



Rainy River District
Social Services
Administration Board

10 - YEAR HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS PLAN

2014 - 2024

Prepared by

OrgCode Consulting Inc.

for

Rainy River District



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Introduction

The *Housing Services Act* came into force in 2011, replacing the *Social Housing Reform Act* of 2000. Amongst the changes introduced by the new legislation was a requirement for Service Managers to develop 10-year housing and homelessness plans, and to have these plans in place by January 1, 2014. The mandated plans were required to have a number of components:

Requirements
An assessment of current and future housing needs within the service manager’s service area
Objectives and targets relating to housing needs
A description of the measures proposed to meet the objectives and targets
A description of how progress towards meeting the objectives and targets will be measured
Is focused on achieving positive outcomes for individuals and families
Addresses the housing needs of individuals and families in order to help address other challenges they face
Has a role for non-profit corporations and non-profit housing co-operatives
Has a role for the private market in meeting housing needs
Provides for partnerships among governments and others in the community
Treats individuals and families with respect and dignity
Is co-ordinated with other community services
Is relevant to local circumstances
Allows for a range of housing options to meet a broad range of needs
Ensures appropriate accountability for public funding
Supports economic prosperity
Is delivered in a manner that promotes environmental sustainability and energy conservation

As Service Manager for the Rainy River District, the Rainy River District Social Services Administration Board (DSSAB) is tasked by the Housing Services Act to develop a 10-year plan. Governed by a board of 13 members drawn from local municipalities and unorganized areas, the DSSABs responsibilities range from delivering Ontario Works and social housing to managing child care services and land ambulance service. In mid-2013, the Rainy River DSSAB retained OrgCode Consulting to lead the development of the plan.

The Rainy River District 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan is the culmination of that effort, and is intended to clarify the District’s housing needs now and into the future. The Plan provides a comprehensive overview of the current service system and the demands it faces. Further, the Plan draws on a wide range of existing research to propose evidenced-based adaptations to the system that will enhance service delivery.

In addition to provincial requirements, the 10-Year Plan has been developed in the context of the Rainy River DSSABs identified values and mission:

Vision:

To provide quality, people centered services in an efficient, affordable, and sustainable manner.

Mission:

To meet needs by providing services with caring, integrity, and accountability.

Values:

Being proactive, adaptive and responsive;
Coordinated and integrated services;
Effective and efficient service delivery;
Equitable access to services;
The long term health and wellness of residents;
Effective leadership, advocacy, and communication;
Partnerships in the community;
Satisfied employees;
Fiscal sustainability, accountability, and transparency.

Goals and Objectives of the Rainy River DSSAB

Goal 1: To meet service needs and deliver mandated responsibilities.

1. Address housing and homeless needs.
2. Strengthen Ontario Works services.
3. Address children's services needs.
4. Delivery quality land ambulance services.
5. Improve people centered services.

Goal 2: To be a financially sustainable, accountable, and transparent organization.

1. Improve financial sustainability.

Goal 3: To advocate for improvement of senior government policies and funding to support RRDSSAB in achieving its goals.

1. Improve policy and funding through advocacy.

Goal 4: To ensure RRDSSAB's information technology supports the organization in achieving its goals.

1. Improve information technology.

Goal 5: To increase public awareness and support and build strong community partnerships.

1. Improve communications with the public and community partners.
2. Build stronger relationships with community partners.

Housing and Homelessness Plans

The province has adopted a policy of ending homelessness through a Housing First approach. Recognizing that the only known cure for homelessness is housing, Housing First works by applying the cure as quickly as possible. Housing First therefore entails helping people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to quickly access housing, and to be supported in their housing success through the provision of supports. The core aspect of Housing First is a focus on permanent and stable housing. As such, supports must be in place for an extended period of time and must address a range of housing barriers, including mental health, addiction and accessibility.

Although Housing First is a more intensive model of service delivery, it is not appropriate for all clients. In fact, only clients with the highest levels of acuity will require this type of intervention, and most others will achieve housing stability with much lower levels of assistance. Correctly identifying which clients require what level of service through a coordinated assessment tool is a critical function of a housing and homelessness system.

The Rainy River District 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan successfully achieves the prescribed requirements:

Requirement	How the requirement is met
✓ An assessment of current and future housing needs within the service manager's service area	Pages 7-24, 24-42
✓ Objectives and targets relating to housing needs	Pages 43-48
✓ A description of the measures proposed to meet the objectives and targets	Pages 43-48, 49-52
✓ A description of how progress towards meeting the objectives and targets will be measured	Pages 49-54, 77
✓ Is focused on achieving positive outcomes for individuals and families	Pages 43-48
✓ Addresses the housing needs of individuals and families in order to help address other challenges they face	Pages 25-42, 43-48
✓ Has a role for non-profit corporations and non-profit housing co-operatives	Pages 27, 45-46
✓ Has a role for the private market in meeting housing needs	Pages 45-46, 46
✓ Provides for partnerships among governments and others in the community	Pages 43-45
✓ Treats individuals and families with respect and dignity	Pages 43-48
✓ Is co-ordinated with other community services	Pages 43-48, 49-52, 80
✓ Is relevant to local circumstances	Pages 25-42
✓ Allows for a range of housing options to meet a broad range of needs	Page 46
✓ Ensures appropriate accountability for public funding	Pages 40-41, 43-45, 77
✓ Supports economic prosperity	Pages 28-31, 51
✓ Is delivered in a manner that promotes environmental sustainability and energy conservation	Page 45

Development of This Plan

Several principles underpin the development of this plan. First, the Plan looks for tangible outcomes over aspirational goals. Second, the Plan relies on the best available evidence and information from the community consultations, but does not treat anecdotes as evidence. Third, the Plan makes use of research concerning housing

and homelessness to inform the analysis and recommendations. Finally, the Plan is designed to meet the unique needs of Rainy River District, and attempts to maximize existing community assets. The process of creating this plan involved substantial data analysis and community consultations.

Community Consultations

Three consultation sessions were held in Rainy River District, one each in the Town of Rainy River, Atikokan and Fort Frances. Approximately 70 people in total attended these sessions. In addition, interviews were held with community members ranging from service providers to advocacy groups. A community survey was made available for the duration of the Plan's development, the results of which can be found in Appendix A. Finally, a survey was made available to community members with lived experience of homelessness or housing instability. The results of this survey can be found in Appendix I.

Data Analysis

Data came from multiple sources, including previous Census counts, service provider data (where available), and outside research on housing and homelessness issues. Unfortunately, two key data sources were not available in the development of this plan. The first, Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) housing and rental market data, provides rental and ownership costs for the communities it covers, along with housing start data. CMHC does not collect data for communities under 10,000 people. The second source is the Census Long Form, which in prior years provided housing cost, income sources, and low-income rates. The National Household Survey (NHS) that replaced the long form is not equivalent in detail or data collection, and is particularly problematic for smaller communities where the non-response rate can be high. In Rainy River District the non-response rate for the 2011 NHS is 32.9 percent. Despite these limitations, the NHS remains the only available source of information on these data points.

The Plan takes a broad view of the opportunities and challenges in Rainy River District. There are some limits to this approach. Although the Rainy River DSSAB plays a substantial role in the provision of housing and homelessness services, there are priorities identified in this plan that are beyond the direct control of the DSSAB. Increasing the amount of assisted living for seniors, for example, entails the provision of services from organizations other than the DSSAB. Consequently, in order for this plan to be implemented successfully, the goals and targets must necessarily be actions that the Rainy River DSSAB has the ability to perform. Multi-sectorial steering committees are common in the implementation of housing and homeless plans, and this will provide another avenue for implementation.

Key Findings

The population of Rainy River District is getting smaller as it gets older, with the number of people under 60 declining over the last ten years. The population as a whole has steadily decreased, and will continue to do so;

The aging population is expanding the demand for assisted living, as seniors have increasing accessibility and service needs that cannot be met by their current housing;

Low-income residents continue to struggle to afford housing, with 30.7% of renters paying more than a third of their monthly income on housing. In comparison, only 9.2% of owner households pay this much;

The housing stock is aging, and mostly made up single detached units. In fact, single detached houses make up two-thirds of Rainy River District's housing stock;

There are relatively few apartment and rental units, and those that do exist are concentrated in just a few communities;

Homeless youth are a population that is underserved, with a lack of emergency shelter or affordable housing options;

Rainy River District has many of the elements it needs to deliver an effective housing and homelessness system, but coordination and linking these elements is still needed. A standard pre-screen and assessment process will greatly contribute to housing success by directing the right client to the right service at the right time;

The District must restructure its homelessness services, with the ultimate goal of providing Housing First and Rapid Re-Housing to those who are homeless, and diversion and prevention to those who are at risk.

Moving Forward

The Plan outlines seven strategic targets and 19 objectives:

Strategic Target 1: Improved system access and prioritization

Objectives:

- Build on existing links between community partners at the executive level;
- Use coordinated intake and assessment to direct clients to the services they need;
- Make decisions that are informed by local data by improving information gathering and sharing;
- Maximize the impact of spending resources in order to end homelessness;

Strategic Target 2: Maximization of existing housing stock

Objectives:

- Maintain existing social housing stock through planned renovations and rehabilitations;
- Use existing social housing stock in innovative ways to meet community needs;
- Enhance the capacity of the non-profit housing sector.

Strategic Target 3: Close housing gaps through new development and redevelopment

Objectives:

- Expand the range of emergency shelter options for youth;
- Expand the diversity in Rainy River District's housing stock, both in terms of housing type and tenure;
- Act as a local champion for the development of innovative funding mechanisms.

Strategic Target 4: Meeting the Current and Future Needs of Seniors and Others with Accessibility Needs

Objectives:

- Expand the range of assisted living options;
- Maximize the impact of capital funding resources by helping people with accessibility needs stay in their homes;
- Provide services in an accessible manner.

Strategic Target 5: Enhancement of Advocacy and Education

Objectives:

- Advocate for better funding commitments from the province, both individually and in concert with other community and regional partners;
- Emphasize public education and communication.

Strategic Target 6: Meet the Needs of Aboriginal People Living Off Reserve

Objectives:

- Continue to include First Nations organizations in the planning of housing and homelessness services;
- Ensure Aboriginal people living off reserve have equal access to housing.

Strategic Target 7: Meet the Needs of Victims of Domestic Violence

Objectives:

- Expand the range of emergency shelter options for female victims of domestic violence in the west end of the District;
- Help victims of domestic violence find stable housing after leaving emergency shelter.

All of the options described in this report support the goal of ending homelessness in Rainy River District. Although residents may find themselves in a housing crisis for a variety of reasons—loss of income, domestic violence, inability to care for oneself independently—the community is prepared to quickly respond to ensure access to permanent, stable housing with the supports they need to maintain housing stability.

1. Rainy River District: Demographic, housing and socioeconomic context

As a small and sparsely populated community, Rainy River District contends with a range of socioeconomic and demographic realities that are, unfortunately, not always positive. The array of challenges facing the District will influence the scope of its housing needs over the next ten years. These same challenges will also shape the range of options available to meet those needs.

Demographic Changes

Population

The population of Rainy River District shrank 7.9 percent between 2001 and 2011. When considering just the communities that make up the Rainy River DSSAB Service Area, the decrease amounts to negative 11.3 percent. As Table 1 indicates, population decline is occurring in all of the local communities. In this table and the tables below, a distinction has been made between Rainy River District and Rainy River Service Area. The former is the Census division that includes the 10 local municipalities and the local First Nation communities. As the Rainy River DSSAB is responsible for the 10 municipalities only, the Service Area includes these municipalities with the First Nation communities removed.

Table 1: Population Changes from 2001-2011, Rainy River District and Service Area

	Population in 2011	Population in 2006	Population in 2001	2001-2011 Population Change	2006-2011 Population Change
Ontario	12,851,821	12,160,282	11,410,046	12.6%	5.7%
Rainy River District	20,370	21,564	22,109	-7.9%	-5.5%
Rainy River Service Area	17,918	19,357	20,193	-11.3%	-7.4%
Fort Frances	7,952	8,103	8,315	-4.4%	-1.9%
Rainy River T	842	909	981	-14.2%	-7.4%
Alberton	864	958	956	-9.6%	-9.8%
Atikokan	2,787	3,293	3,632	-23.3%	-15.4%
Chapple	741	856	910	-18.6%	-13.4%
Dawson	563	620	613	-8.2%	-9.2%
Emo	1,252	1,305	1,331	-5.9%	-4.1%
La Vallee	988	1,067	1,073	-7.9%	-7.4%
Lake of the Woods	296	323	330	-10.3%	-8.4%
Morley	474	492	447	6.0%	-3.7%
RR Unorg.	1,159	1,431	1,605	-27.8%	-19.0%

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2001, 2006, 2011.

Age Cohorts

Population expansion can come from external migration or internal family formation. In the latter case, there is little indication that Rainy River District will reverse its current trend towards a smaller population. In fact, one of the most pointed trends to emerge from the last ten years is a substantial aging of the District's population away

from the usual family formation cohorts.

As Table 2 illustrates, the median age of the population has increased considerably since the 2001 Census, and in some communities now sits at or over 50 years old.

Table 2: Median Age of the Population, Rainy River District and Service Area

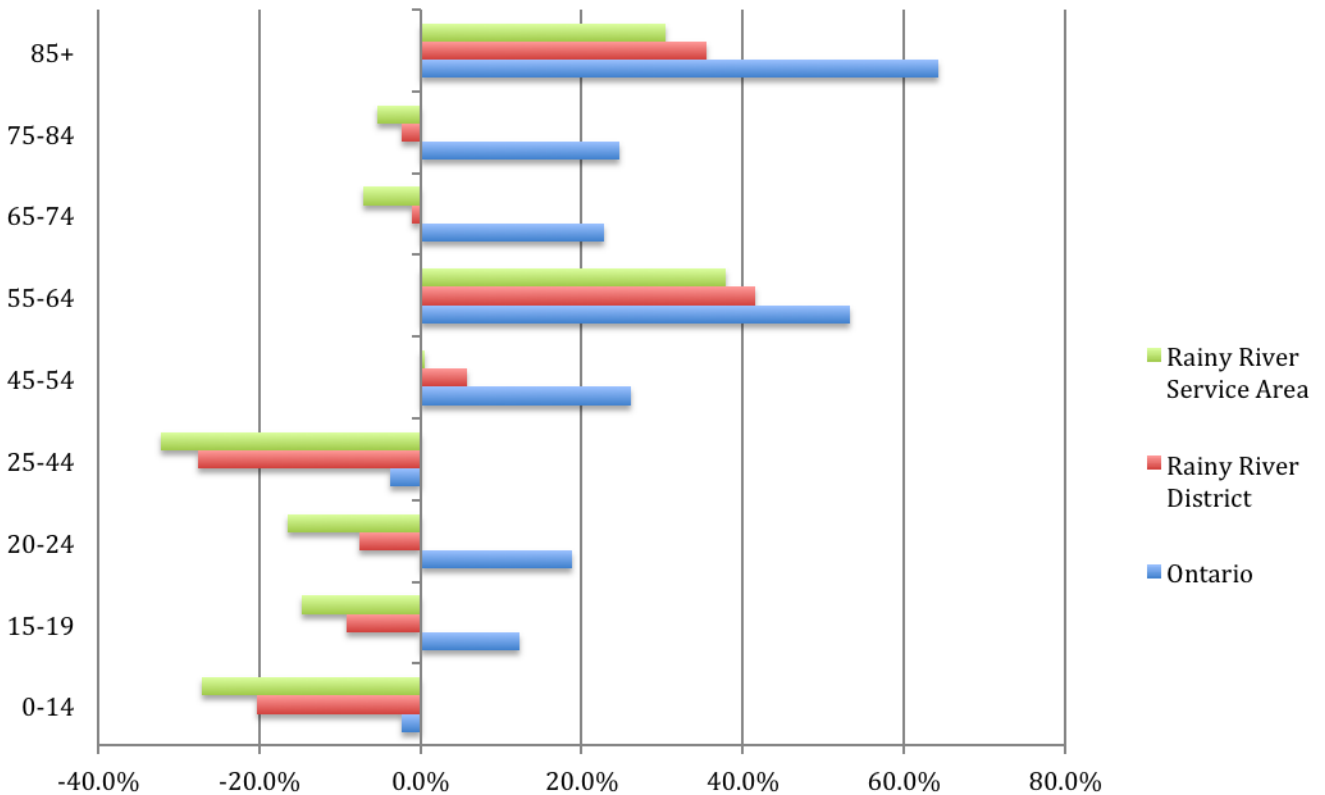
	2011 Median Age	2006 Median Age	2001 Median Age
Ontario	40.4	39	37.2
Rainy River District	43.2	41	38.2
Rainy River Service Area	45.1	42.8	39.0
Fort Frances	44	42.3	40.2
Rainy River T	50.8	47.8	42.4
Alberton	41.1	41.6	37.9
Atikokan	48.5	43	39.2
Chapple	38.4	35.7	33.1
Dawson	47.8	44.2	42.6
Emo	41.4	39.9	36.3
La Vallee	40.9	39.4	36.9
Morley	45.5	39.6	32.7
Rainy River Unorganized	52.9	47.3	44.1
Lake of the Woods ¹	N/A	49.5	43.8

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2001, 2006, 2011.

