
**The Region
of Waterloo's
Role in Addressing**
Homelessness

**A Discussion
Document**



Region of Waterloo
SOCIAL SERVICES

August 2004



Should you have any questions about this Homelessness Report,
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 1998/1999, with the formal designation of Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSM's) and the announcement of both the Provincial and Federal homelessness initiatives along with the devolution of publicly-funded housing, municipalities have been provided with the opportunity for an increased role in homelessness. *The purpose of this report is to begin to clarify the current role of the Regional Municipality of Waterloo in addressing homelessness and to serve as a platform for further discussion and evolution of this role.*

For the purposes of this report, homelessness is defined as someone who is sleeping in indoor or outdoor public places, using emergency shelters, living in illegal or temporary accommodations and/or relying on family, friends and acquaintances for short-term housing. How people become homeless and move out of homelessness is complex and often requires more than simply the provision of housing. Prevention efforts, and interventions such as street outreach, drop-in's and shelters, transitional supports as well as support to housing are essential and make up the continuum of supports to address homelessness. *The Region sees its goal in the area of homelessness to work with community partners towards:*

- *Reducing the number of residents who become homeless*
- *Reducing the length of time a resident experiences homelessness*
- *Improving the quality of life for homeless residents.*

Homelessness continues to be an issue in our community with estimates of 1,500 to 2,000 people experiencing homelessness annually. The Region's investment in addressing homelessness is significant. Over the last term of Council, the Region allocated over \$14 million to address homelessness. This figure does not include other important investments that directly address or have an impact on homelessness from other related areas such as Ontario Works, Public Health, National Child Benefit and Housing Services. The Region is well positioned to take on a leadership role in the area of homelessness as it is connected with or directly delivers other related services, has a mandate to work across all

municipalities and townships in Waterloo Region, has expertise in the area of coordination, planning and research and has links on a provincial and national level.

The role the Region takes in homelessness is attributed from three different sources including the Province, the Federal Government and the local community, each with its own set of expectations.

The Region has been designated by the Province as the service system manager for homelessness. The Province has defined a service system as an inter-organizational network that includes the organizations, groups and individuals involved in administering and delivering a set of integrated supports and services that meets the defined needs of people.

Managing a service system includes activities such as:

- **planning,**
- **resource allocation**
- **accountability/quality assurance.**
- **service delivery**

The Region has also taken on the role of Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) Community Entity and the Homeless Individual and Family Information System (HIFIS) Community Coordinator through the Federal Government's National Homelessness Initiative. As the SCPI Community Entity, the Region is responsible to facilitate a local planning process and implement the SCPI portion of the plan with the \$1.335 million provided to Waterloo Region. As HIFIS Community Coordinator, the Region champions and assists with the implementation and on-going activities of the HIFIS shelter database which collects information on homelessness within the local community and across Canada.

The community through the Waterloo Region Community Homelessness Network has identified that the Region has the lead in the areas of planning and research for homelessness and that other roles such as service delivery, coordination, education and advocacy are shared roles.

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Each of these roles fits well with the existing role of service system manager for homelessness, although each role presents different challenges and opportunities.

Social Services through Social Planning, Policy and Program Administration has been identified as the lead in homelessness. This means that Social Services has a mandate for planning and delivery of services to those who are homeless, those who are transitioning out of homelessness, for supportive/supported housing as well as homelessness prevention efforts.

The Region is currently allocating its available resources for homelessness to support the following programs over the next three years.

Current Region Supported Programs:

- 1 **Prevention Programs** including Housing Counselling and the Rent Bank and Eviction Prevention Program as well as various heating assistance programs
- 2 **Immediate Need Programs** such as street outreach, emergency shelters and drop-in programs
- 3 **Transitional Programs** such as the Families in Transition Program and the Youth Direct Linkage Program
- 4 **Housing Support Programs** such as the Domiciliary Hostel Program, Supports to Daily Living and the Youth Supportive Housing Program

Upcoming Activities

In order to continue to implement the service system manager role and strengthen the Region's impact on homelessness, the following activities are being planned over the next two years.

Planning:

1. System Plan for Homelessness with initial focus on:
 - a) A Sheltering Needs Assessment
 - b) A Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Needs Assessment
 - c) A Youth Homelessness Report and Action Plan
2. Creating a Sustainability Plan
3. Developing an Annual Housing and Homelessness Report

Policy:

4. Continuing to participate in local, provincial and national working groups and studies
5. Continuing to raise issues with the Province and Federal Government and keep Regional Council informed and abreast of issues

Program Administration:

6. Administering the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI)
7. Creating Shelter Guidelines
8. Updating the Shelter Funding Measures
9. Updating the Purchase of Service Application Process for Domiciliary Hostels and Emergency Hostels
10. Program Review of Domiciliary Hostels
11. Creating Standardized Reporting for all Homelessness Grant Funded Programs
12. Implementing the Homelessness Individual and Families Information System (HIFIS)

Community Development/Capacity Building

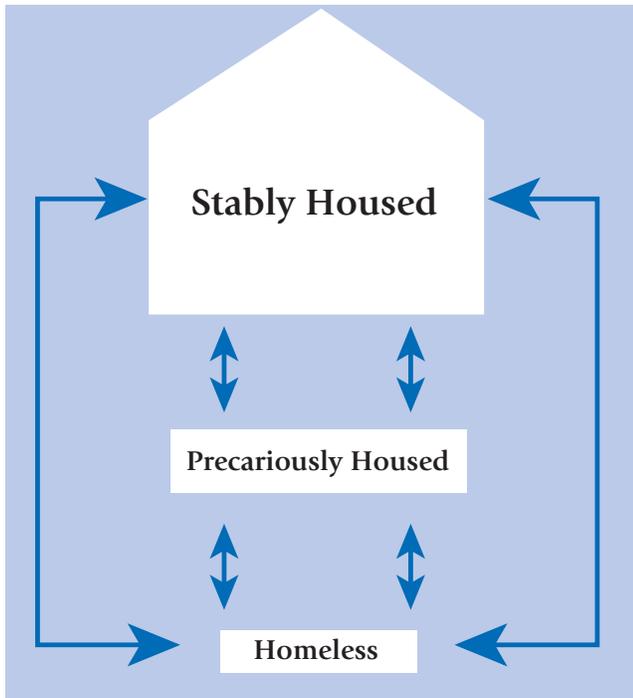
13. Supporting and/or Participating in Community Homelessness Groups
14. Coordinating Street Outreach Activities
15. Sponsoring Community Education Opportunities

INTRODUCTION

Understanding Homelessness

People may be described as living in one of three “states” of housing: stably housed, precariously housed or homeless. Most people in our community have stable housing. However, there are a significant number of people who are homeless or who are at risk of homelessness due to the precarious nature of their housing (Diagram 1).

Diagram 1: Housing States



Stably Housed

“Stably Housed” shown as the largest box in Diagram 1 is the majority of the community. For the purposes of this report, people are considered stably housed if there is no immediate or foreseeable risk of losing their housing. It also means that their housing is affordable, safe and adequately maintained. Stable housing can include various forms of housing (e.g. single family house, townhouse, apartment unit, boarding home, group home etc.) with all forms of funding and tenure models (freehold ownership, condominium ownership, life lease, rent-geared-to-income, private, non-profit or cooperative rental). These various forms of housing are discussed in detail in the Region’s *Community Action Plan for Housing* (2004).

Precariously Housed

Fewer people in the community are precariously

housed (as indicated by a middle box in Diagram 1). People are considered precariously housed when their housing is unaffordable, unsafe or inadequately maintained to the point where a person is at risk of losing their housing. When someone’s housing situation is precarious they are considered “at risk” of homelessness.

The affordability threshold for housing is generally considered to be 30% of a household’s gross income. The Region’s Housing Needs Survey (2003) found that 43.2% of renter households are paying more than 30% of their income on rent and 12.9% of households are paying more than 50%. This study also identified that 6.1% of households faced eviction at some point or were late paying their rent. There are approximately 4,000 people on the waitlist for Waterloo Region Community Housing.

In other cases, people are precariously housed because their home is not a safe or healthy place to be (e.g. abuse or violence, housing in need of repair, overcrowding etc.) or because the individual or family requires some level of support which is not available to them. (Beavis, Klos, Carter et al., 1997, Bergeron, Josephson, Aubry et al., 2000, Hulchanski, 2000).

Homeless

Homeless for the purposes of this report is defined as someone who is sleeping in indoor or outdoor public places, using emergency shelters, living in illegal or temporary accommodation and/or relying on family, friends or acquaintances for short-term housing (often referred to as couch surfing). A person staying for any length of time with family or friends would also be considered homeless if they did not have their own private space and access key.

There are far fewer, but still significant number of people experiencing homelessness and as such is shown as the smallest box in Diagram 1.

A 1999 study in Waterloo Region identified that 1,500-2,000 people used shelters at some point within the year.¹ The Region’s Housing Needs Survey (2003) found that 3.3% of households surveyed had a family member that lived in a shelter or on the street at some point in their lives and 16.3% of

¹ A region wide survey from 1999 entitled “A Backgrounder on Homelessness” estimated numbers through a survey of shelter use that showed 172 people sleeping in shelters on any one night in Waterloo Region.

