

**Region of Waterloo
Portable Home-Based Support
Program Framework**

**“Part of a Coordinated Approach to
Preventing Homelessness and Ending Chronic Homelessness
in Waterloo Region”**

December 5, 2017



ALL ROADS LEAD TO HOME

Region of Waterloo Portable Home-Based Support Program Framework



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Disclaimer:

The HBS Framework describes the Portable Home-Based Support Programs (HBS Programs) funded by the Regional Municipality of Waterloo (Region, Housing Services). The HBS Framework is not intended to provide legal advice. Service Providers are responsible for being in compliance with all federal, provincial, and municipal legislation or other regulatory authority or statute. Any reference to a statute herein shall include any successor or legislation thereto. The HBS Framework does not supersede any such statute or regulation.

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

This section introduces the Portable Home-Based Support Program Framework (HBS Framework) developed by The Regional Municipality of Waterloo (Region, Housing Services) – describing its purpose, what it includes, and how it was developed.

1.1 What is the Portable Home-Based Support Program Framework?

In general, frameworks outline the purpose, description, and policy direction for a program or policy area. The HBS Framework describes the shorter and longer-term Portable Home-Based Support Programs (HBS Programs) currently funded through the Region and, possibly, other funders in the future. More specifically, it outlines the role HBS Programs play in the local Housing Stability System and how they are delivered using a region-wide, team-based approach. This team is referred to in the document as the Portable Home-Based Support Team (HBS Team).

The development and implementation of the HBS Framework is part of an overall redesign of the local Housing Stability System¹. The goal of the redesign is to create a more coordinated approach to service for people with housing issues and to document new policy directions in a series of frameworks. A new Housing Stability System Program Delivery Framework is being developed to unify these new policy directions into one system-level document (anticipated fall 2018). This document will clarify how the various parts of the system fit together and reinforce the common goals of increasing housing affordability, preventing homelessness, and ending chronic homelessness as identified in the local 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan (10 Year Plan). All documents are informing a year five refresh of the 10 Year Plan (also anticipated fall 2018). The 10 Year Plan Update will revise goals and targets in the area of housing and homelessness for the second five-year span (2019-2023) of the current commitment.

1.2 Why Was It Developed?

As further described in this document, the HBS Framework was developed to:

- Outline the region-wide, team-based approach of providing HBS Programs for people with greater depth of need who have transitioned from homelessness to housing and are living in rental units located across the community;
- Inform a Request for Proposals process that will help determine the agency(s) for the HBS Team beginning in 2018/19; and
- Set policy direction for the future.

¹ The Housing Stability System is a network of organizations, groups, and individuals that support people with housing issues in Waterloo Region. It includes Service Providers where at least fifty per cent of their time and/or activities are dedicated to the work of helping people find and keep a home. Often more than one community system is involved with supporting the same person or family with housing issues.

The HBS Framework was written for the following audiences:

- The HBS Team (primary audience);
- Other Service Providers that connect with the HBS Team; and
- Members of the broader community who are interested in learning about the HBS Team in Waterloo Region.

The HBS Framework is attached as a schedule of the Service Agreement between the Region and the HBS Team lead agency.

1.3 What Does It Include?

An overview of each section of the framework is presented below.

- **Section 1:** Context to the document;
- **Section 2:** Policy influences;
- **Section 3:** Description HBS Programs and the HBS Team, including five core elements and the new policy direction.
- **Section 4:** Overview of how HBS Programs fit in the local Housing Stability System; and
- **Section 5:** Plans to support implementation of the HBS Framework.

More detail about the practice of Housing Support Coordination can be found in related Program Standards and Protocols, to be released in 2018.

1.4 How Was It Developed?

Development of the HBS Framework was informed by research², training, and practice in the area of Housing First locally, provincially, and across North America. See **Appendix A** (History of Portable Home-Based Support in Waterloo Region) for a timeline relevant to Housing First initiatives in Waterloo Region dating back to 2007.

Local policy development in the area of Housing First programs has been influenced by the following sources of information within North America over the last 25 years:

- Community Solutions (1990-Present)
- New York's Pathways Program, founded by Dr. Sam Tsemberis (1992-Present)
- Toronto's Streets to Homes Program (2005-Present)
- Canadian Mental Health Commission's At Home/Chez Soi Project (2008-2013)
- Canadian Housing First Toolkit
- US Interagency Council on Homelessness
- US National Alliance to End Homelessness

² See also: Nelson, G. & Aubry, T. (October 23, 2017). "A Portable Housing Benefit as an Indispensable Component of Ending Homelessness in Canada". Evidence Exchange Network's Ontario Housing First Regional Network Community of Interest.

Evolution of the local approach to offering Housing First programs funded through the Region has been influenced by the following:

- **Report of the Ad-Hoc Working Group on Persistent Homelessness in Waterloo Region (2007).** This report was released by the Region. It was developed in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders and had a series of recommendations to work toward ending persistent homelessness in Waterloo Region, including implementing several new Housing First initiatives.
- **STEP Home Program (2008-2018).** The Region funded a number of inter-related programs offered to people experiencing or approaching persistent homelessness in Waterloo Region beginning in 2008. STEP Home will end with implementation of the HBS Framework through the new HBS Team in 2018/19.
- **Canadian Mental Health Commission's Housing First Training and Technical Assistance Project and Housing First Fidelity Assessment (2014-2016).** This project included training sessions, coaching, and a fidelity assessment of STEP Home. Results of the assessment informed the development of the team-based approach piloted in Cambridge beginning in 2016.
- **Rent Assistance Research³ (2015-2016).** A local research project led by Dr. Geoff Nelson emphasized the importance of pairing housing support with rent assistance to make housing more affordable. Participants who were receiving rent subsidies improved dramatically in terms of housing stability, while those who were not receiving rent subsidies actually showed a decline over the time period. Results informed several enhancements in the use of rent assistance within STEP Home over 2017.
- **Cambridge STEP Home Team Pilot (2016-2018).** The Region launched a pilot in 2016 in response to the need for more portable housing support options in Cambridge for people experiencing homelessness with high acuity. It was identified that more portable housing support was needed to balance the lower proportion of on-site support spaces (Supportive Housing) available in Cambridge compared to the rest of the region following redesign of the Supportive Housing program in April 2016. The Cambridge STEP Home Team pilot presented an opportunity to offer more portable housing support spaces while also learning about new Housing First approaches. The new approach featured two inter-connected pilot elements: **1)** Centralized access to housing support based on an evolving Prioritized Access to Housing Support (PATHS) process and **2)** a co-located team with specialized housing support roles that followed an evolving Housing Support Coordination Guide. Pilot activities associated with the PATHS process focused primarily on the application process for housing support, helping people get offer-ready, connecting with landlords, offering rent assistance, and supporting matching and prioritization. These activities are now outlined in the PATHS

³ Pankratz, C. & Nelson, G. (2017). "An Evaluation of Rent Assistance for Individuals Experiencing Persistent Homelessness in Waterloo Region". Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University.

Framework. Pilot activities related to the co-located team with staff that help participants to stay housed through portable housing support are outlined in this HBS Framework. Overall, results from an evaluation conducted within the first year of the pilot showed that the new approach to service was working well. The team exceeded expectations with the number of people housed and landlords were satisfied with the pilot. Staff shared that working together as one team improved communication and consistency in the overall approach and increased focus on reaching housing-related goals. Insights about the pilot informed both the PATHS Framework and this HBS Framework.

- **Housing Help Plus Pilot (2016-2018).** The Region launched a pilot in 2016 to learn about new Rapid Re-housing approaches for people experiencing homelessness with medium level acuity. Six agencies were funded to implement a common Housing Support Coordination Guide and report on shared performance indicators. A Housing Help Plus Working Group met monthly to discuss learning. There was no formal evaluation of the pilot but insights from the direct support workers and managers informed this HBS Framework.

Activities specific to development of the HBS Framework over 2017 include the following:

- Consultations and opportunities to review draft materials:
 - Consultation Phase 1 (July-August 2017):
 - Open invitation to meet with Region staff at any time;
 - Electronic survey open to Region-funded Service Providers;
 - Input through eight regularly scheduled meetings with Housing Stability Service Providers (Working Groups);
 - Meetings with direct support workers and people with lived experience of homelessness;
 - Consultation Phase 2 (September-November 2017):
 - One open stakeholder meeting;
 - Electronic survey open to Housing Stability System stakeholders more broadly; and
 - Meetings with the Housing Stability System Planning Table as well as several open “drop-in” feedback sessions with Region staff.
- Training, coaching, and consultation with OrgCode Consulting. OrgCode works with communities to develop and implement strategies to prevent and end homelessness, including effective coordinated access systems. OrgCode Consulting is also the creator of the common assessment tool used locally called the Service Prioritization and Decision Assistance Tool (SPDAT).

SECTION 2: POLICY INFLUENCES

As the local Service Manager, the Region is responsible for system planning, program delivery, accountability/quality assurance, and resource allocation related to housing stability in the local community. As a backbone⁴ for the Housing Stability System, the Region ensures that investments are aligned to create the greatest possible impact in Waterloo Region.

While local planning, program delivery, and quality assurance practices in the areas of housing and homelessness have been in place for the last 15 years or more, the pace of change has intensified in recent years to accommodate new policy shifts at each order of government and in response to other influencing factors. This has increased the need for a more unified program delivery approach related to supporting people with housing issues in Waterloo Region – one that strengthens mutually supportive thinking and doing across all of the programs funded by the Region in the local Housing Stability System.

Some key influences that have impacted the development of the HBS Framework are summarized below.