In both Rainy River District and Service Area, the only age cohorts to increase from 2001 through 2011 were those comprising people aged 45 to 54, 55 to 64 and 85 or older. As Chart 1 shows, the number of persons entering or in retirement age (55 to 64) grew by 41 percent in the District, and 38 percent in the Service Area. Although the population experienced a slight decline in those aged 65 to 84, the number of residents 85 and older grew substantially. On the other end of the spectrum, both the District and Service Area witnessed a steep decline in the number of residents in the prime family formation stage of 25 to 44. The decline of the younger age cohorts would indicate that population growth through internal replacement will not be forthcoming. Barring an influx of new residents from outside the area, these numbers suggest that population decline will continue throughout the ten-year period.

¹Detailed 2011 Census data is unavailable for Lake of the Woods due to a forest fire at the time of enumeration.

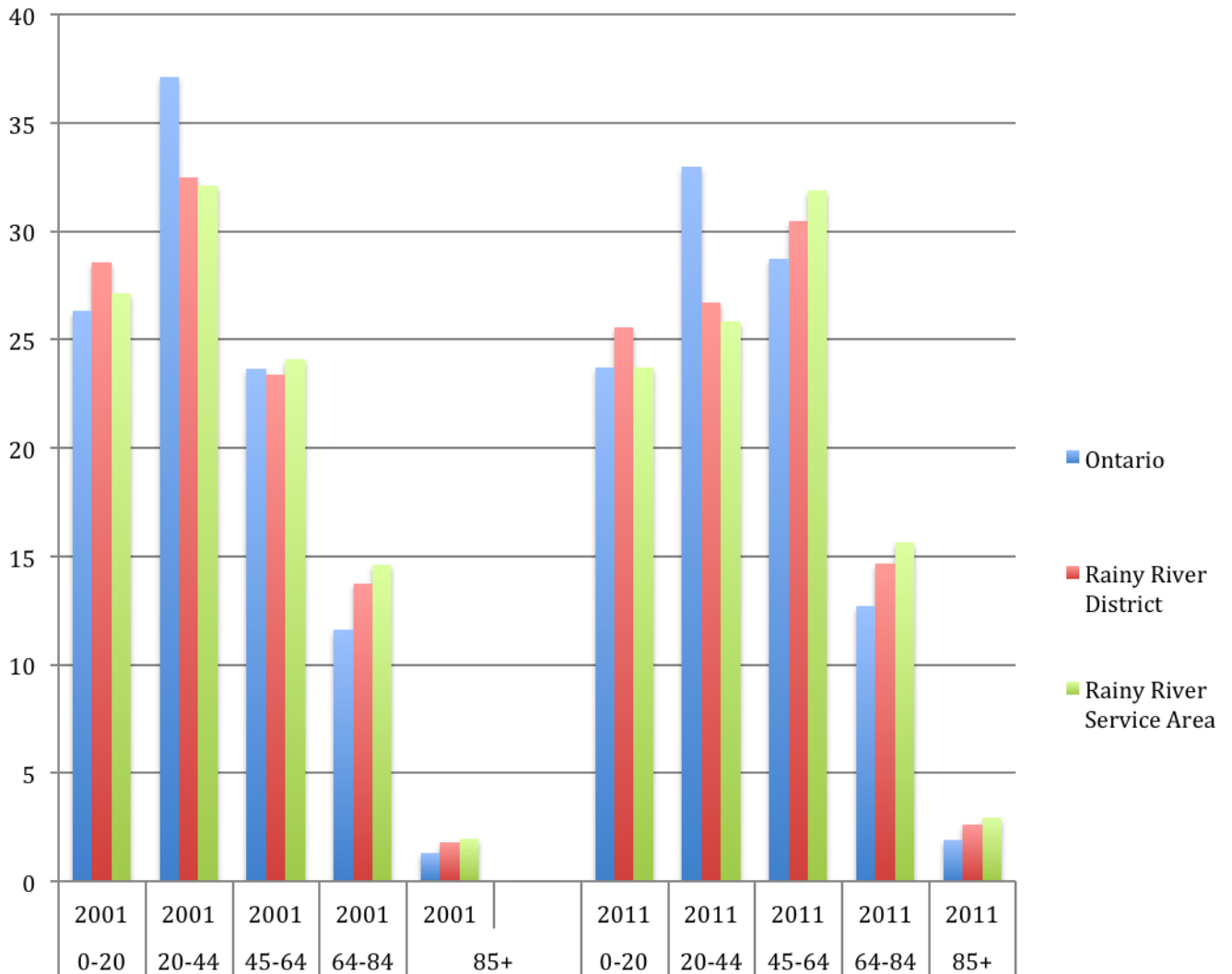
Chart 1: Percentage Increase or Decrease in Age Cohorts, 2001-2011



Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2001, 2011.

Another way to express these changes is to observe how much of the population is made up of particular age cohorts. Chart 2 illustrates this below. To simplify this visually, the nine age cohorts used above have been consolidated to five. Overall, the under-twenty population shrank from 27 percent of the Service Area’s population to 24 percent, while the 20 to 44 age group dropped from 32 percent to just 26 percent. The largest increase came from the 45 to 64 cohort, surging a full eight percentage points in the Service Area from 2001 through 2011. Chart 2 also indicates that although the 85 and over age group is amongst the fastest growing, it remains a very small percentage of the total population. In 2011, this group accounted for just three percent of the total population in both the District and Service Area.

Chart 2: Age Cohorts as a Percentage of the Population, 2001 and 2011



Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2001, 2011.

Examining the over-65 population in more detail yields some important information. Residents 65-plus who are not living in a family are, most frequently, living alone. As Table 3 shows, a third of seniors live by themselves, and most of these seniors are female. This living arrangement is so prevalent that seniors make up nearly half of all residents who live alone in Rainy River District.

Table 3: Percentage of Seniors who Live Alone, by Community and Sex

	% of seniors who live alone	% who are male	% who are female
Ontario	24	28	72
Rainy River District	33	31	69
Rainy River Service Area	33	31	71
Fort Frances	39	24	77
Rainy River T	41	35	71
Alberton	18	67	33
Atikokan	33	29	71
Chapple	18	50	50
Dawson	25	40	60
Emo	25	40	60
La Vallee	26	50	50
Morley ²	31	40	80
RR Unorganized	19	56	44

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2011.

Family Formation

Much of the current family formation in Rainy River District is occurring outside of the ‘traditional’ arrangement of a married couple. As Table 4 shows, married couple families declined over the years between 2001 and 2011, while the number of ‘non-traditional’ families increased. In this respect Rainy River District tracks the broader societal trends occurring at the provincial level.

Table 4: Changes in Family Formations, 2001-2011

	Married Couple families	Common law families	Female lone parent	Male lone parent
Ontario	-578095	96130	275640	33315
Rainy River District	-2180	150	80	20
Rainy River Service Area	-1860	75	165	15
Fort Frances	-825	65	-20	35
Rainy River T	-115	15	-10	-5
Alberton	-40	20	35	5
Atikokan	-440	-15	30	-25
Chapple	-85	-10	-5	10
Dawson	-45	-15	0	-5
Emo	-90	15	45	0
La Vallee	-55	5	35	5
Morley ²	10	5	25	0
RR Unorganized	-175	-10	30	-5

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2001, 2011.

² Error appears in original Census data.

The growth in common law and lone parent families will influence housing demand in the years ahead. For instance, Census data indicates that common law families are slightly more likely than married couples to have children at home. On the other hand, married and common law couples that have children display far more variety in the size of their families; lone parent families predominantly have just one child (Table 5). Overall, Rainy River District is following the general trend towards smaller family sizes (Table 6).

Table 5: Percentage of Family types with One Child, 2011

	Married couples with 1 child	Common law couples with 1 child	Female lone parents with 1 child	Male lone parent with 1 child
Ontario	36.7	48.6	58.0	65.9
Rainy River District	37.7	35.8	57.2	67.3
Rainy River Service Area	38.0	38.5	59.3	74.3

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2011.

Table 6: Average Family Size, 2006 and 2011

	2011	2006
Ontario	3.0	3.0
Rainy River District	2.9	3.0
Rainy River Service Area	2.9	3.0
Fort Frances	2.8	2.8
Rainy River T	2.8	2.8
Alberton	2.9	3.0
Atikokan	2.7	2.8
Chapple	3.1	3.4
Dawson	3.0	3.0
Emo	3.1	3.2
La Vallee	3.1	3.2
Morley	3.1	3.4
RR Unorganized	2.6	2.8
Lake of the Woods	n/a	2.9

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2011.

Housing

Diversity in Housing Stock

Housing in Rainy River District is largely composed of single detached houses. The few apartment buildings that do exist are concentrated in the larger communities, with scarce other housing forms available. As a percentage of the total stock, single detached houses range from a low of 78 percent in Fort Frances to almost 100 percent in the smaller towns (Table 7).

Table 7: Housing Stock Comparison, Rainy River District and Ontario

	Ontario	Rainy River District
Single-detached house	56%	86%
Apartment; building that has five or more storeys	16%	0%
Semi-detached house	6%	1%
Row house	8%	2%
Apartment; duplex	3%	1%
Apartment; building that has fewer than five storeys	10%	8%
Other single-attached house	0%	0%
Movable dwelling	0%	2%
Other dwelling	28%	13%

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2011.

A similar picture emerges in regards to tenure, as most of the housing market in Rainy River District is ownership based. Although some of the larger towns are equal to the provincial average in terms of ratio of ownership to rental, rental units are largely unavailable in the smaller communities (Table 8).

Table 8: Housing Tenure in Rainy River District, 2006

	Number of owned dwellings	Number of rented dwellings	Ownership, % of Total	Rented, % of Total
Ontario	3,235,495	1,312,290	71	29
Rainy River District	6,395	1,750	79	21
Rainy River Service Area	6,220	1,695	79	21
Fort Frances	2,440	1,000	71	29
Rainy River T	290	120	71	29
Alberton	335	10	97	3
Atikokan	1,175	240	83	17
Chapple	270	30	90	10
Dawson	200	45	82	18
Emo	375	150	71	29
La Vallee	345	20	95	5
Lake of the Woods	120	10	92	8
Morley	165	15	92	8
RR Unorganized	505	55	90	10

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2006.

Evolution of Rainy River’s Housing Stock

In keeping with the District’s population decline, there has been a decrease in the number of private dwellings occupied by usual residents. As Table 9 indicates, in Rainy River District as a whole and in many communities throughout the District, this erosion accelerated in the latter half of the decade leading up to 2011, increasing from negative 1.9 percent between 2001 and 2006 to negative 4.2 percent between 2006 and 2011:

Table 9: Private Dwellings Occupied by Usual Residents, 2001-2011

	% change 2001-2011	% change 2006-2011	% change 2001-2006
Ontario	15.8%	7.3%	7.9%
Rainy River District	-3.2%	-2.4%	-0.8%
Rainy River Service Area	-6.0%	-4.2%	-1.9%
Fort Frances	0.4%	1.7%	-1.2%
Rainy River T	-8.2%	-4.6%	-3.8%
Alberton	-6.4%	-10.2%	4.2%
Atikokan	-15.4%	-10.2%	-5.8%
Chapple	-10.0%	-9.7%	-0.3%
Dawson	-7.1%	-8.6%	1.7%
Emo	-12.5%	-12.4%	-0.2%
La Vallee	-0.3%	-2.7%	2.5%
Lake of the Woods	4.6%	-0.7%	5.4%
Morley	16.7%	-2.8%	20.0%
RR Unorganized	-20.6%	-11.1%	-10.7%

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2001, 2006, 2011.

The decline in permanent dwellings is mostly affecting single detached units. Of the 291 dwellings lost in the Service Area between 2006 and 2011, 249 were single detached homes, followed by semi-detached houses. As Table 10 shows, Atikokan in particular has lost units across all housing types, a trend that is consistent with that community’s higher rate of population decline.

Table 10: Changes in Housing Stock Composition, Actual Units, 2006-2011

	Single	Semi	Row	Duplex	Apartment, Under 5 storeys	Apartment, Over 5 storeys
Rainy River District	-124	-35	13	-17	1	0
Rainy River Service Area	-249	-62	14	-5	10	0
Fort Frances	10	-31	4	21	50	0
Rainy River T	-15	0	0	5	10	0
Alberton	-25	0	0	-10	5	0
Atikokan	-100	-25	0	-11	-14	0
Chapple	-15	-5	0	0	0	0
Dawson	-15	0	0	0	0	0
Emo	-30	0	0	0	-40	0
La Vallee	-5	0	0	0	0	0
Morley	-15	0	10	0	0	0
RR Unorganized	-40	0	0	-10	0	0

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2006, 2011.

The most recent data on housing development suggests that new housing construction is happening at a slow pace and in a form that will not greatly change the current stock composition. As Table 11 indicates, there have been 118 housing starts from 2007 through 2011, 88 of which are single detached units. Nevertheless, by 2011 the market appeared to be supplying more multiples and apartments. Similarly, almost all of the new housing has been in the ownership market, with higher levels of rental development only occurring in 2011 (Table 12). At this point it remains unclear as to whether 2011 represents an anomaly or the emergence of a sustained movement towards a more diverse housing stock.

Table 11: Housing Starts in Rainy River District, 2007-2011

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total
Single	44	21	9	5	9	88
Multiple	3	2	0	0	10	15
Semi-detached	0	2	0	0	0	2
Row	0	0	0	0	0	0
Apartment	3	0	0	0	10	13
Total	50	25	9	5	29	118

Source: OMSSA, Socio-Economic and Housing Trends Report: Rainy River District.³

³ Tables 9 and 10 are based on a custom data run performed by CMHC for Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA). The geography used is the Census Division of Rainy River District.

Table 12: Housing Starts by Intended Market in Rainy River District, 2007-2011

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Freehold	94%	100%	100%	100%	47%
Rental	6%	0%	0%	0%	53%
Condo	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Source: OMSSA, Socio-Economic and Housing Trends Report: Rainy River District.

Age and Condition of Rainy River’s Housing Stock

Housing in Rainy River Service Area is aging, with a very large proportion—82 percent—over 25 years old at the last Census (Table 13). Older stock presents a number of challenges, not the least of which is the escalating costs associated with the replacement of major components. Research performed by CMHC has found that building components such as roofs, heating systems and cooling systems will all require replacement at around years 20 to 25 of a building’s lifecycle.⁴ Based on the available Census data, a large majority of the housing stock in Rainy River District is now entering this maintenance phase. Consistent with the overall age of units, the percentage of homes requiring major repair is considerably higher than the provincial rate, with the most acute problems occurring in Chapple, Emo and Dawson.

Table 13: Age of Housing in Percentages, Rainy River District and Service Area

	Percentage of Dwellings...		
	constructed before 1986	constructed between 1986 and 2006	requiring major repair
Ontario	69	31	6.6
Rainy River District	79	21	12.6
Rainy River Service Area	82	18	10.1
Fort Frances	84	16	9
Rainy River T	83	17	11
Alberton	62	36	2.9
Atikokan	97	3	12
Chapple	70	28	16.7
Dawson	79	23	12.5
Emo	73	27	15.1
La Vallee	81	21	4.1
Lake of the Woods	76	24	8
Morley	67	36	5.6
RR Unorganized	63	36	14.2

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2006.

⁴ CMHC, (2000) Service Life of Multi-Unit Residential Building Elements and Equipment.

Price

The price of a housing unit, whether in the ownership or rental market, is distinct from the unit’s affordability. Whereas price is simply the cost to buy or rent a home, affordability is a more relative term that will vary based on a range of contextual factors. Determining the price of housing in Rainy River District is challenging, as some key data points are unavailable. The CMHC routinely collects such rental and ownership market data, but not for communities under 10,000 people. Additionally, the removal of the Census Long Form effectively means the end of reliable Census data concerning housing price. Nevertheless, some information is retrievable.

