

OCTOBER 7, 2021

**HOMELESSNESS AND
HOUSING SUPPORT
SERVICE SYSTEM
PLANNING IN DURHAM
REGION: A SUMMARY
OF THE SCOPE OF WORK**



The purpose of this document is to provide a summary of the scope of work that OrgCode Consulting Inc. will perform for the Region of Durham in the preparation of a homelessness and housing support system plan.

THE CENTRAL AIM OF THE PROJECT

The intention is to help the Region and both its funded and non-funded community partners work towards housing-focused solutions as a system.

THE TASKS TO COMPLETE THE PROJECT

OrgCode's approach to complete the work is comprehensive, analytical and participatory, and is also grounded in the main currents of thought and practice in high performing homelessness response and housing support system. To help service providers and the Region position itself for a desired housing-focused future, there is a necessity to understand current operations, expectations of service providers as they stand, the strengths and weaknesses of service providers and the systems that interface with homelessness and housing stability. Furthermore, there is a need to keep people experiencing homelessness and housing instability at the centre of the planning and implementation. There are 14 proposed action steps:

ESTABLISH A SYSTEM PLANNING COMMITTEE

OrgCode will work with Region staff to establish a system planning committee. The system planning committee will be a combination of executive, management and direct service staff. It will include people with lived/living experience of homelessness. It will include a broad range of organizations, including those not directly funded by the Region. Allied professionals like police, paramedics, by-law and health care professionals will also be invited to participate in the committee.

OrgCode will develop Terms of Reference for the committee. The committee will meet virtually, once per month, throughout the course of the project. The group will use a collaborative leadership model and be chaired by OrgCode. Consensus will be sought, but will not be required in decision-making.

Some of the tasks the group may be asked to perform include:

- Helping to interpret data
- Helping design and interpret the survey and its results

- Organizing on-site observations and engagement with people with lived experience
- Establishing system principles
- Reviewing and finalizing logic models for each sector of service, and the work flow for the system as a whole
- Identifying key informants to be interviewed
- Establishing targets and performance metrics
- Reviewing and commenting on the draft plan
- Championing the plan in implementation
- Lengths of homelessness by service area
- Point in Time Counts
- Gender analysis of data
- Racial analysis of data
- Receipt of OW or ODSP amongst people experiencing homelessness in Durham Region
- Number of people experiencing homelessness accessing social housing
- Assessment, prioritization and matching data from the By Name List process
- Other service level, output focused data

DATA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

OrgCode will review and analyze homelessness services and housing support data from 2016 to present, where available. Of particular interest in this process are data related to:

- Number of unique and repeat people served through shelters, outreach and day services
- Number of exits from homelessness to housing, by service area

All data analysis will be impacted by the quality and completeness of the data.

SURVEY

OrgCode will design and implement a survey available to all funded and non-funded partners that are part of the homelessness and housing support system. The survey will be available through SurveyMonkey. The aim is to have as many people as possible - frontline staff through to Executive leadership - share

their voice and perspectives. The survey results, when analyzed, will be used to identify community priorities, as well as strengths and opportunities.

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

OrgCode will complete up to 21 key informant interviews. People selected for the key informant interview will be informed by the Region. It is OrgCode's intention to ensure a good cross section of key informants:

- Regional staff
- Funded agencies
- Non-funded agencies
- Landlords/housing providers
- Indigenous and non-Indigenous led/serving agencies
- Agency executives and middle managers/supervisors
- Faith based and secular organizations that assist people voluntarily

All key informant interviews will use a semi-structured interview guide. Each interview will last approximately 45 minutes. Results will be analyzed for themes. No key informant will be

individually identified in the report or findings.

ENGAGEMENT WITH PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS OR RECENTLY ACQUIRING HOUSING

When it comes to developing system plans with an emphasis on housing to reduce and end homelessness, OrgCode believes it is necessary to hear the voice of people with lived/living experience of homelessness/housing instability. Through focus groups and interviews conducted with people with lived/living experience, OrgCode can ensure that voice is included. Working with the Region and service providers, it is OrgCode's intention to spend two days in homelessness and housing support environments (shelter, outreach, day services, etc.) engaging with people with lived/living experience. A structured engagement guide will be used, with an aim to gathering input without re-traumatizing people. Results will be analyzed for themes following the engagement. No identifiable information will be used in the final plan.

REVIEW OF BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS, COUNCIL REPORTS, CONTRACTS & INVESTMENTS

The Region will compile relevant documents, council reports, contracts and investments from 2016 to present for OrgCode to review. This will be necessary context and background on the priority setting and investment strategy to date, how results have been reported historically, how different funding requirements have been fulfilled in Durham Region, and the changing face of homelessness pre- and during the pandemic.

