

evidence inspired culture of collaboration is our energy source for creative leadership purp... g... e... courageous



# Guiding the Fight Against Homelessness

Focus to 2025

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## Introduction

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Calgary Homeless Foundation (CHF) was established in 1998 by visionary community leaders who passionately believed that every Calgarian could not only have a home but thrive in their home. Collaborating with governments and the non-profit sector, CHF spearheaded the unified effort to reduce homelessness in Calgary.

Calgary has been recognized internationally as a leader in responding to homelessness – a true measure of our community's core values. By embracing a spirit of partnership across governments, service providers and community leaders, considerable progress was achieved. The number of individuals experiencing homelessness has been reduced. Thousands have found their way home through a continuum of customized approaches covering diversion, transitional housing, and recovery. For those experiencing deep trauma, a significant number of additional longer-term supportive housing units have been made available.

The homeless-serving system has evolved into a network that is seamlessly coordinated through the leadership of CHF. Over 21 agencies work with us to ensure people faced with and experiencing homelessness are not forced to navigate the system – the system customizes to their need. Yet although extraordinary progress has been achieved, we must acknowledge the huge challenge still facing us. Today, on any given night, up to 3,000 of Calgary's mothers, fathers, young adults, and grandparents are waiting for a home and the related supports they need to be successful. Alarming, research completed by the University of Calgary School of Public Policy revealed that in 2019 over 4,200 people slept in a homeless shelter for the first time in their lives. Key determinants that separate people who are securely housed from those who are not are often low income, one missed paycheck or unexpected job loss. The housing situation faced by thousands of Calgarians is perilous, especially in today's economic environment. Our community's work is not done.

This strategic plan begins with a discussion about our purpose — **Guiding the fight against homelessness**. It is the reason we exist as an organization. Our partner organizations, public systems, government, and the private sector have all told us that our role as a guide is of critical value to the work they do and to the people they serve. Our bold ambition is to be recognized as the authoritative guide on how governments, service providers and community leaders can best leverage their combined resources and programs in a unified fight against homelessness.

Collaboration is the principal energy source that will fuel this unified fight. While remarkable success has come from coordinating within the current Homeless-Serving System of Care (involving community organizations, shelters, and housing providers), we now aim to raise the bar. Our objective is to offer our learning and experience to a broader spectrum of the service provider landscape. Our goal is to incorporate the work of other social service systems – such as Justice, Health, Children's Services or Calgary Police Service – in the unified fight against homelessness.

We fundamentally believe that working in silos simply will not deliver the outcomes we seek in the service of those who experience homelessness. It just won't. We need to leverage the power of collaboration to achieve tight integration across a broader scope of services; in that way, we can make a life-changing impact on those who are experiencing homelessness.

I am proud of the strategic planning document you are now reading. It is the work of many people — staff, Board members, people with lived experience of homelessness, community partners, funders, and individual donors — who care deeply about making our organization the best that it can be. This document sets the stage for how we will improve the lives of some of Calgary's most vulnerable citizens. It describes why we exist, what we want to achieve, the enduring values that guide our organization, and the initiatives we will execute in the years ahead as we pursue our ambition.

Although homelessness may never disappear entirely, we envision the day when homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring — perhaps an episode in someone's life, but never a condition that defines one's life.



Patricia Jones  
President and CEO,  
Calgary Homeless Foundation  
June 21, 2021



## Purpose, ambition, and values

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Why do we exist as Calgary Homeless Foundation? What do we aspire to achieve as an organization? What are the enduring values that guide our behaviour?

### Driven by purpose

The best performing organizations are clear about their purpose. Purpose acts as both an energy source and a governor. It helps to frame the organization's ambition for itself and its people. Importantly, the best strategies are always informed by a sense of purpose.

An organization's true purpose is enduring. It transcends leadership changes or Board renewal. It stands strong against the impact of external trends and pressures, even when they arrive unexpectedly. When leaders change, when external forces create new dynamics or when a new government comes to power, strong organizations look to a clear articulation of purpose to point the entity toward its true north.

Our statement of purpose — **Guiding the fight against homelessness** — articulates the higher calling of CHF. It provides the passion for what we do and underlines the true meaning behind the daily work of our staff and volunteers. Each day, our teams:

### Our purpose: **Guiding the fight against homelessness**

Calgary Homeless Foundation commits to guide the fight against homelessness.

We are uniquely positioned within the system of care to observe the many complicating factors that affect those faced with or experiencing homelessness.

Our broad line of sight gives us a deep understanding of the cause-and-effect dynamics of homelessness. This insight, delivered as an arm's length advisor, enables us to inspire governments, service providers and our community to undertake a shared responsibility to maximize our collective impact in the fight against homelessness.