Using the Multiple Listing Service as a data source, it appears that the average resale price of a home in Rainy River District in 2011 is \$155,229 (Table 14). Unfortunately, this data does not distinguish homes by type or number of bedrooms. New homes typically sell in the range of \$200,000 to \$299,999 (Table 15).

Table 14: Sales of Existing Homes in Rainy River District, 2007-2011

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
No. of units sold	289	298	595	689	677
New listings	482	737	1,360	1,245	1,251
MLS Avg. price	\$90,402	\$97,034	\$120,130	\$121,225	\$155,229

Source: OMSSA, Socio-Economic and Housing Trends Report: Rainy River District.

Table 15: New Home Sales in Rainy River District, 2007-2011

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Less than \$175,000	1	0	0	0	0
\$175,000-\$199,999	0	0	0	0	0
\$200,000-\$299,999	1	5	2	0	0
\$300,000-\$399,999	0	1	0	0	0
\$400,000-\$499,999	0	0	0	0	0
\$500,000+	0	0	0	0	0

Source: OMSSA, Socio-Economic and Housing Trends Report: Rainy River District.

In regards to rental housing, median rent in 2006 was \$551. The most recent data available on rental costs comes from the 2011 National Household Survey, which indicates that the average rents are now well over \$600. Median and average rents for Rainy River District are provided in Table 16.

Table 16: Median and Average Rent, Rainy River District, 2011

	2011
Median	\$663
Average	\$651

Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey.

Socioeconomic Health

Labour Force

Rainy River District has been shaken by the 2008 recession and its subsequent slow recovery, with major employers either curtailing their operations or closing entirely. Major sources of economic development for the District are on the horizon, including two gold mines and a biomass energy plant. Nevertheless, the available data provides a mixed picture of the District's economic health. Many economic indicators have moved in a positive direction from the 2001 to 2006 Census, as shown in Tables 17 and 18. Labour participation and employment rates have increased in many communities, while the unemployment rate is down. On the other hand, the Service Area has experienced a net decline in experienced labour force, albeit a very small one.

Table 17: Rainy River District Labour Force Indicators, 2006

	Participation rate	Employment rate	Unemployment rate
Ontario	67.1	62.8	6.4
Rainy River District	64.2	59.1	7.9
Rainy River Service Area	65.8	60.4	8.2
Fort Frances	64.4	59.7	7.3
Rainy River T	53.4	45.9	15.2
Alberton	78.3	73.7	5.9
Atikokan	62.4	56.8	9.0
Chapple	61.8	61.0	2.4
Dawson	56.1	46.9	16.4
Emo	63.1	60.1	4.7
La Vallee	75.0	72.6	3.2
Lake of the Woods	74.0	60.0	16.2
Morley	73.4	68.4	5.2
RR Unorganized	62.1	59.6	4.7

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2006.

Table 18: Changes in Labour Force Indicators, Rainy River District, 2001-2006

	2001-2006 Change in participation rate	2001-2006 Change in employment rate	2001-2006 Change in unemployment rate	2001-2006 Change in total experienced labour force
Ontario	-0.2	-0.4	0.3	480970
Rainy River District	0.8	1.7	-1.6	75
Rainy River Service Area	1.8	2.1	-0.6	-5
Fort Frances	1.9	1.6	0.2	90
Rainy River T	4.7	3.7	1.9	30
Alberton	-0.3	2.7	-2.9	30
Atikokan	0.4	2.4	-2.9	-145
Chapple	-12.1	-8.0	-4.3	-95
Dawson	-6.3	-7.6	2.1	-45
Emo	3.8	4.7	-1.1	40
La Vallee	7.9	11.8	-6.2	120
Lake of the Woods	15.8	7.3	6.8	15
Morley	6.7	6.5	0.4	85
RR Unorganized	-2.8	-1.6	-1.0	-130

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2001, 2006.

The 2011 National Household Survey provides a more recent snapshot of these indicators:

Table 19: 2011 National Household Survey Labour Force Indicators, Rainy River District

	Total	Male	Female
Participation rate	60.2	62.3	58.2
Employment rate	54.8	55.9	53.8
Unemployment rate	9	10.3	7.6

Source: Statistics Canada, NHS 2011.

Sources of Income and Low Income Rates

One indicator of economic health is the proportion of income that comes from earnings, as opposed to government transfers. On this measure, Rainy River District does not compare favourably to either the provincial rate, or to the other comparable local communities of Dryden and Kenora. Earnings as a percentage of income are considerably lower in the Rainy River Service Area in this comparison, while government transfers are higher. In all but two communities men draw more of their income from earnings, while women rely more heavily on government transfers in every community. An equivalent situation is found at the provincial level, and in the local comparators (Table 20).

Table 20: Sources of Income by Sex, Rainy River District and Service Area, 2006

	Earnings as a % of total income	Earnings as a % of total income		Government transfers as a % of total income	Government transfers as a % of total income		Other money as a % of total income	Other money as a % of total income	
		Male	Female		Male	Female		Male	Female
Ontario	77.4	80.7	72.4	9.8	6.9	14.0	12.9	12.4	13.5
Kenora, City	73.6	75.0	71.8	12.1	9.8	15.5	14.2	15.3	12.8
Dryden, City	75.5	78.7	70.3	10.9	7.3	16.6	13.5	13.9	12.9
Rainy River District	72.1	73.7	69.7	14.6		19.1	13.3	14.7	11.3
Rainy River Service Area	71.0	73.3	67.1	15.2		21.8	13.5	15.2	10.6
Fort Frances	71.5	73.5	68.6	14.0		17.3	14.5	14.8	14.0
Rainy River T	56.8	58.3	58.4	20.7		27.5	21.8	27.2	14.7
Alberton	86.3	83.9	89.7	6.1	5.7	6.8	7.6	10.4	3.5
Atikokan	69.9	71.0	67.9	14.9		21.6	15.3	17.9	10.7
Chapple	66.4	69.4	61.2	22.2		26.4	11.4	11.1	11.8
Dawson	58.4	60.2	57.8	17.3		30.0	23.7	29.2	11.2
Emo	78.4	82.1	73.6	14.6	9.9	19.4	7.3	7.7	6.9
La Vallee	81.5	82.7	77.4	10.2	7.8	15.0	8.4	9.0	7.2
Lake of the Woods	70.0	77.6	61.0	18.1		26.4	10.9	11.5	10.7
Morley	71.4	75.8	64.5	15.3		22.0	12.2	12.7	11.3
RR Unorganized	70.8	71.7	58.4	13.8		27.5	15.5	16.1	14.7

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2006.

It is noteworthy that median incomes vary widely depending on family type. Married couple families in Rainy River District have a median income of \$74,363, whereas for common law families the median is \$55,936. The difference between male- and female-led families is also substantial, at \$26,288 for females and \$49,512 for males.⁵

Low-income rates in Rainy River are lower than the province but higher than the local comparators (Table 21). In the Service Area men and women are almost equal on this measure, but the situation is more mixed in the communities. Low-income rates for those under 18 were higher in every community and in the Service Area; in some communities, such as Lake of the Woods, the spread between adult and youth low-income rates is dramatic.

⁵ Statistics Canada, Census 2006

Table 21: Rainy River District and Service Area, Low-income Rate, 2006

	% in low income after tax - All persons	Male	Female	% in low income after tax - Persons less than 18 years of age	Male	Female
Ontario	11.1	10.5	11.6	13.7	13.7	13.8
Kenora, City	4.3	4.4	4.2	5.1	4.5	5.7
Dryden, City	3.9	3.7	4.1	5.2	7.3	2.9
Rainy River District	6.6	6.8	6.3	8.8	9.2	8.3
Rainy River Service Area	5.7	5.9	4.2	8.1	5.7	6.1
Fort Frances	7	6.4	7.7	8.9	6.1	11.2
Rainy River T	2.3	0	0	0	0	0
Alberton	0	0	0	0	0	0
Atikokan	10.2	12.5	8.1	14.4	21.1	5.9
Chapple	11.7	16.3	7.1	20.5	0	0
Dawson	14.5	13.7	14	17.6	15	21.4
Emo	1.9	3.9	0	0	0	0
La Vallee	1.9	0	0	0	0	0
Lake of the Woods	9.5	9.4	9.7	22.2	20	28.6
Morley	0	0	0	0	0	0
RR Unorg.	3.9	2.7	0	5.8	0	0

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2006.

Ontario Works caseloads were on a downward trend after 2007, but Ontario Works recipients have increased in each of the last four years; the number of recipients is now at its highest point since 2008 (Table 22).

Table 22: Rainy River District Ontario Works Caseload, 2007-2012

Year	Clients
2007	251
2008	218
2009	203
2010	206
2011	213
2012	218

Source: Rainy River DSSAB

The number of residents receiving the Ontario Disability Support Program is not directly considered a consequence of economic health, but the benefit rates are low enough to put recipients at economic risk. As Table 23 shows, the overall number of recipients has also trended upwards, with a growth rate of 14 percent between 2007 and 2012.

Table 23: Rainy River District Ontario Disability Support Program Caseload, 2007-2012

Year	Clients
2007	377
2008	387
2009	406
2010	415
2011	434
2012	429

Source: Rainy River DSSAB

Future Economic Development

As of fall 2013, two gold mine projects are currently under development in Rainy River District. The first is the Hammond Reef Gold Project, located 30 kilometers northeast of Atikokan. The second is the Rainy River Gold Project, located 65 kilometers northwest of Fort Frances in the Township of Chapple. The former would begin construction in 2014, and would be in operation for 11 years, while the latter would be operational from 2016 through 2031. Environmental Assessment document indicate that 10 percent of the Hammond Reef project construction employment and 30 percent of its operations employment would be local. Additionally, the Hammond Reef Gold Project is expected to generate demand in Atikokan for an additional 20 housing units during its construction phase and 92 units during its operations.⁶ Comparable figures are not available from the Rainy River Gold Project Environmental Assessment. Table 24 indicates the construction and operations employment projected for both projects.

Table 24. Employment Projections for Rainy River Gold Project and Hammond Reef Gold Project

	Construction Employment (Person Years)	Operation Employment (Jobs)
Rainy River Gold Project	2,415 direct	727
Hammond Reef	1,040 direct (30 months)	550

Source: Rainy River Gold Project Environmental Assessment Report (Draft); Hammond Reef Gold Project Environment Impact Statement/Environmental Assessment Report.

In addition to mining development, Rainy River District will benefit from the development of its forestry industry. A new sawmill is slated for construction in Atikokan, and will employ 90 people once operational. Further, the Atikokan Thermal Generating Station is being converted into a biomass plant, which has produced a spike in construction employment. The production of the wood pellets that will feed the new biomass plant shall occur locally, supporting the employment of approximately 25 people.

Rainy River District in 2024: A Projection

On the basis of this data, a linear projection model that carries forward historical trends has been used to provide an estimate of the situation in Rainy River District at the end of the plan period, 2024. This projection indicates that by 2024 the population will have dropped to under 20,000, and slightly under half the population will be over the age of 55. Common law and lone parent families will make up almost half of the family formation, and these 'non-traditional' family types will account for most of the future childbirths.

As Table 25 shows, the Rainy River Service Area will lose approximately 2,624 people before 2024, an overall decrease of 14.6 percent between 2011 and 2024.

Table 25: Rainy River District Population Estimate, 2024

	Population in 2011	Population in 2024
Rainy River District	20,370	18,287
Rainy River Service Area	17,918	15,294

Source: OrgCode Consulting

⁶ Hammond Reef Gold Project Environment Impact Statement/Environmental Assessment Report

Meanwhile, common law and lone parent families will grow dramatically (Table 26). Although not all of the married and common law families will have children at home, the number of children born to common law and lone parent families will exceed those born to married couple families.

Table 26: Rainy River District Family Formation Types as a Percentage of the Total, 2024 Estimate

	Married Couples		Common Law Couples		Female Lone Parent		Male Lone Parent	
	2024	2011	2024	2011	2024	2011	2024	2011
Rainy River District	59%	68%	21%	15%	16%	12%	5%	4%
Rainy River Service Area	52%	73%	24%	13%	16%	10%	8%	3%

Source: OrgCode Consulting

By 2024 the older age cohorts will comprise almost half of the population (Table 27). Note that this model does not adjust for deaths, and so likely over-estimates the number of people in the older cohorts. Nevertheless, the broad movement towards an older population will continue in line with this model.

Table 27: Age Cohorts as a Percentage of the Population, 2024 Estimate

	0-14	15-19	20-24	25-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75-84	85+
Rainy River District	14.1	6.6	5.0	14.2	18.1	23.0	8.9	6.0	4.0
Rainy River Service Area	12.0	6.3	4.3	13.4	18.6	25.1	9.2	6.7	4.5

Source: OrgCode Consulting

Finally, holding the proportion of seniors living alone static across the study period, Table 28 estimates the number of seniors living by themselves by 2024.

Table 28: Number of Seniors Living Alone, 2024 Estimate

	2024	2011
Rainy River District	1,210	1,085
Rainy River Service Area	10,76	1,020

Source: OrgCode Consulting

2. Current Demands on the System

Homelessness and affordable housing remains a problem for many communities in Northern Ontario. Unlike urbanized areas where homelessness can be more visible, it is often difficult to judge exactly the extent of need in rural and remote towns. Despite this, the challenges faced by Rainy River District are very similar to those of other Northern areas, including a lack of emergency shelters, a dearth of homelessness services for youth and a need for more addiction and mental health services.⁷ It is also recognized that all Northern communities are facing serious financial pressures that limit their ability to individually fund programs or add services, and in many cases repair of housing stock takes precedence over additional units.⁸ On a regional scale new financing options will need to be developed in the years ahead to alleviate this pressure⁹

Northern communities such as Rainy River District are not immune to the same social and economic forces that are shaping the province. In many cases, those forces are felt more acutely in Northern Ontario. Provincially, renter households continue to fall behind ownership households in regards to income and affordability. Ontario's homeowners earned 2.2 times the income of renters in 2010, up from 1.9 times in 1990.¹⁰ An ever-increasing amount of renter's income is being consumed by rent, and production of rental units in Ontario is now at its lowest point since the 1950s.¹¹ The 2008 recession has produced an unstable and slow recovery, but a major outcome has been a decline of manufacturing employment that has put pressure on the social services system. Meanwhile the population continues to age, steadily increasing the need for complex health care and support services. All of these realities are found in Rainy River District.

The housing and homelessness system in Rainy River District has shown remarkable resilience in the face of difficult economic circumstances. Nevertheless, demands on the system remain high and are, by most accounts, increasing. Gaps in the system do exist, and some populations are underserved. Through analysis of available services and community consultations, the following nine interrelated topics have been identified as high priority areas. These are:

1. DSSAB and Non-profit Housing
2. Affordability of housing
3. Continuing demand for homelessness services
4. Increasing needs of seniors
5. Aboriginal persons living off reserve
6. Victims of domestic violence
7. Service integration
8. Data and information gathering
9. Geographic challenges

7 Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association. (2010) A Pan-Northern Ontario Inventory of Homelessness Problems and Practices.

8 Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association. (2013) Where's home? Looking Back and Looking Forward at the Need for Affordable Housing in Ontario.

9 Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association. (2013) Building Capacity in Northern Communities: 2013-2016 Strategic Plan.

10 Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association. (2013) Where's home? Looking Back and Looking Forward at the Need for Affordable Housing in Ontario.

11 Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association. (2013) Where's home? Looking Back and Looking Forward at the Need for Affordable Housing in Ontario..

1a. DSSAB Social Housing Stock

The Government of Ontario and the Government of Canada developed the DSSAB-owned social housing stock in Rainy River District during a time of active government involvement in the sector. The federal government began extracting itself from social housing in the 1980s, and the provincial government followed suit in the 1990s and early 2000s. The housing stock that existed at that time was downloaded to local municipalities, and in the case of Rainy River District, the DSSAB. Crucially, neither government provided additional funding to match this expanded responsibility, and the ongoing maintenance of social housing is paid for through local taxes. Today the RRDSSAB administers 12 buildings in four communities, providing a total of 295 Rent-Geared-To-Income units.

Maintenance Needs

The DSSAB housing is aging. The oldest buildings date to 1967, while the newest was built in the late 1970s. Provincial transfers for social housing were fixed in 2002 and has not been adjusted for inflation since that time.