OBSERVE SERVICES IN ACTION

As part of OrgCode's background fact finding to understand the current state, and strengths, opportunities, threats and weaknesses of the system and service delivery moving forward, OrgCode intends to invest time observing services in action across a range of settings if possible: shelter, outreach, day services, coordinated access, food services, and housing support services. In the most unobtrusive manner possible, OrgCode will observe whether service interventions are matched to fidelity of evidence-informed and evidence-based practice. Five full days are dedicated to this task.

DEVELOPING SYSTEM-WIDE PRINCIPLES

Grounded in being housing-focused, OrgCode will work with the Region and the Committee to develop system-wide principles. These are the core beliefs that funded and non-funded services share in the pursuit of preventing, reducing and ending homelessness regardless of which population group or type of service is provided. System-wide principles are necessary to guide decision-making, implementation and future evaluation.

LOGIC MODELS FOR EACH SECTOR OF SERVICE

For each sector of service (e.g., outreach, shelter, day services) OrgCode will work with the committee to establish logic models. This intentional framing of services will be necessary for articulating what types of activities are in or out of scope in the services provided to people experiencing homelessness or housing instability. It will also be necessary for measuring, in the future, whether intended outputs and outcomes are realized for each sector relative to the intended service approach and investment.

ESTABLISH A SYSTEM FLOW & WORK FLOW FOR SERVICES

Examining the system and services from the end user perspective creates the opportunity to see how the system works together and how different aspects of the work are completed by different entities to accomplish a shared outcome. The system flow and work flow examines how a person/couple/family first presents for service (whether that be eviction prevention or shelter), to engagement and intake with assessment, through to helping the household self-resolve and go the route of coordinated access if necessary, to how and when various staff are attached to the household, and which activities are performed to help the person/family exit from homelessness and stabilize in housing.

DEVELOP DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK

Moving forward, to monitor the effectiveness of the system plan, it will be important to renew, and even reconfigure, data collection and ongoing analysis of performance. This is often a combination of funder-required data collection, as well as other data variables that can be illuminating at understanding and improving performance. OrgCode will establish a data collection and analysis

framework to assist the Region and its partners moving forward.

DEVELOP SYSTEMS PLAN, PERFORMANCE TARGETS AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY

All of the aforementioned work will culminate in the creation of a systems plan with performance targets and an investment strategy moving forward. The systems plan will identify the ideal future state and the transitions necessary to transform to the future state. Performance targets will be established for each sector of service and for the system as a whole. Recommendations will be provided on how to invest existing (scarce) funding, while also identifying where and how to invest if future funding opportunities become available. All of this will happen against a backdrop of federal, provincial and regional investment priorities and intended outcomes of the work, such as reducing chronic homelessness and reducing homelessness amongst Indigenous people.

SUBMIT DRAFT PLAN FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Once OrgCode has crafted a draft plan, it will be submitted to the Region and the committee for review and approval. OrgCode will provide instructions on how to provide feedback and the timeline for

providing feedback. While not every piece of feedback received will result in changes to the draft, salient points, opportunities for clarity and instances where errors have been made will be attended to in the editing process.

EDIT DRAFT AND SUBMIT FINAL PLAN

Based upon the feedback and input of reviewers, OrgCode will make improvements to the draft, layout the document, and submit the final plan to the Region. OrgCode expects one round of feedback and edits before finalizing the plan.

PRESENT THE PLAN

If requested, OrgCode is prepared to present the plan to the community as well as elected officials. If requested, even if OrgCode are not the presenters of the plan, OrgCode is prepared to create a presentation on the plan that can be used by the Region and other local stakeholders moving forward.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WITH PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The proverbial rubber hits the road when a plan turns into action. Even the best of plans can require amendments to implementation; but more often than not, they require careful coaching and advice

to realize the promise of the plan. While much of the implementation will be the responsibility of the Region, OrgCode will be providing 5 days of technical assistance with implementation. This can include meetings, coaching, site reviews, data reports, policy development, and implementation guidance.

TIMELINES

The Region, in consultation with OrgCode, will decide on an official start date for the project.

November: Create system planning committee; receive data and begin analysis and review; review documents and council reports; begin survey design

December/January: Approval of survey by system planning committee and launch; organize and start conducting key informant interviews; conduct engagement with people experiencing homelessness or recently experiencing homelessness; observe services in action; meet with system planning committee

February: Analyze survey results; develop system wide principles; develop logic models; develop system flow; begin writing plan; meet with system planning committee

March: Submit draft plan; meet with system planning committee; receive feedback on draft; edit draft

April: Submit final report; prepare presentation; begin implementation supports