2.1 Regional Policy Shifts

- As part of its Service Manager role, the Region works to **strengthen connections with other community systems and funding partners**. New initiatives increase capacity to serve in a variety of ways. Some of these leverage other funding sources to increase spaces or units within existing programs. Other opportunities complement existing programs with different kinds of services, making it possible to serve people with a broader range of needs. Current partnerships include dedicated support from an agency that supports people with mental health issues who live in two Supportive Housing buildings and dedicated support from agencies supporting people with concurrent disorders who live in two Community Housing buildings. Access to these support options is coordinated through PATHS.
- A number of **human services integration efforts** are currently underway at the Municipal level. Previous to 2015, Service Manager responsibilities related to housing and homelessness were split between two divisions of different departments at the Region. These two divisions have since been merged into a single division called Housing Services with three interconnected teams. Frameworks (policy directions), Standards (service excellence expectations), and Protocols (operational directions) are being revised to ensure a more cohesive approach to program delivery within the new teams and across the division as a whole.

⁴ Collective impact requires a separate organization with staff and a specific set of skills to serve as the “backbone” to the initiative. Backbone organizations play key roles: guiding vision and strategy; supporting aligned activities; establishing shared measurement practices; building public will; advancing policy; and mobilizing funding.

- Staff within the four divisions of the Region’s Community Services Department are also working together to create a more **positive, client-centred service experience** for the people who access one or more of the programs directly operated by the Region. This includes not only Community Housing but also child care subsidies and child care centres, Ontario Works and employment programs, and Seniors’ Services Supportive Housing. The goal is to increase client quality of life and satisfaction with Regional services. A number of working groups are meeting to support this new direction.

2.2 Provincial Policy Shifts

- The **Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI)** consolidation of provincial homelessness programs took effect in 2013. The policy direction of CHPI is for Service Managers to design and implement better coordinated and holistic service delivery systems that are people-centred, evidence-informed, and outcomes-based. Systems are to reflect a Housing First approach, with dedicated focus on homelessness prevention and reducing reliance on emergency services.
- Beginning in 2014, Service Managers have new requirements for enhanced system-level planning and policy development, including creating an integrated local **10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan** with annual reporting.
- In 2016, the Province set a **goal to end chronic homelessness** by 2025 and identified four priority population groups: people experiencing chronic homelessness, youth, people who identify as First Nations, Metis and Inuit, and people discharged into homelessness from provincially-funded institutions (e.g., hospitals and prisons).
- In 2017, a new funding stream was released called **Home For Good** to support Service Managers with ending chronic homelessness. The Region was successful in its bid for these funds, which will help to support implementation of the HBS Framework.
- The **Investment in Affordable Housing (IAH)** program provides provincial and federal funding to improve access to affordable housing through components that create new rental housing, enable home ownership, repair existing homes, and provide flexible housing assistance.

2.3 Federal Policy Shifts

- The Federal Government will shortly release its new **National Housing Strategy**, which will clarify its role in preventing and ending homelessness, as well as creating new and sustaining existing affordable housing.
- Funding through the **Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS)** invests primarily in Housing First initiatives designed to end episodic and chronic homelessness. The Region is one of 61 communities across Canada that receives HPS funding under this policy direction. The directives require that the Region allocate a minimum of 40 percent of its HPS funding

towards Housing First activities. The Region has exceeded this expectation by dedicating all of its HPS funding to Housing First programs. Although current funding agreements end in 2019, the 2017 Federal budget committed \$2.1 billion over the next eleven years, signaling the intention to make HPS more permanent.

- HPS includes software development for a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) called the **Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS)**. The new web-based version of this database (HIFIS 4) will be hosted by the Region. It represents the next phase of system evolution; a single, integrated HMIS for all programs funded by the Region. The Region is a designated Community Coordinator for HIFIS in Waterloo Region, and receives funding to support this role. When implemented, the HBS Team will use HIFIS 4 exclusively for its day-to-day operations and measuring, monitoring, and sharing progress.

SECTION 3: PORTABLE HOME-BASED SUPPORT PROGRAMS & PORTABLE HOME-BASED SUPPORT TEAM

This section describes HBS Programs and the HBS Team, including their purpose, primary outcomes, core elements, and new policy direction.

3.1 Purpose

HBS Programs are designed to help people with lived experience of homelessness to stay housed. Housing support is provided to people with greater depth of need who have transitioned from homelessness to housing and are living in rental units located across the community. Shorter-term support of generally three to six months is provided to people with medium level of acuity. Longer-term support of generally 12 to 18 months is provided to people with high level of acuity. As part of a Support Plan, staff broker or link participants with longer-term supports from other community systems as needed and desired (e.g., mental health and addiction, developmental, or health care supports).

A wide variety of people may be served through HBS Programs, each with their own service needs and preferences. Tailoring housing support to meet the unique needs and preferences of youth, single adults, families, and people who identify as First Nations, Metis, and Inuit is a priority within HBS Programs. As such, staff roles are specialized for each of these four areas. Service needs and preferences of other population groups (such as women, veterans, and older adults) are met more broadly through recruitment, training, and working with other community partners who specialize in these areas of support.

3.2 Primary Outcomes

HBS Programs focus on six primary outcomes. Five outcomes are specific to participants and inform the goal planning of Housing Support Coordination, with the ultimate purpose of reducing risk of future homelessness. The sixth outcome is specific to landlords, with the ultimate purpose of preserving positive landlord relationships.

The six primary outcomes for the HBS program are:

1. Participants stay housed;
2. Participants maintain and/or increase their income stability;
3. Participants maintain and/or improve their physical and mental wellbeing;
4. Participants maintain and/or improve their social and community connections;
5. Participants are satisfied with the quality of the housing support; and
6. Landlords are satisfied with the quality of services provided.

HBS Program staff work to balance housing retention for participants and landlord retention for the Housing Stability System. Some participants may need to move in order to secure the

housing that is more appropriate for them. In these situations, participants and landlords will have access to the resources they need so that the process is seamless and highly supported.

Outcomes are measured during regular case management sessions and feedback is gathered through other evaluation opportunities (e.g., landlord surveys). The HBS Team reports on both process and outcome data as collected through HIFIS. Work is underway to transition all Region-funded Housing Stability Service Providers to a new web-based database (HIFIS 4). Work is also underway to develop a more unified approach to data collection and reporting across the system through a new Housing Stability System Data Strategy (anticipated fall 2018) and to set both indicators and targets for the 10 Year Plan Update (also anticipated fall 2018).

3.3 Core Elements

HBS Programs have five core elements to program delivery:

- Coordinated access;
- Team-based approach;
- Specialized staff roles;
- Collaboration; and
- Portable Home-Based Support tools and Program Standards

Each is described further below.

3.3.1 Coordinated access

Available housing support spaces (i.e., vacancies in Housing Support Coordinator caseloads) are filled exclusively through the PATHS process. People experiencing homelessness are assessed for eligibility at defined access points in the Housing Stability System as outlined in the PATHS Framework and related materials. For more information, see also **Appendix B: PATHS Process: Supporting People with Greater Depth of Need to Find Housing**; **Appendix C: How SPDAT Informs Progressive Engagement**; and **Appendix D: PATHS Prioritization Factors**.

To be eligible for HBS Programs, people must:

- Be currently living without permanent housing;
- Have exhausted a market rent search;
- Have high or medium level of acuity;
- Agree to in-home visits;
- Have lived in Waterloo Region for at least one year (currently or in the past); and
- Consent to service.

Locally, the Service Prioritization and Decision Assistance Tool (SPDAT⁵) is the common assessment tool used to assess acuity. More specifically, people are supported to complete either the Vulnerability Index-SPDAT pre-screen or the full SPDAT assessment when it seems like more support is needed to prevent or end their homelessness. Each SPDAT tool (pre-screen or full assessment) has a version specific to youth, single adults, and families.

If people are eligible for housing support, they are added to the PATHS List. Once added, they are supported to get offer-ready by PATHS Partners (Service Providers that support people with their Housing Plans while they wait for an offer) and Service Navigators (staff that form part of the PATHS Team). Once offer-ready, people may be matched with a housing support vacancy and prioritized for an invitation to accept that offer.

People are prioritized for a housing support offer using a ranking approach, based on the following three rank-ordered priorities:

1. Level of acuity and chronic homelessness;
2. Specific vulnerabilities (tri-morbidity, elevated risk, and Critical Safety List); and
3. Length of time living without permanent housing.

The referral process for housing support is informed by individualized Housing Support Agreements that are part of the PATHS process. These are agreements that outline the steps between being prioritized for an invitation and move-in. Once people move into their new housing with support from staff on the PATHS Team and the HBS Team, they are removed from the PATHS List. Where possible, housing support is paired with rent assistance to make housing more affordable. A voluntary trusteeship is also available through the PATHS Team. These additional resources (rent assistance and trusteeships) are coordinated through the PATHS process.

For more information about specific PATHS Team staff roles, see the PATHS Framework. HBS Team staff roles are described more fully in section 3.2.3 below. How the HBS Team works in collaboration with the PATHS Team is also more fully described in section 3.2.4 below.

3.3.2 Portable Home-Based Support Team Description

One agency is responsible for leading the HBS Team in Waterloo Region. The lead agency may directly deliver the entire program or subcontract parts of program delivery (subject to approval by the Region). The HBS Team provides service across the region (three cities and four

⁵ This tool supports an evidence-informed approach to assessing strengths and vulnerabilities in five areas of life that impact housing stability: (1) homelessness and housing history; (2) wellness (e.g., trauma, substance use, mental health, physical health); (3) risks (e.g., interaction with emergency services); (4) socialization and daily functions (e.g., social network, self-care); and (5) family dynamics (e.g., age, number of children). There is a pre-screen and full assessment, both of which are tailored to youth, single adults, and families.

townships) and must collaborate with other Housing Stability Service Providers that work with youth, single adults, families, and people who identify as First Nations, Metis, and Inuit so that service across the various programs in the Housing Stability System is well coordinated.