### 1. **Allocate resources for highest impact and outcomes**

CHF administers public funding for support programs, support services and rent supplements. We direct funds to where they deliver the most benefit. We allocate resources to 21 organizations and play a coordinating role to connect agencies and synchronize programs. We hold ourselves accountable to our funders; we hold service providers to account for the effectiveness and impact of the programs they deliver.

### 2. **Build knowledge and understanding**

Knowledge is key to determining the resources needed to tackle homelessness and how to distribute those resources for maximum impact. CHF maintains the Homeless Management Information System, collecting system-wide data for real-time reporting on the number of people who are experiencing homelessness, the length of their

homelessness, and their demographic characteristics. We see the big picture. Together with the learning from targeted research, this enables us to identify strengths and gaps across the system of care, broadening the understanding of the causes and effects of homelessness. When armed with the insights we share, funders and service providers are better equipped to close the gap between evidence and research.

### **3. Galvanize the public and political will**

CHF advocates with all levels of government for access and resources to guide Calgary's Homeless-Serving System of Care toward matching the right person with the right housing at the right time. We speak on behalf of those experiencing homelessness and those who aspire to end it.

### **4. Mobilize the community**

Homelessness affects the community at large, not just those who are without a home. A community-level issue deserves a community-wide response; through the events we stage, CHF inspires the entire community to engage in the fight against homelessness.

***Guiding the fight against homelessness*** is the reason we exist as an organization. It is the true calling of Calgary Homeless Foundation. We were formed in 1998 to reduce homelessness in Calgary. In 2008, we were appointed as the lead implementer of Calgary's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness. It is our job to invite and encourage funders and service providers to work together to ensure no one is left behind. Challenging the status quo to drive a collective effort to fight homelessness has been in our DNA since the very beginning.

We acknowledge that homelessness may never disappear entirely, but our purpose will endure — to guide governments and service providers in forming a backbone of integrated supports that enable people to journey out of homelessness. Fueled by our purpose, we envision the day when homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring — perhaps an episode in someone's life, but never a condition that defines one's life.

## Achieving our ambition

Our Purpose describes why we exist as an organization; our Ambition describes the collective desire for a certain achievement and the willingness to strive for its attainment. The two are intertwined – achieving our ambition helps us to fulfill our purpose, and purpose contextualizes ambition.

Our ambition statement sets forth the aspiration to become the authoritative guide and thought leader on the topic of homelessness. However, achieving wide recognition is not in itself the reason for such ambition. Rather, declaring a commitment to become a voice of authority is intended to stimulate our thinking about the significant organizational accomplishments that would be required to earn the right to influence others in a meaningful way. What would signal that Calgary Homeless Foundation serves as a guiding force in the fight against homelessness? In short, stakeholders would turn to us for inspiration, direction, and practical advice. Governments and front-line service providers would engage with us for **strategic advice** to maximize the impact from programs and services that directly *and indirectly* touch on homelessness issues. We would be asked to illuminate themes and provide our **expert opinion** on emerging trends affecting those who are at high risk of experiencing homelessness, so that service providers can ready themselves to respond to issues before they arrive. Our innovative technology platform would be the gold standard for gathering data, respecting privacy, and delivering **powerful insight** to governments and service providers — used not only in Alberta but in other geographies, as well. Supported by the empirical data generated by research and our Homelessness Management Information System, we would provide all orders of government with a **definitive business case and annual accounting** of the payback derived through strategic collaborations that deliver integrated action services and programs. This is both a lofty ambition and a compelling call to action.

### Our ambition:

**By 2025 we will be recognized as the authoritative guide on how governments, service providers and community leaders, in our community and beyond, can best leverage their combined resources and programs in a unified fight against homelessness.**

### To accomplish this, we will:

- ▶ **Serve** as the trusted advisor to all orders of government, the business community and all Calgarians toward building a coordinated and comprehensive response to the complicating issues affecting homelessness.
- ▶ **Promote** the reconciliation necessary to break down barriers by giving, receiving, listening and reaching out in love.
- ▶ **Advocate** with unwavering conviction for the co-creation, with community, of a system-wide approach to serving people experiencing homelessness.
- ▶ **Forge** an innovative path for targeted research, powerful data analytics, a cutting-edge technology platform, and a sponsored forum for sharing knowledge and best practices.

We believe that by aiming high—by setting out to establish our organization as the authoritative voice in our community about the complex issues of homelessness and the best

strategies to address them—we will inspire in our Board and Staff the kind of behaviour and commitment needed to fulfill our purpose of *Guiding the fight against homelessness*.

### Living our shared values

Having **purpose** inspires and unites us. It gives us energy. Being clear about our **ambition** helps turn that energy into positive results for our clients and the community. Moreover, when everyone in the organization operates under a set of **shared values** it has a multiplying effect on our collective will, driving higher performance and better outcomes.

Shared values provide the ethical framework of a great organization. They guide our actions and behaviour. They influence the way we work with each other — and the way we engage with our partners and the community.

