Master PLAN
FOR HOUSING THE HOMELESS IN SURREY

Appendix B: A Selection of Good Practices

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The City of Surrey and BC Housing are jointly undertaking a Master Plan for Housing the Homeless. Many municipalities in BC have been involved in developing plans and strategies to respond to homelessness in their communities. While each community has a unique set of challenges and opportunities, it is helpful to consider the policies and programs implemented locally, as well as in other jurisdictions, in terms of their effectiveness and reach.

This briefing paper is therefore intended to provide background information and case examples of initiatives, good policies and practices in the provision of housing and emergency services for the homeless as implemented in communities outside of Surrey. A number of key topics are explored in this paper; representing a range of practices, from design, funding, and operations to prevention measures and other considerations. Many of the examples are those of local agencies and initiatives, although a small number of national and international projects demonstrate particular relevance or innovation. This is not intended to be an exhaustive review, but rather, it highlights selected topics and practices experienced elsewhere that can inform the development of a Master Plan in Surrey.

Approach & Report Structure

The topics that have been included in this paper were identified as a result of conversations with City staff and Steering Committee members at the outset of this project. They were selected because of their particular relevance to situations or challenges currently experienced in Surrey, as well as examples of collaboration and partnership that could potentially be replicated in the Surrey context.

The research included: a) web-search and documentation of key practices from other jurisdictions throughout North America and b) consultation and interviews with representatives of selected agencies. The consulting team also referenced examples and approaches based on their in-house expertise in the areas of public consultation; shelter planning and design; and working with non-profit agencies.

The paper is structured into two sections. The first looks at emergency services and good practices around design, management and resource centres. The second considers partnership and innovation initiatives across the range of housing and support services. A complete list of sources and key-informant contacts is included at the end of the paper.

GOOD PRACTICES FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES

Homeless Outreach & Service Linkages

In the past five years, homeless outreach services have become an integral part of the solution to end homelessness. The provincial Homeless Outreach Program has grown to include outreach workers in communities around BC and funding has expanded to extend follow up support and rent supplement dollars. This section considers the outreach and follow-up support services from BC that were found to be effective at helping people to stay housed.

BC's Homeless Outreach Program

Selected lessons from the Homeless Outreach Program (HOP) and Aboriginal Homeless Outreach Program (AHOP) in BC:

- Applying a "housing first" approach means that the focus of the program or support service is to provide homeless people with immediate access to housing. Abstinence from drugs or alcohol is not a requirement, nor is the participation in any defined program. Participants may not be "housing ready", but receive the support they need to assist them to stay housed and gain those skills after they have moved indoors and are in a better position to pursue their personal goals.

- Adopting a client-centred approach that focuses on the specific needs of the client is a key principle of outreach work. This characteristic recognizes that each individual has a unique set of needs and circumstances and that it is most effective to meet homeless individuals "where they are at." In BC, many outreach workers have responded by assisting homeless individuals to attain the mix of housing and supports that is best suited to them.

- Being creative, flexible and resourceful are key characteristics of successful outreach work. Many outreach workers apply their experience and insight into their service, helping clients and landlords to find housing, deal with crises and manage their expectations. They are often extremely creative in their use of available tools and community resources.

On-Site Services at Emergency Shelters & Drop-Ins

Bringing staff from outside service agencies to the emergency shelters and drop-in centres helps to connect homeless individuals to key services. For example, the regular presence of employment and assistance workers (EAW) on site at an emergency shelter gives clients an opportunity to connect with an EAW outside of the government office environment, which may be an intimidating environment for some individuals. This requires EAWs to find ways to complete an application with a client on the same day, which involves an adjustment to standard procedures.

Similarly, there is particular importance placed on having mental health workers on site at emergency shelters. Here, the health authorities have to be in a position to complete an assessment of a client and connect them with an ongoing mental health worker as a first step towards their case planning goals. Two Downtown Vancouver emergency shelters, Lookout's Yukon shelter and Raincity's Triage shelter, both include on-site mental health staff.

Housing Follow-Up & Prevention Services

Outreach workers and other front line workers help homeless clients to get housed. Once they are housed, however, clients continue to face a range of housing barriers and possible risk of eviction or loss of housing. Outreach teams do not often have the capacity to provide adequate and ongoing support to all the clients who they originally housed. This is a challenge. Two examples from Toronto provide an alternative approach to housing support work. Similarly, the United Kingdom offers a breadth of experience in the area of homeless prevention with many lessons for BC.

Streets to Homes Housing Follow-Up (Toronto, Ontario)

Streets to Homes is a housing outreach and placement program operated by the City of Toronto since 2005.[1] The program helps homeless people to move into permanent housing and maintain that housing through an extensive network of follow-up supports. It is delivered by City staff and partner agencies. This approach is applied, more or less consistently with clients[2]:

- Step 1 - A street outreach counsellor approaches a rough sleeper and explains that the focus of the program is providing permanent housing.
- Step 2 - If an individual shows interest, an intake assessment is undertaken.
- Step 3 - Housing options are developed for that individual.
- Step 4 - Staff assist the individual to take care of outstanding issues such as access to income support.
- Step 5 - Staff accompany individual to see housing units.
- Step 6 - Once appropriate housing is found that the individual likes, the lease is signed.
- Step 7 - A joint meeting is held between the individual, street outreach counsellor who has been working with the individual so far and a new follow-up support worker who will be providing follow-up support to the individual.
- Step 8 - Follow-up support services by the new support worker are provided for up to one year. This includes informal counselling, finding furniture, connecting to resources, dealing with the landlord, grocery shopping, transportation, and accessing health services.

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[1] In Ontario, the Province directly funds municipalities to deliver housing and homelessness services.

[2] Adapted from *Homelessness, Program Responses and an Assessment of Toronto's Streets to Homes Program.*

Streets to Homes funds approximately 30 agencies to assist with the delivery of its services. Many of these agencies have had their programs realigned to better meet the objectives of Streets to Homes. An additional set of agencies that do not receive funding have signed formal service agreements.

To facilitate the follow-up support, intensive goal setting is pursued with the client. Over time, the frequency of the visits decreases. At the end of the first year, clients are expected to be able to live independently without ongoing support or are transitioned to more appropriate ongoing case management services. Staff sometimes make exceptions and continue to work with clients beyond the first year.

Streets to Homes Youth Program (Toronto, Ontario)

The pathways out of youth homelessness are different than those that adults go through. To be successful in working with at-risk or street-involved youth (under 25 years), support workers need to have a different skill set than the outreach workers and support staff who work with at-risk or homeless adults. In Toronto, the Streets to Homes Youth Program has street outreach counsellors dedicated to working with young people. They help people to get housing and keep it, and to support them as they become more stable and integrate into the community.