The lead agency must create a staffing plan, to be approved by the Region, with a rationale for how the staffing level aligns with the PATHS process and meets the needs of the team. This staffing plan must be reviewed regularly to ensure that it reflects the current demand for Portable Home-Based Support as reflected on the PATHS List.

The lead agency of the HBS Team must hire and retain staff with the appropriate qualifications, experience, and skills for working with people experiencing homelessness with greater depth of need. Staff of the HBS Team, particularly Housing Support Coordinators and Housing Support Coaches, should reflect the demographics of the population served. Where possible, staff with lived experience of homelessness should form part of the team.

The lead agency must ensure that HBS Team staff are adequately trained as part of their orientation to the position and ongoing quality assurance. **See Appendix H (HBS Team Training and/or Certification)** for a list of the minimum training and/or certifications required.

3.3.3 Specialized staff roles

The HBS Team has several staff roles, including Team Lead, Housing Support Supervisor, Housing Support Coordinator, and Housing Support Coach. Each role is described further below.

The **Team Lead** provides strategic direction for the HBS Team and manages Housing Support Supervisors.

Housing Support Supervisors directly supervise Housing Support Coordinators and Housing Support Coaches. Housing Support Supervisors provide regular individual supervision to each staff. They also work with the Team Lead and other Housing Support Coordinators to provide regular opportunities for staff to discuss individualized Support Plans and other emerging issues to support a learning environment. While all Housing Support Coordinators and Housing Support Coaches are supported to work together under a shared service philosophy using common tools, they are also assigned to a specialization⁶ within the HBS Team so that service pathways are clear and distinct for youth, single adults, and families. That is, Housing Support

⁶ Youth is defined as unaccompanied persons ages 16 to 24. Single adult is defined as singles or couples without dependents. Family is defined as a parent(s) or guardian(s) with one or more dependents. While families with dependents under age 18 are the primary focus, the following may also be served: (1) Families with youth up to age 24 where the intention is to continue to live together as an intact household unit; (2) Families with adult dependents (e.g., adult dependents with a disability, families who have recently immigrated and are intact with adult children); (3) Parents with custody arrangements and/or visitation rights; and (4) Parents that have been separated from their children and are actively seeking reunification.

Supervisors are assigned to youth, single adults or family “units” within the HBS Team so that service for these groups is unified for participants and staff. Housing Support Coordinators also specialize in serving people who identify as First Nations, Metis or Inuit; these staff may form their own unit or join one or more of the youth, single adult, or family units.

The Team Lead and/or Housing Support Supervisors participate in the local Housing Stability System groups hosted by the Region, including but not limited to: the Housing Stability System Planning Table, Families to Homes, Youth to Homes, PATHS Working Group, and Technical and Training Working Group. They work closely with other Service Providers in the Housing Stability System and other community systems (e.g., Local Health Integration Network, Here 24/7, and other health service agencies). These staff also work directly with the Region to ensure deliverables of the Service Agreement are met.

Housing Support Coordinators are trained and skilled professionals that provide in-home housing support to participants through the development and implementation of individualized Support Plans, as outlined in the Housing Support Coordination Standards. They support tenants using a person-centred, trauma-informed approach to meet goals within the three core components of housing stability:

- 1) Stabilizing housing,
- 2) Goal planning and moving forward with the next steps in a Support Plan, and
- 3) Connecting to the community and brokering for longer-term services.

Housing Support Coordinators focus on serving participants with mid-acuity over a shorter period of time (generally three to six months with a staff to participant ratio of 1:20) or participants with high acuity over a longer period of time (generally 12-18 months with a staff to participant ratio of 1:10). Housing Support Coordinators are also specialized in their roles with designations related to supporting youth, single adults, families, and people who identify as First Nations, Metis or Inuit. As described above, these specializations form different units within the HBS Team, each with a designated Housing Support Supervisor.

Housing Support Coaches⁷ are most often people with lived experience of homelessness. They are trained and supported to help participants with the following:

- 1) Community participation/inclusion,
- 2) Life skill development/coaching, and
- 3) Belonging (feeling “at home” and/or included in a community of choice).

The Housing Support Coach role is complementary yet distinct from the Housing Support Coordinator role. The Housing Support Coordinator develops and implements the Support Plan. The Housing Support Coach offers hand-on, practical assistance with parts of the Support Plan,

⁷ Part of implementation plans will include a review of this staff role title.

as defined and overseen by the Housing Support Coordinator. To maintain high quality, consistent, person-centred service, communication between these two roles must be maintained. Housing Support Coaches do not maintain a caseload; as such, it is the responsibility of the Housing Support Supervisor to ensure a healthy workload.

While Housing Support Coaches may engage with participants at any point, it is especially important to offer coaching and support during the transition period from homelessness into housing and for people with higher acuity. Relationships developed at this stage for people with greater depth of need encourage opportunities to participate in activities of their choosing and further life skill development. Housing Support Coaches use a holistic approach in their work, which covers many aspects of participants' lives such as relationships, general well-being, sense of empowerment, the ability to experience happiness, and meaningful involvement with community.

3.3.4 Collaboration

Team Environment: The HBS Team uses a meeting structure that supports creative problem-solving to leverage diverse perspectives and solutions, effective goal planning to help implement individualized Support Plans, team development to strengthen collaboration and a shared service philosophy, and regular information sharing regarding participants, landlords, and community partners to ensure effective communication. The meeting structure includes discussions of trends, emerging challenges, and new opportunities or best practices.

A case conferencing strategy is used for participants with more complex housing issues. The focus of these discussions is to prevent eviction or, in the event of a return to homelessness, to support rapid-rehousing (e.g., seamless transitions to another more appropriate housing option).

PATHS Team: The HBS Team works collaboratively with the PATHS Team in a number of ways to ensure continuity of support. For example, Housing Support Coordinators engage with the PATHS Team as part of a Housing Support Agreements once people are prioritized for an invitation of housing support. Housing Liaisons on the PATHS Team continue to stay engaged with landlords where rent assistance is paired with Portable Home-Based Support. If a tenancy is at imminent risk, Housing Liaisons can re-engage to help participants move to another housing option (e.g., an eviction that can't be saved, City by-law infractions, Fire Code violations, and police involvement with the unit). Housing Liaisons also support participants with voluntary trusteeships.

Other Housing Stability Service Providers: The HBS Team works collaboratively with Housing Stability Service Providers, including PATHS Partners (Housing Resource Centres, Emergency

Shelters, Street Outreach, Community Housing, and Transitional Housing), Supportive Housing, and other housing and support options coordinated through the PATHS process.

Other Community Partners: The HBS Team works closely with Service Providers in other community systems, including but not limited to: mental health and addictions, developmental disabilities, health services (e.g., community health care, hospitals), justice (e.g., police, probation), the Region’s Community Services Department (e.g., Ontario Works, child subsidies, Seniors’ Services); and specialized case conferencing groups (e.g., Connectivity Tables and Service Resolution). The HBS Team documents communication with these Service Providers to help identify trends, share case conferencing strategies, and ensure consistent, high quality, person-centred service for participants. The HBS Team also works closely with the Region to develop new partnerships with other systems and funders.

3.3.5 Portable Home-Based Support Tools and Program Standards

A Flex Fund is available to the HBS Team. This fund helps with a variety of housing-related expenses (e.g., repairs to units) when all alternative resources are exhausted (e.g., through other programs, entitlements, subsidies, agency resources, and community donations).

The HBS Team is responsible for implementing Program Standards. Program Standards include more detail about Housing Support Coordination, including expectations related to consents, documentation (e.g., process notes and use of standard templates/forms), participant files, reporting, and quality assurance. The Standards also confirm expectations related to staff qualifications, training, and skills.

Standards are revised from time to time by the Region; changes in expectations are reflected in Service Agreements with the lead agency for the Portable Home-Based Support Team.

3.4 New Policy Direction

The new policy direction for HBS Programs is outlined by a series of policy statements that spell “**IN-HOME SUPPORT**” (see next page). These statements highlight key features of the support, including not only home visits but also structuring services around individualized Support Plans that focus on making the housing a home, brokering specialized services, eviction prevention, preserving positive landlord relationships, and community inclusion.

The new policy direction calls for a region-wide, team-based approach to offering portable housing support. Within the team, support is coordinated for a range of people. This includes people with medium to high acuity; for youth, single adults, and families; and for people who identify as First Nations, Metis, and Inuit. In general, this approach will allow for a more coordinated and consistent approach to service. Advantages include better service for participants (e.g., with a consolidated Housing Support Coordinator role that serves people

across the region, consistency in staff hiring practices, supervision, and training) and a more seamless, supported experience (e.g., engaging with people in a coordinated way with back-up on the team as needed; allowing people to be supported by the same team even if they “age out” of youth services, become a family or return to single status). Strengthening relationships with landlords and other system partnerships will also be easier to facilitate with the consistent messaging and focused accountability inherent to a team-based approach.

Policy statements:

- **I**mplement individualized Support Plans where people’s service needs and preferences guide the work.
- **N**avigate other community systems to broker specialized services.
- **H**elp people to make their housing a home.
- **O**ffer shorter-term support for people with medium level acuity, longer-term support for people with high acuity, and services for all population groups on the same team to better coordinate services.
- **M**easure, monitor and share results to create a learning environment.
- **E**ngage the whole community in the work to end chronic homelessness.
- **S**upport connections to communities of choice.
- **U**se a team-based approach with specialized, mutually-reinforcing staff roles.
- **P**revent evictions and preserve positive landlord relationships.
- **P**rovide the right amount of support to stay housed, no more and no less.
- **O**ffer a variety of tools to help people stay housed – Housing Support Coordination, rent assistance, voluntary trusteeships, and other flexible funding options.
- **R**educe risk of future homelessness by providing holistic support that builds on housing-related strengths.
- **T**ailor housing support to meet the unique needs of youth, single adults, families and people who identify as First Nations, Metis and Inuit.