#### Our values:

#### Our values define who we are as an organization. We are:

- ▶ **Courageous collaborators** — we facilitate and unleash the positive power of collective wisdom, coordinated action plans, and unified programs.
- ▶ **Catalytic leaders** — we explore issues and propose solutions with an intentionally innovative and creative mindset.
- ▶ **Evidence inspired** — we are critical thinkers who embrace evidence to influence decision-making and progress.
- ▶ **Vision dedicated** — we act with the unwavering belief that homelessness can be beaten.



## The power of collaboration

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What does it mean to truly collaborate across the sector? In what way does collaboration embolden the fight against homelessness? Why has CHF committed itself so deeply to inspiring a spirit of ‘courageous collaboration’ across the system of care?

Everyone begins their life journey within the comfort of home. Along the way, some will find themselves without housing. Yet no one is ‘just homeless, but otherwise fine’. Invariably something else is at play to complicate the situation. Childhood and intergenerational trauma. Addiction. Physical abuse. Racism. Mental health disorders. Loss of employment – often exacerbated by a lack of formal education or job skills training. The challenge of reintegration as a productive member of society following incarceration.

In truth, the battle against homelessness cannot be won by attacking only from the perspective of ‘housing’. Simply providing shelter does not transform lives. More is required. Only by tackling the associated underlying issues could society’s response to homelessness yield a lasting, life-changing outcome for those experiencing homelessness.

But executing a holistic approach to serving those who are homeless is not easy to do given the construct of our social services safety net. The complicating factors that drive homelessness (childhood trauma, addiction, abuse, etc.) are presently addressed by different orders of government operating through various departments or ministries, all interfacing with a myriad of community agencies. To prevent homelessness—or to ensure that anyone who experiences homelessness does so only briefly, is housed quickly and successfully, and is unlikely to return to homelessness—would require extensive collaboration across this complex and fragmented network of players. Even trying to conceive of a way to address these complicating factors in an integrated fashion is a mind-bending exercise; to successfully achieve such a level of collaboration is harder still.

One will observe that our statement of ambition is strongly flavoured with the concept of collaboration. This is deliberate. We firmly believe that the power of collaborative behaviour presents an incredible opportunity to achieve better social outcomes and greater financial returns by enabling the intersection of service pathways across government departments and community agencies. As thought leaders and guiding influencers, our greatest contribution will be found in our success at inspiring funders, service providers and community leaders to work under a thoughtful, deliberate, comprehensive, and coordinated plan to fight homelessness.

At times today, inter-governmental or multi-agency cooperation does shine through, but seldom bright enough or with enough consistency to achieve the progress we all hope for. While we have made extraordinary progress over several years, with many people contributing, many challenges still face us. We need a profound shift of mind and heart toward active collaboration and a spirit of partnering — a visible breakthrough across four orders of government, their various departments and ministries, and community-based service providers. This requires the formation of trusting, long-term alliances among players operating under different mandates and strategies. It necessitates an innovative, system-wide approach to serving people experiencing homelessness. It demands data models that deliver valuable insights and performance measures that drive accountability and impact; funding protocols tied to a long-range strategy; bundled programs and services co-developed at a network level; and coordinated research. This is a huge challenge that can only be met by working in unison.

Collaboration of this magnitude will not happen overnight or by accident. Someone needs to lead for the long term. Someone needs to champion an integrated system of care that builds diversion, prevention, and recovery into the action plan to fight against homelessness. Someone needs to share leading practices and shed light on where the system is succeeding, or not. To unleash the full power of collaboration, someone needs to *guide the fight* — stand back, take a broad and neutral view of the landscape, synchronize the efforts of others, and inspire a more seamless way for funders, service providers and the community to work together. That is the reason we care about collaboration. It is central to our purpose, to which we commit ourselves wholly.