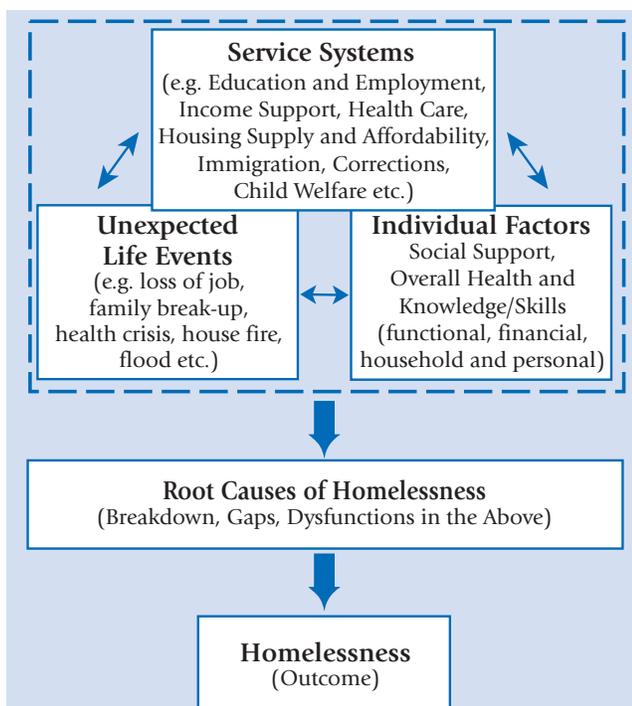
households surveyed had a family member that had to live temporarily with family or a friend.

It has been shown that the majority of people who experience homelessness do so on a “temporary” or one-time basis. A smaller number of people experience “episodic” homelessness, moving in and out of homelessness, and an even smaller number experience long term or “chronic homelessness” (Springer, James, Dennison et al., 1998).

Homelessness is a paradox in that it is so incredibly simple and so incredibly complex at the same time. It is simple because a person who is homeless appears to simply need their basic needs met on a short-term basis while they re-establish themselves in an independent lifestyle with housing and employment. For some this may be true, however, for most people who experience homelessness it is often much more complex.

How people become homeless is complex, uniquely individual and includes an inter-connected set of causes and effects that have been eloquently described as a “web of influences” (View from the Sidewalk, 2001). Diagram 2 shows how influences which include service systems, individual factors and unexpected life events can lead to homelessness. Breakdowns, gaps and dysfunction in these areas are often referred to as the “root causes” of homelessness with the state of homelessness being

Diagram 2: Root Causes of Homelessness

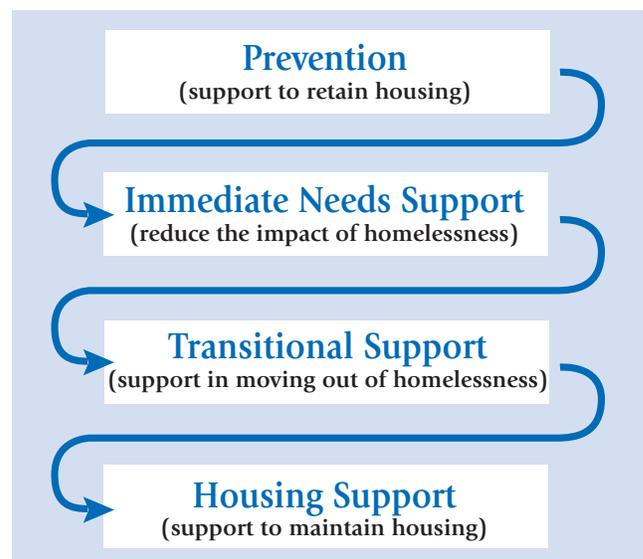


the outcome.

While these factors are considered the “root causes”, homelessness is often cyclical. The instability or absence of housing can contribute to issues such as lack of employment, family breakdown, ill health etc. which then make it more difficult to obtain and maintain housing. The cyclical nature of homelessness is the reason the arrows in Diagram 1 do not show a linear progression between the housing states.

How people transition out of homelessness is also complex and involves much more than just the provision of affordable housing. While affordable housing is always an essential part of the equation, the other systems and individual factors that have been noted play a large part in whether or not someone will be able to acquire or maintain housing. For many, particularly the episodic and chronically homeless, transitional or long-term supports may be helpful or necessary to enable someone to create a “home” where they can remain housed. The following quote by Franklin (1999,. p.192) who wrote about the transition from homelessness to home reinforces the point that addressing homelessness is much more than providing a roof over someone’s head, “there is a much more complex process at issue – which involves, not only rehousing, but also a progression through the stages whereby an individual comes to feel at home – a progression which is too easily taken for granted by those who have a safe, secure and predictable pattern to their lives”.

Diagram 3: Continuum of Supports Addressing Homelessness



What is important in addressing homelessness is that there is not just one form of intervention, but that there is a continuum of supports in place within communities to prevent and respond to homelessness (Diagram 3).

Responsibility for Addressing Homelessness

Housing is a basic need² and has been identified through international law as a basic human right. (UN, 1948) A lack of stable housing severely impacts a person's ability to survive and be successful in other areas of life. Homelessness may lead to poor health³, unemployment and crime which translate into huge costs both financially and socially within communities⁴. Homelessness not only contributes to the deterioration of an individual's health but to the health of the overall community as well.

Based on the scope and impact of homelessness, it would be fair to say that all levels of government have a role to play in addressing homelessness. At the municipal, provincial and federal levels of government there are some specific and important roles identified.

At a federal and provincial level, the Canadian Constitution s. 36 states that [these] upper levels of government are jointly committed to ensuring public services of reasonable quality to all Canadians (Callaghan, Leilani & Porter et al, 2002, p.2). In terms of the Federal Government this includes ensuring compliance with international human rights law guaranteeing the right to adequate housing (Callaghan et al, 2002). More specifically, the City of Waterloo's Affordable Housing Task Force Report (2002) identified existing roles for the Federal and Provincial Government:

Federal Government:

- Provide national standards and a legislative and regulatory framework to support development of affordable housing
- Provide financial resources (grants, funding to provinces, tax incentives)
- Provide leadership in policy development, research, training and education
- Provision of mortgage insurance

Provincial Government

- Provide provincial standards and a legislative and regulatory framework to support the development of affordable housing

- Provide leadership in the development and implementation of housing policies and programs (non-profit housing, rent supplements, capital grants, tax incentives)
- Provide support to municipal initiatives

In two-tier municipalities, the lower tier municipalities' role can be minimal or extensive dependent on their policies and approach. In Waterloo Region, it appears that each municipality undertakes various processes to identify needs in their community, to encourage and facilitate the availability of affordable housing and to address homelessness. Often the vehicles used include official plan development and implementation, incentive programs, enforcement of property standards, participation on various committees, task forces and working groups, resource support for studies and community services and in some cases, through the actual development and operation of affordable housing. Upper-tier or Regional Government can also have a minimal or extensive role dependent on their policies and approach but have some very specific mandates identified by the Provincial and Federal Governments.

² Abraham Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of human needs identifies food, clothing and shelter as the most fundamental basic human needs. University of Waterloo Professor, Dr. Larry Smith, as the keynote speaker to Waterloo Region's celebration of National Housing Day 2003, recognized housing as the "platform of a humane society" and identified it as a priority over other social programs such as education and healthcare. Cited in The Record, November 21, 2003.

³ "In terms of its health impact, the Columbia University School of Public Health states, ". . . homelessness can be viewed as an environmental stressor comparable to other trauma, including refugee experiences, natural disasters, and criminal victimization". www.mailman.hs.columbia.edu/index.html. For further information, a literature review on homelessness and health is included in the Waterloo Region Community Homelessness Plan (2001) Appendix 7.

⁴ For example, as noted In Homelessness – Causes and Effects: The Costs of Homelessness in British Columbia (2001) it was shown that in 1998-1999, it cost 33% more in major government health care, criminal justice and social services (excluding shelter costs) for those who are homeless and on the streets compared to those people who had been recently housed after being homeless. Beyond the increase in these direct costs, there are many indirect or soft health and well-being costs that are borne by the individual and the community.

Over the last 10 years, the federal government has been downloading much of the responsibility for publicly funded community housing to the provinces (Starr & Pancini, 2001). In some cases, as in Ontario, provincial governments have downloaded the responsibility of addressing homelessness, operating publicly funded housing and the building of new affordable housing to municipalities. In January 1998, the Province completed its realignment of Social and Community Health Services and designated 47 municipalities across the province as Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSM's). These CMSM's were identified as taking on different roles and responsibilities and levels of service system management in a number of areas including Ontario Works, Ontario Disability Support Program, Child Care, Land Ambulance, Public Health and Social Housing. Later that same year, the report of the Provincial Task Force on Homelessness was released and also identified the CMSM's as the Service System Managers for Homelessness. At the same time, the Federal Government announced its National Homelessness Initiative, (NHI) which included the local delivery of the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI).