SECTION 4: PROGRESSIVE ENGAGEMENT IN THE HOUSING STABILITY SYSTEM

This section provides information about the progressive engagement approach to program delivery in the Housing Stability System. Four questions are addressed: what is progressive engagement in the context of a system of care; why is it being adopted; how does it work (overview of the model); and how is data informing the approach (use of HIFIS and SPDAT). For more information about the information referenced in this section, see **Appendix E** (Overview of Levels of Engagement, Housing Help Hubs, and Housing Stability Programs); **Appendix F** (Progressive Engagement Pyramid) and the **Appendix G** (Progressive Engagement Flowchart).

4.1 What is Progressive Engagement?

Progressive engagement is a systems-based program delivery approach where more extensive service is offered only after attempts to resolve an issue with more limited service has been unsuccessful. For example, a shelter stay is offered only after all other safe and appropriate options are considered. Progressive engagement is not about saying “no” to offering more service. Rather, it is about starting with a more limited level of service and offering more service over time, based on demonstrated need.

In longer-term programs, support may lessen over time. At this point, people may be encouraged to move-on from the program, which ensures that limited housing stability resources remain available to people who truly need them to stay housed.

The goal of progressive engagement is to offer just enough of the right kind of service, no more and no less. In doing so, risks of either over-serving or under-serving people are reduced and there is a greater likelihood that limited resources will be used effectively across the system. The goal with progressive engagement is to support people to access the most appropriate housing program, at the right time, based on three key indicators – strengths, depth of need, and barriers related to finding and keeping a home. Programs are offered in a defined order, deepening engagement along a person or family’s service pathway by offering more or different kinds of help based on demonstrated need. People’s preferences inform the process; choice within each program is offered wherever possible (e.g., location of housing, staff member on a team).

4.2 Why Use Progressive Engagement?

Adopting a progressive engagement approach offers three main benefits, as outlined below.

1. **Equity-based, not “one size fits all”.** People with housing issues are not all the same. Within this group, there is a broad range of strengths, depth of need, and barriers related to finding and keeping a home. As a result, people require access to different kinds of programs to resolve their housing issues. For example, while some people may need a relatively small amount of support over a short period of time (less engagement)

to prevent homelessness, others may need a more intensive and longer-term support (more engagement) to achieve the same outcome. At the level of the system, the progressive engagement model helps with triage or matching people with appropriate programs. For example, some resources in the Housing Stability System are for people who can self-direct their housing search (e.g., Level 1 – Renter’s Toolkit and Housing Help Hubs). Others are meant for people who have a greater depth of need, such as offering longer-term support to stay housed (e.g., Level 4 – Supportive Housing).

2. **Strengths-based.** Progressive engagement is based on the belief that **most** people with housing issues have the ability to either self-resolve them or at least actively participate in the process. The model creates an environment where people are supported to demonstrate or leverage their strengths and abilities before more extensive service is offered. It nurtures an environment where people are encouraged to try new things and learn from the process. For example, during emergency shelter inquiries, people are invited to explore other resources and problem-solve as a first step. Then, if shelter is needed, first-time participants are given time to try and self-resolve their homelessness before they are offered increasing amounts of support to find housing.
3. **Consistent service.** Progressive engagement supports greater consistency in service by streamlining access to resources using common assessment, and by aligning levels of support offered within programs through standardized staff roles and service plans. As described more fully in section 4.4 below, a common assessment tool informs the process of matching people with the most appropriate type of housing program for their needs at specific milestones along their service experience or pathway. While Service Providers may vary in some ways (e.g., serve different household types – youth, single adults and/or families), the work to help people find and keep a home remains consistent across the system. Consistency is maintained in three main ways: **i)** Service is provided by staff that play defined roles in the system; **ii)** Staff are guided by standardized service plans (Housing Plans, Support Plans, or Critical Safety Plans); and **iii)** Plans focus on key service objectives, which are defined for each program. For HBS Programs, staff roles and Support Plan goals were defined earlier in section 3.3.3, and primary outcomes were defined in section 3.2.

4.3 Overview of the Model

This section provides a detailed overview of the progressive engagement model in Waterloo Region. After a general description, the two system functions (see section 4.3.1), four levels of engagement (see section 4.3.2), and ten programs (see section 4.3.3) are described. When the progressive engagement model is fully implemented, there will be two main ways that people can access housing resources. One option will be universal access to self-directed housing resources through an on-line Renter’s Toolkit and on-site Housing Help Hubs. These resources

will be widely available with no eligibility requirements. In the second option, people may qualify for one or more Housing Stability Programs. Access to these programs will be fully coordinated across the system, informed by common assessment and individualized service plans.

All service **begins** with a conversation that engages people to consider appropriate referrals, if there is another way to meet their needs (i.e., informed and supportive redirection within the scope of coordinated access services). With intentional support for diversion across the Housing Stability System, for example, people don't need to stay in shelter or join a waiting list for service if a more appropriate option is available that can safely meet their housing needs. People who are referred to a specific type of resource may or may not choose to access it. If they choose not to follow through with a referral, and do not return for further service, they will have essentially exited the Housing Stability System. There are many reasons why people may choose not to engage further. For example, they may access other community or informal/natural supports instead, or resolve their housing situation on their own with no need for further assistance.

Safety screening plays an important role during this process. If a safety concern is raised, additional protocols are followed to ensure that the person or family is immediately connected with appropriate crisis or "first responder" community resources (e.g., 911, Women's Crisis Services of Waterloo Region, suicide prevention hotline).

The ultimate goal for all service pathways is to **end** with long term housing stability (e.g., lower depth of need and stable housing). For example, prior to discharge from a housing support program, engagement may decrease for some time while people are supported to transition from the program and connect to other resources in the community. After people exit the Housing Stability System, they may re-engage at any time. They will be supported to access available programs that align with their strengths, depth of need, and barriers related to housing that are relevant at that time. During the return intake process, they are supported to explore what happened last time they were served. Program staff take the time to learn about people's housing situations since their last service interaction and ask questions about what can be done differently to provide a better experience and/or better outcomes this time around.

4.3.1 Levels of Engagement

With progressive engagement, the work is to connect people with available housing and other community resources that address their housing issues as quickly as possible, while balancing current capacity to serve, overall program demand, and people's individual service needs and preferences along the way.

There are four levels of engagement in the model:

1. Self-Directed Housing Resources
2. Housing-Focused Services
3. Shorter-Term Housing Support
4. Longer-Term Housing Support

Programs that fall within each level of engagement share some features and differ on others. To determine where programs fit in the system, three primary factors are considered:

- How people access the program;
- If housing support is offered and the focus of that support; and
- Where or how programs are delivered.

People with service pathways at “less engagement” levels may access any or all of the resources in Levels 1 or 2. Any support at these lower levels of engagement is generally provided on-site or over the phone with no accompaniment or follow-out into the community. Where indicators suggest that people may need more or a different kind of support, engagement **deepens** (“more engagement”). Here the focus shifts to understanding what might be making it hard for the person or family to resolve their housing issue. Following assessment, eligible applicants are matched with appropriate housing support and rent assistance. For example, people with a moderate depth of need may need shorter term housing support to help them find and keep their housing (Level 3). Alternatively, people with a high depth of need may need the “most” or highest engagement possible – longer term housing support (Level 4) – to achieve the same housing outcomes.

4.3.2 System Functions

Promising practices suggest that well-designed systems have two functions or ways of delivering service that are really important:

1. Providing Universal Access to Self-Directed Resources. Locally, self-directed housing resources are offered through the Region’s on-line Renter’s Toolkit or Housing Help Hubs. Plans are underway to promote the Renters’ Toolkit in Housing Help Hubs co-located with fixed-site programs in the system or other places where people need easy access to self-directed housing information (e.g., information about community resources that can help with finding and keeping a home).

2. Coordinating Access to Programs. Requests for service can come from a number of sources, including individuals and families directly, their family or friends, or from Service Providers. Some requests are from local residents and others are from people thinking about moving to Waterloo Region.

Coordinated access works to streamline these requests for service. Staff are considered specialized problem-solvers that help people to navigate their next steps, including appropriate referrals. For example, there are intentional efforts to divert or refer the person or family to services that may offer a better solution to their issue. Where people must apply for housing resources and waiting lists are in effect, coordinated access can include application assistance, matching people with upcoming vacancies (e.g., using a By-Name List that identifies each person or family's service needs and preferences), prioritization within a matched pool of applicants for each vacancy, and facilitating offers. Throughout this process, assistance is provided related to service navigation.

Both decentralized and centralized coordinated access models are used across the Housing Stability System. A decentralized model is used in Level 2 where staff follow protocols that outline how to connect people with appropriate community resources, including other Housing Stability Programs in Level 2 and/or the PATHS process.

Through the PATHS process, access to Level 3 and Level 4 programs is centralized. When a support option becomes available through PATHS, it is offered to the person or family who both wants the program and also needs it the most compared to others waiting on the list with a similar level of need related to finding and keeping a home. Common assessment informs this work.

4.3.3 Housing Stability Programs

The local Housing Stability System includes ten programs, each fulfilling a specific role. These ten programs are mutually-reinforcing. While they are designed to address the full range of housing issue that people face, for some people, being able to retain housing over the longer-term requires a collaborative, shared approach to service planning that involves a number of community systems. For example, Housing Stability Programs may need to be complemented with specialized support from the health sector, developmental services, or mental health and addiction systems in order to reach Support Plans goals.

More specifically, Housing Stability Programs offer one or more of the following:

- i. **Housing** (permanent or time-limited housing options as well as temporary shelter);
- ii. **Rent assistance** (fixed-site rent assistance dedicated to units or buildings and portable rent assistance dedicated to people living in the community); and/or
- iii. **Support** (Housing Help or Housing Support Coordination, sometimes paired with Rent Funds or Flex Funds).