A partner agency, Youthlink Inner City, has specialized counsellors who help homeless youth to access housing and who provide follow up supports once they are in their homes. Streets to Homes leverages the resources available to Toronto's homeless youth by providing linkages across multiple youth-serving agencies not funded by Streets to Homes, thereby maximizing the housing and stabilization outcomes for street involved youth and youth living outdoors.

Youth Link Inner City Centre.
Photo: www.youthlink.ca

A number of programs help people to keep their housing, by providing a wide range of services including mediating with landlords and eviction prevention. They also teach life and parenting skills, address immediate needs such as food and transportation, provide counselling, emotional and practical supports and reconnect youth with their families.

Prevention Efforts (Various Locations, United Kingdom)

Agencies in the UK have placed particular emphasis on efforts to prevent homelessness or prevent repeat homelessness. Good practice examples include:

- *Protocol for Preventing Repeat Homelessness and Evictions* —
  Newcastle City Council developed an agreement between the housing and service provider agencies to assist them to identify vulnerable tenants and ways in which joint working can be implemented if problems occur. The protocol involves three areas:

  a) contacting support workers who are already involved with these individuals and making a referral to the in-house support team if needed;

  b) where there is concern about a tenant's ability to maintain a tenancy, holding a case meeting with the applicant and relevant agencies and developing a support plan; and

  c) implementing the actions to prevent eviction or housing loss.

- *Vulnerable People Protocol and Training Package* —
  West Berkshire Council developed a proactive approach to identify, assess and support people who are, or who may become, vulnerable to losing their tenancies. Indicators or points of vulnerability include:

  - hospitalisation and time period following discharge;

  - rent arrears or other debt problems;

  - change from supported accommodation to independent living;

  - during and following substance abuse etc.

  The training package enables frontline staff to understand potential vulnerability and learn how to respond, make an assessment, and review and evaluate. Once support needs are identified, a case conference with relevant support agencies is held in a pre-tenancy meeting.

- *Discretionary Funds* —
  Bournemouth Borough Council set up a "fix it" fund that is to be used at the discretion of housing officers. This can be used for one-off payments to a tenant to help pay off arrears, damage costs or for rent advances.[3]

- *Joint Protocols and Information Sharing* —
  Newcastle City Council created a protocol around hospital discharge as a means to prevent homelessness. The protocol outlines key steps for participating agencies to take to prevent a patient from being discharged into the street. This includes a process to be followed on admission; seeking help from other agencies in finding accommodation and arranging support; and making

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[3] BC's Homeless Outreach Program provides outreach workers a rent supplement fund that is typically used to offset the difference between private market rent and a client's shelter allowance. Often outreach workers use these resources to avert crises or provide other types of one-off support to the client.

information available for patients and staff. The protocol was developed by a working group, which helped to provide information to health service providers about the resources and agencies available. It also led to the introduction of a clear set of guidelines for the assessment of all patients' accommodation needs on admission to hospital, which has had multiple benefits for patients and hospital and housing staff. Similar protocols and programs have been developed for ex-offenders and people leaving the justice system.

KEY APPROACHES TO HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION

- Setting up systems to identify and assess households at risk of homelessness

- Providing training that provides frontline staff with a range of skills, tools and information

- Early and timely intervention before housing or financial problems become too serious

- Youth respond better to age-specific advice and peer mentoring

- Flexible and individualized support that reflects the particular needs of the client

- Providing resource information and assistance with making the links to doctors, dentists, mental health workers, and any other professionals. Support might include applying for income assistance or employment programs, whatever is needed

- Liaising with landlords when appropriate

- Working jointly and effectively with other agencies

- Providing information about services and resources

- Removing barriers to advocacy services

- Develop tenancy sustainment schemes

Source: Adapted from *Good Practice: Guide - Homelessness: Early Identification and Prevention*

Drop-In Centres & Resource Centres

In BC, many drop-in centres tend to be focused on immediate issues like showers, meals and laundry. Essentially offering a warm, dry place to hang out. In addition, there is often an additional emphasis on service linkages, whereby frontline staff help clients to connect with health services, income assistance, recreational opportunities or other immediate needs such as housing or food programs. Some drop-in centres target particular groups, such as youth, Aboriginal people or women, and are often credited as providing a critical connection point for service agencies. They create an opportunity for front line staff to build trust with homeless and/or at-risk individuals and to serve as a gateway to key services and programs. The following are some good practice examples from across Canada.

Coast Mental Health Resource Centre (Vancouver, BC)

The Coast Mental Health drop-in and resource centre offers programs and services for people with mental illness, including those who are homeless. The centre is often the first point of contact that clients have with mental health services. Some of the services the resource centre provides include:

- Affordable meals
- Laundry and shower facilities
- Social and recreational activities, psychosocial programs and volunteer opportunities
- Housing outreach services
- Mental health outreach services and referrals

The resource centre is located on the ground and second floors of Seymour Place, a 12-storey building in the Downtown South area of Vancouver. The building also contains 136 apartments of affordable housing, supported mental health housing and housing for persons with HIV/AIDS.

The Fire Pit Cultural Drop-in Centre (Prince George, BC)

The Fire Pit is a drop-in centre, located in downtown Prince George for the support of Aboriginal people infected or at-risk of HIV/AIDS and the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV). The centre, which opened its doors in 2003, is operated by Positive Living North in partnership with the Central Interior Native Health Society. The Fire Pit is a place where Aboriginal people can do crafts and artwork, eat nutritious food, join a talking circle, connect with

support staff or get information about health, HIV/AIDS and HCV. The prevention model at the Fire Pit puts the emphasis on participation in cultural activities that lead to healing and that help to reduce risky behaviours. The centre offers a daily meal and an opportunity to connect with housing outreach workers as well as other services. The centre is a valuable resource in Prince George as a cultural centre, a safe place to get indoors, and as a front-line service in the prevention of HIV and HCV.

The Fire Pit Drop-In Cultural Centre
Source: www.positivelivingnorth.ca

YouthLink Inner City Drop-in Centre (Toronto, Ontario)

YouthLink is a service organization that offers services and programs to people between the ages of 12 and 24 and their families/caregivers. The inner city drop-in centre provides access to services, programs and outreach for street-involved and homeless youth. It offers youth a welcoming place where they can access a continuum of services:

- Food, clothing, showers, laundry facilities, internet and phone access and personal hygiene supplies.
- Community referrals and connections as well as on-site services, provided by partner agencies, e.g. nurses, mental health workers, employment counselling, legal clinic, infectious diseases clinic and anonymous testing for HIV and sexually-transmitted diseases.
- Housing support through the Streets to Homes program.
- HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C support and education, including healthy sexuality workshops.
- Pre-employment supports and life skills training.
- Through a Peer Education Program, youth who have accessed the drop-in can work at the Centre as a street youth outreach/peer support worker.