Unfortunately, the Rainy River DSSAB faces a genuine challenge in paying the costs of maintaining this housing. Due to the age of the stock, most buildings are approaching the point where major components will require replacement or rehabilitation. The Building Condition Assessment completed by the DSSAB in 2008 indicates that capital reconstruction costs for the twelve buildings will amount to \$9.4 million over twenty years. This amount is over and above the usual annual maintenance of operating a building, and will require a reserve fund contribution of \$463,000 per annum. The DSSAB has not adopted a strategy for funding this \$9.4 million of construction, and the amount put into reserves fluctuates on a yearly basis. As of 2012, approximately \$400,000 has been put into reserves to fund capital reconstruction, substantially less than the \$2,778,000 that would be retained had the full \$463,000 been put away every year since 2008.

Unit Miss-match

The DSSAB housing stock is somewhat polarized between small and large units. One-bedroom units make up 72 percent of the total stock, while apartments with three or more bedrooms account for 20 percent. The majority of the remaining eight percent of units are mostly two-bedroom apartments, with a very small number of bachelor units. In terms of actual numbers, there are 214 one-bedroom apartments to just 14 two-bedroom apartments. If the current waiting list is an indicator of demand (Table 29), the prevalence of one-bedroom apartments may not be well suited to the declining number of non-senior singles applying for social housing. As the movement towards smaller families continues, especially when headed by a single parent, one and three-or-more-bedroom units may become more difficult to fill.

Table 29: Household Types on Waiting List for Social Housing, in Percent, 2008-2012

	Seniors	Non-senior singles	Families
2012	71	5	24
2011	24	38	38
2010	16	35	49
2009	8	25	67
2008	36	32	32

Source: Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association, Waiting List Survey, 2008-2012.

The increasing percentage of seniors on the waiting lists belies the reality that some seniors avoid DSSAB housing due to the unit’s small sizes and lack of accessibility. Evidence from community-based research suggests that seniors strongly prefer two-bedroom units so as to accommodate family members or caregivers, but such units are in short supply in the DSSAB housing.¹² Low-income seniors that are deliberately avoiding social housing due to its unsuitability is one factor contributing to housing stress for this population group. Despite these misgivings, seniors accounted for almost three-quarters of the waiting list in 2012.

Vacancies

As Table 30 shows, the actual number of people on the social housing waiting list was dropping until 2011. Until 2012, declining waiting list numbers had combined with unit repair needs to produce vacancies across the social housing stock. Current vacant units are in need of repair and not suitable for habitation.

Table 30: Households on Waiting List for Social Housing, Actual Numbers, 2008-2012

	Seniors	Non-senior singles	Families
2012	78	6	26
2011	7	11	11
2010	6	13	18
2009	2	6	16
2008	16	14	14

Source: Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association, Waiting List Survey, 2008-2012.

1b. Non-Profit Housing Stock

The non-profit housing stock is newer, and also supplies a source of market rent housing. In total there are 136 non-profit housing units in Rainy River District. Only half of these units are one-bedroom apartments, with the remaining 31 and 29 percent composed of two and three-bedroom units, respectively.

Governance

Community consultations revealed that non-profit housing providers are having difficulty in finding people to sit on their boards. In some cases the DSSAB has been asked to provide property management and administration services to non-profit housing organizations; this arrangement is in place for five organizations.

Due to their more recent construction, the non-profit providers will not be reaching their mortgage maturation dates within the short term and there appears to be little risk of losing these affordable units. However, it also appears unlikely that the non-profit housing sector will be a source of new affordable housing in the near future. Governance issues are a stumbling block for some. In other cases, non-profit providers have both the will and the land to develop additional units, but lack the capital funding to do so.

Vacancies

Vacancies are also an issue for the non-profit providers, which appears to be linked to the types of units available. Vacancies lower the amount of affordable housing overall, as these units are made available as market rent units when there is no household on the waiting list

¹² Assisted Living Action Group. (2012) Aging at Home Survey for Older Adults.

2. Affordability of housing

Available evidence indicates that the average rent in Rainy River District is \$651, while the average resale home price in the District is \$155,229. Although both are low in comparison to other communities across the province, the income level and local housing market of the individual household determines affordability. The most frequently applied standard is that housing costs should not exceed 30 percent of a household’s gross monthly income. A more specific definition is found the Ontario Provincial Policy Statement:

In the case of ownership housing, the least expensive of:

- *Housing for which the purchase price results in annual accommodation costs which do not exceed 30 percent of gross annual household income for low and moderate income households; or,*
- *Housing for which the purchase price is at least 10 percent below the average purchase price of a resale unit in the regional market area.*

In the case of rental housing, for which the total monthly shelter cost is the gross monthly rent that includes utilities, heat, hydro and hot water, but excludes parking and cable television, the least expensive of:

- *A unit for which the rent does not exceed 30 percent of gross annual household income for low and moderate income households; or,*
- *A unit for which the rent is at or below the average market rent of a unit in the regional market area.*

Other definitions set the level of affordability on the basis of prevailing housing costs. For example, to be eligible for provincial funding through the Affordable Housing Program and the Investment in Affordable Housing for Ontario Program, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing requires unit rents to be no higher than 80 percent of the Average Market Rent as determined by the CMHC. Similarly, an affordable ownership unit should have a resale price at least 10 percent lower than the average market price. Unfortunately, Average Market Rents from CMHC are not available for Rainy River District.

Under the first definition, the average rent in Rainy River District as provided by the National Household Survey is affordable to those grossing a monthly income of \$2,170. To rent a unit in Rainy River District under this definition of affordability, a household will require a yearly income of \$26,040. Meanwhile, to affordably buy a house in Rainy River District, a household would require an income of at least \$36,100.¹³ Table 31 provides a breakdown of affordable ownership by percentile.

Table 31: Affordable Home Price by Percentile, Rainy River District

Income Percentile	Affordable Price ¹⁴
20th Percentile: \$25,200	\$89,000
30th Percentile: \$36,100	\$127,500
40th Percentile: \$47,200	\$167,000
50th Percentile: \$57,800	\$204,500
60th Percentile: \$72,400	\$256,000

Source: Government of Ontario. Household Incomes and Affordable House Prices, 2012.

¹³ Government of Ontario. Household Incomes and Affordable House Prices, 2012.

¹⁴ To calculate these price levels, the Government of Ontario uses the following assumptions: Taxes = 0.125% of house value a month’ Mortgage insurance = 0.00008 of house value a month’ Amortization = 25 years; Down payment = 5.0%; Mortgage Rate = 5.4%; Mortgage Factor = 0.0060458.

Recent data suggests that renter households are struggling to afford housing in Rainy River District, with 30.7 percent paying more than a third of their income on housing. In comparison, only 9.2 percent of owner households are in the same situation.¹⁵

Table 32 provides seven possible income scenarios and the affordability implications of each. Clearly, the affordability situation is most acute for one-person households dependent on assistance from Ontario Works, the Ontario Disability Support Program, or the Old Age Security/Guaranteed Income Supplement who are attempting to pay market rent. For these individuals, the average rental cost would consume 47 to 96 percent of their income. This is particularly concerning given that Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program case loads have both risen over the last five years in Rainy River District, and slightly less than half of all persons living alone are over the age of 65. These scenarios indicate the ongoing importance of the rent-geared-to-income units in Rainy River District, as they provide rental units that can be reliably afforded by those with the lowest incomes. The benefit is not just to the tenants; residents who are required to pay a higher percentage of their income on housing have less money to spend locally on other items.

¹⁵ Statistics Canada. (2013) 2011 National Household Survey.

Table 32: Simulation of Monthly Income and Rental Costs

	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4	Scenario 5	Scenario 6	Scenario 7
	<i>One person household, Ontario Works</i>	<i>Single Parent Households with 2 Children, Ontario Works</i>	<i>Family of 4, Ontario Works</i>	<i>One person household, Ontario Disability Support Program</i>	<i>One person household, Old Age Security/ Guaranteed Income Supplement</i>	<i>Family of 4, Minimum Wage Earner</i>	<i>Family of 4, Median Ontario Income (after tax)</i>
Monthly Calculations							
INCOME							
Income from Employment						\$1,777.00	\$6,792.00
Basic Allowance ¹⁶	\$230.00	\$350.00	\$448.00	\$590.00			
Maximum Shelter Allowance	\$376.00	\$641.00	\$695.00	\$474.00			
OAS/GIS ¹⁷					\$1,286.51		
Child/Family Benefits ¹⁸		\$789.24	\$789.24			\$789.24	
GST/HST Credits ¹⁹	\$22.08	\$67.33	\$67.33	\$29.02	\$33.47	\$67.33	
Ontario Trillium Benefit ²⁰	\$51.18	\$103.76	\$126.93	\$51.18	\$56.45	\$126.93	
Employment Insurance Paid ²¹						(\$33.40)	(\$127.68)
Canada Pension Plan Paid ²²						(\$74.64)	(\$322.88)
Working Income Tax Benefits ²³						\$77.06	
TOTAL INCOME	\$679.26	\$1,951.33	\$2,126.50	\$1,144.20	\$1,376.43	\$2,650.04	\$6,341.44
Affordable Rent (based on 30% of income)	\$203.78	\$585.40	\$637.95	\$343.26	\$412.93	\$795.01	\$1,902.43
% of income dedicated to average market rent	96%	33%	31%	57%	47%	25%	10%

16 Basic and maximum shelter allowance. Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) rates effective January 2013. Source: Ontario Works Policy Directives and Ontario Disability Support Program Policy Directives, Ministry of Community and Social Services.

17 Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement. April to June 2013.

18 This includes the maximum Child Tax Benefit, National Child Benefit Supplement and Ontario Child Benefit.

19 This is based upon net annual income. The GST/HST and Ontario Tax Credit are issues on a quarterly basis, but calculated on a monthly basis. The figures are derived from GST/HST and related provincial program calculator.

20 Based on CRA Ontario Trillium Benefit Calculator.

21 Based upon the Employment Insurance Premium Rates, CRA Payroll Deduction Online Calculator.

22 Based upon Canada Pension Plan Rates, CRA Payroll Deduction Online Calculator.

23 As determined by the Working Income Tax Benefit Online Calculator, for 2013 tax year.

Beyond the direct costs of rent or mortgage payments, low-income households must also contend with utility costs. The combination of an older housing stock and cold climate is not conducive to low utility bills. Similar to other Northern communities, many of the households in Rainy River District that are seeking emergency assistance are doing so because of utility arrears.²⁴

Affordability issues are exacerbated by the limited supply of rental and lack of diversity in the housing stock. An ability to find rental units outside of the largest communities places substantial pressure on lower-income residents to either buy or move. If they do opt to buy, their ability to find smaller and less expensive housing forms is constrained by the lack of options beyond single detached homes. A similar problem is found for seniors who might wish to downsize to a smaller owned unit, or simply rent to avoid maintenance.

In a growing community, this demand pressure would be relieved through development that responds to the needs of the market. In a no-growth community such as Rainy River District, housing supply is either very slow or dwindling. Although the most recent housing start data provides some reason for hope, Rainy River District currently finds itself in a situation of 'housing lock-up,' where the options and resources are so limited that movement amongst units is difficult and new construction is minimal.

Housing lock-up is a capital problem. New capital investment from private sources (developers) or spending from public sources (governments) funds the construction of new units. With both occurring very slowly, or not at all, the housing stock has remained largely static while the demographic and economic situation has evolved. Notwithstanding a burst of economic activity or a major funding commitment from a higher level of government, innovative approaches will be needed to access the capital that exists in the current housing stock.

3. Continuing demand for homelessness services

a) Estimating the extent of homelessness

Homelessness exists in Rainy River District. Clarifying the exact number people who are homeless is a challenge, given homelessness in the District happens largely out of sight. The practice of Point-In-Time counts has been developed to accurately assess the size and characteristics of homeless populations who are in shelters or sleep outside, but there is no equivalent process for assessing the extent of unseen homelessness (often called hidden homelessness).

Existing data provides some guidance on the ratio of homeless people to members of the total population. The United States provides the largest sample size, where Point-In-Time counts are done on a yearly basis by community entities known as Continuums of Care. An analysis of these results shows an average of 14 people who are homeless per 10,000 members of the population in rural communities.²⁵ Applying the available research on rural populations to Rainy River District, it is estimated that there are 29 homeless individuals in the community at any one time. An estimate of this type does not adjust for economic need, which may increase the number of homeless individuals overall. As such, these 29 people are considered a baseline estimate. A more robust estimate of need would be available through the use of a centralized Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) that could track client usage across multiple services.

²⁴ Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association. (2012). *Moving Forward on Affordable Housing and Homelessness in Northern Ontario*.
²⁵ National Alliance to End Homelessness. (2010) *Geography of Homelessness*.

b) Characteristics of the homeless population

From a service delivery perspective, it is useful to divide homeless populations into three categories based on their acuity, or level of need:

Lower acuity: These individuals are not coping with complex health or behavioral issues, and do not require a substantial investment of resources. They may require assistance in finding housing, or securing income supports.

Mid-range acuity: These individuals may have a few areas of their life where they are coping with complex issues. They may require assistance in finding housing and income, but will also require some ongoing supports for a few months. The individuals will benefit from case management services and an individualized planning process that links them to community resources.

High acuity: High acuity individuals have multiple areas of complex needs and are likely to make up the chronically homeless population. These individuals will need ongoing case management support for at least 12 months, and often longer.

At a minimum, it is necessary to assess very quickly the level of assistance required by an individual seeking assistance, so that funds can be stretched for maximum effect and focused on those with the highest needs. The highest acuity clients will be the smallest in number, at around 16 percent of homeless individuals.²⁶ Assessment data compiled from a number of communities indicates that mid-acuity individuals will make up 25 to 35 percent of the homeless population, while low acuity clients will comprise 60 percent.²⁷ Using the baseline estimate of 29 homeless individuals in Rainy River District, 17 would be low acuity individuals requiring minimal support, seven to 10 would be mid-acuity and requiring some extended supports, and five would be high acuity requiring ongoing supports.

In addition, it is possible to approximate what kinds of services would be in high demand from homeless individuals. For instance, rates of severe mental health issues and substance addiction are much higher in the homeless population than the public at large. It is important to note that no one is destined to be homeless, and most people who cope with mental illness or addiction will never experience homelessness in their lifetime. For those with high levels of acuity, however, these health concerns may affect a person’s ability to remain stably housed if they do not also receive some degree of support. Table 33 draws from five years worth of Point-In-Time data from the United States, and averages client characteristics amongst the homeless population.

Table 33: Five-year Average of Characteristics of Homeless Population in the United States, 2008-2012

	% of the Homeless Population
Severely Mentally Ill	17%
Chronic Substance Abuse	22%
Persons with HIV/AIDS	2%
Victims of Domestic Violence	11%
Unaccompanied Youth (Under 18)	1%

Source: HUD, Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Programs Homeless Populations and Subpopulations, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012.

²⁶ National Alliance to End Homelessness. (n.d) Snapshot of Homelessness. Url: http://www.endhomelessness.org/pages/snapshot_of_homelessness

²⁷ OrgCode has derived these estimates based on its analysis of SPDAT assessment scores. For more on the SPDAT assessment tool see Appendix C.

Point-In-Time counts performed in Canada have revealed similar results. A 2012 count in Red Deer revealed that 56 percent of homeless persons had a mental illness, while 74 percent had an addiction.²⁸ A similar count performed in Metro Vancouver in 2011 found that 54 percent of people who were homeless had an addiction, while 35 percent reported having a mental illness.²⁹ Finally, data from Rainy River District residents with lived experience of homelessness indicates that mental health services were among the most highly accessed (see Appendix I). This evidence would suggest that addressing the needs of residents who are homeless will require an integration of services that goes beyond the provision of housing.

c) Characteristics of homeless services

The Rainy River DSSAB is empowered through legislation to act as the lead on housing and homelessness issues in Rainy River District. To accomplish this, the Rainy River DSSAB provides services directly—such as affordable housing and rental arrear assistance—and provides funding to community partners for emergency assistance, prevention and second-stage housing.

Funding commitments and available programs

Homelessness services provided by the Rainy River DSSAB are heavily orientated towards prevention and responding to emergency housing situations. In the case of emergency housing, this often entails using funds to temporarily set up individuals in hotels, as there is no shelter in Rainy River District outside of the Women’s Shelter of Hope. In the case of prevention, funding can include assistance with payment of rental and utility arrears, as well as food banks.