Wherever possible, people who are eligible for housing support or permanent housing should be able to choose from options that match their service needs and preferences. To be positioned to offer choice in this way, the Housing Stability System needs diversity in the mix of support and housing options that are available. Increasing the portability of rent assistance and support is one way to meet this objective.

4.4 Being Data-Informed through HIFIS and SPDAT

An integrated data management system and common assessment tools are essential for system-level progressive engagement to work well. HIFIS 4 is the integrated database currently being implemented in the Housing Stability System in Waterloo Region. HIFIS 4 will address the need for consistent, timely, and effective communication related to referrals, intake and discharge messaging, and support coordination from system entry to exit for participants. For example, participants will not need to answer questions more than once and relevant information gathered from earlier points in their service pathway will be used to support the development and implementation of plans that follow. This will strengthen mutually-reinforcing practice. HIFIS 4 will meet the need for shared measurement (data collection and reporting), a critical component of collective impact related to strengthening a learning culture (e.g., monitoring progress across the system to promote service excellence).

SECTION 5: NEXT STEPS

This section explains what's next. The first step is to communicate the release of the HBS Framework. Then the work begins to implement it.

5.1 Communicate Release of the HBS Framework

To support the roll-out of the HBS Framework, people who participated in the consultations will be informed about its release and next steps. Presentations by Region staff will be offered to groups that participated in the consultation process. In addition, a summary will be circulated widely in the community. This document and its summary will be posted on-line on the Region's website and added to the Homeless Hub national clearinghouse. The Region will update existing brochures and other materials for Service Providers so that the information aligns with the HBS Framework.

5.2 Implementation and Transition Plan

In 2018, Region of Waterloo will issue a Request for Proposals to select an agency(s) to lead the HBS Team. As part of transition plans to the new approach outlined in this HBS Framework, existing STEP Home and Housing Help Plus Service Providers will be considered for a transitional Service Agreement. This period will support transition of existing participants to the new HBS Team and any needed wind-down of existing services.

Implementation plans will include the following activities:

- **Transition to HIFIS 4.** The HBS Team will use HIFIS 4, the new web-based integrated system to support daily operations and manage record keeping. Implementation of HIFIS 4 will take place over 2018, a process led by the Region.
- **Landlord Tools.**
 - Develop a Landlord Handbook (e.g., pros/cons of partnering with the HBS Team, intended outcomes of HBS Programs, and what landlords can expect).
 - Develop a process for how landlord concerns will be addressed (e.g., consents related to disclosing damages/risks to tenancies, how concerns will be resolved by the HBS Team and/or other partners).
 - Resources for unit cleaning and other services (e.g., hoarding, pest control).
 - Appoint a Housing Services staff member to attend Waterloo Region Apartment Management Association (WRAMA) meetings to provide updates and information on the different program resources available to landlords.
- **Eviction Prevention Protocol.** The HBS Team will collaborate with the PATHS Team to develop and implement a protocol for preventing evictions (when possible) or supporting the ending of a tenancy and transition to new housing (when a move cannot be avoided). This protocol will include a new risk management strategy that clarifies roles and

responsibilities between the participant, landlord, HBS Team, and PATHS Team (Housing Liaisons) when a tenancy is at-risk. This strategy will include:

- how different levels of risk will be measured, monitored, and mediated;
- how communication will be supported with all key partners;
- how decisions will be made about the tenancy with clarification about who should be consulted vs. who is accountable; and
- the resources that will be available to support eviction prevention or ending a tenancy (e.g., Flex Funds for damage repairs).

The protocol will also outline the roles and responsibilities of community partners who may also be engaged in the process of eviction prevention or ending a tenancy with a move to new housing (e.g., police, Waterloo Region Legal Clinic).

- **Program Standards.** The Region will work with the HBS Team and other partners to set and monitor service expectations for HBS Programs funded by the Region. These Standards will include minimum in-home visit expectations. They will also clarify roles and responsibilities related to meeting the outcomes of the program for the participant, landlord, PATHS Team (Housing Liaisons), and PATHS Partners.
- **An evaluation of the new approach.** Following a period of implementation, Region staff will evaluate the model to identify areas of strength and aspects that need improvement. In addition to evaluating the six key outcomes identified in section 3.1, staff satisfaction (e.g., with the level of training and supervision provided), PATHS Partners satisfaction (e.g., with services provided by the HBS Team) and landlord satisfaction (e.g., with the level of support provided) will be explored.

Appendix A: History of Portable Home-Based Support in Waterloo Region

STEP Home (2008 to March 2018)

STEP Home began in 2008 following release of the “Report of the Ad-Hoc Working Group on Persistent Homelessness in Waterloo Region” the previous year. In this report, a person was considered to be approaching or experiencing persistent homelessness in the following types of situations:

- When homelessness has become the new “normal” and skills are oriented to surviving on the streets rather than living in housing.
- When there is a longer term pattern of cycling between experiencing homelessness and being at-risk of housing loss.
- When a person may not be strongly connected to the idea of “conventional housing” (i.e., family home, housing covered under the Residential Tenancies Act, 2007 or Long Term Care).
- When it would be challenging to find another suitable alternative if the current housing was lost.
- When a longer period of time may be needed to build a trusting relationship with another person.
- When a person has either extensive use of emergency services and/or a large number of disconnections with community-based programs.

The goal of STEP Home was to provide options and supports to end persistent homelessness in Waterloo Region. It began with two workers at two agencies and grew over time to include over twenty staff through twelve programs at ten agencies. Each agency had a separate Service Agreement with the Region. Agencies collaborated through the STEP Home Agency Advisory Committee, the STEP Home Direct Support Worker Advisory Committee, and were informed by the Participant Advisory Committee. During the ten years in which STEP Home operated, approximately 500 people experiencing persistent homelessness were supported to find and keep their housing. Five guiding principles informed the work:

- We support housing towards a home.
- We know relationships are key.
- We walk with people to build community.
- We do what it takes and we don’t give up.
- We think about what we do and how to do it better.

STEP Home included the following programs for most of the ten years it operated:

- **Street Outreach:** Four workers seeking to find and engage with people who were street-involved (staff to participant ratio of 1:200).
- **Streets and Shelters to Housing Stability:** 12 workers helping participants to find and keep a home with support continuing for at least a year once housed (staff to participant ratio of 1:10).
- **Whatever It Takes:** One worker supporting service resolution.
- **Circle of Friends:** Two workers recruiting and training volunteers to provide a circle of friends to a participant.
- **Peer Health Worker:** One to three part-time peers providing outreach to support participants to access housing and health care services.
- **Supportive Housing:** Two buildings with on-site housing support eligible to people experiencing persistent homelessness.

Several evaluation reports were completed that helped to inform program evolution, including:

- Cambridge STEP Home Pilot Year One Evaluation (2017)
- An Evaluation of Rent Assistance for Individuals Experiencing Persistent Homelessness in Waterloo Region (2017)
- Region of Waterloo STEP Home Social Return on Investment (2013)
- STEP Home Report 2012-2014
- STEP Home Annual Report 2011-2012
- STEP Home Flex Fund Report (2011)
- STEP Home Housing Report (2011)
- STEP Home Services Report (2011)
- STEP Home Year 3 Evaluation Report (2011)
- The Story of SHOW: Development and Early Impact of Supportive Housing of Waterloo (2011)
- Program Review Resource Guide: Selected Longer Term Housing Stability Programs or People Experiencing Persistent Homelessness in Hamilton, Toronto and Ottawa (2011)
- We'll Leave the Lights On For You: Housing Options For People Experiencing Persistent Homelessness Who Use Substances (Alcohol and/or Drugs) (2011)

Several significant changes took place within STEP Home over 2014-2017, including:

- Agencies began piloting SPDAT as a common assessment tool in 2014.
- Staff supported the first Registry Week as part of the 20,000 Homes Campaign in 2014.
- Information gathered from Registry Week evolved into the local PATHS (Prioritized Access to Housing Support) process, where access to housing support is centralized. STEP Home began receiving referrals through the PATHS process in 2015.

- Agencies Participated in the Canadian Mental Health Commission’s Housing First Training and Technical Assistance Project, led by Dr. Sam Tsemberis and a team of researchers including a Dr. Geoff Nelson from WLU. Training sessions were held in 2014 and 2015. The project concluded in 2016 with a Housing First fidelity assessment of STEP Home that outlined several recommendations to strengthen the current approach.
- A Housing Specialist position was piloted in 2015; this position transitioned to the Cambridge STEP Home Team Pilot in 2016.
- The Waterloo Region Housing Support Coordination Guide was drafted in 2015 and piloted over 2016. Consultations about this document were held in 2017. An updated version will be released as Standards in 2018, for use in Portable Home-Based Support and Supportive Housing programs.
- The Cambridge STEP Home Team Pilot was launched in 2016. The first year was evaluated in 2017. Learning informed the HBS Framework.
- Iain DeJong from OrgCode Consulting provided training and coaching between 2014 and 2017 about SPDAT, Progressive Engagement, Housing-Based Case Management, and Housing Stability System Redesign.

Housing Help Plus (October 2016 to March 2018)

Given the focus on serving people experiencing persistent (chronic) homelessness with the highest level of acuity through STEP Home, a service gap was identified for people experiencing homelessness with medium level of acuity. As part of the redesign of the Emergency Shelter Program, positions that were filling this need in the community were realigned in April 2016 as Housing Help Plus workers at five sites. An additional worker was added in Lutherwood to serve the Kitchener-Waterloo area for people not connected to shelter. The Region supported the pilot through monthly Housing Help Plus Working Group meetings to discuss learning. Each worker supported 15 participants at a time with access through an agency-administered PATHS List. Workers helped participant to find housing with up to six months of support once housed, using the Housing Support Coordination Guide to inform their work.