Aside from government, other sectors of society also have a role to play in addressing homelessness. In fact, many non-profit community agencies, faith groups and other volunteer groups/individuals have been providing services to those who are homeless and at-risk of homelessness for many years. In addition, the business sector has a role to play. There are many examples locally and around the world where business has become involved and made

significant impacts in addressing homelessness. The Region's role in homelessness is interrelated and dependent on these groups for the provision of effective services. It is also essential that these groups and those impacted by homelessness participate in planning efforts to address homelessness.

Purpose of This Report

Municipalities identified as CMSM's with responsibility for homelessness are struggling to define their role in addressing homelessness. Roles have been identified for municipalities from both the provincial and federal governments as well as from local communities. This issue was examined to some degree through a report funded by the Ontario Regional Research Fund of the National Homelessness Initiative entitled "The Capacity of Ontario Municipalities to Address Homelessness" written by SHS Inc., Social Housing Strategists in December 2002. This report compared communities across Ontario and focused on both the devolution of housing and homelessness to municipalities. While this report offers some helpful insights it does not address specifically the roles attributed to and the approaches taken by the Regional Municipality of Waterloo (the Region).

It is hoped that this report will begin to clarify for local stakeholders (Council, Region Staff and community members involved in addressing homelessness) the expectations, challenges, opportunities and current approaches of the Region in addressing homelessness. This report will serve as a starting point and a platform for further discussion and evolution of the Region's role in homelessness.

2. UNDERSTANDING ROLES ATTRIBUTED TO THE REGION FOR HOMELESSNESS

Since 1998/1999, with the formal designation of Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSM's) and the announcement of both Provincial and Federal homelessness initiatives along with the devolution of publically funded housing, municipalities have been provided with the opportunity for an increased role in homelessness. This section will outline the provincial and federal roles attributed to municipalities for homelessness that relate to Waterloo Region as well as identify the

challenges and opportunities within these roles.

Provincially Attributed Role – Service System Manager

Historical Context

In 1997, the Province announced an increased role for local government through the Local Services Realignment within the legislative authority of the *Services Improvement Act*, 1998 and the *Social*

Assistance Reform Act. The shift in delivery responsibilities began in 1998 and was completed in 2001 for 47 municipalities across Ontario identified as CMSM's⁵. A number of documents were produced to clarify the new roles for social and health services between the two levels of government:

- Consolidation of Municipal Services Management: Consolidation Planning Framework: Southern Ontario January 1998
- Roles and Responsibilities: Provincial-Municipal Service Realignment: Social and Community Health Services January 1998
- Who Does What: Towards Implementation (1998)
- Local Services Realignment: A Users Guide (1999)
- Roles and Responsibilities - 2001: The Provincial - Municipal Relationship in Human Services"

In these documents, the Province has provided general information on what it means to be a Service System Manager and specific information on this role for the various programs including Ontario Works, Ontario Disability Support Program, Child Care, Land Ambulance, Public Health and Social Housing. However, the Province has been less forthcoming when it comes to defining the service system manager role for homelessness.

The Provincial Task Force on Homelessness 1998 report recommended that municipalities be designated as the service system manager for homelessness. Between November 1998 and February 1999 a number of meetings were organized by the Ontario Municipal Services Association (OMSSA) with municipal and provincial representatives to discuss and clarify this new role. At that point, the Province identified the role as local planning in collaboration with community agencies and allocating available resources. Available resources at the time were identified as the Provincial Homelessness Initiative Fund and Emergency Hostel Redirection Funding. Additional programs such as Off the Street and Into Shelter were announced in 2000.

Further clarification was to be provided through the document "Roles and Responsibilities - 2001: The Provincial-Municipal Relationship in Human Services". While this document provided general information on the provincial/municipal partnership and service system management, no

specifics related to homelessness programs were provided.

At the September 2002 OMSSA Conference, a panel of municipalities (representing Muskoka, Waterloo Region and Ottawa) shared how they have interpreted and implemented the role in their communities. It was evident from these discussions that further dialogue and clarification would be beneficial. Therefore, the Region's role as the service system manager for homelessness, remains under development.

The remainder of Section 2.2 will outline the Region's current understanding of the service system manager role for homelessness and identify how the homelessness program area interacts with other related program areas.

Service System Management and the Role for Homelessness

The Province has outlined three areas of responsibility within the provincial/CMSM partnership:

1. governance;
2. service delivery; and
3. service system management.

The role of service system manager must be understood in the context of a framework which includes authority limits (governance) and expectations for service delivery. Governance and service delivery will be described briefly followed by a more detailed description of service system management. These descriptions have been summarized from the "Roles and Responsibilities - 1998" and "Roles and Responsibilities - 2001" reports. In the absence of information on how these responsibility areas relate to homelessness, a description has been created and has been summarized in Table 1 (p. 10) in the same way it has been for other program areas in the two "Roles" documents.

1. Governance

The Province has defined governance as, "the legitimate authority and responsibility to make decisions and take actions" (Roles and Responsibilities, 2001, p. 12). Authority can be seen as occurring on a continuum from support

⁵ The 47 CMSM's include Regional level governments as well as District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs) of which there are ten in northern Ontario.

(provision of information, monitoring, analysis and coordination), to influence (provide advice with obligation of other organization to consider the advice but does not imply the other organization must follow the advice), to direct (instruction to another to carry out an activity in a specified way which may come through law, policy or funding) (Roles and Responsibilities, 1998).

Authority and responsibility for all devolved programs is shared to varying degrees between the Province and the CMSM. The aspects of direct authority including law, policy, funding as well as oversight will be described in further detail.

The Province holds most of the responsibility in terms of **law-making** related to human services. Through the *Constitutions Act*, the Province has the authority to enact laws including statutes and regulations. Municipalities are given the authority to create by-laws in areas outlined by the *Municipal Act*.

Legislation from the Province that relates directly to CMSM's and homelessness is virtually non-existent. Other than the *Ontario Works Act* which outlines the parameters for the administration of per diems for transient hostels (emergency shelters), there is no other legislative framework from the Province in terms of fulfilling the role of service system manager for homelessness.

Policy identifies a plan of action and the parameters in which the plan will be carried out. In all program areas the Province retained the responsibility for high level policy direction including the type of service to be provided, eligibility requirements and broad delivery strategies. CMSM's have the responsibility for local policy within the parameters of provincial policy and legislation.

In terms of homelessness, Provincial policy identifies that local municipalities have full discretion on how to undertake the local governance, planning, resource allocation, quality assurance/accountability and service delivery within three broad objectives:

- Moving people from street to shelter
- Moving people from shelter to permanent housing
- Preventing homelessness.

Funding policies that were created by the Province identified cost-sharing arrangements between CMSM's and the Province and how resources are to be allocated. These cost-shared arrangements vary from program to program. Funds at both levels of government are raised through taxation and the

collection of fees although the provincial government has a much broader base of taxation measures whereas municipalities rely on property taxes. Both levels of government may also have access to additional funding sources such as federal grants.

The Province funds a number of homelessness programs through different arrangements with CMSM's. The Province provides 100% funding for the Provincial Homelessness Initiative Fund (PHIF), the Community Partners Program and Supports to Daily Living and 80% Provincial and 20% municipal cost-sharing for Off the Street and Into Shelter Funding, Emergency Hostel Redirection Funding, domiciliary hostels and transient hostels (emergency hostel) per diems and related benefits. More recently, the Province has provided one-time endowment funding for Rent Banks and Emergency Energy Assistance.

The CMSM's share funding responsibility by paying 100% of the cost for planning and administration of the service system manager role and their 20% share for the grants and programs listed above. In addition, CMSM's may choose to spend 100% municipal dollars to provide further services and support in the area of homelessness.

In terms of oversight, both the Province and municipalities are responsible to their electorate for the funding they manage and to ensure that the expected results are achieved within budget. As part of the service contract with the Province, municipalities are asked to report quarterly on expenditures and service targets for homelessness programs.

2. Service Delivery

Service delivery is defined as "the supervision and direct provision of services to clients and administration of the service delivery function". The document points out that, "As managers of human services, CMSM's have the authority, where legislation permits, to determine whether or not to deliver services directly or to contract for service delivery through another organization" (Roles and Responsibilities, 2001, p. 20).

For all homelessness programs, CMSM's can choose to directly deliver services or contract with community agencies. Additionally, the Province has not mandated the provision of any particular homelessness programs; all homelessness programs are discretionary and locally defined.

3. Service System Management

A **service system** is defined as “an inter-organizational network that includes the organizations, groups and individuals involved in administering and delivering a set of integrated supports and services that meets the defined needs of people” (Roles and Responsibilities, 2001, p. 14). **Service system management** is defined as “. . . a coordinated approach that recognizes the complex, multi-faceted needs of people and involves collaboration among the organizations that are part of the delivery system” (Roles and Responsibilities, 2001, p. 14). CMSM’s have been identified as the service system manager for a number of programs. The service system manager role is noted to include planning, resource allocation/reallocation and quality assurance/ accountability which are described in more detail below.

