

# Journey HOME

housing first | no wrong door | community safety

## The Journey Home Task Force

The Task Force first came together in Fall 2017 to focus on applying best practice principles in the local context to address the issue of homelessness.

The Task Force is designed to be community-driven and inclusive with 21 members and 2 co-chairs representing: organizations working to improve the lives of those most vulnerable in our community, government agencies, regional partners and individuals with lived experience of homelessness.

## Background

Kelowna is currently facing challenges that many cities across the nation are experiencing related to homelessness and this is further complicated by Kelowna's 0.2% vacancy rate creating a lack of non-market and affordable housing to meet community needs. While more than 50 community partners currently work to address issues around housing and homelessness, the need for a coordinated approach was identified. The City of Kelowna has dedicated staff to support the work of the Journey Home Task Force in developing a long-term community strategy to address homelessness. By identifying organizational strengths and understanding the full picture of the system that provides care to our most vulnerable populations, we can move forward with a measurable and robust action plan.

## What is Journey Home?

Journey Home is the strategy to address homelessness in our community with a focus on ensuring everyone has a place to call home. The long-term goal is to ensure a coordinated and easy-to-access system of care for those in Kelowna who have lost, or are at risk of losing their home. Journey Home is a collective vision grounded in the belief that all people have the right to safe and dignified housing and supportive care.

## The Importance of a Strategy

There's no quick fix when it comes to homelessness. What it takes is significant legwork to identify current barriers and gaps that exist in our system and find ways to address these issues that are viable in our local community, and proven in other cities that have seen success. This means bringing together current players in the homeless serving sector, and introducing new ones like the Lived Experience Circle (to provide critical perspectives on what it's like to be homeless) and A Way Home Kelowna (to address youth homelessness). It's more than just providing housing, it's ensuring service providers have the appropriate level of knowledge, training, and confidence in a strategy that has the capacity to drastically improve the situation.

## Strategy Development & Workplan

From the beginning, the foundational goals of Journey Home include:

- Ensuring a safe and healthy community for all citizens
- Working toward Functional Zero - addressing homelessness; and when it occurs, ensuring it is rare, short-lived and non-reoccurring
- Promoting collaboration and coordination of services and resources to support those who are vulnerable
- Developing appropriate forms of housing
- Developing a long-term funding strategy
- Developing multi-sector partnerships so that public investment can be targeted toward the goal of reducing homelessness

## Strategy Premise



Five year strategy with strategic review in year three



Eliminates chronic and episodic homelessness



Shifts resources to prevention over time



Journey Home Design Lab  
Developing Mental Health & Addictions Supports  
March 6, 2018

To ensure a made-in-Kelowna solution, the Journey Home workplan included broad and inclusive community input with **over 2,000 points of engagement** through Community Summits, a series of 23 Design Labs, multiple Lived Experience Circle meetings, strategy review sessions and a public survey.

## Foundational Concepts

The Strategy is grounded in the foundational concepts of:

- Innovation
- Reconciliation
- Lived Experience

These concepts are woven and embedded in every aspect of the strategy and are critical to its success.

## Three Strategic Pillars

Building on these foundations, three strategic pillars have also been established which underpin specific actions laid out over a 5-year period.

- Backbone Coordination & Partnerships
- Inclusion & Prevention
- Housing & Wraparound Supports

## Lived Experience Circle Jan 2018 (ongoing)

Journey Home recognizes that having an ongoing advisory group of people who have experienced homelessness is essential. Those who are intimately familiar with homelessness, whether through their own experience or in supporting a loved one, hold valuable perspectives and expertise related to issues, barriers and potential solutions that are realistic for our local community.

The Lived Experience Circle has played an integral role in the Journey Home process to date by helping to inform and guide the work of the Journey Home Task Force.



Circle sessions include a convener and are recorded visually by a graphic facilitator capturing the conversation as it happens.

**A WAY HOME**  
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## Working to End Youth Homelessness

Focused on identifying, developing, and implementing strategies to prevent and end youth homelessness in our community, A Way Home-Kelowna is committed to ensuring that the needs of youth are prioritized and form an essential part of the Journey Home strategy. A youth-specific strategy, informed by the voice of youth with lived experience, will be embedded into Journey Home, ensuring the needs of young people are prioritized and that the unique responses required to support them are front and centre.

## Why investing in solutions is a better use of public resources

\$1 ↔ \$2

To keep people who would otherwise be supported by the Strategy in their current situation, it would cost police, health, jail, shelters, bylaw about:

-\$100M



If we house and support those same people; police, health, jail, shelters, bylaw will see a cost avoidance of about:

+\$50M

*There is significant evidence that beyond the human cost of homelessness, the economic cost of not addressing homelessness far exceeds the overall cost to the social services, health care, and justice systems of caring for a homeless person living on the streets, versus providing the housing and supportive services they need.*

## Journey Home Strategy: Grounded in Action

Within the framework of the Journey Home Strategy is a focused and clear action plan. By engaging with over 70 organizations and agencies working to improve the lives of those most vulnerable in our community, achievable and tangible actions became clear. While there are numerous actions throughout the five-year strategy, the following five actions are highlighted as the most pressing activities with the highest priority.

### 1. Establish a neutral Backbone Organization

This organization is dedicated to implementing the Journey Home Strategy. This organization will take on homeless systems planning, funding coordination, and building partnerships with key groups including A Way Home Kelowna to address youth homelessness and regional partners including Westbank First Nation, City of West Kelowna and the Regional District of Central Okanagan to start.

### 2. Create 500 new Housing First program spaces

This includes supportive care to house and support people in the rental market.

### 3. Support development of 300 units of long-term supportive housing

These units would be located in purpose-built buildings targeted to people experiencing chronic and episodic homelessness with higher needs.

### 4. Support work of A Way Home Kelowna to introduce Upstream for Youth

The Upstream Program is an early intervention pilot partnership with the School District to identify and support youth while they are in school and at risk of becoming homeless.

### 5. Support increased access to quality mental health, addictions, health supports and treatment for people experiencing homelessness

This includes additional services and programs, more training for service providers and strengthening partnerships with the health sector.