### **The collaboration spectrum**

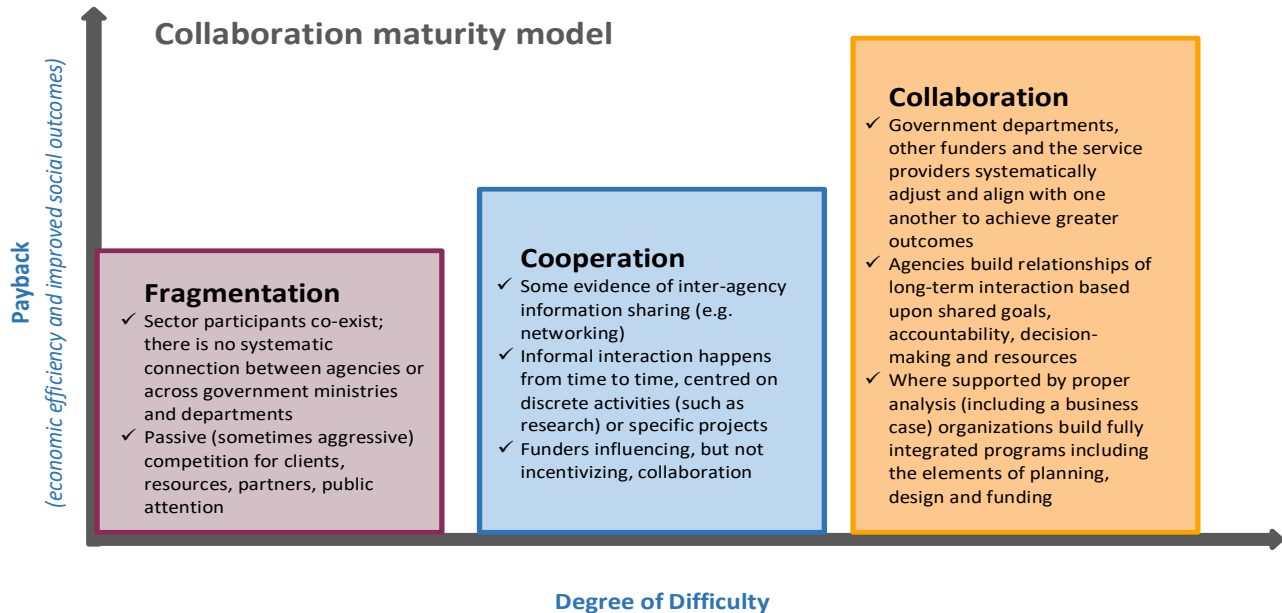
Service providers are already keenly aware of the recurring need to connect two or more programs to fully address the needs of their clients. Across the system today, competent participant-serving professionals routinely cooperate with other agencies to facilitate client access to service beyond what is available within their own organizations. This cooperation can take different forms: a direct client introduction from one professional to another; CEO-level networking; informal referrals to another agency (“Here’s a number to call”), or perhaps a referral arrangement between two organizations. The reality? This level of interaction is helpful but does not drive sustainable, life-changing outcomes for clients.

Standalone agencies operating through transactional inter-agency relationships invariably come up short. Good intentions notwithstanding, informal cooperation cannot guarantee the level of coordination required to deliver a comprehensive solution to complex social problems. A model built on a foundation of ad hoc cooperation ultimately leaves the burden of navigating multiple organizations and programs on the shoulders of the client. Even formal referral relationships, clearly a step in the right direction, lack operational linkage between organizations – and without operational linkage, there is no reliable, consistent mechanism to successfully coordinate or tailor services to better meet client needs.

To deliver breakthrough outcomes, a force stronger than cooperation is needed. Agencies must go further, by adopting a unified vision for integrating their activities, embracing a shared commitment to supercharge the collaboration effort, and accepting mutual accountability to serve the holistic needs of their clients. But even that is not enough. Funders must synchronize their funding allocation decisions to address program gaps and overlaps. Government –at all levels–must be prepared to accept input from service providers about what works well in the community, or not. And agencies must design and deliver their programs following a direction set by government leaders who themselves demonstrate true collaboration between levels of government and within their own ministries.

The shift from cooperation into collaboration is not semantics. One is not the other said differently – there is a profound difference between the two. Cooperation is largely passive. It involves participants being supportive of each other’s goals, but little more. Collaboration, on the other hand, implies a deeper and more powerful connection; it serves as an energy source for creative change.

It involves working directly together in common enterprise toward a shared goal, with shared ownership for achieving a shared outcome. This continuum is described in the graphic below:



### ***Our point of view:***

To accelerate progress in the fight against homelessness, all levels of government, our community leaders and front-line service providers must leverage the power of true collaboration to optimize the integration of homelessness services in our community.

For social impact agencies focused on serving those experiencing or faced with homelessness, true collaboration would speak to how programs are designed, aligned and resourced. Their client-serving professionals would work seamlessly across organizational boundaries to meet the holistic needs of their clients, committed to delivering a consistent client experience regardless of the service provider. Foundations and other funders who support the agencies would coordinate their efforts to ensure that resources are allocated to where they can do the most good. In addition, elected officials from all levels of government—together with the senior bureaucrats in their ministries and departments—would deliberately connect their own efforts in a manner that addresses not simply the need for housing programs, but also recognizes the additional, underlying supports required to tackle the range of complicating factors that make homelessness all-too-prevalent in our community.

Collaboration of this sort is not easy. It demands trust, leadership, courage, and a partnering mindset. It must be built upon a foundation of compatible values and a shared sense of purpose. But far beyond attitude and willingness, it takes deliberate action to establish operational linkages and create a hardwired relationship between entities. The magic of multi-government / inter-agency collaboration can only come alive through a measure of guidance that inspires strategic thinking, shared vision, and a disciplined implementation process.