For the past several years the primary funding source for homelessness funds has been the Consolidated Homeless Prevention Program (CHPP), a provincial program that provided funding to Service Managers. In 2011-2012, the Rainy River DSSAB distributed the CHPP funds as follows:

Table 34: Rainy River DSSAB Distribution of CHPP Funds, 2011-2012

	2011	2012
Food Bank	\$14,250	\$11,000
Other Providers	\$18,858	\$18,700
Misc. Client Payments	\$13,770	\$18,804

Source: Rainy River DSSAB.

In addition, funding was provided through the Provincial Rent Bank (PRB) and the Emergency Energy Fund (EEF). Both programs provided assistance to residents who were facing eviction or disconnection due to rental and utility arrears (Table 35).

Table 35: Rainy River DSSAB Provincial Rent Bank and Emergency Energy Fund

	2011	2012
Provincial Rent Bank	\$2,963	\$5,038
Emergency Energy Fund	\$4,930	\$5,363

Source: Rainy River DSSAB.

Under CHPP funds, Miscellaneous Client Payment refers to prevention services such as rent arrears, utility arrears

²⁸ City of Red Deer. (2012) Red Deer Point In Time [PIT] Homeless Count 2012.

²⁹ Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness. (2012) One Step Forward: Results of the 2011 Metro Vancouver Homeless Count.

and reconnect charges that were not eligible under the EEF or PRB. The total combined spending on homelessness prevention in 2012 amounts to \$40,205.

In 2013 the CHPP and four other provincial programs, including the EEF and PRB, were combined into the Community Homeless Prevention Initiative (CHPI). The new CHPI is likely to be the only ongoing source of provincial funding for homelessness programs for the foreseeable future. The two key program outcomes expected by the province are that:

- a) People experiencing homelessness obtain and retain housing; and,
- b) People at risk of homelessness remain housed.

Service Managers are expected to deliver programs that meet both objectives. Appendix B provides the seven principles of the CHPI program, plus the four service categories eligible for CHPI funding. For 2013-2014, the Rainy River DSSAB has committed to the following spending arrangement for CHPI funds:

Table 36: Rainy River DSSAB Delivery Plan for CHPI Funds

	Funding	% of Total
Emergency Shelter Solutions	\$25,000	17%
Housing with Related Supports	\$39,000	26%
Services and Supports	\$16,223	11%
Homelessness Prevention	\$55,706	37%
Program Administration	\$15,103	10%
	\$151,032	

Source: Rainy River DSSAB.

Capital for affordable housing needs has been provided by the provincial Investment in Affordable Housing (IAH) for Ontario program. Funding through this program can be used to provide for the construction of affordable housing units, rent supplements and down payment assistance. A total of \$650,979 dollars over four years will be provided to the Rainy River DSSAB through this program, and has been allocated to the Ontario Renovates component. Ontario Renovates provides funding to low-income residents who need to make structural repairs or accessibility improvements to their homes. Investing the funding in this way will not increase the supply of affordable units. However, the yearly allocation severely limits the potential of this program to construct new units in Rainy River District. Adjustment of the current housing stock to meet evolving needs is a core issue in the District, and Ontario Renovates remains the only funding available that can address this need.

Beyond the costs of these programs, it is important to note that homelessness is paid for through the entire service system, especially in the health and justice system. Canadian research has found that the average cost for homelessness, health and justice services for individuals who are homeless is \$56,431 per year.³⁰ Effective interventions such as Housing First have been shown to reduce system costs by 54 percent. When directed at the chronically homeless population who are also the highest system users, Housing First can return \$1.54 in net savings for every program dollar spent.³¹

³⁰ Mental Health Commission of Canada. (2012) *At Home/Chez Soi Interim Report*.

³¹ Mental Health Commission of Canada. (2012) *At Home/Chez Soi Interim Report*.

Service Access

As noted above, assessing a person before they receive assistance is critical to providing the right level of service. Currently, the Rainy River DSSAB and the agencies it provides funding to serve clients on a first come, first serve basis. Beyond the requirement to prioritize victims of domestic violence on social housing waitlists, there is no prioritization of clients.

Service interventions should vary depending on the level of acuity. For homeless individuals with complex issues (high acuity), more intensive support is needed to stabilize and maintain housing. Housing First is an approach to ending homelessness that focuses on a rapid and direct move from homelessness to stable housing and then the provision of services and supports on an as-needed basis to promote long term housing stability and individual well being. Using a Housing First model, potential clients are assessed and those with the highest acuity receive priority. These high acuity clients would be receiving support through Intensive Case Management (ICM) or Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) for 12 months or longer, depending on their housing stability needs.

For mid-acuity clients, the intervention will focus on Rapid Re-Housing, an approach that focuses on returning homeless individuals and families to permanent housing and the provision of lower intensity case management services. In Rapid Re-Housing programs, supports are provided for a much shorter period of time.

Low acuity clients will not require case management and can be assisted very quickly in ending their own homelessness. Research has repeatedly found that most individuals who experience homelessness do so only once in their life, for a short period of time, and will never experience homelessness again.³² As noted above, this description covers the majority of the homeless population at any time, which has implications for service delivery planning.

A key aspect of helping low acuity clients is diversion. Diversion is a homeless prevention strategy that assists people in connecting to other services in order to avoid entering emergency housing (in the case of Rainy River, usually a motel or hotel). Diversion is not about turning people away. Instead, it is about applying the lightest touch possible in order to avoid homelessness. Some common diversion services might include:

- Family reunification/accessing assistance from family
- Landlord mediation
- Access to housing listings
- Access to phone and computer
- Assistance accessing other services and supports
- Navigating other systems and supports
- Very short term case management/problem solving
- Very shallow assistance (e.g., grocery gift cards)

A consistently applied prescreening process will determine if an individual or family seeking assistance will benefit from diversion services. Only after all other avenues have been exhausted would the individual or family receive emergency housing.

32 Culhane, D. P., Metraux, S., Park, J. M., Schretzman, M., & Valente, J. (2007) Testing a Typology of Family Homelessness Based on Patterns of Public Shelter Utilization in Four U.S. Jurisdictions: Implications for Policy and Program Planning. *Housing Policy Debate*, 18(1); Springer, J. & Mars, J. (1999) Profile of The Homeless Population: Mayor's Homelessness Action Task Force. City of Toronto; Culhane, D. P. & Byrne, T. (2010) Ending Family Homelessness in Massachusetts: A New Approach for the Emergency Assistance Program. University of Pennsylvania: Departmental Papers (SPP).

Serving clients on a first come, first serve basis does not necessarily ensure that intervention investments are maximized, nor does it ensure that clients with the greatest needs are prioritized for service. To make the most effective use of available resources for prevention, the funds should be targeted at individuals and families who are most likely to become homeless if they do not receive such assistance.

Services outside of the Rainy River DSSAB

Other major housing providers in the District include the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), the La Verendrye Non-Profit Supportive Housing Corporation (Riverside Health) and the Urban Native Housing providers such as the Fort Frances Native Urban Wahkaihanun Corporation. The local CMHA provides subsidized housing with supports to 11 individuals with an ongoing mental health disability, as well as housing for nine people with problematic substance use. The La Verendrye is associated with Riverside Health and provides supportive housing to residents who are frail elderly or are developmentally, physically, emotionally or psychiatrically challenged. A total of 34 units are available through this program. Additionally, La Verendrye operates a transitional housing program for residents with mental illness.

Community Living Fort Frances and District operates a residential program for adults with a developmental disability. Twenty-four hour support is provided at two buildings, comprising eight units, along with one rented unit in DSSAB housing. Community Living also provides supports to individuals in the community, and has established a working relationship with the Rainy River DSSAB to support individuals located in social housing.

Community services such as the United Native Friendship Centre, Victims Services and the Salvation Army also provide emergency assistance to people experiencing housing instability. This happens thorough rental or energy arrears assistance in the case of the United Native Friendship Centre, providing emergency shelter in hotels in the case of Victims Services, and a food bank in the case of the Salvation Army. Finally, the Atikokan Women's Shelter of Hope provides emergency and second-stage housing to women who are homeless due to domestic violence.

Gaps in the homelessness service system

Presently, homelessness services for youth in Rainy River District are not well developed. The reliance on motels for emergency shelter is problematic, as youths are often not accommodated. Similarly, landlords are reluctant to rent to young people. Access to income is an impediment to housing stability, as Ontario Works funds are made available to people who are 16 or 17 in special circumstances only. A patchwork of services exists to assist young people in or near homelessness. Firefly acts as coordinated intake centre for child-focused services, and the United Native Friendship Centre, as well as Victims Services, is able to provide some emergency support. The absence of youth-focused housing, however, means that these interventions are unlikely to result in long-term housing stability.

There are no programs in Rainy River District that can be considered Rapid Re-Housing, although many of the elements exist in the community. Programs offered by CMHA come closest to a Housing First model, although in this program, as in the La Verendrye programs, turnover can be low. Additionally, the CMHA housing subsidy is only available to single individuals.

4. Increasing needs of seniors

The rising number of seniors in the Rainy River District population presents a number of challenges to the housing system. Older housing stock is difficult to adapt for accessibility due to its size, and in any case the expense makes this difficult to accomplish. Two characteristics of the seniors population in Rainy River District stand out: First, it is the over 85 population that is amongst the fastest growing age cohorts in the District. Second, a high percentage—33 percent—of seniors are living alone. Community consultations strongly indicated that an expansion of assisted living services is required in Rainy River District.

Effect of senior living arrangements on service system

The number of seniors living alone will impact the broader service system, as these seniors may have no caregivers present to assist in the tasks of daily living. Evidence indicates that seniors living alone are less likely to describe themselves as very happy than those in other living situations, and may experience higher levels of social isolation.³³ Isolation in turn affects health and wellbeing; a Statistics Canada study indicated that those seniors who reported having no close friends were also far less likely to report being in good or very the good health.³⁴ Health needs for seniors increase as they age, and almost half of those over the age of 85 report being unable to walk without assistance or require a wheelchair.³⁵ In Rainy River District, this would currently amount to 233 seniors with mobility needs.

Service gaps

The most frequently highlighted issue for seniors is the lack of options between living alone and long-term care. Services exist for seniors with a medical condition, and can be accessed through the local Community Care Access Centre (CCAC). For those who are need of gradually escalating assistance, options are limited. Again, the geographical distance of the District is an impediment to service delivery; the economics of delivering in-home care to remote communities is problematic. Even within communities this is an issue, as it was frequently noted that much social housing has been built in locations far removed from town centers. The arrival of telemedicine in the District, funded by the Northwest LHIN, is a welcome addition and may offer an opportunity for collaboration between senior housing providers and the health care system.

Community-based research provides a sense of current demands. A recent survey of seniors conducted by the Assisted Living Action Group, a community organization, found that a majority of seniors would rather rent than own, and would prefer two bedroom units.³⁶ Laundry, house cleaning, home maintenance and personal errands were among the services most in need of assistance. Higher intensity assistance, such as help with bathing and dressing, or taking medications, were amongst the least needed services. These results are consistent with Org-Code's consultation outcomes.

Additional supports for seniors will enable more people to stay in their home community. It will also reduce strain on the health system. In Ontario, 10 percent of seniors with the most complex needs account for 60 percent of provincial health care spending.³⁷ Economic analysis indicates that the total 'burden of care'—consisting of the cost of acute care, long term care, assisted living/supported housing and the productivity loss of informal caregivers—can be reduced by approximately eight percent when home and community care is present.³⁸ Similarly, a study conducted for the North West Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) indicated that up to two-thirds of the individuals on the North West CCAC waiting list for long-term care could be diverted to supportive housing.³⁹

33 Statistics Canada. (2006) A Portrait of Seniors in Canada.

34 Statistics Canada. (2006) A Portrait of Seniors in Canada.

35 Statistics Canada. (2006) A Portrait of Seniors in Canada.

36 The survey was completed in October 2012. A total of 634 responses were received.

37 Sinha, S. (2013) Living Longer, Living Well: Highlights and Key Recommendations.

38 Community Provider Associations Committee & the Change Foundation. (2010) Executive Summary: Valuing Home and Community Care: An Examination of Economic Value Created by Home and Community-Based Healthcare in Ontario.

39 North West Community Care Access Centre. (2010) The North West Balance of Care Project II: Final Report.

Service availability

Table 37 shows the stock of housing available to seniors in Rainy River District, while Table 38 shows the current and projected capacity for long term care and assisted living in the District, as calculated by the North West LHIN:

Table 37: Housing for Seniors in Rainy River District

Name	Type	Number of room/beds
Morley Meadowside Manor	Non-profit	10
Heritage House	Public	41
Riverview Manor	Public	14
Fotheringham Court	Public	35
Rose Manor	Public	35
Green Manor	Public	39
Lady Frances Place	Public	10
Rivercrest Terrace	Non-profit	12
Golden Age Manor East	Non-profit	30
Golden Age Manor West	Non-profit	10
Queen Street Manor	Public	20
Flinders Place - OCHAP	OCHAP	40
Columbus Place for Seniors of Fort Frances	Non-profit	30
Elizabeth Manor	Public	29
Atikokan General Hospital	ELDCAP beds ⁴⁰	22
Fort Frances Riverside - Emo	ELDCAP beds	12
Fort Frances Riverside - Rainy River	ELDCAP beds	21
Rainycrest Long-Term Care	LTC beds	164

Table 38: Current and Projected Long Term Care and Assisted Living Capacity, Rainy River District

	Current Capacity	2025
Long term care	219	248
Assisted living	17	123

Source: North West LHIN

The dynamics of future senior services in Rainy River District will often depend on outside entities. Much of the current service provision for seniors comes from sources such as the Northwest LHIN. Although the Rainy River DSSAB has a role to in its capacity as landlord to social housing stock, it does not have the ability to provide direct services to seniors. Further, the ability of the DSSAB to finance the development new senior’s housing is highly limited.

Opportunities do exist in repurposing existing social housing stock to make it more accessible. In 2010 the Rainy River DSSAB used provincial funding to renovate five units of social housing in Riverview Manor, located in the Town of Rainy River, making accessibility improvements for seniors with physical disabilities. Northern Independent Living Services now provides on-site assistance to tenants.

⁴⁰ Elderly Capital Assistance Program

The Riverview Manor model is a logical option for other social housing site, but at an average cost of \$87,240 per unit it is not likely to be a widely adopted strategy without substantial outside funding. Several other models exist for linking social housing buildings to assisted living services, including:⁴¹

- Co-location of services close to or within buildings**, with the services themselves provided by an outside agency;
- Service coordination**, where a full time employee or volunteer is located at the building and assists residents in accessing services and advocates on their behalf;
- Services and service coordination**, that includes a full-time service coordinator and contracted access to services;

Beyond the social housing stock, it would be important to ascertain where seniors are living at the neighborhood level. The concept of Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORC) has been developed in the United States to identify areas that were once mixed-age but have, over time, evolved to consist of a mostly senior population.⁴² Identifying NORC areas aids in service provision by maximizing whatever economies of scale might exist at the local level, either through service delivery or service location. In some instances the residents of these NORC areas have self-organized and partnered with service agencies to improve the range of service options.

5. Aboriginal persons living off reserve

In contrast to the District as a whole, the First Nations communities in Rainy River District are growing. Currently, providers such as the United Native Friendship Centre, the Atikokan Native Friendship Centre and the Gizhewaadiz-iwin Health Access Center provide a range of services related to housing and homelessness, including emergency assistance, food banks and assistance with mental health and addiction issues. Meanwhile, Urban Native Housing authorities are some of the few organizations adding new units to the area. Aboriginal persons living off reserve also have access to mainstream services, although it was identified through consultations that navigating the broader social service system is challenging. Consultations also revealed that poverty and mental illness are continuing issues for this population, and the need for domestic violence services is high. Racism towards Aboriginal people was cited multiple times as a barrier to housing in the private market.

The ethnicity of people accessing homelessness services in Rainy River District is not currently captured, but studies of homelessness populations in other Canadian jurisdictions indicates that Aboriginal people are over-represented in the homeless population. As Table 39 shows, the proportion of homeless people who are Aboriginal is high, even in communities where Aboriginal people make up a small percentage of the population:

Table 39: Aboriginal People as Percent of Homeless Population

Municipality	Aboriginal People (% of total population)	Homeless Aboriginals (% of total homeless population)
Hamilton ⁴³	1.3%	20%
Vancouver ⁴⁴	2.0%	27%
Calgary ⁴⁵	2.5%	16%
Red Deer ⁴⁶	4.4%	44%

41 HHS & HUD. (2006) Inventory of Affordable Housing Plus Services Initiatives for Low- and Modest-Income Seniors.

42 HHS & HUD. (2006) Inventory of Affordable Housing Plus Services Initiatives for Low- and Modest-Income Seniors.

43 St. Michael's Hospital. (n.d.) Homelessness in Canadian Cities. Centre for Research on Inner City Health.

44 Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness. (2012) One Step Forward: Results of the 2011 Metro Vancouver Homeless Count.