Dr. Peter AIDS Foundation Day Health Program (Vancouver, BC)

The Dr. Peter AIDS Foundation is a not-for-profit organization in Vancouver's West End neighbourhood. The Dr. Peter Centre provides a community of care for people living with HIV/AIDS, addiction and/or mental illness, ensuring people have access to treatments that will improve their overall well-being and help prevent further transmission of HIV/AIDS.

The Day Health Program at the centre allows individuals who are members of the program to access a range of services including:

- Hot, nutritious meals including breakfast and lunch

- Counselling services

- Medical services, including highly active anti-retroviral therapy (HAART) treatment

- Alternative, recreational and complementary therapies, ranging from massage, yoga, music and art

- Basic personal needs such as showers, sleep rooms, as well as laundry facilities, computers, and telephone

Dr. Peter Centre, Vancouver's West End
Source: www.drpeter.org

Note: *Successful drop-in and resource centres are well-integrated into their neighbourhoods. By ensuring there is no loitering outside the building (through building design and management practices), but also by having regular liaison meetings with local businesses and residents, many drop-in centres can adequately support their clients without causing a disruption to the local community. If the centre is well designed and well run, it can often become an asset to the local community, helping to revitalize older neighbourhoods and contributing to local area improvement initiatives. Some drop-ins, such as Coast Mental Health Resource Centre and the Dr. Peter Centre are membership-based, ensuring that users are aware of the expectations of both the facility and the neighbourhood.*

Good Management Practices for Shelters & Supportive Housing

Good management practices refers to a range of practices around the operations of emergency shelters or supportive housing, and also the agreements and approaches in place that help to foster a collegial and respectful relationship with local neighbours and businesses. Some common examples are presented in this section.

Good Neighbour Agreements

Good neighbour agreements are voluntary agreements between a service/housing provider and a neighbourhood association or other group of individuals representing a local area. They are seen as tools that enable funders, licensing agencies, neighbours and service providers to develop facilities that meet the needs of users or clients, while minimizing the impact on neighbourhoods. The pursuit of these types of agreements helps to bring together residents, businesses, social agencies and the local municipality to address areas of concern. Above all, these agreements provide a means for all neighbours and key players to work effectively together to achieve a joint vision.

In a new-build situation, the developer of the social service facility (e.g. emergency shelter or social housing project) is typically responsible for facilitating the process and ensuring that all key parties are able to participate. Good neighbour agreements typically address issues related to property maintenance and appearance, codes of conduct, communication protocols and monitoring. An advisory committee is typically established to negotiate the agreement and to provide a longer term structure for communication and conflict resolution.

Specific **objectives** of a good neighbour agreement might include:

- Promoting communication, respect and trust among neighbours, residents of proposed housing or facility, providers and funders by assuring the rights and responsibilities of all parties are understood and monitored.

- Assuring that the safety, security, codes of conduct and property management standards are established and upheld.

- Establishing successful long-term relationships, while providing all affected parties with the opportunity to be involved in planning, monitoring, and re-negotiating agreements, specifically with respect to safety, security, codes of conduct and property management.

- Providing a structure and process for the resolution of conflicts minimizing the incidence of litigation.

- Identifying a contact list for individuals that represent the key parties involved.

Principles of effective good neighbour agreements include:

- Clear and honest communication.
- Working together to address concerns and solve problems in a positive and timely manner.
- Being respectful of the residents or clients and engaging them in resolving issues.
- Commitment to following through on agreed upon actions.

Tips for setting up good neighbour agreements include:

- Drafting an agreement that fosters good will and two-way communication between neighbours and service providers.
- Using language that demonstrates mutual responsibility, e.g. "ABC Housing has responsibilities, but so do our neighbours to help make it work and together lets build a better neighbourhood."

KEY ELEMENTS OF GOOD NEIGHBOUR AGREEMENTS

- *Condition of Property and Premises*— maintenance and appearance standards; design input.

- *Neighbourhood Codes of Conduct* — neighbours and residents uphold mutual behaviour expectations as outlined in codes of conduct; includes tenant activities; approaches to mitigate disruptive behaviour and ensure all residents can continue to enjoy the area.

- *Community Safety* — crime prevention, block watches, security lighting.

- *Communication & Information Sharing* — disclosure about property concerns; process for continued communication among parties; participation in neighbourhood committees; responsibility for media relations; mechanism for informed planning and decision-making.

- *Monitoring and Compliance* — Compliance mechanisms; implementation of agreement; enforcement of regulations; dispute resolution mechanism; fair eviction procedures; reaffirming agreements.

Source: Adapted from Good Neighbour Shelter Certification Standards. Community Shelter Board.

Community Liaison Committees or Good Neighbour Groups

Once a new development is complete and occupied, community liaison or good neighbour groups are often established to continue to respond to issues that may arise as a result of the new development. The life of these groups is dependent on the members and whether neighbourhood issues emerge from the building's operations. In Vancouver, the development of supportive housing projects resulted in the formation of a number of community liaison committees or good neighbour groups. Many of these groups were disbanded over time.

What is the objective of such groups or committees?

It is largely to deal with issues that have an impact or a perceived impact on a neighbourhood. The groups do not have any responsibility on the internal operations of the facility/housing, e.g. tenant selection or other management approaches.

Who participates?

Typically, participants include representatives from the local municipality, police, local health authority in addition to tenants, neighbourhood residents and businesses. The membership can be fixed with named representatives from various agencies, businesses, local associations or strata condominiums. Sometimes meetings are open to the public.

Frequency of meetings?

The frequency is to be determined at the outset of the formation of the group. Often meetings are held monthly or quarterly depending on the situation, but then adjusted over time as needed to maintain regular communication and discuss emergent or ongoing issues.

Who coordinates?

Often, the local municipality will be expected to coordinate and staff the group. In some instances, however, the housing provider might be in a better position to lead this process.
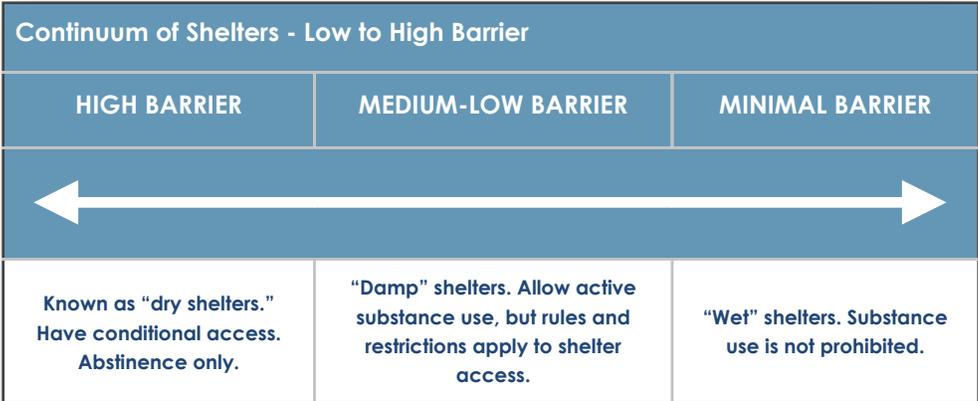
Alternative approaches?