Within policy and authority limits, a plan outlines the steps and approach for getting something done and may include strategic, financial and operating plans. **Planning** within a service system includes assessing service needs, identifying planning partners, developing planning processes and developing strategic and operational plans. The Province has not mandated or suggested any particular framework for planning other than it should be system wide and include community service providers.

“**Resource allocation** refers to the process of determining (a) the amount of goods, services, personnel and money that should be dedicated to a given activity, program, service and organization and (b) how these resources should be distributed among competing interests.” (Roles and Responsibilities 2001, p. 16) Activities in allocating and managing resources may include developing and implementing an allocations or funding strategy, negotiating budgets, developing service contracts, monitoring contracts etc. There are no requirements from the Province in terms of a mandated process for allocating funding, negotiating budgets, developing service contracts or monitoring of contracts.

Quality assurance and accountability measures are often identified as part of a service contract and may include reporting of service statistics and expenditures, program evaluation activities and audits. Quality assurance and accountability may also be addressed through licensing or a quality assessment process (e.g. ISO 9000). All these quality assurance and accountability tools work towards identifying the degree to which expected outcomes have been achieved, the effectiveness of different services in achieving objectives, benefits experienced

by clients, adequacy of processes, risk management, financial and operating control as well as compliance with policies, guidelines and protocols. It was noted that each provincial ministry is developing accountability mechanisms for provincially mandated programs as well as a benchmarking system to assess municipal service performance against provincial standards.

The service contract between the Province and the CMSM related to homelessness programs requires quarterly reporting of expenditures and services statistics related to the three broad homelessness program objectives. Other than these requirements, there are no defined accountability and quality assurance measures. For example, there are no provincial standards or licensing for any emergency hostels/shelters or domiciliary hostels other than annual fire and health inspections. The Ontario Municipal Benchmarking Initiative that has been developed does not identify any indicators related to homelessness.

Carrying Out the Role for Service System Manager for Homelessness

Within the provincial framework described, service system managers are charged with making a number of local decisions, for example determining:

- which department/division will lead the service system manager functions
- how to fund and what level of funding will be provided to administer the service system manager functions
- whether or not and to what degree the municipality will provide additional 100% funding
- whether to deliver services directly or enter into contracts with community providers
- policies and processes for allocating funds
- content of service contracts (if any)
- whether or not to set local standards in the absence of provincial regulation
- if and how community advisory bodies will be organized
- the degree to which to take on a community development role (support, coordination and capacity building for those areas of the system both within and outside the CMSM’s direct mandate or authority)
- what type of planning will occur and how often

The Province has offered some examples of what it sees as the most effective ways in which the service system manager role can be fulfilled in the areas of planning, resource allocation and quality assurance/accountability including (2001, p. 18):

Table 1. Summary of Provincial/Service System Manager Responsibilities for Homelessness

ROLES/ RESPONSIBILITIES	PROVINCE	SERVICE SYSTEM MANAGER (the Region)
GOVERNANCE		
Policy-Making	Set broad objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move from street to shelter • Move from shelter to permanent housing • Prevention of homelessness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Determine local approaches to governance, administration and service delivery e.g. organizational structure, establishment of local advisory committee/s etc. - Determine which discretionary services will be funded
Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Ontario Works Act</i> to provide per diem and related benefits to emergency and domiciliary hostels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - By-laws (which include all motions approved by Council)
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 80% for emergency and domiciliary hostel per diems and mandatory benefits - 100% for PHIF, supports to Daily Living, Community Partners and Endowment Funds - 80% for OSIS and EHRF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 100% for planning, research and administration - 20% of cost-shared programs - 100% funding for any additional program spending in the area of homelessness
Oversight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitoring expenditures ensuring appropriate use of funds - Monitoring service statistics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensures effective programming and appropriate use of funds through service system management functions
SERVICE DELIVERY		
Service Delivery	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Directly delivering services or entering into agreements with community agencies to deliver services
SERVICE SYSTEM MANAGEMENT		
Service System Planning	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Homelessness research – identifying needs and approaches to address homelessness - Identifying planning partners and cooperating and coordinating with other key homelessness stakeholders - Develop planning processes - Developing strategic and operational plans - Community development
Resource Allocating and Management	None	Developing and implementing an allocations and funding strategy, negotiating budgets, developing service contracts, monitoring contracts for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provincial Homelessness Initiative Fund - Off the Street and Into Shelter Fund - Emergency Hostel Redirection Fund - Supporting Communities Partnerships Initiatives (SCPI) - Domiciliary Hostels and Emergency Shelters - Supports to Daily Living - Community Partners Program - 100% Municipal Funded Projects
Quality Assurance/ Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitors expenditures and service statistics through quarterly reporting from CMSM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collection of service statistics - Creation of program guidelines - Creation and monitoring of service agreements/contracts - Program evaluation

2. UNDERSTANDING ROLES ATTRIBUTED TO THE REGION FOR HOMELESSNESS

- Promoting a shared vision that is client-centred.
- Planning of the local service system conducted collaboratively by organizations that are part of an inter-organizational network.
- Utilization of a community plan that identifies available services and service needs within the community and allocates resources and enters into contracts based on this plan.
- Creating a strategic funding approach where funds are reallocated within the system to support services that best meet long-term goals.
- Creating policies that address the range of client needs in a way that recognizes the interdependence of these needs and of the services provided.
- Ensuring that agencies are held accountable for engaging in systemic behavior, e.g. collaboration and coordination.
- Creating standards that address interagency processes.
- Conducting client satisfaction surveys that ask questions that help in the assessment of how well services are integrated.

There are many ways to configure the service system for homelessness and each municipality has done so in different ways. This makes sense as each community is unique and whatever model is adopted must be within the context of the community, available resources and authority limits. Community context is important because communities differ in terms of the range of needs, what was previously in place that can be built on and what residents are prepared to support. How the Regional Municipality of Waterloo has configured the local service system for homelessness and fulfills its obligations is described in Section 3.

Connection with Other Service System Manager Responsibilities

It is important to note the connection to other CMSM delivered programs (other than those directly attributed to the service system manager role for homelessness) that directly impact or address issues of homelessness including Ontario Works, Community Housing, Public Health and the National Child Benefit Reinvestment.

Ontario Works

Ontario Works has an obvious and direct connection with homelessness as housing is a purchased commodity. Ontario Works, under the *Ontario Works Act*, provides basic financial assistance and supports

to employment. While Ontario Works is delivered by CMSM's, program requirements, the level of support available and in many cases the types of programs offered are dictated by the Province. Social Services through Employment and Income support administers these programs many of which are supplemented with 100% Region dollars.

A number of people who receive Ontario Works and related benefits are homeless and a majority are precariously housed. At the end of 2003, the Province identified that 87% of those on Ontario Works in the province were living in market rent housing (MCSS, 2003). The maximum amount available under Ontario Works for shelter costs for a single adult is \$325 (plus a recently announced increase of 3%), yet average market rents are \$517 for a bachelor unit in the Kitchener Census Metropolitan Area (CMHC, 2003). It is clear that housing affordability is a significant issue for those on Ontario Works.

Programs offered through Employment and Income Support for those who are homeless include:

- Provision of per diem for transient (emergency hostels) and domiciliary hostels.
- Personal Needs Allowance, Community-Start-Up and other benefits to those eligible in emergency hostels, domiciliary hostels and transitional hostels (shelters for women and their children fleeing domestic violence).
- Provision of the basic living allowance of \$195 a month to those who are eligible and have no fixed address.
- Casework service to those receiving assistance including support, counseling, advocacy, referral to community agencies and provision of emergency assistance.
- Emergency assistance and discretionary benefits to those on Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and the working poor.

Housing

The Province transferred the financial and administrative responsibility for publicly-funded community housing (community housing) to CMSM's in 2001. Community housing provides over 8,000 households with affordable housing in the following housing forms: Waterloo Region Housing, non-profits, co-operatives, and rent supplement units in private rental buildings. Many households pay rents that are geared to their income, making rents affordable to those who would otherwise be

2. UNDERSTANDING ROLES ATTRIBUTED TO THE REGION FOR HOMELESSNESS

unable to afford housing.

Within the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, Planning, Housing and Community Services is the Service Manager for Housing and has a mandate for a wide range of housing services, most of which are outlined in legislation including: administering more than 8,000 community housing units; operating the Waterloo Region Co-ordinated Access System (WRCAS) through the Community Housing Access Centre; and operating a rent supplement program. Planning, Housing and Community Services provides various other services related to developing strategic directions to balance housing needs with housing supply, such as facilitating and enabling the development of 1,000 new affordable housing through the Region's Affordable Housing Strategy; creating a Community Action Plan for Housing; maintaining a database of housing incentives and funding sources; conducting housing research; policy development; and co-operating and coordinating with other key stakeholders, including housing providers, special-purpose groups, area municipalities, the private sector and senior levels of government.