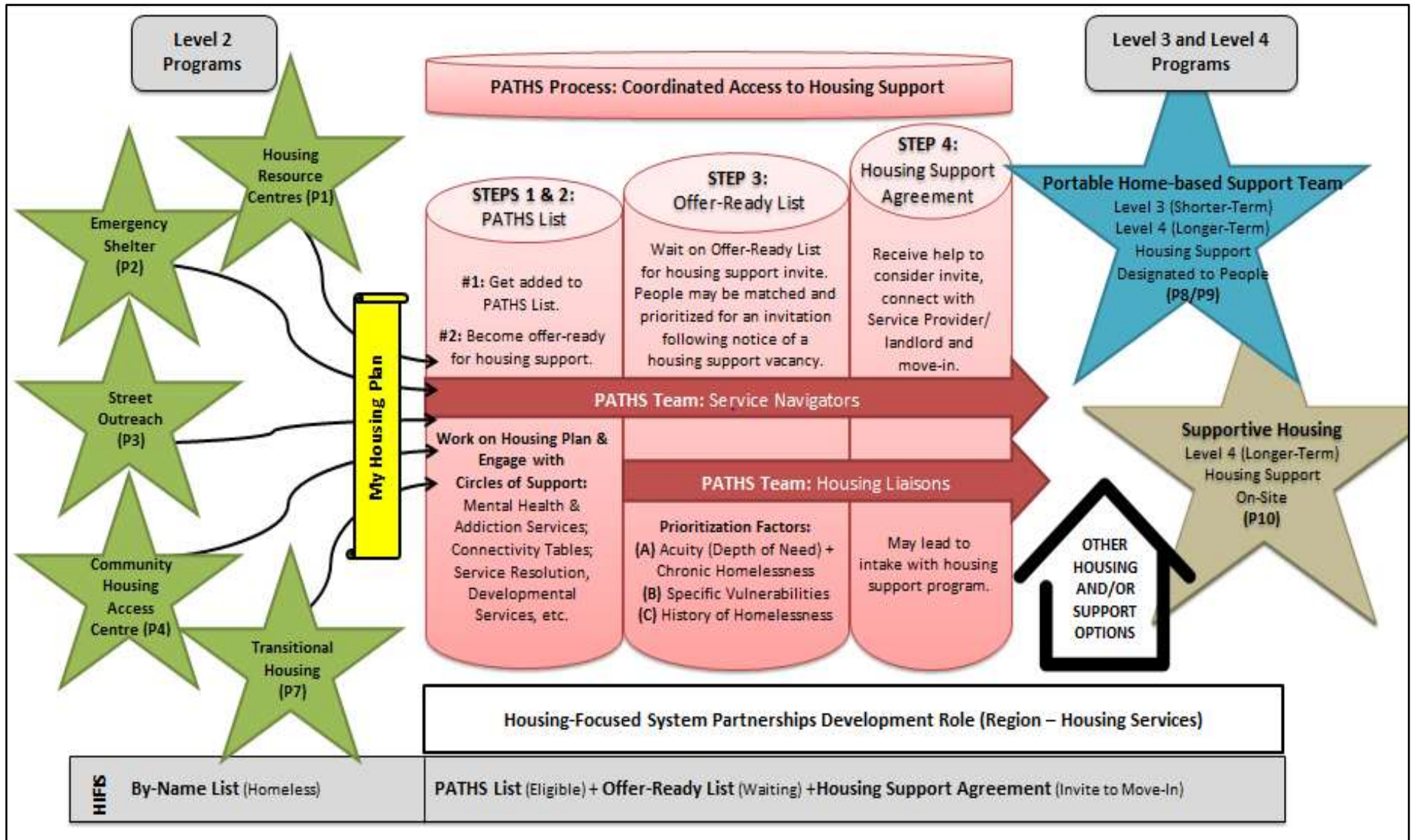
History of Families to Homes (2013 to Present)

The Families in Transition (FIT) program was redesigned in 2013 as part of a new pilot approach to serving families, which was created to response to a rise in the number of families accessing emergency shelter in Waterloo Region. The Pilot marked the start of an intense period of rapid learning and adaptation for the Housing Stability System, particularly with respect to Housing First, progressive engagement and service prioritization, coordinated access, diversion, and alignment of resources along intentional service pathways. It fundamentally changed the way that families accessed programs in Housing Stability System and has been used as a prototype for the broader Housing Stability System redesign also changing the way youth and single adults are supported to find and keep a home.

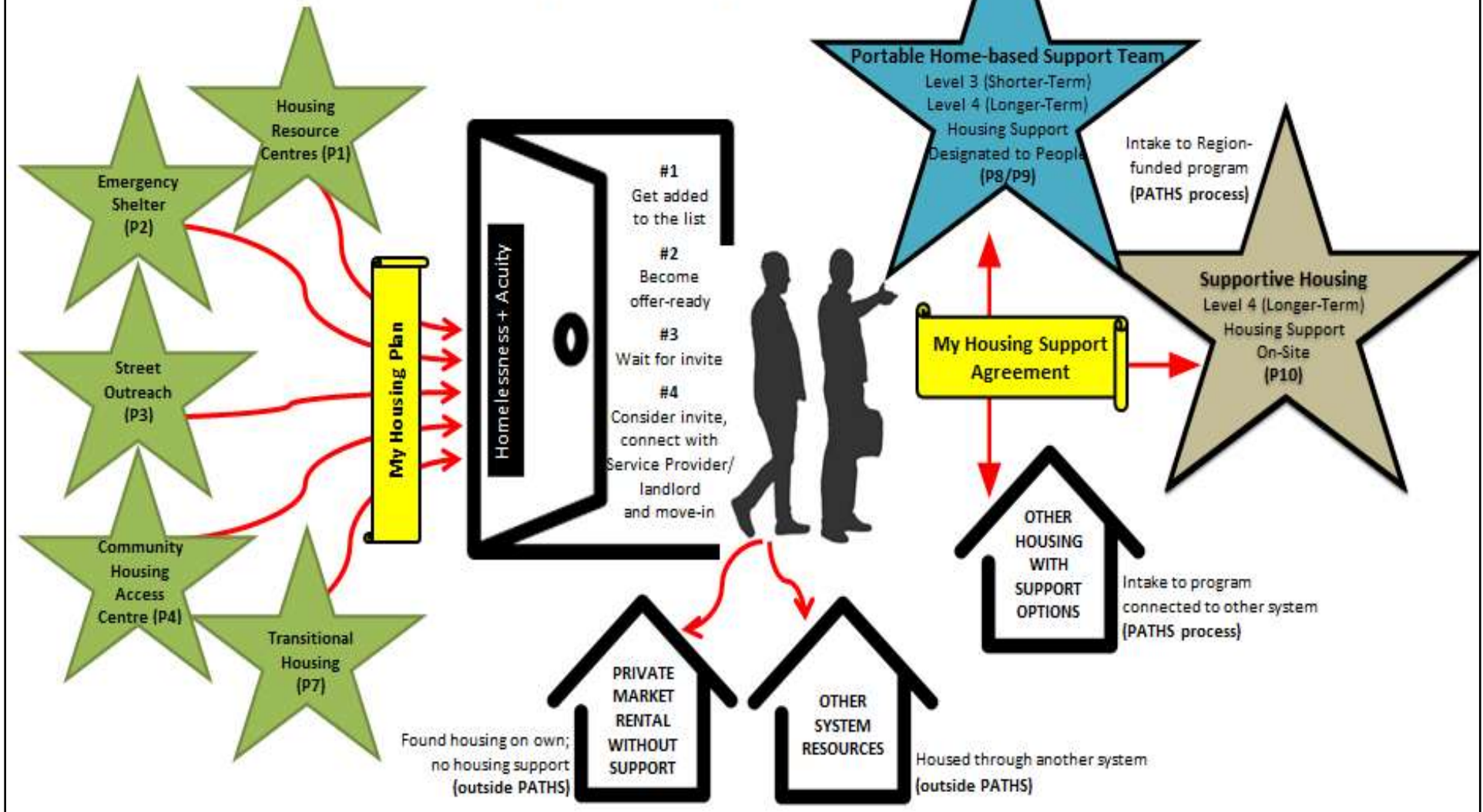
Through the Pilot, families seeking support to resolve their housing crisis accessed the Housing Stability System through one coordinated system. If families were in immediate need of shelter, they received specialized diversion services to retain their current housing or find another safe and appropriate option. If families had no other safe and appropriate place to go, they were admitted to shelter with an individualized Housing Plan that outlined the next steps required to make the stay as brief as possible. In order to stay in emergency shelter, families were expected to be actively engaged in their individualized Housing Plan. Through the Pilot, priority was shifted to diverting families from shelter to other residential options. Diversion was offered as a complement to other housing-based interventions, all within the context of progressive engagement. This was achieved through coordinated access to housing stability resources that were re-aligned to function less as discrete programs and more as intentional family “service pathways”, with the ultimate goal of supporting families to secure permanent housing.

In 2016, a family-specific STEP Home position was added to provide longer-term Portable Home-Based Support for at least one year through a different agency than the Families in Transition program.