Where possible, the new development and society may have an option to join the local community association or business improvement association as a means to ensure ongoing cooperation and communication. This reduces the time burden on participants, particularly municipal staff who are expected to attend multiple meetings.

Management Approaches

Operating an emergency shelter or supportive housing involves multiple considerations. For example, protecting the safety of tenants is to be achieved while minimizing the sense of institutionalization at a facility. In a neighbourhood, it is important to maintain positive relationships with others and minimize problems or perceptions of problems that

might be seen to arise from the development. A number of management approaches and considerations have been identified as part of this:

- Considering the safety and wellbeing of different user groups when **developing the program** for the facility. This might include whether the shelter will be dedicated to a particular group, i.e. a separate shelter for men and women, youth and/or families. If a shelter will accommodate multiple groups together, then consideration needs to be taken in terms of how the building can protect vulnerable user groups and ensure there is efficiency and flexibility in how the building is used. This could involve the development of separate or flexible use areas for men, women, families, and/or couples.

- Developing **operational plans or operational agreements** that consider the range of operational issues and values underlying the building's management approach. For example:

  - Determining whether the facility will be a low barrier or high barrier shelter. High barrier shelters typically expect all users to be clean and sober when they stay at the shelter, while medium, low and minimal barrier shelters allow users to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol to varying degrees on the nights when they stay at the shelter. Large communities typically benefit from having a variety of emergency services that span the low to high barrier continuum.

Continuum of Shelters - Low to High Barrier		
HIGH BARRIER	**MEDIUM-LOW BARRIER**	**MINIMAL BARRIER**
←		→
Known as "dry shelters." Have conditional access. Abstinence only.	"Damp" shelters. Allow active substance use, but rules and restrictions apply to shelter access.	"Wet" shelters. Substance use is not prohibited.

  - Using techniques that create a warm and welcoming environment for users. For example, some shelters opt to keep the front door open at all times as a means to make users feel like they can come and go.

  - Applying approaches that ensure the safety and security of all clients, particularly if a mix of different population groups are jointly using the facility. For example, ensuring there is an adequate staff to client ratio; maintaining separate areas for men and women; implementing guest policies among others.

  - Developing approaches to client intake and discharge that do not result in disrespectful or undignified situations for clients. For example, developing

pre-determined intake times inevitably results in long line ups for clients. Allowing longer term stays or allowing intakes at all times of the day would prevent such situations.[4]

- Developing **key policies and procedures** around all aspects of shelter management, e.g. admission and discharge approaches; substance use policy; procedures for managing violent behaviour or dealing with inappropriate behaviour; how to respond to critical incidents; managing client confidentiality and privacy; building maintenance; staff training; workplace safety; and neighbourhood relations.[5]

- Ensuring that **staffing ratios, recruiting practices and training approaches** adequately reflect the needs of the population groups who will be accessing the facility. For example, if it is anticipated that many of the shelter users will have complex mental health issues or concurrent disorders, then it is important that staff have the qualifications or receive training to enable them to work with such clients in a safe and effective manner. The number of staff to client ratio is determined by BC Housing emergency shelter guidelines, which set a minimum of 2 staff on shift 24 hours per day, seven days per week as the standard. However, each facility should ensure that there are adequate staff to client ratios and the presence of appropriately-trained staff at all times.

Design Solutions for Emergency Shelters

The design of emergency shelters is a key factor in their success. BC Housing's Emergency Shelter Design Guidelines lay out basic design requirements for shelters. In addition to these guidelines, experience from service providers, clients and designers reveals additional design details that may improve the success of shelters. The following section outlines "things to think about" in the design of shelters.

Site Specific Considerations

- The location of an emergency shelter should be carefully considered. Integration of a shelter within a neighbourhood is important for its acceptance by the local community.

- Scale and design should be appropriate for the neighbourhood context. For example, in residential areas, the building should have a residential "look and feel" and avoid an "institutional" look through design, landscaping and exterior materials selection, e.g. roof pitch and window styles. An emergency shelter building should be scaled to fit the general scale of the neighbouring buildings.

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[4] **Note:** BC Housing's emergency shelter guidelines have standardized a 30-day stay period throughout most funded shelters in BC.

[5] **Note:** BC Housing has developed a set of sample policies and procedures for emergency shelters. http://www.bchousing.org/resources/Programs/ESP/ESP_Documents/ESP_Sample_Policies_and%20Procedures.pdf

- Size and scale should also be considered in relation to the number of people who can be appropriately accommodated in a shelter and the particular neighbourhood location. For example, shelter size should be compatible with the neighbourhood and client group served. In general, however, smaller shelters tend to create an intimate, less institutional setting that can facilitate positive staff-to-client relationship building.

- The selected site should be able to accommodate a sufficiently large shelter that allows for the variety of program space needed to ensure the shelter is able to assist people to connect with services and move from homelessness to permanent housing.

Emergency Shelters: Program Space Considerations	
Core Spaces/Program Areas	Description/Notes
Secure entrance, reception area/counter	Requires surveillance cameras on the outside
Administrative office space (including a separate bathroom for staff)	Main record keeping, storage of supplies, computers
Computer area and lounge	For shelter and drop-in users
Meeting Room and counselling room	Quiet spaces for staff and service providers to work with users
Medical office/ examination room	For clinical staff to provide on-site medical support
Bathrooms	Number of day use toilets, sinks, showers to reflect drop-in or day users and number of staff
Kitchen and eating area, as well as dry storage and freezer area	Consideration of number of seatings in dining area
Bike parking and storage lockers	For use by shelter users
Laundry facilities	Number of washers/driers needed. Commercial grade
Bedrooms	What is configuration of bedrooms - four beds/room or two beds/room etc.?
Bathrooms	Number of day toilets, sinks, showers to reflect number of overnight shelter users
Garbage room/Janitorial storage	
Bed bug room	With immediate access to the outside

- Designing internal courtyards create an "off the street" outdoor space where clients can "hang-out" and spend time without blocking the sidewalks or disrupting the tenants or businesses in neighbouring buildings. Since the establishment of BC's legislation that prohibits smoking within 3 metres of windows and doorways, it is important to consider the size and layout of such

courtyards during the design stage so that users who smoke are not forced to go outside the complex.

- Another valuable design consideration are lobbies and/or intake areas. It is important to allow for a large enough lobby or entrance area that ensures that all clients have an indoor or sheltered outdoor space to stand or sit upon intake. Such areas should minimize the indignity and street impact of line ups. *Please see section on management approaches.*

Common Area Considerations

- **Safety issues:** Separation of sleeping areas for men and women and, for certain population groups, separate common areas may also be needed to protect high-risk women.

