demonstrated success.

Context

ABOUT HOMEWARD TRUST

Homeward Trust is the backbone organization leading the work to end homelessness in Edmonton. Our primary role is to coordinate responses to housing needs by working together with local agencies and all orders of government. Homeward Trust’s mandate is to provide leadership and coordinate responses to ending homelessness in Edmonton. This project involves coordinating the partner agencies in efforts to prevent chronic homelessness, and giving leadership by introducing a new model of upstream intervention for people experiencing homelessness.

We work to identify, then contract, and guide the active and engaged community organizations that are providing outstanding services to people experiencing homelessness in Edmonton. These groups are engrained in the community and have an in-depth understanding of the diversity of needs of the specific vulnerable populations they serve.

BACKGROUND: PREVENTING CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

The objectives outlined within the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness focus on both preventing and ending homelessness, with a particular focus on chronically homeless individuals. While efforts to address the needs of chronically homeless individuals and families will continue through the work of the programs delivered using a Housing First approach (including Rapid Rehousing, Intensive Case Management, Assertive Community Treatment and Permanent Supportive Housing), additional resources are needed facilitate housing access for people who have experienced homelessness for a shorter period, but who face barriers in resolving their circumstance independently.

Homeward Trust's experience in implementing the Ten-year Plan to End Homelessness has shown that more effort and investment are required to prevent homelessness and intervene "upstream" before individuals experience a long term episode of homelessness (and become "chronically homeless"). Supported referrals is an approach to partnership that Homeward Trust has piloted over the past year. This kind of relationship is intended to prevent chronic homelessness by helping community partners to intervene early in a client's experience of homelessness.

Based on the current demand for housing resources, an estimate has been developed that 250 people are becoming chronically homeless per year. Many of these individuals have connections with agencies that provide some supports, but who may be unable to assist with resources to access housing. The purpose of this REOI is to leverage those connections and existing services to reduce homelessness, while expanding the capacity of agencies to secure housing for those they are serving.

A supported referral partnership creates the opportunity to broaden the network of partners in the work of ending homelessness. It is also an opportunity for Homeward Trust to provide focused funding to agencies that are already serving the homeless population, but that may have limited capacity to help their clients access housing.

In addition, Homeward Trust will support the partnership by providing the following:

- Training opportunities related to housing, landlord relations, and client supports;
- Referral pathways for high-acuity clients who may be appropriate for Housing First, supportive housing, or other programs funded under the Ten-year Plan to End Homelessness;
- Standardized screening tools to assess barriers to housing and level of need, as well as training on the use of these tools; and
- Homeward Trust will make available a common database for all data entry
- Discounted furniture and supplies available through Find, a social enterprise furniture bank operated by Homeward Trust in support of housing efforts in community.

Scope

SUPPORTED REFERRALS

It is envisioned that through this Request for Expressions of Interest, one or more agencies will be identified as a source of "supported referrals". This would mean that, through a Memorandum of Understanding agreement, the agency would be able to access funding to secure housing for their clients who are experiencing homelessness. A supported referral partnership creates the opportunity to add housing capacity to the community supports already being provided to individuals and/or families experiencing homelessness.

To make a supported referral, the agency commits to make support services available, for a period of at least 6 months, for client who is experiencing homelessness. An agency's ability to deliver to the concept of supported referrals will be demonstrated by the submission of a brief six (6) month support services plan specific to each client's individually needs. This could be for a new client of the agency, or an existing client identified as an appropriate referral. The type of services provided to the client may vary, but the agency is also committing to help the client to access housing, and then to maintain their

housing without returning to homelessness. Services available or brokered through the agency may include (but are not limited to):

- Connecting clients to income supports;
- Life skills development;
- Supports to ensure individuals are connected to their new community either through formal or informal relationships;
- Culturally relevant responses, particularly for indigenous clients (inclusive of First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and Non-status) experiencing homelessness;
- Providing in-home visits by an outreach worker;
- Peer support and mentorship; and
- Pre-employment support bridging to the labour market.