Appendix B: PATHS Process: Supporting People with Greater Depth of Need to Find Housing



PATHS Process: Service Pathway for Participants



Appendix C: How SPDAT Informs Progressive Engagement

Level of Engagement	VI-SPDAT Pre-Screen		Full SPDAT Assessment	
	When and Why	Program	When and Why	Program
Level 2: Housing-Focused Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ At intake, if household returns (within timeframe TBD⁸) or intensive diversion effort suggests more support is needed ✓ Informs Housing Plan (focus on shelter diversion) ✓ Informs access to PATHS 	Housing Resource Centres; Emergency Shelter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ At intake, if returning with VI-SPDAT score; confirms and/or deepens understanding of acuity ✓ Informs Housing Plan (focus on shelter diversion) ✓ Informs access to PATHS 	Housing Resource Centres; Emergency Shelter
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ In shelter, if not able or willing to move forward with Housing Plan (after first week or during any Housing Plan Review) ✓ Informs Housing Plan ✓ Informs access to PATHS 	Emergency Shelter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ In shelter, if not able or willing to move forward with Housing Plan (after first week or during any Housing Plan Review) and has VI-SPDAT score; confirms and/or deepens understanding of acuity ✓ Informs Housing Plan ✓ Informs access to PATHS 	Emergency Shelter
Level 3: Shorter-Term Housing Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Informs access to PATHS 	Transitional Housing; Portable Home-Based Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ At intake, if needed, to confirm and/or deepen understanding of VI-SPDAT score ✓ Informs Support Plan at intake/move-in and discharge 	Transitional Housing; Portable Home-Based Support
Level 4: Longer-Term Housing Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Informs access to PATHS 	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Same as Level 3, but at move-in and months 1, 3, 6, 9, 12; then every 6 months thereafter 	Portable Home-Based Support; Supportive Housing

⁸ Protocol for when a second intake should be considered a first intake because of an extended time lapse in-between stays is TBD.

Appendix D: PATHS Process Priority Groups

Category	Level 3: Portable Home-Based Support (Shorter-Term)	Level 4: Portable Home-Based Support (Longer-Term) and Supportive Housing
(A) Acuity and Chronic Homelessness	<p align="center">Medium Acuity</p> <p align="center">Youth: 4-9 (VI-SPDAT); 13-33 (SPDAT) Adults: 4-9 (VI-SPDAT); 13-33 (SPDAT) Families: 4-8 (VI-SPDAT); 20-53 (SPDAT)</p> <p align="center">AND</p> <p align="center">Chronic Homelessness</p>	<p align="center">High Acuity</p> <p align="center">Youth: 10+ (VI-SPDAT); 34+ (SPDAT) Adults: 10+ (VI-SPDAT); 34+ (SPDAT) Families: 9+ (VI-SPDAT); 54+ (SPDAT)</p> <p align="center">AND</p> <p align="center">Chronic Homelessness</p>
(B) Specific Vulnerabilities	<p align="center">Tri-Morbidity</p> <p align="center">Presence of physical health, mental health and substance use issue. Documented in the Wellness domain of the SPDAT.</p>	
	<p align="center">Elevated Risk</p> <p align="center">Involvement in abusive, higher-risk and/or exploitative situations. Documented in the Involvement in Higher Risk and/or Exploitive Situations domain of the SPDAT.</p>	
	<p align="center">Critical Safety List</p> <p align="center">Person is on the Critical Safety List as a result of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having exhausted most sheltering options in community; • Having service restrictions from most or all emergency shelters; and • Being at an elevated risk of death. 	
(C) Housing History	<p align="center">Length of Time Living Without Permanent Housing</p> <p align="center">Length of time since being added to the By-Name List. Unsheltered homelessness and emergency shelter use prioritized over hidden homelessness.</p>	

Definition of Chronic Homelessness: People, often with disabling conditions, who are currently homeless and have been homeless for six months or more in the past year (i.e. have spent more than 180 cumulative nights in a shelter or place not fit for human habitation).

Appendix E: Overview of Levels of Engagement, Housing Help Hubs, and Housing Stability Programs

Housing Help Hubs and Housing Stability Programs are aligned with one of four levels of engagement based on a number of factors, as described below. See also **Appendix G: Progressive Engagement Flowchart**.

Notes:

- **Level 2: Housing Help** = Housing Resource Centres, Emergency Shelter, Street Outreach
- **Level 3 and Level 4: Housing Support Coordination** = Transitional Housing, Portable Home-Based Support, Supportive Housing

1. **Access:** How are housing resources offered?

- Are they available on a drop-in or “first come, first served” basis? (Level 2 – Housing Help)
- Or is there a waiting list? (Level 2 – Community Housing; Level 3 and Level 4 – Housing Support Coordination)
 - If so, are resources offered based on:
 - When people apply? (Level 2 – Community Housing)
 - Other factors like depth of need? (Level 3 and Level 4 – Housing Support Coordination)

2. **Type of Support:** Are resources primarily...

- Self-directed? (Level 1 – Renter’s Toolkit and Housing Help Hubs)
- Offered through some staff support? (Level 2 – Housing Help; Level 3 and Level 4 – Housing Support Coordination)
- Housing support focused primarily on a Housing Plan? (Level 2 – Housing Help)
- Housing Support Coordination through a Support Plan? (Level 3 and Level 4 – Housing Support Coordination)

3. **Location:** Are resources primarily...

- Offered on-line? (Level 1 – Renter’s Toolkit)
- Designated support to the individual or family and “portable” so that it can follow people out in the community? (Level 2 – Street Outreach; Level 3 and Level 4 – Portable Home-Based Support)
- Designated support to a unit, building, or neighbourhood and/or available at fixed sites? (Level 2 – Housing Resource Centres or Emergency Shelters; Level 3 – Transitional Housing; Level 4 – Supportive Housing)

4. **Intensity of Support:** Are there limits to the support in terms of number of hours, frequency or number of contacts, or length of time that it is available? (Varies by housing support program, with limits informed by individualized Service Plan.)

Reasons for service and resources available through Housing Help Hubs and Housing Stability Programs.

Housing Resource	Primary Reasons for Service	Description
Level 1: Self-Directed Housing Resources		
Housing Help Hubs On-Line & Drop-In Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Need housing information ✓ Able, willing and/or prefer to self-resolve housing issue(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Access Renter’s Toolkit on-line. ✓ Universal access to consistent and current housing information 24/7. ✓ Co-located with drop-ins or other programs in the community; access will vary by site.
Level 2: Housing-Focused Services		
(#1) Housing Resource Centres Housing Help – Drop-In & Phone Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Need or prefer to receive support ✓ Safe and unlikely to need a place to stay in the next few days: need support to stay housed or find new housing ✓ Experiencing homelessness or engaged in eviction process or other housing situation where move-out is imminent: need support to avoid shelter stay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ See the HSS Pocket Card for access information. ✓ On-site and phone support to develop and implement a Housing Plan (focus: prevention, diversion and/or finding new housing), including referrals to other Housing Stability Programs or community systems. ✓ Intensity of support varies (hours, contacts, duration). ✓ Access to limited grants or loans through Rent Fund. ✓ Families: Access to Flex Fund and “Urgent Status”.
(#2) Emergency Shelter Housing Help – On-Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ No other safe and appropriate place to stay ✓ Engaged in Housing Plan or Critical Safety Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ See the HSS Pocket Card for access information. ✓ At point of inquiry, support people to develop a Housing Plan (focus: shelter diversion). ✓ Safe, temporary place to stay during housing search. ✓ Resources to meet basic needs (stay-related services). ✓ On-site housing search support during stay to develop and implement a Housing Plan (focus: finding new housing); daily intentional housing conversations and Housing Plan Reviews.
(#3) Street Outreach Housing Help – Drop-In & Mobile Access (linking and engagement focus)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Street-involved ✓ Need greater flexibility in the way programs are offered ✓ May be unhoused and more vulnerable (greater depth of need and more housing barriers); often underserved and waiting for more housing support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ See the HSS Pocket Card for access information. ✓ Mobile service not tied to a location or time; contact takes place in community (e.g., public spaces, outdoors, places where people gather/sleep) – some flexibility to respond to emerging needs (e.g., crisis support, accompaniment). ✓ Drop-ins located at community sites at certain times with access to various resources (e.g., washrooms, showers, laundry facilities) or specific services (e.g., replace ID).

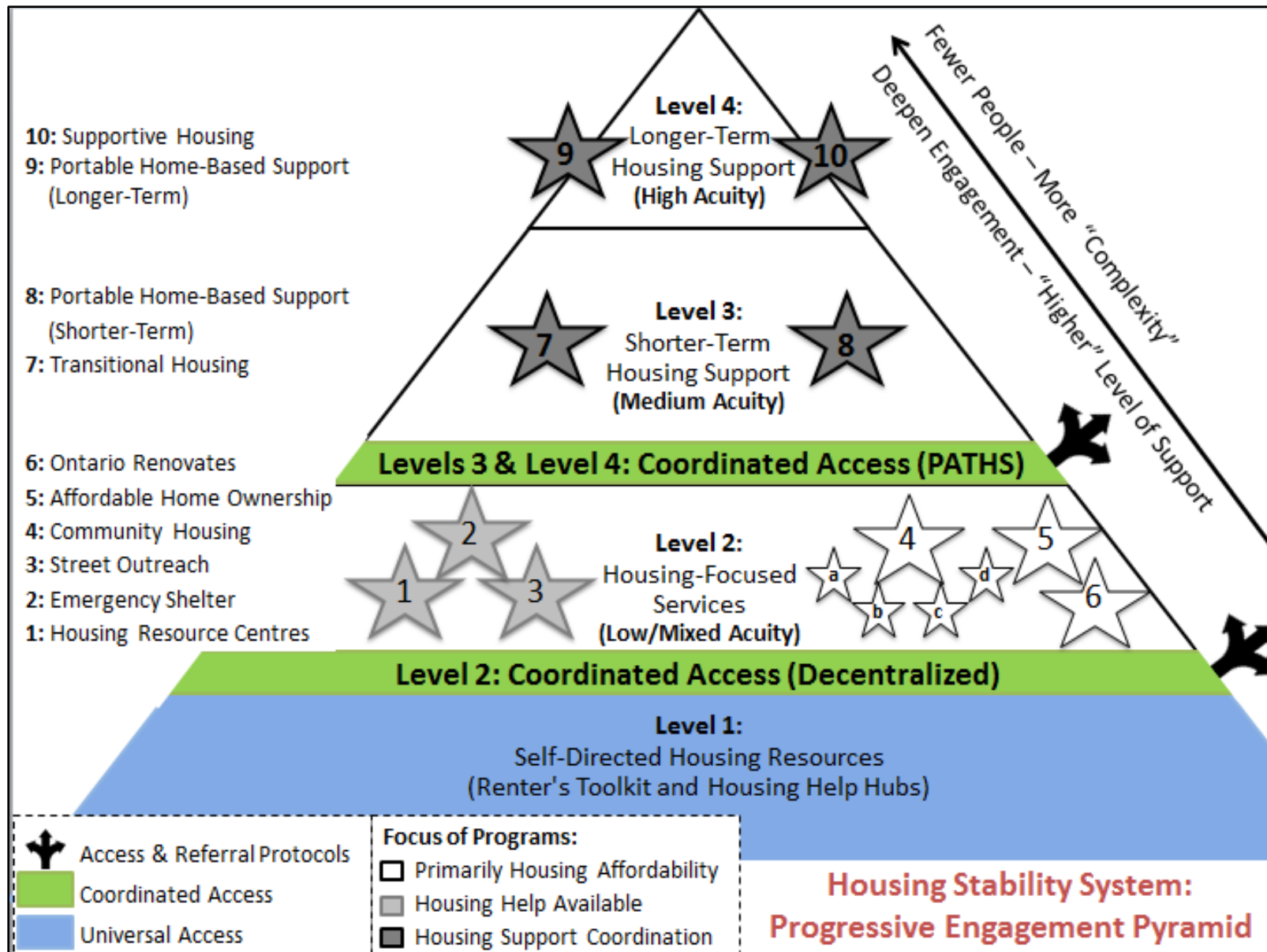
Reasons for service and resources available through Housing Help Hubs and Housing Stability Programs (continued).