- **Lighting:** Motion detecting lighting should be sensitive, ensuring that it is never dark in hallways or other common areas.

- **Facilities:** Ensuring there are adequate washrooms and laundry facilities to reflect the number of users and anticipated demand levels.

- **Beg Bug Prevention:** An increasingly critical aspect of housing or shelter facilities is the availability of a bed bug room where residents/users belongings can be heated in order to remove bed bugs before such belongings enter the facility. An often neglected consideration is the importance of having access to the bed bug room directly from the outside.

- **Storage:** The homeless or at-risk of homelessness often carry all of their personal belongings with them at all times. This may include large items such as bicycles or shopping carts. If a shelter cannot accommodate these belongings, often the homeless individuals will not stay at the facility. Creating a large enough area to park carts and bicycles, as well as having storage for other belongings, is critical.

Other Considerations

- At the outset, shelters should be designed for the population group that it is expecting to serve. Shelters that are dedicated to specific population groups are recommended in many situations. For example, women, youth or Aboriginal clients are seen to be better served by dedicated shelters. Women who are fleeing violence or are active in the sex trade are seen as particularly vulnerable and also at-risk youth are another group where a joint shelter would not be considered appropriate.

- Designing and planning the interior and exterior of the building with warm colours and an architectural style that is residential in feel would avoid the institutionalization of the building for users, but also help to integrate it into the surrounding area.

- There are many subtle design issues that help to ensure workplace safety for staff and maintain the safety of users. Examples include having wide reception desks for staff, placing mirrors in stairwells , good sight lines to all exit doors and outside spaces, and motion or heat-sensored lighting in all common areas. The Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles offer multiple strategies to address safety through design, e.g. lighting along pathways, placement of windows, and minimizing the use of sight-limiting fencing or landscaping.
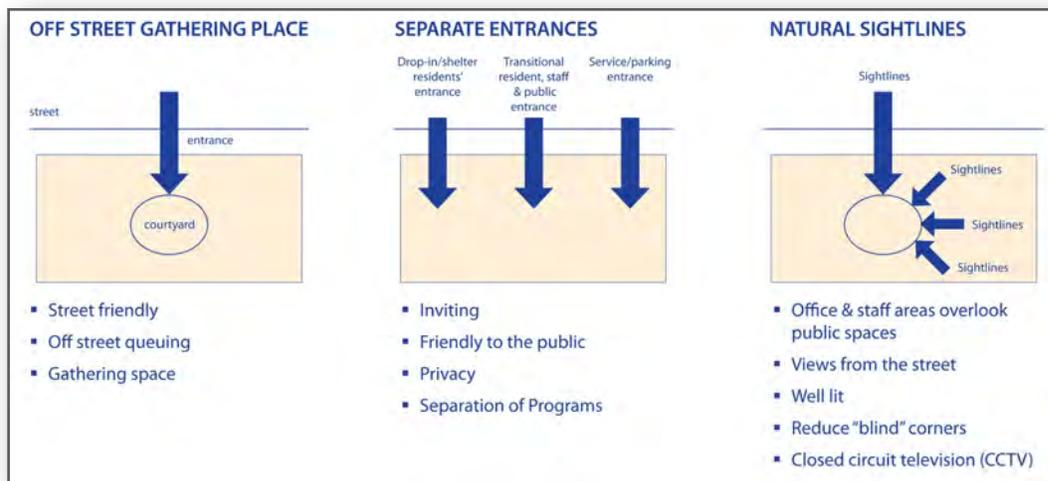
- In shelters that might accommodate couples or families, having flexible rooms or lock-off rooms with access to separate bathrooms can greatly improve the accessibility of these shelters to such users. Another group that could benefit from such flex space are transgendered individuals.

- Security measures such as a fob system for getting in and out of different parts of the building easily. This allows staff to enter and exit rooms easily to be able to quickly respond to a crisis or deal with a difficult situation.

- The use of automatic faucets and hand dryers in the bathrooms help to minimize the spread of germs and maximize water conservation and operational efficiencies. Please note that automated faucets do not typically allow the user to adjust the temperature of the water. As such, drinking fountains or other source of drinking water is needed for the benefit of users.

- Flexibility of design that allows for future conversion of units to permanent housing or other purposes.

Case Examples

The following case examples present three emergency shelter situations where design considerations featured prominently in the planning and operations of the facilities.

Rock Bay Landing (Victoria, BC)

The Victoria CoolAid Society runs a purpose-built facility that includes emergency shelter, transitional housing and community policing office. The building includes 84 permanent shelter beds co-located with 23 units of transitional housing and the first two units of family shelter in the Capital Region. The building can also accommodate 20 extreme weather mats when needed. The facility opened in 2010, with land that was granted by the City of Victoria and project funding by BC Housing.

The facility provides a large, secure courtyard for clients and guests, day storage for non residents and a variety of meeting rooms. The shelter also provides washrooms, showers laundry training workshops, computer access, kitchen and dining facilities. There is also space for a community policing office within the shelter.   The building is targeting LEED Gold certification. Some highlights of the planning context and program include:

- Strong commitment by government, health and social agencies to address homelessness.

- Potential clients were already in the neighbourhood without supports or services.

- Designed as a purpose-built building adopting best practices.

- Flexible design to allow for conversion over time to permanent housing.

- Co-location with Victoria Police Department.

Rock Bay Landing
Source: Victoria Cool Aid Society

- Cool Aid Society is the operator of the shelter, with experience working successfully in many different neighbourhoods. There was a strong commitment to working in partnership with neighbours of Rock Bay Landing.

- Tenants and shelter users are involved in daily one-on-one goal planning.

- Programs include life skills and training for clients, including work training and volunteer opportunities.
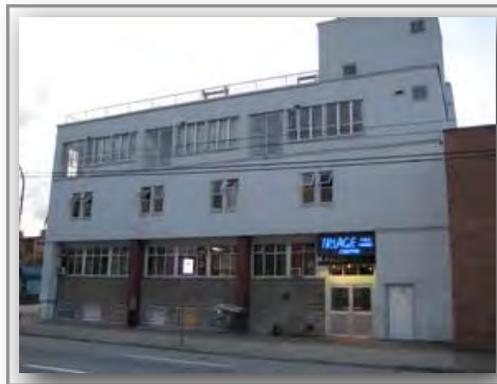
Triage Shelter & Windchimes Long Term Housing (Vancouver, BC)

Windchimes is a long-term supported housing program operated by RainCity Housing & Support Society. It has been in operation since 1993 and serves people living with mental illness. Windchimes includes 27 units and is located in the same building as the Triage Shelter, which provides additional access to services and support such as medication administration and a low-cost meal service.