On a monthly basis, the agency will confirm the housing status of their supported referrals until six months after they have been housed. This will meet Homeward Trust's obligation to be accountable for the impact of housing dollars; reporting on service provision is not required.

TARGET POPULATION

Individuals and families eligible for funding as a supported referral must be experiencing homelessness, which means: they are without a permanent place of residence; living on the street, in shelters or in places that are not intended or suitable for permanent residence; are "couch-surfing", or temporarily living with others for short periods of time. Youth under age 18 are not eligible to receive this funding, except as part of a family.

Clients referred to access funding for housing must be experiencing homeless, and will be screened using a simple, standardized screening tool used by the homeless-serving sector to prioritize services. The purpose of this screening will be to quickly determine the acuity of a person's barriers to housing, so that:

- Supported referrals can be targeted to persons who are experiencing barriers such that they are unlikely to be able to resolve their homelessness without additional resources; and
- Those with very high needs who require more intensive supports to end their homelessness (such as Housing First programs, supportive housing, or clinical housing teams) can be referred appropriately.

Agencies selected to provide supported referrals will be well-positioned to identify homeless individuals and families in need of housing and support. In addition, through participation in this partnership, agencies may gain access to other potential clients.

RESOURCES TO ACCESS HOUSING

Agencies selected will have access to a pool of "client start-up" funding to help clients access housing. Agencies will be able to manage to the maximum funding available, meaning that they will have flexibility in how funding is apportioned between appropriate clients according to need. This also

enables agencies to prioritize among their clients based on need in determining who will be an appropriate supported referral.

Funds may be used for:

- Security deposit;
- Rent and/or rent arrears
- Utilities and utilities hook ups, including deposit;
- Tenant's home insurance;
- Start-up groceries; and/or
- Furniture and set-up of units, including basic supplies such as dishes and cleaning supplies.

EOI Submissions

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Those interested in providing a response to the Request for Expression of Interest are to forward electronic submissions to Homeward Trust by **March 31, 2017**, to the attention of:

Homeward Trust Edmonton
6th Floor, 10242 105 Street
Edmonton AB T5J 3L5
Email: proposals@homewardtrust.ca

Any questions should be directed by email to Jarrod Bayne, Chief Programs Officer (jbayne@homewardtrust.ca), by March 17, 2017. Responses will be posted online by March 21, 2017.

Submissions should be no more than three (3) pages in length.

Submission of an Expression of Interest does not create any contractual relationship, obligation or duty between Homeward Trust Edmonton and the submitting parties, nor is HTE committing to respond to all interested parties. All submissions will be treated as confidential and due diligence will be exercised to maintain the respondents' confidentiality. HTE may request modifications to submissions at any time.

REVIEW AND SELECTION

An Expression of Interest is not an application to funding but demonstrates a proponent's level of interest and willingness, and ability to deliver the scope of the potential MOU agreement.

Homeward Trust is a community-based organization committed to transparency. All submissions are subject to a community review process and Board approval as follows:

- Homeward Trust administration will review submissions and prepare an assessment. Should multiple submissions be received, these will be ranked.
- Submissions, ranking, and administration's assessment are submitted for review by HTE's Project Review Committee (PRC) and Indigenous Advisory Council (IAC). These groups provide advice and feedback on the suitability of submissions received. In addition to this advice, scope of available funding will be considered in identifying the number of candidates for an MOU agreement, and the funding available to each.

- Successful proponent(s) will be notified by **April 24, 2017**.

Homeward Trust will review received Expressions of Interest with consideration of the following characteristics:

- Agency's experience working successfully with Edmontonians experiencing homelessness;
- Organizational capacity to support homeless clients, and connect participants with services commonly required by those experiencing homelessness. This may include identified support services provided by the agency, and/or partnerships in place to deliver supports;
 - Agency experience in helping clients to access housing, and/or ability to support individuals while in housing should be highlighted;
- Experience, capacity, connections, and/or history related to the delivery of inclusive and culturally-appropriate services;
- Alignment with the values that guide implementation of Edmonton's Ten-year Plan to End Homelessness, including:
 - Housing First;
 - Trauma-informed care; and
 - Harm reduction.