Community housing assists in addressing the needs of households that are precariously housed or homeless. The WRCAS waiting list typically contains 3,500 to 4,000 households, over 80% with incomes under \$20,000 per year. In 2003, 933 households were housed in community housing from the WRCAS waiting list. Providing decent housing that people can afford assists in preventing households from becoming homeless. Furthermore, WRCAS has an "Urgent Status" for applicants who are homeless as a means of lowering their waiting period for affordable housing. There is need to further co-ordinate housing supply with support services in order to enhance the continuum of housing and supports required to address the needs of those who are homeless and to prevent those who are precariously housed from becoming homeless. The Bridges project in Cambridge and Charles Village in Kitchener are two examples of how Social Services and the Planning, Housing and Community Services are working together to develop necessary supports along side affordable housing.

Public Health

Public Health is accountable to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care for compliance with the Mandatory Health Programs and Service Guidelines (1997). Public Health has a mandate to provide

public health programs and services which target health promotion, prevention of disease, and health protection – all of which prevent homelessness and support people who are homeless as they move toward stable and adequate housing.

Housing that is safe, secure, healthy, accessible, appropriate, and affordable is one of the conditions that contribute to the health of individuals and communities⁶. Furthermore, not only does ill health predispose to homelessness, but illness and disease arise out of homelessness⁷. The impacts of homelessness can be especially severe for children. Healthy child development – from developing secure attachments to allergy resistance to brain development – may be compromised when a child does not have basic necessities such as adequate shelter.

Access to adequate and secure shelter is a basic component of disease prevention and health protection. Without shelter, the health of individuals and communities are at risk of increased illness and disease. Some diseases, such as Tuberculosis, continue to pose many challenges for public health, especially in certain high risk groups. The homeless are one of these groups and contributes to this challenge as the immune status of homeless persons and their ability to comply with medical regime is compromised. In spite of medical advances, infectious diseases remain an important cause of both morbidity and death. Ensuring that all residents are adequately housed is a wise health investment in a community as the quality of living conditions plays an important role in disease prevention and health protection.

Public Health operates a number of disease prevention and health protection initiatives that connect with the issue of homelessness including:

⁶ In 1986 the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion (WHO, 1986) recognized shelter as a basic prerequisite for health. Since then significant attention has been paid to the extensive links between health and adequate housing. Also see the Health Canada website about "Housing as a Determinant of Health" http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/phdd/overview_implications/09_housing.html, as well as Hancock, Labonte, & Edwards, 1999 "Indicators that Count: Measuring Population Health at the Community Level".

⁷ See the literature review on homelessness and health included in the Waterloo Region Community Homelessness Plan (2001) Appendix 7.

health inspections of special needs and supportive care homes which house more than 10 people, training for food handlers, consultations/in-services on food safety and disease prevention, comprehensive Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) and Sexual Health Clinics, anonymous HIV outreach clinic, outreach sexual health/STD/HIV clinics, a needle exchange program, provisions of free STD medications, information on how to access government funded dental health programs, including a "local needs" dental clinic for children under 19 years, support for families participating in Healthy Babies and Healthy Children to access housing services, screening, assessment and service coordination of families with children between 0-6 years of age and prenatal mothers, and referrals from various programs to other housing-related community services.

Public Health also addresses the broader conditions that promote health in a wide range of initiatives from food access to healthy living. Public Health participates on and provides support to various housing and homelessness committees.

National Child Benefit

The National Child Benefit (NCB) Program is a unique partnership agreement among the federal, provincial and territorial governments and First Nations. The aim of the program is to help prevent and reduce the depth of child poverty, support parents as they move into the labour market and reduce overlap and duplication of government programs. The NCB combines two key elements: monthly payments to low-income families with children, and benefits and services designed and delivered by the provinces and territories to meet the needs of families with children in each jurisdiction. Increases in the federal NCB contribution have allowed provinces and territories to reduce the direct cost of social assistance payments to families with children. These provincial and territorial "savings" must be re-directed to programs and services that benefit low-income families with children in their jurisdictions.

In Ontario, the responsibility for social assistance is cost-shared between the Province and municipalities on an 80/20 basis. Municipalities must use their 20% "savings" for local programs targeted to reducing the depth of child poverty and promoting attachment to work. Areas in which NCB funds have been used to address issues of homelessness in Waterloo Region include shelter subsidies (costs

associated with utilities, relocation and storage), start-up funding for the Rent Bank and Eviction Prevention Program as well as some New Project Development Grants directed to agencies that serve people who are homeless. Other subsidies that are provided to low income families including food, clothing, transportation, recreation and counselling can help to defray the costs of housing.

Federally Attributed Roles Through the National Homelessness Initiative

Historical Context

In March of 1999, the Government of Canada appointed Minister of Labour, Claudette Bradshaw to co-ordinate the National Secretariat on Homelessness. This Secretariat was charged with the national role of developing government policies, supports and services relating to homeless individuals and families. In December 1999, the Government of Canada announced that it would invest \$753 million over three years for the National Homelessness Initiative (NHI) in an approach to help alleviate and prevent homelessness across Canada. In July 2003, a second homelessness initiative was announced extending the program from 2003-2006 with \$405 million.

Two of the National Homelessness Initiative programs that relate to Waterloo Region and in which the Region has a role include the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) and the Homeless Individual and Family Information System (HIFIS).

NHI – SCPI

The NHI's Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) provides funding to local communities to increase availability and accessibility to a range of services and facilities to move people from homelessness to self-sufficiency. In order to access the funding a Community Plan must be submitted identifying community priorities and matching funding. The delivery model is unique for the Federal Government in that they are delivering the program directly with communities. In some cases the program is administered locally by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSD – formerly Human Resources Development Canada – HRDC), in other cases by a body within the local community identified as the Community Entity and in some cases as a shared model. Across Canada, there are a total of 61 SCPI communities of which 22 are located in Ontario. Of these 22

communities, 11 have designated Community Entities of which eight are municipalities. The Region is one of these municipalities.

In 2000, the federal government announced the local allocation of \$1.355 million in SCPI funds to Waterloo Region and announced a further \$1.355 million in 2003.

The Government of Canada's Homelessness Initiative: Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative: How to Manage Your Agreement for Community Entities (2001) outlines the roles and responsibilities between HRSD and Community Entities.

The Region as the Community Entity is responsible for facilitating a planning process with community stakeholders to develop and submit a Community Plan to the local HRSD office. The Region is then responsible for the implementation of the NHI portion of the Community Plan including administering a request for proposals based on priorities identified in the Community Plan and the support of a Community Advisory Board who will make recommendations on funding allocations. Once funding is allocated, the Region is responsible for receiving NHI funding and taking accountability for managing contracts with the community service providers. The Region is expected to evaluate the program locally, participate in any other evaluation activities identified by HRSD and participate with HRSD in communication strategies for announcing homelessness activities.

HIFIS

The Homeless Individual and Family Information System (HIFIS) is a national database that was created to collect common information on homelessness across Canada. The software system was designed by and for shelters to assist with daily operations such as booking in clients, maintaining bed lists, producing billing reports and collecting client data. As a national system, non-identifying data can be aggregated and analyzed to assist service providers, researchers and various levels of governments across Canada to better understand and address issues of homelessness.

As part of the national HIFIS implementation plan, local communities have been asked to identify a Community Coordinator. The Region has taken on this role through Social Services Planning, Policy and Program Administration. The *National Secretariat on Homelessness: The Community Coordinator Role April 2002 – March 2003* is the most

recent document to outline the role between the Government of Canada and the Community Coordinator.

The role of the Community Coordinator is to coordinate HIFIS locally and to be the main point of contact between local agencies and the National Secretariat on Homelessness. Included in this role is to serve as the regional champion for HIFIS, interact with local stakeholders to promote HIFIS, participate in and coordinate training, determine the mandatory set of data to be collected by the participating shelters to create a regional homelessness database, analyze HIFIS information contained in the aggregated regional database and ensure the quality of the data, create regional analysis reports, release data and analysis on homelessness to support informed discussions in the community, export the regional data, provide support to other coordinators (provincial or national), and participate in creation of data sharing protocols.

The Government of Canada through the National Secretariat on Homelessness has identified that it will continue to develop and improve HIFIS and provide this software and other materials on their website at no charge. They will also support communities to implement HIFIS through training, help-desk support and providing networking opportunities with other HIFIS communities. The National Secretariat on Homelessness will eventually receive non-identifying HIFIS data from Community Coordinators across Canada to be analyzed on a national level.

Challenges and Opportunities with the Homelessness Role

Each of the roles attributed by the Provincial and Federal Government provides challenges and opportunities. These challenges and opportunities are outlined below and include the dual role attributed to municipalities, issues with resources, program flexibility and managing the service system.

Dual Roles

The roles attributed by the Province and the Federal Government are not contradictory but they do differ. The Province and the Federal Government have used different delivery frameworks, different language and require different levels of reporting. The role CMSM's in Ontario have for homelessness is unique across Canada. In some areas of Canada, the introduction of National Homelessness Initiative

(NHI) was the first community focused funding for homelessness provided by upper levels of government. In Ontario, for a number of communities, NHI is but one of a number of government grants for homelessness at the community level (i.e. in Waterloo Region, NHI only accounts for 10% of funding from governments for issues of homelessness). As the NHI was centrally developed for all of Canada it has taken some time to understand the unique roles municipalities as CMSM's carry for homelessness in Ontario. It is challenging to coordinate planning at two different levels when each has a different focus and is further complicated by a variety of community planning processes. There is a need to coordinate these processes while respecting their unique focuses. Overall, the various roles present an opportunity for dialogue, clarification and acknowledgement of the different responsibilities in addressing homelessness.