Triage is a low-barrier shelter for men and women with a mandate to accept people with mental health issues, substance use and other issues. There are 28 shelter rooms and each client has a private room. Clients are able to stay longer than at most shelters, giving staff time to help them access appropriate support services based on their needs and circumstances. Many of the clients who stay at the shelter have been turned away from other shelters due to their complex health needs.

There is a good balance between the number of shelter beds and longer term housing units in the building, which has been noted to be one of the building's success factors as the long-term tenancies help to create a more stable environment for all clients.

Triage Shelter & Windchimes Housing
Source: raincityhousing.org

HEAT Shelters - Operated by RainCity Housing (Vancouver, BC)

In 2008, the City of Vancouver, in partnership with the Province and Streetohome Foundation funded several emergency shelters to house the homeless during the winter months. The temporary shelters, which were known as HEAT (Homeless Emergency Action Team) shelters were quickly established in spaces found around the city, and were not located in purpose-built facilities. Selected HEAT shelters have continued to be funded every winter since 2008.

RainCity Housing & Support Society ran three of the shelters in 2010. These were primarily located in large, open spaces, with minimal infrastructure. Each of the RainCity-operated shelters housed approximately 40 people and was operational on a temporary basis between December and April. While the locations were not originally intended for shelter use and the buildings/spaces were often inadequate, RainCity developed techniques and program approaches to ensure their shelters operated efficiently and safely for guests, staff and neighbours. Highlights of the shelter features include:

- The shelters generally housed 40 people on mats in a large open space. Mats and bedding were provided and laundered.

- Guests were allowed to bring furniture into the space to create more privacy for themselves.

- Shelters accepted men and women. Initially, only 20% of guests were female. In one shelter, where the manager and most staff were female, the number of female guests increased to 50%.

- In at least one shelter, a glassed-in room was available for women to sleep separately. The room was also used to separate pets on occasion (eg. cats from dogs). This added flexibility for a variety of uses.

- Two private locking bathrooms were used by guests and staff, although staff retained a key that could be used in emergencies. Two bathrooms were found to be insufficient for 40+ people. In the first year of the HEAT program, neighbours in the immediate area complained about loitering and nuisance in the area. For this reason, as well as other issues, the HEAT shelters in the later years were open during the days rather than just at night.

- The shelters included showers that were available for the guests to use.

- While limited kitchen facilities (fridge, sink, storage) were installed, meals were catered and not prepared on site. Two meals and snacks were provided.

- Covered outdoor gathering place where guests could get fresh air, smoke or hang out was noted to be important. This was found to build community among guests and reduced conflict with neighbouring residents. Where the shelter facilities did not have adequate outdoor areas, temporary covered spaces were created.

Since operators were not able to significantly change the physical spaces, the program approach was an important factor in the success of the shelters. The program was designed to remove barriers to access, ensuring the shelters were accessible to all street homeless. This included allowing pets, providing space for guests to store belongings (e.g. bags and shopping

HEAT Shelter Interior
Source: City of Vancouver - Jay Black

carts), being accessible by foot or transit and being open 24 hours a day. Some additional program features include:

HEAT shelter sleeping mats
Source: CBC News

- RainCity staff had a zero tolerance policy for violence, sexualized language or behaviour. This approach contributed to community building within the shelter and helped to make the environment safer and accessible (e.g. women, youth, gay, transgendered).

- Vancouver Coastal Health regularly visited shelters to connect people with medical and mental health services. People with pets were connected with veterinarians and provided basic education about pet care.

- Rather than a first-come first-served system, reservations could be made for up to a four month stay. This reduced the number of people waiting at intake line ups, avoided publicly visible line ups, and gave guests certainty that they had a place to stay during the winter.

- RainCity staff focused on creating a community within each shelter. There was significant interaction between staff and guests due to the physical layout of the spaces. The no-barrier approach meant staff were able to connect with people who do not typically access housing services for a variety of reasons. In some cases, staying in the HEAT shelters led people to seek health and housing services and transition into more stable housing after the shelters closed.

Good Practices in Partnership & Innovation

Social Enterprise Initiatives

As funding dollars are reduced, non-profit organizations have begun to increasingly look towards social enterprise projects as a means to supplement their revenues and further their missions. More and more organizations have begun to develop and operate social enterprises to create employment opportunities for their clients and create change in their communities. Social purpose or social enterprise projects essentially involve an activity that generates revenue for the non-profit by exchanging goods and/or services in the market. These activities help the organizations to realize their objectives.

In the case of housing providers, operating a social enterprise may help to generate funds that can support the costs of building maintenance and upgrades, but it can also create opportunities for work experience for tenants and clients. Many approaches have led to a decrease in organizations' dependence on government funds.

Good Shepherd Non-Profit Homes (Hamilton, Ontario)

An Ontario housing provider, Good Shepherd Non-Profit Homes, manages the Good Shepherd Works initiative which provides landscaping, unit clean up at tenant turnover and pest treatment services to non-profit and private market landlords as well as homeowners. The initiative creates opportunities for paid training and employment for individuals facing barriers to employment. For eight years, Good Shepherd hired tenants to fulfill basic maintenance and janitorial services at their buildings. The program was then expanded in 2009 with funding through the Homelessness Partnership Initiative in 2009. Since then, Good Shepherd has continued to operate the service as part of its social enterprise activities.

St. Stephen's Conflict Resolution Service (Toronto, Ontario)

The St. Stephen's Community Conflict Resolution Service was initiated in 1985 in response to a need for a service that assists individuals to resolve interpersonal disputes. The St. Stephen's Community House, a Toronto-based social service agency that addresses issues of poverty, homelessness, racism, etc., initiated the program. What began as a grant-dependent program shifted to a revenue-generating social enterprise by the mid 1990s. The service includes consultation and training in

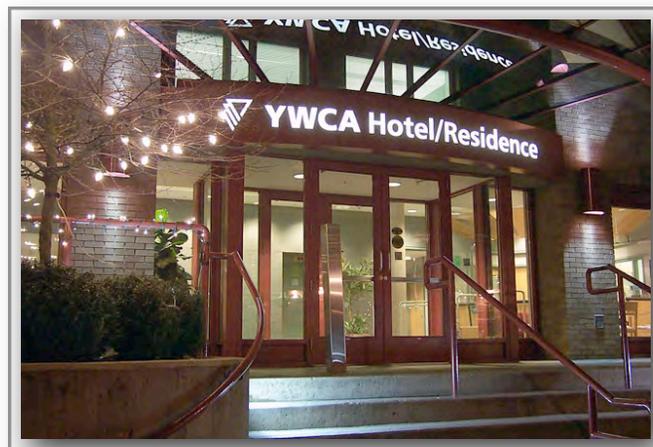Source: Good Shepherd www.goodshepherdcentres.ca

dispute resolution; conflict management and de-escalation; and mediation services. The services, which are offered to the public and private sectors, are provided by a roster of trainers. The revenue generated from these activities allow St. Stephen's House to continue to provide free community-based mediation services for clients in need.