We maintain that collaboration across the entire system—embracing the four levels of government, funders, community leaders and service providers—is imperative. More than that, we believe that a higher order of collaboration is within our collective grasp. It will take time, respectful advocacy, and an unwavering focus on the end game to unleash the power of collaboration in the fight against homelessness. It is in guiding the effort to bring true collaboration to life that CHF sees meaning in our existence and a way to best serve those who are experiencing or faced with homelessness.

## The world in which we operate

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In the face of massive socio-economic upheaval and accelerated change, Boards are asking: “How must our organization adapt in this ever-changing environment?”

This is not an easy time for Calgary’s most vulnerable, or for the social services agencies working with them. Unemployment is shockingly high, with no clear prospects for a medium-term private sector turnaround. Provincial government cutbacks have landed in full force, with a likelihood of more cuts to come when the pandemic abates. Entrenched views regarding societal evolution (e.g., the LGBTQ community) or political issues (such as immigration policy or the climate change agenda) have heightened polarization and discord to a level never seen in our community. Changing demographics (ageing population; new Canadians) and technological ‘advances’ (synthetic drugs) are creating a growing need for new programs to address a different set of problems. And all the while issues like poverty, racism, addiction, and mental health disorders continue to marginalize thousands of adult Calgarians and the children growing up around them. The confluence of these negative forces has created an environment where homelessness is a reality for too many.

Homelessness presents a dynamic and complex challenge for the community. The brutal reality of homelessness is most visible in the form of emergency shelters and people living on the streets. Less obvious are the situations where people are discharged from jails, hospitals, or child welfare homes with no stable place to go, or placed in substandard, overcrowded, or unsafe housing (the ‘hidden homeless’). Approaches to address homelessness must therefore be understood not only from the macro context, but also with an appreciation for unique local circumstances and dynamics. Anticipating the potential impact of the macro and micro trends and forces relevant to our organization is an important ingredient to building a strategic plan that is enduring. The table below summarizes the trends that have informed the strategies of CHF over the next several years. Appendix 1 describes each trend and impact in more detail.



**Economic trends**

- ▶ The income gap will continue to widen, causing the demand for affordable family housing to intensify.

**Social / cultural trends**

- ▶ 'Working remotely' will continue to influence post-pandemic work styles, making collaboration and co-creation more difficult to achieve.

**Demographic / health trends**

- ▶ The negative effect of entering the labour market during the current economic environment will have a lasting effect on today's younger generations and an eventual rise in the need for social impact services.

**Sector trends**

- ▶ The present swirl of challenges surrounding social impact organizations will leave them most in need of support in the areas of public policy advocacy, technological innovation, and data management capabilities.

**Technological trends**

- ▶ The blending of machine intelligence with human learning will be key to solving intractable problems.

**Political attitudes**

- ▶ The pandemic has softened the public mood – there is now more empathy and for tackling long-standing social issues and addressing the underlying disparities. This introduces the possibility of public policy innovation regarding social services.