Resources

While the Province recognizes that "Service System Management is a complex undertaking that requires an investment of time and resources" (Roles and Responsibilities 2001, p. 18), the Province has provided no planning and coordination resources for CMSM's to undertake the service system manager role for homelessness. The federal government through SCPI allows for up to 15% of allocations to be directed towards administration costs. In communities with large amounts of SCPI funding this can be translated into multiple staff positions. Communities with less SCPI funding may not be able to afford any new staffing support. Yet, it often requires the same amount of time and resources to allocate \$1 million as it takes to allocate \$12 million. The Region, with approximately \$1.3 million in SCPI funding, had adequate resources to hire staff to administer the program. However, it is recognized that \$1.3 million is not adequate to address the needs in our community.

Coordination of services at both the system management and community agency level is not well supported but takes a considerable amount of time. Coordination is important for efficiency of services as well as effectiveness for the service user. The reality is that resources are allocated from other important areas to offset the costs in staff time that are required to develop and maintain some level of service coordination.

The Region is now the fifth largest urban centre in

Ontario and the tenth largest in Canada. (Statistics Canada, 2001) However, the Region has been identified at the funding level of a mid-sized city. In terms of funding from the Province, large, medium and small communities receive very different levels of funding. Larger communities such as Toronto, Ottawa and Hamilton receive anywhere from approximately \$500,000 to \$12 million annually in Provincial Homelessness Initiative Funding. Mid-sized communities such as Waterloo Region tend to receive anywhere from \$180,000 - \$360,000, while smaller communities tend to receive anywhere from \$1,000 to \$90,000. There are also large resource differences with NHI. The ten largest urban centres across Canada (as identified in 1999) receive 80% of the NHI funding while 51 communities receive the remaining 20%. Greater amounts of funding increase the opportunities to address needs in the community and improve the effectiveness of the service system manager role.

Funding levels from the Province are set at the 1998 base year which does not reflect changes and growth in homelessness in communities over the last six years. However, the opportunity with Provincial Funding is that it is on-going and considered fairly stable. NHI funding at this point is time limited, with significant time gaps between rounds of funding.

Flexibility

The strength of the Provincial framework for homelessness is that it has provided maximum flexibility to tailor funding and programs to local needs and processes. This is also true of the NHI program with the exception of a mandated planning and allocation process which Waterloo Region has had challenges integrating with established processes. However, the flexibility within both programs has led to the development of different and innovative models and interventions across the province, from which service system manager's for homelessness can share and learn from one another.

Service System

Unrelated to the two mandates, managing a service system in itself has many challenges. Service systems in general are complex in part because there are often both formal and informal delivery agents and stakeholders within the system. Informal agents and stakeholders tend to be less known, are more likely to come and go and are less involved and connected with the formal delivery agents and stakeholders.

2. UNDERSTANDING ROLES ATTRIBUTED TO THE REGION FOR HOMELESSNESS

Service systems are also complex because different service systems are connected and overlap. This is particularly true of homelessness where other systems such as education, income support, corrections, health, immigration and so on, have such a strong impact on homelessness. While services targeted specifically to people who are homeless can be identified as a system, the prevention work of addressing the systemic or root causes of homelessness through CMSM's is extremely challenging. Challenging because there are so many systems involved and because municipalities have a limited sphere of influence on a number of the systems which are largely accountable to the Provincial and Federal government.

On the other hand, CMSM's which have responsibility for public health, housing, child care and income support are ideally positioned to work with issues related to homelessness due to their multiple roles and responsibilities.

Another challenge related to the service system for homelessness is that it is a newly identified "system" that has little infrastructure. With a few exceptions, homeless programs were not operated by the Province or Federal Government before being passed to municipalities. It is a system that has been historically unfunded by government, undertaken by faith communities and other non-profit and volunteer groups with few resources. This is unlike other systems such as community housing, income support and child care that have had government involvement for many years and have been legislated, funded and coordinated.

In homelessness there is an opportunity for service system managers to strengthen and reduce duplication of the services within the system of supports for those who are homeless and to identify the impacts of other systems on homelessness. The identified impacts from other systems can then be addressed through information sharing, advocacy efforts and the development of service protocols.

3.0 REGION'S CURRENT APPROACH TO HOMELESSNESS

The Regional Municipality of Waterloo's understanding and implementation of its roles in homelessness have been evolving since 1998. Staff has been attempting to understand our mandate and niche as it relates to addressing homelessness and managing the homelessness service system.

What is clear is that the Region is well positioned to take on a role of leading planning and research and coordinating services in the area of homelessness. Regional services are local, accessible and are the services that often respond to people in crises. For many years the Region has been proactive in the area of housing, homelessness and emergency support. The coordination of these functions and related services will assist in improving the quality of life for individuals who are homeless and at-risk.

Given that people will continue to experience transitions in their lives that may result in homelessness, the Region is working with community partners towards:

- Reduce the number of residents who become homeless
- Reduce the length of time a resident experiences homelessness
- Improve the quality of life for homeless residents

Diagram 4: Region's Ability to Impact Homelessness

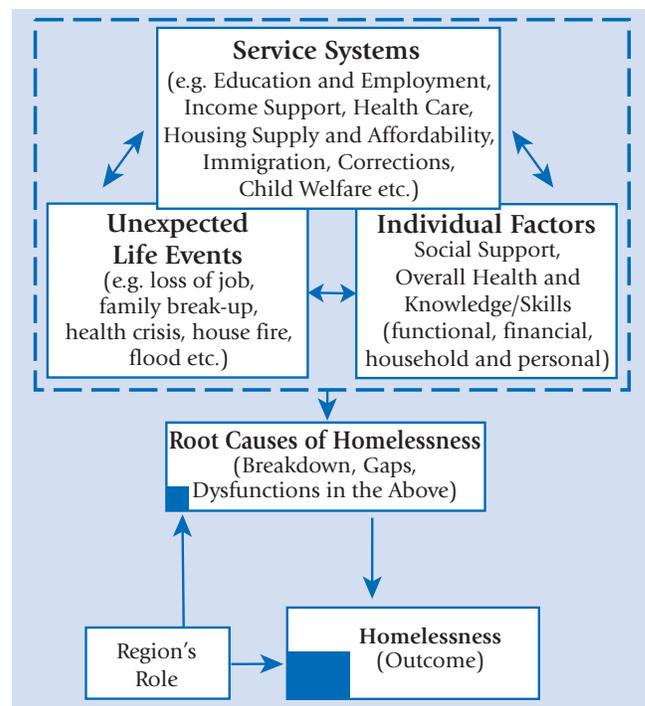


Diagram 4 looks at the Region's ability to impact homelessness. The small dark blue square in "Root Causes" identifies that the Region currently has a limited role or impact on preventing or addressing the root causes of homelessness in part because many of the service systems that impact homelessness are outside the mandates of municipalities. The larger dark blue square in "Homelessness" identifies that the Region currently has a greater role within the system that supports people once they have become homeless. Here, the Region works with its community partners to reduce the length of time a resident experiences homelessness and to improve the quality of life for homeless residents. This is accomplished through immediate needs support (such as shelters, drop-ins, food programs etc.), transitional supports and supports to housing. However, the Region still only has direct governance over some of the services within the response system. Historically, not-for-profit and community groups have addressed these needs which the Region now has a greater role in supporting and coordinating. However, resources to fulfill this role are limited and there remain many gaps in the continuum of supports to assist those who are homeless.

Within the constraints of these realities, the Region has attempted to work in ways to maximize its impact. *The remainder of Section 3 details the Region's current structure and work in the area of homelessness and section 4 outlines ways in which the Region will be working to strengthen its role and increase its ability to impact homelessness.*

Governance

As outlined in Section 2 of this report, governance includes policy, law-making, funding and oversight. Two areas related to governance in which CMSM's have the authority to make decisions include the department/divisional lead for the service system manager functions and resourcing the role of service system manager for homelessness.

The Region has identified that Social Services has the lead in homelessness. In looking at the continuum of homelessness to housing this means that Social Services has a mandate for planning and delivery of services to those who find themselves on the street, those in need of emergency shelter services, transitional and supportive/supported housing as well as prevention efforts while Planning, Housing and Community Services has the lead in Community Housing (publicly funded), rent supplements, coordinated waiting list and new

affordable housing.

While the mandate for housing and homelessness are administered between two Departments, intentional linkages have been formed to ensure a seamless continuum from homelessness to housing. Staff from each Department sit at each other's planning and allocation tables. The two departments, along with Public Health, have formed the Homelessness Interdepartmental Policy and Planning Group and meet to coordinate planning and policy related to homelessness. Finally, all three Departments report to Community Services Committee and coordinate activities and reports to Council.