Housing Resource	Primary Reasons for Service	Description
<p>(#4) Community Housing Rent Assistance – Fixed-Site & Portable</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Require financial assistance – have low to moderate income ✓ Date of application informs when housing is offered (modified chronological waiting list) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ See the Access Centres for application information. ✓ Rent assistance options that are either fixed-site (with Housing Providers, Waterloo Region Housing or Private Market Landlords) or portable (rent subsidies) ✓ Each fixed-site option has a mix of rent geared-to-income (RGI) and/or below average market rent (BAMR) units. ✓ Portable option refers to rent subsidies that can be used to make housing more affordable wherever tenants choose to live in the community.
<p>(#5) Affordable Home Ownership Funds for Homeowners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Require financial assistance – have low to moderate income 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Access through Region – Housing Services. ✓ Funds to support the transition to home ownership
<p>(#6) Ontario Renovates Funds for Property Owners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Require financial assistance – have low to moderate income 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Access through Region – Housing Services. ✓ Funds for repairs, renovations and accessibility
<p>Level 3: Shorter-Term Housing Support</p>		
<p>(#7) Transitional Housing Housing Support Coordination – On-Site & Temporary (less than a year)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Mixed acuity with housing barriers related to transitional circumstances ✓ Need more support with Housing Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Marillac Place is the only Region-funded program (for youth who are pregnant, parenting or trying to regain custody of a young child; youth can access the program by phoning or dropping by). ✓ On-site housing search support and Housing Support Coordination during stay, tailored to specific transitional circumstances ✓ Support to develop a Housing Plan and Support Plan (focus: reducing acuity and transitioning to permanent housing) ✓ Residents not covered under the <i>Residential Tenancies Act</i>
<p>(#8) Portable Home-Based Support Housing Support Coordination – Shorter-Term (rental housing in community)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Medium acuity and experiencing homelessness; additional factors considered during prioritization ✓ Need more support with Housing Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Access through the PATHS process. ✓ Housing Support Coordination once housed; generally 3-6 months ✓ Support to develop a Support Plan (focus: reducing acuity and transitioning from support, sometimes by brokering services) ✓ People transition after moving through all stages of Housing Support Coordination Standards ✓ 1:20 staff to household ratio

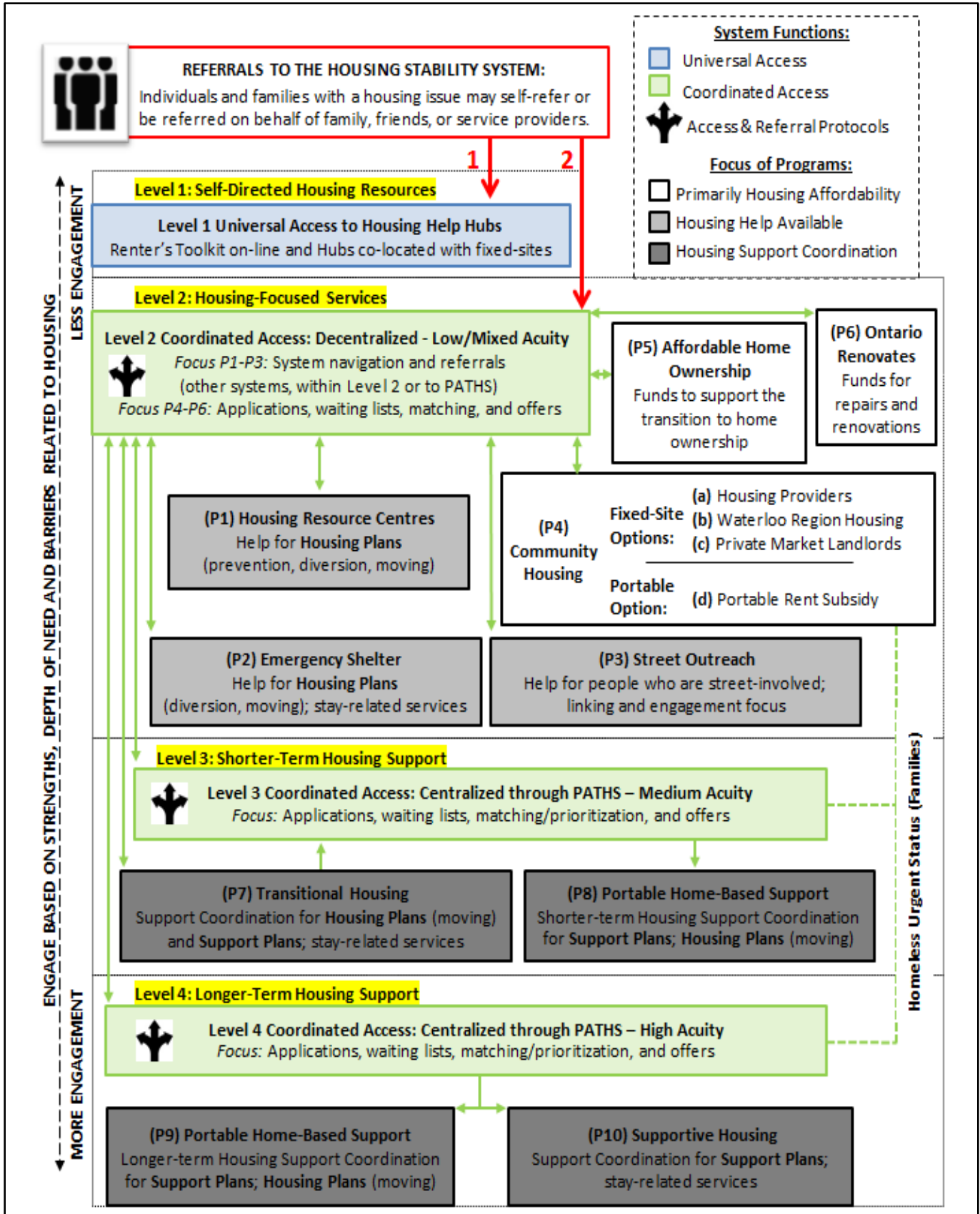
Reasons for service and resources available through Housing Help Hubs and Housing Stability Programs (continued).

Housing Resource	Primary Reasons for Service	Description
Level 4: Longer-Term Housing Support		
<p>(#9) Portable Home-Based Support Housing Support Coordination – Longer-Term (rental housing in community)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ High acuity and experiencing homelessness; additional factors considered during prioritization ✓ Need for more support to stay housed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Access through the PATHS process. ✓ Housing Support Coordination once housed; generally 12-18 months ✓ Support to develop a Support Plan (focus: reducing acuity and transitioning from support, sometimes by brokering other services) ✓ People transition after moving through all stages of Housing Support Coordination Standards ✓ 1:10 staff to household ratio
<p>(#10) Supportive Housing Housing Support Coordination – On-Site (permanent housing)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Access through the PATHS process. ✓ On-site Housing Support Coordination ✓ Support to develop a Support Plan (focus: reducing acuity and transitioning from support, where possible) ✓ People transition from housing support after moving through all stages of Housing Support Coordination Standards (as long as it takes) ✓ Tenants are protected under the Residential Tenancies Act ✓ 1:20 staff to household ratio

Appendix F: Progressive Engagement Pyramid (Part 1)



Appendix G: Progressive Engagement Flowchart (Part 2)



Appendix H: HBS Team Training and/or Certification

- Assertive engagement and progressive engagement;
- Brain injury, and associated symptoms and behaviours;
- Case management/support planning;
- CPR "A" (if working with adults) and/or CPR "C" (if working with youth and children);
- Crisis planning;
- Harm reduction, safe needle clean-ups and Naloxone;
- Hoarding;
- Housing First;
- Housing Stability System orientation (e.g., Housing Stability System 101, Understanding Community Housing);
- Mental health and addictions, and associated symptoms and behaviours;
- Motivational interviewing;
- Non-Violent Crisis Intervention (NVC);
- Recovery model;
- Relapse prevention;
- Stages of change;
- Standard First Aid;
- Suicide prevention;
- Trauma-informed support;
- Use of SPDAT to develop and implement individualized Support Plans;
- VI-SPDAT and Full SPDAT; and
- Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS).