



Request for Expressions of Interest

Supported Referrals to House LGBTQ2S Youth Experiencing Homelessness

Issue Date

March 10, 2017

Request for Expressions of Interest

Homeward Trust Edmonton (HTE) is requesting Expressions of Interest (EOI) from organizations/agencies willing to partner in the work of ending homelessness for youth who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, and/or Two-Spirited (LGBTQ2S).

Edmonton is home to a number of organizations committed to working with vulnerable youth who identify as LGBTQ2S, including those 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 received funding from the Government of Alberta targeted specifically towards the subpopulation of homeless youth who identify as LGBTQ2S. 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 (see below).

Funding is available for 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 Edmonton (HTE) is a community-based organization that provides leadership and resources towards ending homelessness in Edmonton. Homeward Trust’s mandate is fulfilled through leading initiatives and programs, engaging community stakeholders and partners, conducting research, creating awareness and funding housing and support services projects.

BACKGROUND

This project is aligned with a number of ongoing community initiatives that are part of the work to end homelessness in Edmonton.

Over the past 2 years, there has been significant progress made towards coordinating efforts to address youth homelessness across the serving sector, including the release of the [Government of Alberta’s Supporting Healthy and Successful Transitions to Adulthood: A Plan to Prevent and Reduce Youth Homelessness](#) and the launch of [Edmonton’s Community Strategy to End Youth Homelessness in Edmonton \(“Youth Homelessness Strategy”\)](#). Within the latter document, Strategy 3.1 identifies the need for targeted responses to specialized homeless youth populations, including those who identify as LGBTQ2S.

Homeward Trust receives funding from Alberta Human Services to implement the provincial Youth Plan and Edmonton’s Youth Homelessness Strategy, focusing on application of Housing First and integrated service systems towards rapid reduction of youth homelessness. In addition, time-limited funding has been made available that is specifically targeted to address the needs of LGBTQ2S youth experiencing homelessness. This funding is an enhancement of the [Government of Alberta’s Outreach Support Services Initiative under A Plan for Alberta: Ending Homelessness in 10 Years](#).

LGBTQ2S YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

The 2016 Homeless Count identified 305 homeless youth under the age of 24 in Edmonton. Faced with the urgent need to address homelessness for this population, Homeward Trust Edmonton and its partners released the Community Strategy to End Youth Homelessness in Edmonton (“Youth Homelessness Strategy”) in 2015. Addressing homelessness among youth is not only important in terms of outcomes for those impacted, but also as a measure to prevent chronic homelessness among adults in the future. It is an essential component of the work to end homelessness in Edmonton.

Within the youth homeless population in Edmonton, youth identifying as LGBTQ2S are substantially overrepresented, estimated between 25-40% of homeless youth in Canada. In addition, LGBTQ2S youth face increased risk of violence, sexual exploitation, substance abuse, and suicide. Family conflict, gaps in social services, and discrimination in housing, employment, and education make it difficult for many LGBTQ2S youth to secure safe and sustainable places to live. For this reason, targeted interventions to address homelessness among this population are required.

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 homeless LGBTQ2S youth clients. A supported referral partnership creates the opportunity to add housing capacity to the specialized supports already being provided to homeless LGBTQ2S youth in community.

To make a supported referral, the agency commits to make support services available, for a period of at least 6 months, for an LGBTQ2S youth 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 six (6) month support services plan specific to each client’s individually needs. This could be 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. 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.

In entering into an agreement to provide supported referrals, agencies gain access to housing resources. 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
- Discounted furniture and supplies available through Find, a social enterprise furniture bank operated by Homeward Trust in support of housing efforts in community.

TARGET POPULATION

The Alberta Youth Plan defines homeless youth as those Albertans who are between the ages of 13 and 24 and: 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.

This project will serve LGBTQ2S homeless youth between ages 16 and 24 years old. The intention of the project is that providers do not create barriers to service through requirements for self-identification and/or labels related to gender and sexual identity.

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 for youth. 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 youth who are experiencing barriers such that they are unlikely to be able to resolve their homelessness without additional resources;
- Youth 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 LGBTQ2S youth in need of housing and support. In addition, through participation in this partnership, agencies may gain access to other potential clients. One way in which this may occur is in connection with a new project to provide safe accommodations and service access to LGBTQ2S youth. Other referrals to the agency will be available from the community and government stakeholders implementing Edmonton’s Youth Homelessness Strategy.

FUNDING 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 in the first 90 days of housing;
- 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.

PREVENTING CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

Homeward Trust's experience in implementing the 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness has shown that more effort and investment are required to prevent homelessness and intervene "upstream" before individuals become entrenched in chronic homelessness that requires Housing First intervention. 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.

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. The PRC and IAC's advice is received as an input to Homeward Trust in identifying candidates for an MOU agreement.
- The 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 homelessness and LGBTQ2S youth;
 - Experience of the agency in helping youth to access housing, and/or ability to support youth while in housing should be highlighted;
- Organizational capacity to support homeless youth, and connect participants with services commonly required by LGBTQ2S youth experiencing homelessness. This may include identified support services provided by the agency, and/or partnerships in place to deliver supports;
- Experience, capacity, connections, and/or history related to the delivery of inclusive and culturally-appropriate services;
- Alignment with the values and purpose of the Youth Homelessness Strategy and the provincial Youth Plan, including:
 - Housing First
 - Trauma informed care
 - Harm reduction
 - Positive youth development
 - Individualized and youth-centered supports.