In terms of resources, while it has been identified that there are not enough resources from each level of government to adequately address homelessness, the Region's investment is significant. In some cases the investment includes 100% regional dollars and in some cases it is cost shared with the Province and the Federal Government. Between 2001-2003 the Region allocated over \$14 million directly related to addressing homelessness.

Service System Management

Section 2 outlined aspects of service system management and areas in which the Region has authority to make decisions regarding service system management for homelessness. In the area of planning, the Region decides planning approach, frequency, if and how community advisory bodies will be organized/supported and the degree to which to take on a community development role (support, coordination and capacity building for those areas of the system both within and outside the CMSM's direct mandate or authority). In the area of resource allocation decisions include whether to deliver services directly or to contact with community providers, the policies and processes for allocating funds as well as the content of service contracts. In the area of quality assurance there is the decision to set local standards in the absence of provincial regulation.

Within Social Services, Social Planning, Policy and Program Administration (SPPPA), has the lead in the service system manager role for homelessness. SPPPA has identified that its core functions include:

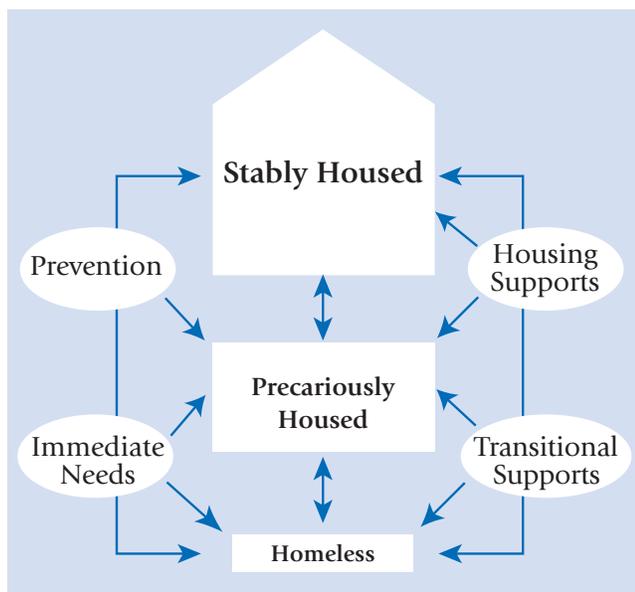
- 1) Planning (including research and evaluation)
- 2) Policy Development
- 3) Program Administration
- 4) Community Development/Capacity Building

The planning approach utilized through SPPPA is system and community based planning. System planning is an approach that necessitates looking at homelessness in the context of all the components that impact on homelessness rather than just isolated factors. Community based planning means that the Region does not undertake planning in isolation and works to involve relevant stakeholders in all phases of the planning process.

Homelessness planning to date has largely been dictated and in response to the federal governments National Homelessness Initiative. The community, through the Waterloo Region Homelessness Network has identified and confirmed that the Region should have the lead role in homelessness planning and research. Proposed enhancements to this area have been identified in Section 4.

Currently, the Region works with a number of community groups addressing homelessness and seeks advice from each as needed. In some cases the Region plays a leadership and facilitating role with these groups and in other cases a participant role. Some of the current community groups working on issues of homelessness include the Waterloo Region Community Homelessness Network, the Cambridge Action on Homelessness Group, the Youth Homeless Coordinating Group, the Waterloo Region Housing Coalition, Renter's Educating and Networking Together (R.E.N.T.), the Kitchener Downtown Community Collaborative and the City of Kitchener's Downtown Advisory Group.

Table 5: Continuum of Supports Directed to Appropriate Housing States



Resource Allocation/Service Delivery

The Region has resources, both financial and human, to allocate to the issue of homelessness. Some of these resources are 100% funded by the Province or Federal Government, some are cost-shared, while others are 100% Region funded (refer to Table 2). The Region enters into contracts with service providers rather than directly operating programs related to homelessness. Therefore, resource allocation and service delivery are directly linked. Staff consult and work with the community to recommend the best method for allocating resources. The decisions on these allocations are made by Council. SPPPA has created and maintains service agreements for all of its homelessness programs. Minimum standards and accountability measures are maintained through these service agreements.

Homelessness programs supported by the Region touch on all areas of the continuum of supports including **prevention, immediate needs, transitional supports and housing supports**. These programs and services support people at various housing states including stably housed, precariously housed and homeless with the greatest emphasis being on those who are homeless and precariously housed (refer to Diagram 5). The programs and services supported by the Region are detailed further in this section under the headings of prevention, immediate needs, transitional supports and housing supports. It should be noted that a number of these services may cross over two or more types of interventions along the continuum of supports. The services and programs listed are those that are ongoing or have been funded for at least a three year period.

Prevention

Noted previously, the Region's ability to work in the area of prevention is limited due to having little mandate and influence in the systems that contribute to the root causes of homelessness. Prevention efforts are largely geared to those who are precariously housed with immediate and short-term interventions to assist people in maintaining their housing.

1) Housing Counselling

Housing Counselling is a program of Lutherwood's Housing Action Centre. The Housing Counselling Program has been operating since 1999 and receives continued funding through Regional Housing to assist individuals, couples and families with

children to access and maintain rental housing. Clients can access housing information, referrals, assistance with applying for Community Housing, individual housing counselling and can access the independent resource centre including free computer, internet, telephones, newspapers, photocopiers and fax machines.

2) Rent Bank and Eviction Prevention

Rent Bank and Eviction Prevention is a program of Lutherwood's Housing Action Centre. The program has been operating since 2002 and has been funded through the Provincial Homelessness Initiative Fund and National Child Benefit Funding. Services include information on landlord and tenant relations, eviction process and tenant rights and responsibilities. One tool that the Coordinator can use is the Rent Bank Program which provides financial assistance in the form of interest-free loans to individuals, couples and families with children who are experiencing financial difficulties that are leading to eviction or difficulty in securing housing.

3) Heating Assistance

The Waterloo Region Heating Assistance Partnership includes three components: Social Services offers assistance to those eligible under Ontario Works and the working poor year round; Social Services administers the Heat Bank with funding from local utility companies during the winter months; the Region provides a small grant in support of the Share the Warmth Program. Each of these programs provides assistance to those who are unable to pay heating/energy costs and who are in threat of being disconnected thus placing them in a precarious housing situation.

Immediate Need

Immediate need services including outreach, shelters and drop-ins are those that assist someone once they are homeless to reduce the negative impacts of homelessness and link to services that will assist in the transition out of homelessness. In many cases immediate need services include transitional services as well.

1) Street Outreach Programs

Mental Health Homeless Outreach

Mental Health Homeless Outreach first began in 2002. This program is now offered by the Canadian Mental Health Association-Waterloo Region Branch and Waterloo Regional Homes for Mental Health funded in part through the Provincial Homelessness Initiative Fund. One agency has a full-time outreach

worker who focuses activities in Cambridge and the other has a full-time outreach worker who focuses activities in Kitchener-Waterloo. The program aims to assist those with mental health issues to find and retain emergency, transitional and/or permanent housing and to design, implement and evaluate an effective inter-agency model for mental health outreach services across the region.

Youth Homeless Outreach

Youth Homeless Outreach began in October 2001 and is sponsored by ROOF and funded in part through Off the Street, Into Shelter Funding. The aim of the Youth Outreach Project is to enhance the ability of youths aged 12-25 to move from the street and into safe shelter as well as to identify the barriers that prevent youth from doing so. Two Youth Outreach Workers provide a combined total of 70 hours per week of outreach in Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo.

2) Emergency Hostels

Emergency hostels (or shelters) provide shelter and basic needs for people who are homeless. A municipality's choice to support shelter services is discretionary. The provision of these services can take a number of forms such as by directly operating, by purchase of service agreements with not-for-profit community agencies or by arrangement with hotels, motels or other providers. In Waterloo Region, shelter services are delivered through purchase of service agreements with not-for-profit agencies including the House of Friendship's Charles Street Men's Hostel, the K-W YWCA-Mary's Place and Argus Residence for Young People (The Bridges in Cambridge is planning to open in the Winter of 2004).

Emergency hostel funding is provided through the *Ontario Works Act* for those eligible. The program is uncapped and cost-shared on an 80/20 basis between the Province and the Region. The current maximum per diem is \$38. Those who are eligible may also receive a Personal Needs Allowance (PNA) of \$112 per month and other mandatory and discretionary benefits. The Province has recently increased this funding by 3%.

There are a number of other shelters in the community that the Region does not fund on a per diem basis but with which the Region has a connection. The Region supports residents of transitional hostels (Anselma House and Haven House) through the provision of PNA and other

mandatory and discretionary benefits. In the past, the Region has also provided one-time grants to Safe Haven Shelter and the Kitchener-Waterloo and Cambridge Out of the Cold Programs.