45 Calgary Homeless Foundation. (2012) Winter 2012 Point-in-Time Count Report.

46 City of Red Deer. (2012) Red Deer Point In Time [PIT] Homeless Count 2012.

Additionally, these studies have found that Aboriginal people who are homeless have higher needs than non-Aboriginal people, with higher rates of police detention and sleeping rough.⁴⁷ Aboriginal people experiencing homelessness are also more likely to be younger on average, to be female, and to come from families that are homeless.⁴⁸ The presence of nearby First Nation's communities may help to mitigate the impact of homelessness for Aboriginal people in Rainy River District, but Aboriginal people who are homeless cope with the same challenges as others who are homeless. These challenges include low income and chronic health problems, including mental health and addiction concerns.

6. Victims of Domestic Violence

A shelter for female victims of domestic violence is located in Atikokan. The Women's Shelter of Hope maintains 10 beds for emergency shelter, and operates a second-stage housing program called New Horizon's. Domestic violence was repeatedly noted as one of the main pathways to homelessness in Rainy River District. The Women's Shelter of Hope offers a vital service but its location is problematic, as there is no equivalent shelter in the west end of the District. Efforts to mitigate this have involved volunteer drivers or transportation by police, as well as finding temporary accommodation while accompanied by a volunteer. Additionally, no dedicated emergency shelter exists for male victims of domestic violence. Women who do become homeless will have high service needs. These individuals are vulnerable to sexual and physical abuse, and may have significant mental health issues.⁴⁹

7. Service access integration

Service providers in Rainy River District are highly collaborative. The positive nature of this cooperation was a consistent theme throughout the consultations, although opportunities for improvement were identified. Cooperation amongst front line staff is very high, but considered less extensive at the executive level. Staff demonstrated genuine willingness to collaborate with other providers when responding to immediate situations, but the overall strategic direction of the service system is not obvious.

There is a clear need in Rainy River District for an improved process to link clients to services. Although service providers are committed to a "No Wrong Door" approach, this is not formalized. There are several models of coordinated intake and assessment, each designed to link the right client to the right service, at the right time. Two prominent models include:

Single location central intake, where one site performs intake, screening and assessment function, as well as controlling client admission to programs.

Multiple location uniform intake, where every participating agency uses standardized intake, assessment, and referral procedures and tools. This model is often used in conjunction with a HMIS application that allows for shared data collection and reporting.

47 t. Michael's Hospital. (n.d.) Homelessness in Canadian Cities. Centre for Research on Inner City Health; Calgary Homeless Foundation. (2012) Winter 2012 Point-in-Time Count Report.

48 Homeless Count; City of Red Deer. (2012) Red Deer Point In Time [PIT] Homeless Count 2012.

49 Arangua, L., Andersen, R., & Gelberg, A. (2005) The Health Circumstances of Homeless Women in the United States. *International Journal of Mental Health*, vol. 34, no. 2, Summer 2005; Roman, N. (2011) Domestic Violence Housing First Symposium: Building on Our Past, Learning as We Go: Keynote Remarks. Conference of the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

In either model an integrated system will include several key elements:

- **A prescreen tool** that will quickly assess the client's intensity of need;
- **Diversion resources** that can be used to prevent a client from becoming homeless without accessing emergency housing services – in this case, stays in motels. Diversion may include referral to a community legal clinic, a meeting with a landlord or help strategizing a way to find housing. It may also include paying rent arrears to avoid eviction. Diversion efforts are typically captured by existing prevention programs, although with a higher focus on find other means to resolve the housing crisis.
- **An assessment tool** for those clients unable to secure their own housing after a certain period of time. The assessment tool will provide a level of acuity for the client and lead to a referral to other services.

Integration of intake and assessment is consistent with the direction taken in other sectors of service delivery. The local Community Care Access Centres already provide this type of function, and the newly created Development Services Ontario streamlines access to services for adults with developmental disabilities. Many communities have adopted this type of process in their housing and homelessness system as a means of increasing the effectiveness of their funding and reducing duplication in services.

It will be essential to move the focus of housing and homelessness services in Rainy River District from independent programs to a more integrated approach that is outcome based and solution focused. Such a model ensures the alignment of services and interventions to focus on housing stability and solutions to homelessness. Alignment and collaboration will improve the 4 A's of evidence-informed housing and homelessness service provision:

Access – there has to be clearly defined, advertised places where individuals and families call and/or physically go to get help;

Assess – using a valid assessment tool, the needs of the household are understood – both the presence of an issue and the severity (acuity) of the issue;

Assign – based upon the information gathered in the assessment, the household is connected to the program best equipped to help them;

Accountability – service providers must perform the functions that they advertise that they do. Data is used to track the outputs and outcomes of the process in order to make refinements as necessary.

In an effective integrated service delivery model, households or individuals who require assistance, or are homeless or at-risk of homelessness have access to the supports and services that will assist them in attaining housing stability. In order to determine the most appropriate intervention for a resident or household, assessment of their needs begins with a universal screening to determine housing status and eligibility for resources. Based on a common assessment process of a resident's needs, a coordinated referral can be assigned to a partner agency for the completion of a housing plan, provision of financial assistance and/or case management. An integrated service model that operates on a performance measurement framework and outcome-based funding ensures increased accountability for the outcomes achieved, the approaches developed and the solutions created to overcome barriers for residents' stability. Investments towards integrated technologies such as a Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS) will provide monitoring tools for accountability.

Examples of prescreen and assessment tools are provided in Appendix C. A model intake and assessment process is provided in Appendix D.

8. Data and Information Gathering

Many service providers collect data of some sort, but the collection and reporting is fragmented. In many cases the data collection is done in response to requirements of funders, but is not routinely shared with community partners. Where data is sent to the Rainy River DSSAB by its service providers, there are questions about its reliability and if service providers are using the same process to input their data. Reliable and timely data on services and outcomes is especially critical because of the lack information from other sources. With no CMHC or reliable long-form Census data to draw on, the District is limited in its ability to gain knowledge about its housing and homeless situation.

9. Geographic Challenges

For many residents in Rainy River District, access to services is constrained by distance. The sole shelter for female victims of domestic violence is in Atikokan, an hour and a half drive from Fort Frances and over three hours for those in the Town of Rainy River; shelter statistics indicate that crisis calls to the shelter come from throughout the District.

For residents who are in need of services in Thunder Bay, there is a thrice-weekly private coach service that travels from Fort Frances to the City. Although this service is invaluable to seniors and those unable to drive, it requires first travelling to Fort Frances and staying in a hotel in Thunder Bay.

As is the situation in most rural areas of Canada, transportation limitations further exacerbate individuals and families being able to access the right supports at the right time to ensure homelessness prevention and long-term housing stability. All service delivery planning must take the challenges of geography and limited transportation options into account.

3. Strategic Targets and Objectives

Seven Strategic Targets have been identified, each with its own set of goals and recommended measures. These targets and objectives are intended to address housing and homelessness needs for all residents of Rainy River District, but issues related to accessibility, victims of domestic violence and Aboriginal peoples living off reserve have been given specific targets.

The primary solution to homelessness is housing, and any strategic planning must recognize that there is a shortage of affordable housing that is accessible to people with very low incomes, particularly if they face additional barriers such as accessibility, substance use or health issues. The need for more affordable housing was heard frequently during the community consultations and was identified as a priority for ending housing instability and homelessness in Rainy River District. No solutions to homelessness can exist without a focus on guaranteeing a sufficient supply of safe, permanent and affordable housing. Based on this, the strategic targets and objective provided below discuss both goals of increasing affordable housing options and ensuring that communities can responding appropriately to households who find themselves homeless or in a housing crisis.

1) Strategic Target: Improved system access and prioritization

1a) Objective: Build on existing links between community partners at the executive level

Recommended Measures:

- a. Consolidate multi-sectorial meetings into a Housing Action Task Force that will bring together executives and managers from a range of community partners to provide strategic direction to the service system. In addition to service providers in the housing and homelessness system, membership should include representatives from the health and justice sectors. It is expected that Task Force members will be those with the decision-making powers to improve policies, protocols and practices to ensure that individuals and families receive the support they need in a strength-based, solution focused manner.

1b) Objective: Use coordinated intake and assessment to direct clients to the services they need

Recommended Measures:

- a. Adopt integrated intake for Rainy River DSSAB services.
- b. Develop a standardized, decentralized intake and assessment process that will:
 - Provide the same prescreen regardless of where the client enters the system;
 - Collect information from the client once;
 - Direct the client to the right service based on their need if they are unable to secure their own housing.The common prescreen and assessment process should be piloted with Rainy River DSSAB and at least two other community partners for the first year. Adoption of the common process will become a requirement to receive DSSAB funding thereafter.
- c. Develop a discharge protocol for clients who exiting the care or custody of Child and Protective Services, health facilities or justice facilities and have no fixed address to which the client can return.

1c) Objective: Make decisions that are informed by local data by improving information gathering and sharing

Recommended Measures:

- a. Develop a common information release form and collection protocol that will allow sharing of information captured by the coordinated prescreen and assessment
- b. Adopt a Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS) as a primary data collection and reporting tool. Pilot the use of the HMIS tool internally, and then make its use mandatory for community partners receiving Rainy River DSSAB funding. Perform regular Quality Assurance audits to maintain the integrity of the data collection process.
- c. Updates from HMIS data should be provided to the Housing Action Task Force on a quarterly basis.
- d. At a minimum, establish a common set of system metrics for measuring system activity and performance, as outlined in Appendix E.

1d) Objective: Maximize the impact of spending resources in order to end homelessness

Recommend Measures:

- a. The allocation of CHPI funding should reflect provincial priorities of ending homelessness, with proportionally more of the funds redistributed to housing with supports and emergency housing. This should be done with the recognition that emergency housing options are quite expensive and must be tightly tied to a rapid connection to the coordinated intake and assessment process to ensure an immediate return to housing with the supports required to increase stability.
- b. To ensure that prevention funds have the greatest impact, direct funds to those with the highest and most immediate needs. Prevention funds and supports should again be directed to those households that would become homeless if an intervention does not occur, and therefore the common intake and assessment process will prove essential in identifying households that can be diverted from the homeless serving system, even temporarily, and those that will enter it if no supports are provided.
This can be accomplished by:
 - i. Decreasing and eventually ending the use of CHPI funding for food banks, and redistributing this funding to rent and utility arrears assistance. Although initially started as an emergency response in the 1980s, food banks have become entrenched in many communities. Unfortunately, food banks are not a focused means of providing assistance to people experiencing housing crises.
 - ii. Unless identified as requiring immediate assistance from CHPI based on the coordinated intake and assessment acuity results, and with continued priority being provided to victims of domestic violence, ensure that all possible diversion strategies have been systematically exhausted. For example, where appropriate, require households to seek assistance from the Northwest Community Legal Clinic regarding their tenancy issues before being eligible for rent arrears assistance.
- c. To ensure that housing with supports funds have the greatest impact, direct funds to programs that employ either a Rapid Re-housing or Housing First model. Adopt a target of funding five individuals in Housing First programs, and 10 individuals in Rapid Re-housing programs. Adjust these targets as more specific local information becomes available.
- d. To ensure that emergency shelter funds have the greatest impact, prioritize funding for emergency shelter solutions that serve youth.

- e. Recognizing that the most frequent reason for eviction is non-payment of rent, the use of a third party rental payment directly to the landlord may prove to be an effective homelessness prevention strategy for many households. Frequently advertise the availability of direct-pay to landlords and utility companies for those tenants receiving Ontario Works and living in DSSAB-owned or managed housing. Although the option to select direct-pay should always be voluntary, a consultation concerning the advantages and availability of direct-pay should be mandatory for those social housing tenants who are seeking assistance with rental arrears.

2) Strategic Target: Maximization of existing housing stock

2a) Objective: Maintain existing social housing stock through planned renovations and rehabilitations

Recommended Measures:

- a. Implement internal technology upgrades to facilitate the development of an asset management plan that will direct repairs, renovations and rehabilitations over the next ten years.
- b. To control costs for both the DSSAB and tenants over time, ensure that rehabilitations integrate features to improve energy efficiency.
- c. Commit to a target that caps the percentage of units (i.e. 5%) that are vacant due to repairs by 2024.
- d. Give serious consideration to the need to debenture for social housing capital replacement and repairs. Funds generated through debenture should first be applied to the maintenance and adaptation of existing social housing stock, before considering the construction of new stock.

2b) Objective: Use existing social housing stock in innovative ways to meet community needs

Recommended Measures:

- a. Maximize usage of vacant units in the social housing stock by making such units available to other service providers. As a matter of process, the Rainy River DSSAB should first go to its own waiting list to fill vacant units. Where there is no waiting list or no interested prospective tenants, the units should next be made available to other providers. This will entail a standing agreement with other service providers to ensure that these units are targeted to clients who are being supported because the coordinated assessment process identified that they would have become/remained homeless without intervention, and are therefore being supported by community partners to maintain housing stability.

2c) Objective: Enhance the capacity of the non-profit housing sector

Recommended Measures:

- a. Consider investing in the development of a toolkit for non-profit housing providers that provides guidance on financial management, Board management, regulatory requirements and other activities critical to effective housing provision.

3) Strategic Target: Close housing gaps through new development and redevelopment

3a) Objective: Expand the range of emergency shelter options for youth

Recommended Measures:

- a. Working with community partners, explore the possibility of using CHPI Emergency Shelter funds to retain at least one vacant DSSAB-owned unit to act as an emergency shelter for homeless youth, when all diversionary strategies have been exhausted.

3b) Objective: Expand the diversity in Rainy River District's housing stock, both in terms of housing type and tenure.

Recommended Measures:

- a. Improve collaboration and information sharing between the DSSAB and the local planning committees/authorities.
- b. Encourage local municipalities to adopt permissive secondary suite policies that will allow the development of new rental units where services exist.

3c) Objective: Act as a local champion for the development of innovative funding mechanisms

Recommended Measures:

- a. Work proactively in the Northern Ontario Service Delivery Association to develop new ways to finance housing construction.
- b. Encourage local municipalities to explore the feasibility of creating a Housing Development Corporation under Section 203 of the Ontario Municipal Act that will have access to a broader range of financing options.

4) Strategic Target: Meeting the Current and Future Needs of Seniors and Others with Accessibility Needs

4a) Objective: Expand the range of assisted living options

Recommended Measures:

- a. Working with the North West LHIN, prioritize modifications to DSSAB-owned housing that will facilitate the expansion of assisted living in the District.
- b. Ensure that the coordinated intake and assessment process is well integrated with the local CCAC and other services that provide assistance to those with disabilities.
- c. Take a lead role in advocating for enhanced seniors services from the North West LHIN and provincial government.

4b) Objective: Maximize the impact of capital funding resources by helping people with accessibility needs stay in their homes

Recommended Measures:

- a. Continue to focus IAH money on Ontario Renovates, with an increased focus on funding accessibility improvements that will allow people to stay in their homes longer.
- b. Work with local advocacy groups to develop a list of reputable contractors that can be provided to successful tenants.

4c) Objective: Provide services in an accessible manner

Recommended Measures:

- a. As ongoing procedure, perform accessibility assessments to ensure key information and processes are accessible to clients with disabilities.
- b. Make compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Customer Service Standard a requirement for service providers receiving DSSAB funding.

5) Strategic Target: Enhancement of Advocacy and Education

5a) Objective: Advocate for better funding commitments from the province, both individually and in concert with other community and regional partners

Recommended Measures:

- a. Consider the creation of a Board Political Action Committee, similar to what exists on the Thunder Bay DSSAB, with a specific mandate of communicating Rainy River District's unique needs to other orders of government and other agencies.
- b. Request that the provincial government continue providing capital funding after the expiry of the IAH program.
- c. Continue to advocate for new financing sources that recognize the unique challenges of Northern DSSABs.

5b) Objective: Emphasize public education and communication

Recommended Measures:

- a. Use the Rainy River DSSAB website as a communication tool that provides an inventory of services and contact information.
- b. Continue to educate the community about the realities of homelessness and housing need in Rainy River District.