Wigwamen Incorporated (Toronto, Ontario)

Wigwamen is a 405-unit Aboriginal housing provider in Toronto. The organization operates Green Tech Services, a licensed service organization that provides home energy audits. Green Tech is a wholly-owned subsidiary corporation incorporated in 2007, from which the retained earnings are invested in Wigwamen initiatives or re-invested in the enterprise. Green Tech is one of three social enterprises run by Wigwamen, alongside Wigwamen Non-Profit Residential Corporation and Upper Canada Property Management. Combined, the social enterprises have allowed the non-profit to develop new programming and partner on new social housing projects.

YWCA Hotel (Vancouver, BC)

Vancouver's YWCA hotel is a social enterprise hotel, where all the proceeds go to support the YWCA's community programs. By providing reasonably-priced accommodation for travellers, the hotel generates revenues that sustains the YWCA network of programs. The YWCA provides a range of integrated services for women and their families — from early

Source: YWCA. www.ywcahotel.com

learning and care to housing, health and fitness, employment services and leadership.

Habitat for Humanity's ReStores (Canada-wide)

ReStores are building supply stores run by Habitat for Humanity that sell donated new and used building materials. The ReStore concept was started in Winnipeg in the early 1990s and today, there are 65 ReStores across Canada. The funds generated are used to help with funding Habitat homebuilding projects. The income generated from operating ReStore may not be a significant component of the organization's funding, however, it does generate some income and contributes to the re-use of construction related

materials. In this way, the ReStore helps to support the agency's broader objectives of environmental sustainability, as most of the product that is sold at the ReStore would likely have ended up in a landfill.

Cornerstone Cafe - Fernwood Neighbourhood Resource Group (Victoria, BC)

The Fernwood Neighbourhood Resource Group (NRG) operates The Cornerstone Cafe out of one of its buildings in the Fernwood neighbourhood in Victoria. All the proceeds from the coffee shop are reinvested into the organization's programs and services. The Fernwood NRG Society offers a range of programs and services including child care, family drop-in classes, and other recreation activities. The Society also runs ten units of low-end of market rental housing in the neighbourhood and provides employment for 45 people, many of whom are neighbourhood residents.

H.A.V.E. Cafe (Vancouver, BC)

H.A.V.E. Café is a social enterprise dedicated to developing job and life skills for students. Students are selected based on need and put through an 8-week culinary training curriculum. HAVE trains individuals from the Downtown Eastside and surrounding neighbourhoods who face barriers to

Source: Fernwood NRG. fernwoodnrg.ca/

employment. The program includes lifeskills and occupational training to prep cook level for five to eight students per course.

Students receive Food Safe certification as well as bus tickets, meals, uniforms, tools and a $100 honorarium upon successful completion of the training. Those who successfully complete the course are introduced to potential employers and receive placement in entry level jobs in restaurant kitchens and receive counselling support for three months. Students prepare the meals served to customers at the HAVE Cafe and proceeds from the cafe are reinvested into the program. The rent collected from H.A.V.E. also goes to keep the transition house, located upstairs, operational.

Similar to HAVE, Lookout Emergency Aid Society operates the North Shore Culinary Training Program (www.northshoreculinaryschool.com/) and FareStart in Seattle (www.farestart.org) runs a barista training program for street youth and a 16-week culinary program for homeless and disadvantaged individuals.

Note: Success with social enterprise ventures is not guaranteed. Non-profits need to fully assess their capacity and strengths and evaluate whether they will be able to run a business while continuing to pursue their primary mandate as a social service provider. While this section has focused on positive examples of social enterprise, there are many other examples of non-profits that were forced to close down their social enterprise due to a lack of funding, business training or knowledge, or an inability to manage the enterprise with short-term losses. To start a social enterprise often requires substantial capital investment, and this may be initially supported through grant dollars if that is available. However, an ongoing dependence on grant funding is not sustainable. As in any business venture, there is always a substantial risk involved, a factor that non-profits need to be aware of in advance.

Employment Programs Connected to Housing

Gaining job skills and work experience is one of the variables for success for individuals who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness. The following initiatives illustrate a connection between training and job experience with housing for people who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness. The programs are directly operated by housing providers or by an organization that has an ongoing connection to a housing project.

Cool Aid Construction Skills Training (Victoria, BC)

While not an ongoing program, Victoria's Cool Aid Society implemented a unique skills training opportunity as part of the development of the Sandy Merriman, an emergency shelter for women. The shelter was built by women who were "employment disadvantaged" and who were interested in learning construction skills. These women, alongside professionals, renovated a house in downtown Victoria which now operates as a 25-bed emergency shelter and daytime drop-in centre.

Cool Aid's Community Casual Labour Pool (Victoria, BC)

Cool Aid Society runs the Community Casual Labour Pool, a free service that matches employers with workers looking for short term, casual positions. The program connects clients to short term temporary work such as moving, gardening, construction trades, house cleaning, office or clerical work. A number of the individuals who find work through the program end up finding permanent full time or part time employment. The jobs and incomes have a strong impact on the lives of Cool Aid clients and the community. The Victoria Cool Aid Society operates a range of programs including supported housing, community health and dental services, emergency shelter, mental health and employment services and other programs.

Cool Aid Society - Sandy Merriman House
Source: youthcore.ca

Harbour Light Volunteer Work Experience Program (Vancouver, BC)

The Salvation Army's Harbour Light is located in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside and provides a continuum of care and services including emergency shelter, drop-in, detox and treatment services, as well as second-stage housing for those leaving the treatment program. The Volunteer Work Experience Program at Harbour Light is a pre-job readiness program. The program helps clients to gain transferable job skills and work experience

through volunteer work, training and education, so that they can focus on becoming self-sufficient when they leave Harbour Light. Each participant is individually assessed and a job skills development program is tailored for them. The aim is to provide participants with certified training and education. The program includes training in basic First Aid, Food Safe, Serving it Right, janitorial training and life skills.

Potluck Cafe and Catering (Vancouver, BC)

Potluck operates a cafe and catering business that serves corporate and non-profit clients throughout Vancouver. The business is located on the ground floor of the Portland Hotel, a low barrier housing development for individuals with mental health and addictions. As a registered charity and social enterprise, catering revenues from the cafe are invested back into the organization's community social programs including:

- Food Services & Lifeskills Training and Employment — for DTES residents with barriers to employment.

- Meals for Portland Hotel residents — One free meal per day and three free meals for residents who are HIV positive.

- Community Kitchen Program — DTES residents learn basic cooking and nutritions at the Cafe twice a month.