3) Welcome Aboard Drop-In

The Welcome Aboard Drop-In Centre in Cambridge has been operating since 1997 with funding in part through the Provincial Homelessness Initiative Fund. Welcome Aboard is open all year, weekdays from 6:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. and provides a warm, safe place for homeless and low income individuals to get off the street. Programs include a daily meal program, showers, laundry facilities, weekly medical clinic, identification clinics, help in accessing drug and alcohol treatment, job and volunteer placements, help accessing and maintaining housing, mailbox, dedicated phone lines, message centre as well as assistance with food, clothing and furniture. Welcome Aboard is the only centre in Cambridge offering daily services to people who are homeless.

Transitional Supports

The Region supports two programs that could be identified as focusing primarily on transitional support. Again, many of the immediate need programs listed above also provide some transitional supports.

1) Families in Transition Program

The Families in Transition Program has been operating since 2003 and is funded through Emergency Hostel Redirection Funding to provide housing help to families in need. The Support Worker is able to offer intensive support to families with children that have multiple issues regarding housing and other areas such as employment, child care, transportation, income support, counselling etc.

2) Youth Direct Linkage

The Youth Direct Linkage Program is an amalgamation of a number of ROOF services that have operated since 2002. The program works with absolute and chronically homeless youth to decrease prolonged use of seasonal shelter options (i.e. Out of the Cold), improve health and increase individuals' ability to find and maintain safe housing. The program included one full-time staff member and up to 800 hours of part-time staffing annually funded in part through the Provincial Homelessness Initiative Fund. The program blends components of ROOF's evening/weekend Group

Program with on-site Out of the Cold support (seasonal), partner agency on-site client visits, client appointment accompaniment, client advocacy, high risk incident intervention and participation in community education/collaborative processes.

Housing Supports

Housing supports (supportive housing and housing with supports) has been identified as a huge gap within the community. While there are a number of provincial housing support programs, there are only three within the homelessness portfolio that are offered within the Region of Waterloo including Domiciliary Hostels, Supports to Daily Living and Mental Health. The Region only works with two of these programs, Domiciliary Hostels and Supports to Daily Living and partially funds one additional program through the Provincial Homelessness Initiative Fund.

1) Domiciliary Hostels

A domiciliary hostel (dom hostel) is a rest/retirement home or supervised boarding home which provides food, permanent accommodation and services to individuals who require long term assistance with daily living, but who do not require nursing care. Individuals may include the frail elderly and persons with physical, emotional or developmental disabilities. Support services in a dom hostel include 24-hour supervision and assistance to residents with bathing, grooming, rising and retiring, dining and medications.

The Region of Waterloo is one of 26 of a total of 47 CMSM's throughout the province who have the Dom Hostel Program. The Region currently has purchase of service agreements with 17 operators. There has been a steady increase in the number of subsidized individuals with the numbers doubling over the past decade. Presently, there are a total of 347 subsidized individuals of which approximately 45% are adults and seniors with mental health issues, 38% are seniors, 4% have addictions issues, others have developmental delays, autism and several have undiagnosed conditions.

The Region provides a per diem of up to \$40 to operators for eligible residents. This per diem is cost-shared 80/20 between the Province and the Region up to a maximum cap of \$1.95 million per year.

2) Supports to Daily Living

Supports to Daily Living (SDL) is a funding program

for support services that enable people with special needs to live independently within the community. In addition to their low income, residents are generally prone to chronic homelessness, are survivors of abuse and many have histories of mental illness and substance abuse.

This program began and was the direct responsibility of the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) until 1999 when the responsibility for administering the program was devolved to local CMSM's. There are a total of 31 SDL Programs through 11 of the 47 CMSM's in Ontario. This program is 100% funded by the province with total annualized funding of \$394,000. No administrative dollars are attached to this funding.

Waterloo Region has 2 SDL Programs including the K-W YWCA's Lincoln Road and the House of Friendship's Eby Village.

3) Youth Supportive Housing

In 2002, Cambridge Kiwanis Village Non-Profit Housing developed a youth supportive housing program in partnership with Argus Residence for Young People to assist young people exiting Argus to attain and retain permanent housing. A full-time Youth Support Worker funded in part through the Provincial Homelessness Initiative Fund works with youth exiting Argus to secure and retain permanent housing through one of Cambridge Kiwanis Village's four two-bedroom apartments dedicated for youth or through private landlords.

4. Implementing the Region's Role

A number of activities are being proposed over the next two years in continuing to implement the Region's role and enhance impact in the area of homelessness.

The following activities have been identified under the headings of planning, policy development, program administration and community development/capacity building as per Social Planning, Policy and Program Administration's key activity areas.

Planning

1. System Plan for Homelessness

A report providing the background and framework for a homelessness system plan is expected to be completed by December 2004. This report will set the stage for various components focusing on root causes and service systems that will be completed over time. The initial components of the system plan will include:

a) A Sheltering Needs Assessment

A process is currently being developed in order to undertake a sheltering needs assessment focusing on improving the understanding of current gaps and needs related to shelter and housing for those who are homeless. The report detailing the process will be presented in January 2005 with a final report expected by December 2005. This report will serve as an important tool to plan for future services as the region grows and to efficiently and effectively utilize resources.

b) Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Needs Assessment

An assessment of needs related to FASD will be undertaken which will result in the development of an ideal service continuum and address the implementation of such a model.

c) A Youth Homelessness Report and Action Plan

Over the past three years, the Off the Street, Into Shelter Youth Outreach Workers have been collecting data on homeless and street-involved youth in the Region of Waterloo. This data along with a comprehensive literature review is currently being prepared. The Youth Homeless Coordinating Group will then use this data to complete an Action Plan to address youth homelessness locally. It is anticipated that this report will be available in the fall of 2004.

2. Sustainability Plan

A plan will be developed which will identify strategies to address sustainability at an individual, organizational and community level. Staff support will be directed to implementing recommendations of the plan.

3. Annual Housing and Homelessness Report

Beginning in 2005, Housing Services and Social Planning, Policy and Program Administration will begin producing an annual housing and homelessness report for Council. It is anticipated that the first report will be released in the fall of 2005.

The above noted documents and studies may identify a need for the development of a plan for further Regional support for homelessness services and programs.

Policy**Influence**

4. Continue to participate in local, provincial and national working groups and studies.

Advocacy

5. Continue to raise issues with the Province and Federal Government and keep Regional Council informed and abreast of issues. e.g. obtain more federal and provincial funding based on our community's growing needs and encourage the Province to streamline their homelessness programs.

Program Administration**6. Supporting Communities Partnership Initiatives Grants**

As the Community Entity responsible for the local administration of SCPI, the Region through the recommendation of a Community Advisory Board, will allocate funding to projects identified as priorities within the Waterloo Region Community Plan Update. It is anticipated that allocations will take place in the summer of 2004.

7. Creation of Shelter Guidelines

There are no provincial standards or guidelines for emergency shelters. A number of communities including the Region have begun to develop local guidelines and standards. Staff has been working with service providers over the past year to draft these guidelines and are expected to be brought forward to Community Services Committee in the spring of 2004.

8. Update on the Shelter Funding Measures

New funding measures for emergency shelters were created by the Region in consultation with operators in 2002. These measures have been reviewed over the past year and an update will be presented in 2004.

9. Updated Purchase of Service Application Process for Domiciliary Hostels and Emergency Hostels

In 2003, an updated purchase of service application process was created by staff for Domiciliary Hostels and Emergency Hostels and is being implemented through 2004.

10. Program Review of Domiciliary Hostels

As part of the consultations with the District Health Council and local mental health providers, the Region identified a six step plan in reviewing the Domiciliary Hostel Program which is being implemented.

1. Update Domiciliary Hostel Guidelines
2. Increase information sharing between key

players in the program

3. Establish annual meetings with domiciliary hostel providers
4. Revise the annual purchase of service agreement
5. Evaluate the domiciliary hostel program
6. Create a complaints policy and procedure

11. Standardized Reporting for all Homelessness Grant Funded Programs

Beginning in 2004, all programs receiving homelessness grants will be providing regular quarterly reports. Over the next year, these reports will be standardized.

Community Development/Capacity Building**12. Homelessness Individual and Families Information System**

The implementation of the Homeless Individuals and Family Information System (HIFIS) began in 2003 and will be completed in 2004. A report to approve a data sharing protocol between the Region and the Government of Canada is expected to come to Community Services Committee in the fall of 2004.

13. Support and/or Participation in Community Homelessness Groups

Social Planning, Policy and Program Administration currently facilitates the Youth Homeless Coordinating Group, participates in and supports the Waterloo Region Homelessness Network and participates on the Cambridge Action on Homelessness Group, the Kitchener Downtown Collaborative and the Waterloo Region Housing Coalition. Staying connected to these groups assists in the Divisions planning activities. Over the next year staff will continue to support and participate with these groups in reviewing their mandates and opportunities for partnerships.

14. Coordination of Street Outreach Activities

Social Planning, Policy and Program Administration will provide support to a street outreach providers group (including projects funded through homelessness grants and those funded through other sources) in networking, looking for opportunities to collaborate, building capacity and undertaking evaluation.

15. Sponsoring Community Education Opportunities

Staff will continue to sponsor or organize community education opportunities (e.g. speakers for the quarterly Homelessness Network meetings).

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