6) Strategic Target: Meet the Needs of Aboriginal People Living Off Reserve

6a) Objective: Continue to include First Nations organizations in the planning of housing and homelessness services

Recommended Measures:

- a. Ensure the inclusion of First Nations representatives on the Housing Action Task Force. Representation should include, but not be limited to, the Atikokan Native Friendship Centre, the United Native Friendship Centre, Chiefs Secretariat and the Fort Frances Native Urban Wahkaihanun Corporation.

6b) Objective: Ensure Aboriginal people living off reserve have equal access to housing

Recommended Measures:

- a. Working with relevant partners, develop educational material for both landlords and tenants on illegal discriminatory barriers to housing access.

7) Strategic Target: Meet the Needs of Victims of Domestic Violence

7a) Objective: Expand the range of emergency shelter options for female victims of domestic violence in the west end of the District

Recommended Measures:

- a. Working with community partners, explore the possibility of using CHPI Emergency Shelter funds to retain at least one vacant DSSAB-owned unit to act as an emergency response option for female victims of domestic violence. Again, immediate access a re-housing support should be provided to ensure that victims of domestic violence return to stabilized housing as soon as possible with the case management and safety supports they require to increase their housing and life stability.

7b) Objective: Help victims of domestic violence find stable housing after leaving emergency shelter

Recommended Measures:

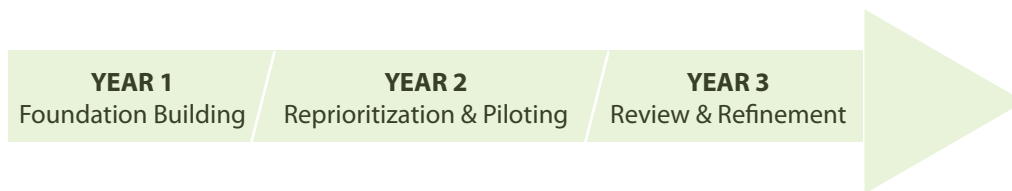
- a. To ensure that victims of domestic violence achieve stable housing after leaving emergency shelter, explore the development of a discharge protocol that will link the individual with community service agencies and housing with supports. Adherence to a Housing First approach will again ensure that victims of domestic violence are connected with safe, affordable and permanent housing options as soon as possible.
- b. Continue to support programs similar to the New Horizon's program at the Atikokan Women's Shelter of Hope that have proven to be an important resource for women and children fleeing violence.

4. Three-year Implementation Plan

The overarching recommendation of this Plan is that Rainy River District should invest in change and spend on impact. Investing in change means adapting process and funding priorities to effectively deliver services. Spending on impact means investing in service models that have demonstrated success and positive outcomes. The targets below represent the most important changes needed in Rainy River District to launch the 10-Year Plan.

The highest priority recommendations have been selected as targets for the Implementation Plan. Although all of the above recommendations are important, the following goals are seen as essential to improving the housing and homelessness system in Rainy River District. In other words, if these targets are not met it will be difficult to realize the benefits of the other recommendations.

The Three-year Implementation Plan consists of the following components:



Year 1:

First year activities are intended to put in place enhanced organizational and system capacities. Launching of the Housing Action Task Force, implementation of a HMIS application, and development of a standardized prescreen and assessment tool will all occur in this first year. Additionally, the DSSAB will have completed a capital repair/replacement plan for its social housing stock.

Year 2:

The second year is a time of piloting new initiatives, along with reprioritizing funding commitments. The new standardized piloting and assessment process will be piloted in 2015 with two participating service agencies, as will the launch of the HMIS application. Additionally, the CHPI funds will be reprioritized to a Housing First approach, with greater emphasis on housing with supports, diversion and targeted emergency shelter that is closely tied to supports. Provided there is sufficient interest from service providers and Service Agreements are finalized, the practice of making vacant DSSAB housing available to clients from other agencies will begin in Year 2.

Year 3:

By the third year Rainy River District will have a standardized prescreen and assessment process, a system-wide data collection system and a Housing Action Task Force that is effectively managing relationships between providers and systems. Vacant units are being utilized by service providers to provide stable housing to clients, and the District has expanded the range of housing with supports and emergency housing. At this point it will be necessary to perform an analysis of progress made in Year 2 and identify successes and challenges. Working with the HMIS data, the Rainy River DSSAB will be able to assess the state of implementation. Procedures and funding levels may need to be adjusted at this point to maintain consistency with the overall objectives of the Housing and Homelessness Plan.

RAINY RIVER DISTRICT SOCIAL SERVICE ADMINISTRATION BOARD
10-YEAR HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS PLAN

Target	Timeline	Ownership
Launch of Housing Action Task Force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convene first meeting by June 2014. Meet quarterly thereafter. 	DSSAB, Service Provider Partners, Health, Justice, Volunteer Sector
Implementation of coordinated intake and assessment process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select/develop prescreen and assessment tool by Q3 2014; Pilot the process with RRDSSAB and two other service providers, beginning in Q1 2015 and ending in Q4; Wide deployment of the process beginning Q1 of 2016. 	DSSAB, Service Provider Partners
Implementation of HMIS application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have system in place and staff trained by end of Q4 2014. 	DSSAB, Service Provider Partners
Implementation of system metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beginning recording using HMIS beginning Q1 2015. 	DSSAB, Service Provider Partners
Through CHPI funding creation of five rental assistance allocations for clients in Housing First programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beginning 2015, continuous from that point onward. 	DSSAB, Service Provider Partners
Through CHPI funding, the creation of 10 rental assistance allocations for clients in Rapid Re-housing programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beginning 2015, continuous from that point on. 	DSSAB, Service Provider Partners
Finalization of capital repair/replace-ment plan for DSSAB social housing stock, including priority list for units to be retrofitted for assisted living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete by Q4 2014. 	DSSAB
No more than the capped percentage of social housing stock vacant due to needed repairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin Q1 2015, with intention to reach target by 2024. 	DSSAB
Enter service agreements that will place clients in vacant social housing stock units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solicit interest from service providers Q1 of 2014; Negotiate service agreements with service provider Q3 of 2014; Implement Q1 of 2015. 	DSSAB, Service Provider Partners
Review HMIS data and gather feedback from service providers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of data and gather feedback by Q2 of 2017; Begin refinement of processes and funding in Q3 of 2017, with full implementation by the end of Q4. 	DSSAB, Service Provider Partners

Estimated Cost of Reaching Targets

Housing First and Rapid Re-housing Target

Canadian research has found that Housing First offers a substantial savings to a community. Homelessness, especially chronic homelessness, is paid for through the health, justice and social services system. Effective housing interventions reduce this usage and redirect it towards less expensive resources. The average annual cost of providing Housing First to a client is \$17,000, including the cost of housing and supports, but this is offset by a 54 percent reduction in service usage costs.⁵⁰ For the most intensive users, who are usually the targets for Housing First programs, the investment returned \$1.54 for every dollar of program costs.⁵¹

A possible model for the Rainy River DSSAB would provide rental assistance to a high acuity client in order to afford a private rental unit, in partnership with a service provider delivering case management services.

Table 40. Estimated Cost of HF and RRH Program in Rainy River District

Intervention	Number	Cost/person/year	Total Cost/year
Housing First	5	\$2,124.00*	\$10,620.00
Rapid Re-Housing	10	\$3,300.00**	\$33,000.00
Total yearly cost to RRDSSAB			\$43,620.00

* Based on subtracting the Maximum Shelter Allowance provided by ODSP from the average rental cost as indicated by NHS 2011. Cost is for a full year of rental assistance.

** Based on subtracting the Maximum Shelter Allowance provided by OW from the average rental cost as indicated by the NHS 2011. Cost is for up to 12 months of rental assistance.

Unit Retrofits to Reach Assisted Living Target

The North West LHIN projects 106 assisted living clients over the next twelve years. Eighty-eight of those units will be located in Atikokan, Emo and Fort Frances. The table below estimates the cost of retrofitting DSSAB units over the next 12 years, as a percentage of the 88-unit target.

Table 41. Estimated Cost of Unit Retrofits in Rainy River District

% of Target	Cost	Cost/year
10%	\$785,160	\$65,430
25%	\$1,919,280	\$159,940
50%	\$3,838,560	\$319,880

Estimated on the basis of an average construction cost of \$87,240 per unit.

Beyond Year Three

By the end of the third year, Rainy River District will have built the foundation for a renewed housing and homelessness system. The consistent implementation of this system will be the major objective in the years after the initial three-year implementation period. This will include, among other items, accurate and reliable data collection, the continued strengthening of relations amongst service providers, and continued emphasis on the principles of prevention and Housing First.

50 Mental Health Commission of Canada. (2012) At Home/Chez Soi Interim Report.

51 Mental Health Commission of Canada. (2012) At Home/Chez Soi Interim Report.

One of the key challenges in a ten-year plan is to maintain momentum and focus. Additionally, it is useful to establish discreet points where the lessons learned from the implementation of the Plan can be quickly fed back into the system to improve performance. To provide structure to the remaining seven years of the Plan, several milestones can be identified:

Mid-point review: 2018

Consistent with provincial direction, a mid-point review will be undertaken in year five (2018). The review will provide an opportunity to assess the implementation challenges and successes that have occurred in the two years since the end of the initial implementation plan. In addition to soliciting input from service providers, this would be an appropriate time to invite comment from members of the community.

Based on input from service providers and members of the public, along with information gleaned from collected data, refinements to the Plan can be made at this time.

Comprehensive Review: 2023

By 2023, the Rainy River DSSAB will be preparing to develop its second 10-Year Plan. At this point the DSSAB will perform a more detailed review of its successes and challenges over the previous several years of implementation. As the political, economic and demographic circumstances will have likely changed considerably by this time, the second 10-Year Plan will involve a new set of strategic targets and objectives.

Appendix A: Community Survey Results

A total of 46 responses were received to the Community Survey. The results are summarized below. Questions 10, 11 and 20 have been discarded due to no responses or high numbers of data entry errors.

Demographics of Survey Participants

The average age of respondents was 52, with the largest number of participants coming from the 40-49 cohort. The overwhelming majority of respondents (72%) were female, and 63 percent were married.

Q1: Survey participants by age cohort.

0-24	0
25-29	2
30-39	8
40-49	12
50-59	10
60-69	8
70-79	5
80 plus	1

Q2: Gender of survey participants

<i>What is your gender?</i>		
Answer Options	Response %	Response Count
Male	23.9%	11
Female	71.7%	33
Transgender	4.3%	2
answered question		46
skipped question		0

Q4: Family status of survey participants

<i>What is your family status?</i>		
Answer Options	Response %	Response Count
Single	21.7%	10
Separated	2.2%	1
Divorced	2.2%	1
Common law	10.9%	5
Married	63.0%	29
answered question		46
skipped question		0

Combined, participants from Atikokan and Fort Frances made up 91 percent of respondents.

Q3: Survey participants by community

Which community do you live in?

Answer Options	Response %	Response Count
Alberton	0.0%	0
Atikokan	21.7%	10
Chapple	2.2%	1
Dawson	0.0%	0
Emo	4.3%	2
Fort Frances	69.6%	32
La Vallee	2.2%	1
Lake of the Woods	0.0%	0
Morley	0.0%	0
Rainy River	0.0%	0
Rainy River (Unorganized)	0.0%	0
answered question		46
skipped question		0

Q5: Interest in affordable housing and homelessness

Tell us why you're interested in affordable housing and homelessness in Rainy River District. Please check all that apply:

Answer Options	Response %	Response Count
I have been homeless in the past in Rainy River District	2.2%	1
I am homeless right now	0.0%	0
I am struggling to afford housing in Rainy River District	4.3%	2
I have a friend or family member who is homeless in Rainy River District	6.5%	3
I have a friend or family member who is struggling to afford housing in Rainy River District	21.7%	10
I am a community member who is concerned about homelessness in Rainy River District	45.7%	21
I am a community member who is concerned about lack of affordable housing in Rainy River District	56.5%	26
I work for an agency or organization that helps people who are homeless or struggle to afford housing	47.8%	22
I volunteer for an agency or organization that helps people who are homeless or struggle to afford housing	6.5%	3
I am a municipal councilor in Rainy River District	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)	13.0%	6
answered question		46
skipped question		0

Other (please specify)

- I am concerned about the lack of assisted living accommodations
- I am involved in the ALAG?SALT groups
- Interested in affordable, independent, assisted living accomodation
- I have a family member and know of several others who require supported housing, particularly for seniors.
- Concerned about the unavailability of transitional/supportive housing for seniors prior to Long Term Care
- I work for an organization that works with individuals who struggle to find available and affordable housing.

Housing Situation of Survey Participants

Most survey respondents owned their homes, with a very small percent either renting or living in subsidized housing. Only one respondent indicated renting their own apartment and living on their own.

Q8: Housing situation

Do you currently live in housing that you rent or own?

Answer Options	Response %	Response Count
Yes	100.0%	45
No	0.0%	0
answered question		45
skipped question		1

Q9: Housing type

If you answered yes to Question 8, what best describes your housing situation?

Answer Options	Response %	Response Count
Own my home	88.9%	40
Own a mobile home	0.0%	0
Rent a mobile home	0.0%	0
Rent (house or apartment) with other roommates, paying market rent	0.0%	0
Rent (house or apartment) with other family members, paying market rent	4.4%	2
Live in subsidized housing	2.2%	1
Rented room	0.0%	0
Boarding house	0.0%	0
Long term care facility	0.0%	0
Group home with care	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)	4.4%	2
answered question		45
skipped question		1

Other
rent (house or apartment) on my own, paying market rent
Paying a mortgage on home- not yet owned

Most respondents indicated that had another adult living in their home, while 38 percent had children under 18. Almost a quarter shared their home with a person 65 or older.

Q12: Household characteristics of survey participants

Are there other persons living in your household? Please indicate how many:

Answer Options	Response %	Response Count
Children under 18:	38.2%	13
Other adults (18-64 years old)	70.6%	24
Seniors (over 65 years old):	23.5%	8
Persons with cognitive or physical disabilities:	5.9%	2
answered question		34
skipped question		12

Most participants did not report being in housing need. Most indicated that their housing was right for their family size and only in need of minor repairs, with nearly two-thirds spending less than 30 percent of their income on housing. Nevertheless, 35 percent of respondents indicated that they were spending more than a third of their income on housing, and 11 percent reported spending more than 50 percent.

Q13: Housing suitability for family size

Would you say that your housing is:

Answer Options	Response %	Response Count
Just right for my household size	64.4%	29
Too small for my household size	2.2%	1
More than big enough for my household size	33.3%	15
I am not currently housed	0.0%	0
answered question		45
skipped question		1

Q15: Housing in need of repairs

Would you say your housing unit is:

Answer Options	Response %	Response Count
In need of minor repairs	57.5%	23
In need of moderate repairs	27.5%	11
In need of major repairs	10.0%	4
I am not currently housed	5.0%	2
answered question		40
skipped question		6

Q14: Amount of income spent on housing

<i>How much of your monthly income do you spend on your housing (rent or mortgage)?</i>		
Answer Options	Response %	Response Count
Under 30% of my monthly income	64.4%	29
Over 30% of my monthly income	4.4%	2
Over 30%, but under 50% of my monthly income	20.0%	9
Over 50% of my monthly income	11.1%	5
I am not currently housed	0.0%	0
answered question		45
skipped question		1

A very small percentage of participants had ever experienced homelessness, but those who responded indicated that the episode was quite lengthy.

Q6: Experience of homelessness

<i>Have you experienced homelessness before? (Including couch surfing or staying in a car, at a motel or a shelter)</i>		
Answer Options	Response %	Response Count
Yes	4.4%	2
No	95.6%	43
answered question		45
skipped question		1

Q7: Length of time spent homeless

<i>If you answered yes to Question 6, how long did that episode last?</i>	
years	
8 months	

Employment and Income Characteristics

Three quarters of participants were employed, with a large majority in full-time positions. Close to a third of respondents had a total household income of over \$90,000 a year, with another third making under \$50,000 a year. An overwhelming majority were receiving money from Old Age Security and/or the Canada Pension Plan.