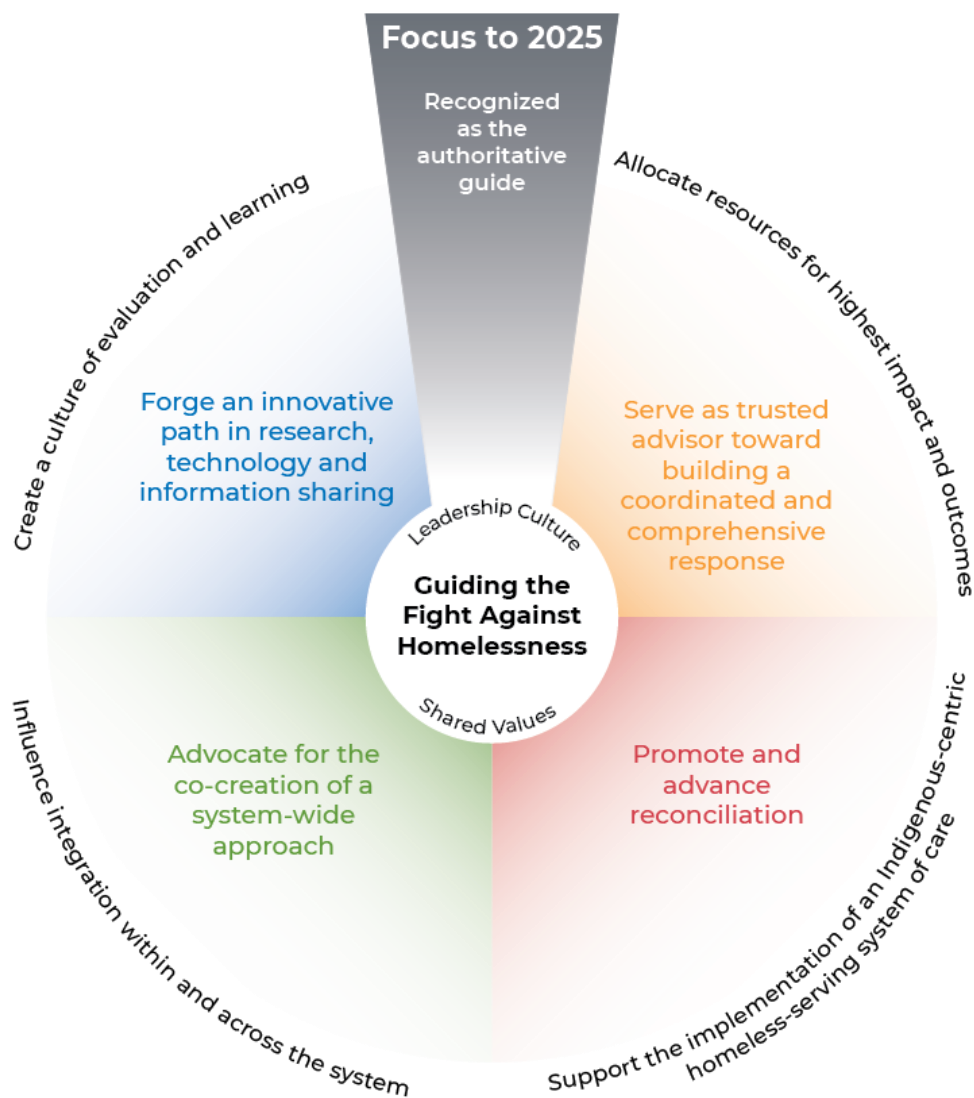
## Strategic focus to 2025

Our purpose is compelling. Our ambition is clear. What strategy will we execute to achieve our aspiration?

Our strategy emanates from **Purpose**, the heartbeat of Calgary Homeless Foundation. It sits at the centre of all that we do, enabled by our leadership culture and shared values. Our **Ambition** is to be recognized as the authoritative guide in conducting a unified fight against homelessness.

Strategy is the vehicle by which an organization achieves its long-term ambition. A well-designed strategy tells the organization where its people should concentrate their efforts, aligns resources and energies, and facilitates change toward an agreed end. Good strategy demands clear focus.

Through to 2025, we have identified four **Areas of Focus** around which we will concentrate our efforts to create breakthrough. This is represented by the graphic below and explained further in the pages that follow.



## Areas of focus to 2025

### Allocate resources for highest impact and outcomes

Our objective is to identify and secure new or additional funding. This could relate to innovation pilots or initiatives, the scaling of existing programs, or the application of research into practice.

We will accomplish this by:

1. Develop a Marketing and Communication Plan about our refreshed strategy. Build greater awareness for the role we play at CHF and create excitement for the value we will deliver as the authoritative guide for the sector. Implementation of the plan will include activities such as –
  - ✓ Aligning our website and other communication materials with the simplified top-line messages related to our Purpose, Ambition and Areas of Focus.
  - ✓ Providing Board members and staff with key talking points about our Purpose and Ambition, and most importantly about the value delivered by CHF in guiding the fight against homelessness.
  - ✓ Diversifying and broadening relationships with all levels of government, both bureaucratic and political.
2. Building a component of our Stakeholder Engagement Plan with the expressed intent to enrich the dialogue with governments regarding funding needs for homelessness programs and targeted research.
3. Intensifying our efforts toward revenue diversification through a fundraising campaign directed toward business leaders and philanthropists.
4. Exploring with others the possibility of creating additional capacity to fund direct client service activities through internal optimization. This could entail, for example, the following:
  - ✓ Sponsor and facilitate the dialogue among service providers (particularly smaller agencies) to encourage them to identify and implement opportunities to increase impact of their programs. Where possible, provide analytic data and best practice guidance to stimulate the thinking.
  - ✓ Co-create a system-wide approach for shared services in the areas of communications, advocacy and research. Through this effort, build the trust needed to open up the possibility of extending the shared services model to other areas of the business at an appropriate time in the future.
  - ✓ Establish and host a forum for agency leaders to discuss the possibility of leveraging best practices of frontline programming across the system of care under a 'centre of excellence' concept.
5. Advocate for the development of a system-wide approach, including the community and government ministries, for a recovery-oriented system of care with shared outcomes.

## Support the implementation of an Indigenous-centric homeless-serving system of care

Calgary Homeless Foundation carries out its work on the lands of Treaty Number 7. Members of the Blackfoot Confederacy originally called this place home, yet a highly disproportionate number of those experiencing homelessness come from an Indigenous background. Any strategy designed to see Calgary win the battle against homelessness must acknowledge and respond to this reality.

Our goal is to continue to build knowledge and understanding within our organization regarding the marginalization of Indigenous peoples, and to enhance relationships with Treaty 7 leaders, Elders and the urban Indigenous community. In so doing, we will become more effective in guiding and aligning service providers to meet the needs of their Indigenous program participants.

To meet this objective, we will:

1. Execute with vigour our three-pillar Indigenous engagement strategy for the sake of building relationships primarily, to the benefit of all parties secondarily, with the principles of reciprocity as a foundation:
  - ✓ Build relationships with Treaty 7 leadership.
  - ✓ Create an Elder Advisory Circle to guide CHF's reconciliation efforts by staff and Board members.
  - ✓ Deliver programs to staff and Board Members to increase awareness, knowledge and cultural competency regarding systemic racism toward Indigenous peoples
2. Receive and act on the advice of Elders and feedback from Indigenous engagement to determine if and when we are ready to hire Indigenous advisory staff or recruit new Indigenous Board members.
3. Share the results of the Belzberg Research on the factors impacting the flow of Indigenous peoples to and from Treaty 7 First Nations to Calgary with the Indigenous community (urban and Treaty 7) in support of First Nations OCAP® (ownership, control, access and possession) data collection principles.
4. Explore expansion of our partnering activities with funders (e.g., United Way or Calgary Foundation) who also work closely with the Indigenous community.
5. Support the urban Indigenous community to develop self-governance of an Indigenous-led system of care for Indigenous funding streams.

## Influence integration within and across the system

There is little doubt that the issue of homelessness is squarely on the agendas of the four levels of government and of the social impact sector. This is evident in the amount of government funding devoted to the fight against homelessness, and in the dozens of agencies presently working in the field to serve Calgarians facing or experiencing homelessness.

Although intentions are clear and outcomes encouraging, something is missing. What is less visible—and largely absent—is a mechanism to successfully network the relevant participants

from government and the social impact sector under a *cohesive, collaborative, unified* fight against homelessness. Presently, there exists a spirit of cooperation among the 21 agencies who receive funding from CHF. This is amplified by a degree of coordination that is achieved through our resource allocation process. Cooperation among agencies is undeniably delivering value to the system today. But truth be told, the opportunity exists to drive higher value through stronger collaboration and tighter integration.

An even greater opportunity for value creation is found in the extent to which the networking and collaboration is extended to connect with other systems serving the community (Health; Justice; Children's Services; Calgary Police Service; etc.). This advanced level of integration and collaboration represents the ultimate tool in spearheading a unified fight against homelessness.

In the quest to better coordinate access and delivery within Calgary's Homeless-Serving System of Care and to expand its connection to adjacent systems, our focus in the coming years will be to:

1. Improve our organizational capabilities as collaborators by formulating and executing a multi-year strategy and action plan for Community Partner Collaboration. This could involve, for example —
  - ✓ Creating a framework for measuring and assessing the strength of our relationship with partner organizations and key individuals within those organizations.
  - ✓ Exploring opportunities for better integration of CHF-funded agencies, housing providers (non-market and market), and shelters. Encourage through our words and actions the optimum level of integration within our present sphere of influence before seeking to guide a more expansive system-to-system collaboration.
  - ✓ Identifying a CHF Board member to serve as a liaison with certain partner organizations to obtain direct feedback on how we are performing as a collaborative guide.
  - ✓ Establishing a structured approach to managing the frequency of touchpoints with others in the Homeless-Serving System of Care to learn of new funding opportunities, targeted research requests, emerging client needs, service gaps and so on. Build that learning into the appropriate CHF action plans.
2. Propose (for discussion and input by other members of the system) an overarching Governance Framework to foster greater system-wide collaboration in the years ahead.
3. Explore opportunities to build direct connections with and between service providers, as well as with and between funders. With guidance from CHF, this might include initiatives such as sponsoring a program of employee secondments or short-term rotations to foster greater on-the-ground collaboration among member agencies.
4. Take the lead in convening a coalition of leaders to co-develop a strategy and action plan that will move the needle regarding tighter integration and shared outcomes between all levels of government, across their ministries, and among service providers. This could involve, for example –



- ✓ Reviewing the 2018 Together to Zero Community Plan to reduce homelessness in Calgary, to determine relevance in the current context and to identify the next steps in re-engaging with and mobilizing the community.
  - ✓ Determining connections and linkages with the City of Calgary Mental Health and Addiction Strategy and the City of Calgary Community Safety Investment Framework as another step toward leveraging existing community-wide and Government of Alberta strategies.
  - ✓ Showcasing our approach to continuous learning and evaluation as a live example of a system-wide approach to serving the community and building capacity for evaluative thinking.
  - ✓ Inviting the relevant parties to engage in open dialogue about practical steps that could be taken to synchronize or integrate the programs and services of other systems (Health; Justice; Children's Services; Calgary Police Service; etc.) with Calgary's Homeless-Serving System of Care.
  - ✓ Engaging with major community funders to encourage the alignment of their funding decisions and reporting requirements with the co-developed strategy and action plan.
5. Build a leadership culture within our organization, where 'courageous collaboration' becomes a way of life for Board and staff when interacting with CHF colleagues and external stakeholders. In this regard, we will —
- ✓ Re-shape the Board meeting agendas to encourage more generative discussion about our performance and progress, especially concerning the goal to be seen by funders and service providers as an exemplary guide in the unified fight against homelessness.
  - ✓ Evaluate internal processes for recruiting, training, performance management and compensation to ensure they align with and support behaviors commensurate with a leadership culture.
  - ✓ Actively support professional development programs for the Executive Leadership Team and their direct reports related to leadership character, style and competencies.
  - ✓ Train all staff on what we mean by 'collaboration'. Build in them the capacity to think differently, be open to new ideas, and to exhibit collaborative behaviours in their interactions with government representatives, other funders, and service providers.
  - ✓ Create a long-term game plan for succession and transition in titled leadership positions.