Eva's Initiatives (Toronto, Ontario)

Eva's Initiatives work with homeless and at-risk youth in Toronto (16 to 24 year olds) to help them get off the streets. The initiatives include emergency shelters,

Potluck Cafe & Catering. www.potluckcatering.com

transitional housing, harm reduction services to address drug and alcohol use, counselling, employment and training programs, and housing support services. Eva's Phoenix opened in June 2000 and provides transitional housing for 50 youth for up to one year in shared townhouse style units with access to common areas. The young tenants develop the skills to live independently through hands-on programs that are delivered in a supportive environment. Those living at Phoenix must be involved in a training or employment program. Eva's staff also provide counselling, job placement assistance, housing search support, mentorship as well as other services to help youth achieve and maintain self-sufficiency.

Eva's Phoenix also includes a youth employment program that provides at-risk youth with employment opportunities that assist them to get the foot in the door to a career of their choice. Up to 160 youth can participate in the employment and pre-apprenticeship program. The program includes 5-week employment preparation, followed by employability and career-exploration workshops that help to prepare participants for a work placement. The program helps to match youth with employers of their choice for a 12-week placement and offers them guidance and support to ensure they're meeting their goals and objectives.

Eva's Phoenix Print Shop. Photo: Toronto Star

Co-Location and Partnership Arrangements

The following examples demonstrate partnership arrangements and collaborative environments between non-profit organizations.

The NonProfit Center (Various Locations, USA)

Across the United States, multi-tenant nonprofit centers have proven effective in addressing the needs of nonprofits to have secure, affordable office space. The Centers can provide an environment of stability and collaboration. Tenants typically share a commitment to communicate with and educate each other about program and advocacy work.

"Co-location is a mechanism to create social innovation, or synergy. The idea is to bring organizations together, in close physical proximity with the belief that the dialogue between those organizations will produce innovative ideas and partnerships and new projects. The physical environment has to be positive, you have to be co-located with organizations that have the same values as you do, and otherwise there won't be much opportunity for synergy. It's really about finding the right partners, or tenants, or sub-tenants, depending on the relationship. That's what, I think, makes the difference, and having organizations that are pretty entrepreneurial."

-- Don Palmer, Executive Director, Causeway

The NonProfit Center in Boston is an example of a multi-tenant nonprofit building founded by Third Sector New England in 2004. The building comprises nine floors with over 110,000 of rentable square feet. The center offers affordable office space for a diverse range of tenant organizations

and also provides numerous meetings rooms equipped with state-of-the-art communications technology that are made available to tenants.

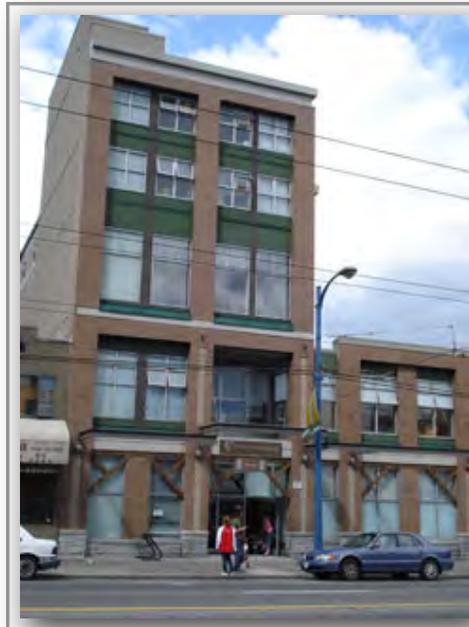**Crabtree Corner & Sheway Housing (Vancouver, BC)**

Crabtree Corner and Sheway are the result of a partnership of two lead organizations — the YWCA of Vancouver and Vancouver Native Health Society. Both facilities serve primarily Aboriginal women and their children. Located in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, Crabtree Corner is a family resource centre run by the YWCA. It provides emergency childcare and support services to women and families who are overcoming substance abuse issues. Crabtree Corner also includes 12 units of transitional housing for parenting and pregnant women who are managing substance abuse challenges. Led by Vancouver Native Health Society, Sheway provides comprehensive health and social services to women who are pregnant or parenting children less than 18 months, particularly those at risk of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. Sheway brings together multiple partners including the Ministry of Children and Family Development, Vancouver Coastal Heath Authority, the YWCA among others.

NonProfit Centre, Boston
Source: nonprofitcenterboston.org

The location for the building was secured through funding from Human Resources Development Canada's (HRDC), BC Housing, fundraising and a Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Vancouver for a capital grant towards lease and construction costs. The shared facility provides the following:

- 12 non-market housing units
- Medical clinic
- Emergency daycare centre (24 spaces)
- Two drop-in centres
- Commercial kitchen serving breakfast and lunch programs
- 24-hour housing support staff
- Programs for women and families

Crabtree Corner & Sheway
533 East Hastings, Vancouver

Lookout Society & Avalon Hotel (Vancouver, BC)

Lookout Society entered into partnership agreements with privately-owned hotels in order to improve the living conditions for residents in SRA (Single Room Accommodation) hotels in Vancouver. Lookout provides support services to residents and acts as a resource for non-program tenants. These might include assistance with medication, help with money management and budgeting, teaching lifeskills, referrals to other services and agencies, crisis intervention and monitoring of physical and mental health. The support workers also accompany tenants to appointments, visit them in hospital, or join them on shopping trips to increase their ability to plan healthy meals and improve their nutrition.

At the Avalon Hotel, Lookout provides support to 35 of the 86 units of affordable housing for those at risk of homelessness in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. A Tenant Support Worker (TSW) is available on-site seven days a week to support the Lookout clients, but also to act as a resource person for hotel staff who are working with the remaining tenants, providing suggestions and referral information.

Photo: Simon Kirby (Flickr)

Storehouse 39-3-10, (Calgary, Alberta)

Storehouse 39-3-10 is an umbrella non-profit established by three founding partners. The organization's goal is collaborating to be more efficient and expand program capacity to address the needs of Calgary's growing homeless and those living in poverty. The three founding organizations include:

- Community Kitchen Program of Calgary Society
- NeighbourLink of Northwest Calgary and Beltline Inc.
- Calgary Eye Way Society

Each of the agencies works in the area of poverty reduction and homelessness in the city of Calgary. With contributions from a broad range of funding sources including federal and provincial government as well as foundations and private donors, a building was purchased in Northeast Calgary. The building has been converted to provide shared warehouse space, meeting rooms, training rooms, boardroom, volunteer and staff lunch room, copy room, reception areas etc.

Storehouse 39-3-10 is unique in that it involves more than the co-location of non-profit agencies, but also embraces program collaboration. Working together, the founding agencies have jointly developed programs such as a one-stop shop helpline and pre-employment programs.

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Key Contacts

- Michael Anhorn — BC Housing

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- Lesley McMillan — Eva's Phoenix

- Denise Bryan — Fred Victor

- Aaron Munro — RainCity Housing & Support Society

C I T Y S P A C E S