## **Create a culture of evaluation and learning**

Our vision is to create a culture of learning and evaluation within the Homeless-Serving System of Care. A culture of learning and evaluation will drive mutually reinforcing accountability, innovation and strategic learning between CHF and all stakeholders. Learning and evaluation will elevate the funding relationship between CHF and the funded agency above task management, efficiency and performance. At its core, it will create a social learning system that clearly outlines mutual expectations and progress towards impact in a transparent, strengths-based manner.

Long-term, we intend to advance technology infrastructure, the utilization of business intelligence and the refinement of data warehouses across the entire system of care.

Alongside a vision for learning and evaluation, this focus will enable CHF and the Homeless-Serving System of Care to leverage analytical insights, evaluation and research strategically. This, in turn, ensures the collective aspiration and continuous learning of funders, policymakers, service providers and the business community are heard, understood and applied appropriately and authentically.

By accomplishing this vision, Calgary's Homeless-Serving System of Care will be grounded in organizational relationships, a coherent system of evaluation and the fostering of collective learning.

1. In support of these strategies, CHF will build sector capacity for accountability, innovation and strategic learning through the co-creation with community partners of a collective learning and evaluation framework. This framework will consist of technological, evaluative and social tools to support measurement (to drive accountability), open learning (to inspire innovation) and sensemaking (to encourage strategic learning). Key elements will include:

*Measurement–*

- ✓ Enhancing data collection platforms and business intelligence tools to provide robust and transparent indicator calculations, real-time data aggregation and customizable dashboards for different stakeholders.
- ✓ Exploring system capacity to move towards an integrated data environment, streamlining data flow from agencies to our Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) – what we call the Community Data Hub project.
- ✓ Developing a set of Program Effectiveness Indicators that are meaningful, transparent, reliable and valid, and which ensure accountability for outcomes and impact.
- ✓ Designing a set of System Effectiveness Indicators to better understand sector achievement and enhance client wellbeing and improved health outcomes. These indicators will be selected to facilitate sector-level accountability, applied research and collective interpretation.

*Open Learning–*

- ✓ Fostering strategic learning through ongoing developmental evaluations of program pilots.
- ✓ Bringing the sector together on topics identified by the community and CHF. This will be achieved through enhanced Communities of Learning to better leverage program outcomes, leading practice and innovation within the system of care.
- ✓ Engaging and supporting front-line staff in a reflective practice approach to self-directed learning.

*Sensemaking–*

- ✓ Implementing tools such as System Mapping and Outcome Harvesting to translate, analyze and interpret information.
- ✓ Implementing Learning Bulletins to disseminate and preserve knowledge surfacing from the measurement, evaluation and learning activities.

2. To support the continuous learning and evaluation initiatives described above, we will streamline and enhance data gathering, collection and reporting by:
  - ✓ Migrating our data model to a scalable, cloud-based platform and integrating additional data assets
  - ✓ Finalizing the reporting model by which dashboard and other management information is made available to the appropriate parties, including frontline agencies, so that they can better understand their own program effectiveness and client outcomes using a variety of metrics available in real-time interactive dashboards.
  - ✓ Building a 3-year roadmap to continually improve HMIS to drive agile system planning and maximize the support for users as they evaluate and make strategic decisions about their programs and services.
  - ✓ Investing in the IT skills, equipment and software tools to enhance analytics capability and reporting – including the ability for CHF to generate business intelligence and perform predictive modelling about homelessness trends and impacts.
  - ✓ Clarifying and communicating our position regarding the ethics of data sharing and the underlying principles of data governance and security.
3. Convene a Volunteer Research Committee of academic researchers, sector leaders, policymakers and staff to develop applied and academic research projects and curate and translate research into community-level, evidence-based policies and programs.
4. Consider the use of targeted grants to further the sector's capacity to sponsor or conduct targeted research.



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CHF aims to provide all of our stakeholders with transparency and accountability. Any complaints or concerns with CHF can be anonymously reported through our external whistleblower line at 403.241.1821.

We also welcome your feedback on this report.