Q16: Employment of participants

<i>Are you currently employed?</i>		
Answer Options	Response %	Response Count
Yes	77.8%	35
No	22.2%	10
answered question		45
skipped question		1

Q17: Employment type of participants

<i>If yes, is your employment:</i>		
Answer Options	Response %	Response Count
Full-time	82.9%	29
Part-time	11.4%	4
Contract full-time	0.0%	0
Contract part-time	5.7%	2
Informal/day labour	0.0%	0
answered question		35
skipped question		11

Q18: Income range of participants

<i>What is your total annual household income range?</i>		
Answer Options	Response %	Response Count
Less than \$20,000 per year	4.9%	2
\$20,000 - \$30,0000 per year	7.3%	3
\$30,000 - \$50,000 per year	17.1%	7
\$50,000 - \$70,000 per year	22.0%	9
\$70,000 - \$90,000 per year	19.5%	8
More than \$90,000 per year	29.3%	12
answered question		41
skipped question		5

Q19: Income sources

Do you get income from any of the following sources? (check all that apply)

Answer Options	Response %	Response Count
Ontario Works	0.0%	0
Ontario Disability Support Program	7.1%	1
Employment Insurance	0.0%	0
Spousal/child support payments	0.0%	0
Child tax credits	14.3%	2
Canada Pension Plan	78.6%	11
Old Age Security Payments	57.1%	8
Guaranteed Income Supplement	14.3%	2
WSIB	0.0%	0
answered question		14
skipped question		32

Accessibility of Services

Of the participants who responded to the question, most indicated that they were accessing mental health and addiction services, along with meal programs and support services for seniors and victims of domestic violence. Mental health services were the most highly used in the last five years, followed in equal measure by emergency shelter, emergency financial assistance, food banks, meal programs, addiction treatment and supports for victims of domestic violence. Close to a third indicated that access to services was very poor or poor, while 37.2 percent said access was good or very good. Slightly over a third had no opinion.

Q21: Services accessed by participants

Are you currently accessing any of the following services? (please check all that apply)

Answer Options	Response %	Response Count
Emergency shelter	0.0%	0
Emergency financial assistance (for example, utility assistance)	0.0%	0
Food bank	0.0%	0
Meal program	20.0%	1
Support program designed for youth	0.0%	0
Support program designed for seniors	20.0%	1
Support program designed for victims of domestic violence	20.0%	1
Support program for people with physical or developmental disabilities	0.0%	0
Mental health services	40.0%	2
Addiction treatment	0.0%	0
Home care	40.0%	2
Services for victims	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)	40.0%	2
answered question		5
skipped question		41

Other

None of the above
Community food box - pay for

Q22: Services accessed by participants in the last five years

Have you accessed any of the following services in the last five years? (please check all that apply)

Answer Options	Response %	Response Count
Emergency shelter	20.0%	2
Emergency financial assistance (for example, utility assistance)	20.0%	2
Food bank	20.0%	2
Meal program	20.0%	2
Support program designed for youth	0.0%	0
Support program designed for seniors	10.0%	1
Support program designed for victims of domestic violence	20.0%	2
Support program for people with physical or developmental disabilities	10.0%	1
Mental health services	70.0%	7
Addiction treatment	20.0%	2
Home care	10.0%	1
Services for victims	10.0%	1
Other (please specify)	20.0%	2
answered question		10
skipped question		36

Other

Have helped people in service access these services

None of the above

Q23: Assessment of availability of services

How would you describe the availability of services?

Answer Options	Response %	Response Count
Very poor	2.3%	1
Poor	25.6%	11
Good	27.9%	12
Very good	9.3%	4
No opinion	34.9%	15
answered question		43
skipped question		3

Community Perceptions of Need

Respondents assessed low-income seniors and people with compromised mental health as the groups most at risk of homelessness, followed by single parents with children and youth. A very large majority (83.7%) indicated that homelessness is either a moderate or major issue in Rainy River District, while 95.4 percent thought the same of affordable housing. Members of the public were thought to have a somewhat negative view of people who are homeless, while public officials were considered to have no prevailing view or a negative view.

Q24: Most at risk of homelessness

In your opinion, the group that is most at risk of homelessness in Rainy River District is:

Answer Options	Response %	Response Count
Seniors who are low income	20.9%	9
Youth (16-24)	11.6%	5
Single parents with children	16.3%	7
People who have physical or developmental disabilities	2.3%	1
People who have addictions	7.0%	3
People who have compromised mental health	23.3%	10
Single men	2.3%	1
Single women	0.0%	0
Women escaping abusive relationships	4.7%	2
Other (please specify)	11.6%	5
answered question		43
skipped question		3

Other (please specify)

Everyone- Homelessness doesnt discriminate- Their is a lack of housing everywhere in this community
Families with large number of children
seniors requiring support but not requiring/able to get placement
All of the above
low income families

Q25: Perception of need, homelessness

In your opinion, homelessness is...

Answer Options	Response %	Response Count
Not an issue in Rainy River District	0.0%	0
A small issue in Rainy River District	9.3%	4
A moderate issue in Rainy River District	65.1%	28
A major issue in Rainy River District	18.6%	8
The biggest issue in Rainy River District	0.0%	0
I don't have enough information to form an opinion	7.0%	3
answered question		43
skipped question		3

Q26: Perception of need, affordable housing

In your opinion, affordable housing is...

Answer Options	Response %	Response Count
Not an issue in Rainy River District	0.0%	0
A small issue in Rainy River District	2.3%	1
A moderate issue in Rainy River District	41.9%	18
A major issue in Rainy River District	53.5%	23
The biggest issue in Rainy River District	0.0%	0
I don't have enough information to form an opinion	2.3%	1
answered question		43
skipped question		3

Q27: Attitudes of public

How would you describe the attitudes of people in Rainy River District toward developing affordable housing and homelessness services?

Answer Options	Response %	Response Count
Very negative	2.4%	1
Somewhat negative	41.5%	17
Neither negative nor positive	12.2%	5
Somewhat positive	19.5%	8
Very positive	9.8%	4
People in our community are not aware that homelessness is an issue	14.6%	6
Comments		4
answered question		41
skipped question		5

Comments

i dont think people who have the powers to make this happen care to make it happen I have often heard from people that if we have a shelter or emergency housing it will bring people here that we dont want in our community. This is horrible as its our community members who are homeless

Not a top of mind or visible issue here as it is in urban communities

Depends on the group you talk to...many do not see a homeless problem

rent geared to income housing is not being fully utilised as homes are not being repaired and made ready in a timely manner.

Q28: Attitudes of public officials

How would you describe the attitudes of elected officials in Rainy River District toward developing affordable housing and homelessness services?

Answer Options	Response %	Response Count
Very negative	9.8%	4
Somewhat negative	29.3%	12
Neither negative nor positive	34.1%	14
Somewhat positive	17.1%	7
Very positive	0.0%	0
Elected officials in our community are not aware that homelessness is an issue	9.8%	4
Comments		6
answered question		41
skipped question		5

Comments
See above comments
social housing is in the outter most parts of town and put in industrial areas - segregated
Ignorance.
Town Council has their heads in the sand when it comes to looking ahead to the future of our community with regard to the increasing senior population.
Some communities have elected officials who are very positive - Fort Frances elected officials are very negative.
Elected officials likely unaware

A majority of participants rated the availability of homelessness and affordable housing services as poor, and a plurality identified financial limitations as the biggest barriers to affordable housing in Rainy River District.

Q29: Perceived availability of homelessness and affordable housing services

How would you describe the availability of services for people who are homeless or who need affordable housing?

Answer Options	Response %	Response Count
Very poor	7.3%	3
Poor	53.7%	22
I don't have an opinion	19.5%	8
Good	19.5%	8
Very good	0.0%	0
Comments		2
answered question		41
skipped question		5

<i>Comments</i>
I would say moderate
The services are good, but the availability of housing is poor.

Q30: Perceived barriers to affordable housing

<i>In your opinion, what is the biggest barrier to affordable housing in Rainy River District?</i>		
Answer Options	Response %	Response Count
Lack of awareness that affordable housing is needed	22.0%	9
Local opposition to some housing types (e.g., group homes or apartment buildings)	12.2%	5
Regulations and by-laws that restrict the types of housing that can be built	2.4%	1
Financial barriers that prevent non-profit organizations and private developers from building new affordable housing	36.6%	15
Lack of services that help people stay housed	9.8%	4
There are no barriers to affordable housing in Rainy River District	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)	17.1%	7
answered question		41
skipped question		5

<i>Other (please specify)</i>
see comments from # 28-
i think it is financial barriers and lack of services to support people to remain housed
lack of vision
The short sighted vision & ignorance of Fort Frances elected officials.
Apathy on the part of elected officials
Families may have developed a poor reputation for how they choose to maintain the condition of the home as in 28. rent geared to income housing is not making homes available quickly enough.

Community Priorities

Housing with supports and more publicly owned subsidized housing were considered the highest priorities, while housing with supports and seniors housing were considered the second-highest priorities. Finally, more affordable rental housing and educating the public about affordable housing and homelessness need were considered the third highest priorities.

Q31: Most important priority

What is the MOST important priority in Rainy River District to improve the provision of affordable housing and homelessness services (choose only one)?

Answer Options	Response %	Response Count
More rent supplements to help people access housing	4.7%	2
More publicly-owned subsidized housing	14.0%	6
A resource centre that offers assistance to find housing and a listing of affordable rental housing	4.7%	2
More affordable ownership housing	0.0%	0
Housing with supports (including permanent assisted living and permanent supportive housing)	46.5%	20
Accessible housing for people with disabilities	0.0%	0
Educating the community about the need for affordable housing and homelessness services	4.7%	2
Housing for seniors	9.3%	4
Addiction services that help people remain in their housing	2.3%	1
Mental health services that help people remain in their housing	7.0%	3
Other (please specify)	7.0%	3
answered question		43
skipped question		3

Other (please specify)

Emergency shelter with a full time community case worker for individuals accessing this service

Both Addiction and Mental Health are equal priorities.

getting all rent geared to income housing available for rent.

Q32: Second highest priority

The NEXT MOST important priority (choose only one)?

Answer Options	Response %	Response Count
More publicly-owned subsidized housing	7.0%	3
A resource centre that offers assistance to find housing and a listing of affordable rental housing	7.0%	3
More affordable ownership housing	4.7%	2
More affordable rental housing	9.3%	4
Housing with supports (including permanent assisted living and permanent supportive housing)	25.6%	11
Accessible housing for people with disabilities	0.0%	0
Educating the community about the need for affordable housing and homelessness services	7.0%	3
Housing for seniors	16.3%	7
Addiction services that help people remain in their housing	4.7%	2
Mental health services that help people remain in their housing	7.0%	3
More rent supplements to help people access housing	4.7%	2
<i>Other (please specify)</i>	7.0%	3
answered question		43
skipped question		3

Other (please specify)

Supportive Housing for Seniors

Addiction and Mental Health issues are equal priorities.

more housing for seniors

Q33: Third highest priority

The THIRD MOST important priority (choose only one)?

Answer Options	Response %	Response Count
More publicly-owned subsidized housing	2.4%	1
A resource centre that offers assistance to find housing and a listing of affordable rental housing	0.0%	0
More affordable ownership housing	4.8%	2
More affordable rental housing	23.8%	10
Housing with supports (including permanent assisted living and permanent supportive housing)	11.9%	5
Accessible housing for people with disabilities	0.0%	0
Educating the community about the need for affordable housing and homelessness services	16.7%	7
Housing for seniors	14.3%	6
Addiction services that help people remain in their housing	2.4%	1
Mental health services that help people remain in their housing	14.3%	6
More rent supplements to help people access housing	4.8%	2
Other (please specify)	4.8%	2
answered question		42
skipped question		4

Other (please specify)

Housing for single people

Coordination of services

Open Response

Participants were asked to provide any additional information they considered important.

Q34: Open response

What is MOST important for us to know about homelessness and/or affordable housing in Rainy River District?

More housing is needed, and supportive housing to help keep people in their homes. Also many persons in housing should have the rent paid up front to eliminate eviction causing more homelessness when rent is not paid. Single tenant housing is needed. Young people have different needs and live different lives than older and family tenants.

It needs to be addressed with the support of other agencies. Or a plan created outside of local agencies and a new facility brought here. Who else can run this shelter or hold this program under their roof besides DSSAB? Can it be its own program apart from DSSAB? or will it be housed through them? I think the rate of success with this program lies with who runs it.

There is to great a gap between independent living and long term care. We need more options for those who need assisted living.

location (needs to be central)and availability are lacking, supportive housing models work well-

Many Seniors need supports and cannot function in their own homes any longer. moving them to assisted living would help them & free up some much needed accommodations in Atikokan.

No support from local/municipal government. Need more awareness and support from all communities. Affordable housing is needed!

People tend to ignore the future and what they will require in assistance. How do you get people to think about their and their loved one's future needs before it's too late!

future demographics of seniors & increasing number of people afflicted by Alzhiemers

That ALL sectors (political, social, health, commercial, grass roots people, etc. - Aboriginal/Non-Aboriginal) work together in partnership to develop a long range, fiscally responsible, strategic plan that meets the growing housing needs of seniors in the Rainy River District.

We need affordable, independent /assisted living in the district

We really need assisted living here. It is very sad that people are leaving because they need the assistance but it isn't available here.

I don't believe it's a chronic issue, but it tends to affect families with large number of children

low cost housing for single people. Most housing is for families and seniors.

A human face has to be put on this issue so that it can be recognized, otherwise it will not resonate in the community

Seniors need support to remain in their homes!!!!

Some affordable housing is poor health-wise (mouldy, buildings that are too old, too unkept, have tiny rooms) and it is not even all that affordable (i.e., way to expensive for a dump that it is).

There are empty houses in Atikokan but they are not available for rent. Staff who answer phones are sometimes not very polite to people who are desperate for housing. As a member of this community I would like to see those empty houses offered to people who need them, not sit there and wait for people to come and them tell them they are not available because they need to be fixed. How about you keep them fixed all the time so people can rent them!!!

Our children are the future of this community and in order for them to remain in Fort Frances, we must provide places for them to stay and possibly grow with their families that they can ALL afford. Also, our Seniors NEED an Assisted Living place for those in need and there are a lot of us out there. Meals on Wheels and other agencies that help us remain in our homes/apartments are very beneficial but we really need an Assisted Living place here in Fort Frances for all Seniors. Our Seniors were once the backbone of our community. Allow them dignity in their twilight years by being cared for with care and compassion and worry-free living.

the social housing units in Atikokan are not being made ready for rent. We have people waiting for housing. They would prefer to have the utilities included in the rent to be able to budget better

It is good news that this issue is being examined, and because of this, something positive will be realized! Thank you.

There needs to be more safe and affordable housing options in general in the district. It's believed that the services are available, but the options for housing aren't. Affordable and assisted housing needs to be made readily available for all groups including youth, seniors, women leaving abusive relationships, etc. Most of the time those in need of housing need it today, not 6 months to a year from now.

People who get into their first housing unit usually have no life skills, ideas how to sustain living and taking care of bills, rent, garbage etc. There should be some workshops or better guidance during the moves in's to educate people what their responsibilities are as a home-renter. People are being set up for failure. And you wonder why people don't pay rent or hydro bills etc... Because they have never had to before...

If the rent geared to income houses are still not fully rented then the RRDSSAB needs to quickly get those homes available for rent.

Appendix B: Principles and Service Categories for CHPI

Seven Guiding Principles	
1. Housing First	A Housing First approach is based on the principle that people are better able to move forward with their lives if they are first housed. As such, this approach aims to assist people who are homeless to obtain and maintain permanent, affordable housing and to assist those who are at risk of homelessness to remain housed. Housing is linked to flexible, appropriate support services using a people-centred approach according to people's needs.
2. People-Centered	A people-centred approach focuses on positive results for individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Housing programs, services and supports should be based on this approach.
3. Partnership Based	Housing and homelessness related services in Ontario require strong partnership between all levels of government, non-profit and co-operative housing providers, community support services and the people who require housing- and homelessness- related supports to build healthy, sustainable and inclusive neighbourhoods.
4. Locally Driven	Homelessness-related services, programs and housing must be locally relevant and based on peoples' needs. This approach will provide opportunities to access affordable and safe housing, as well as employment, support services and other community resources.
5. Inclusive	All persons have the right to equal treatment and protection from discriminatory practices that limit their housing opportunities. Local services, programs, initiatives and decision making will reflect the voices, experiences and input of people with lived experience of homelessness or risk of homelessness.
6. Fiscally Responsible	Local initiatives funded under the CHPI will meet the intended purpose and outcomes of the program with due regard for economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Local strategies will reflect fiscal conditions as they evolve to promote the goals of the program and will provide value for money.
7. Outcome Focused	All initiatives designed under this program should be created with the outcomes for the person in need of services in mind and should be informed by the principles of Housing First, people centred, and inclusive, while being monitored, evaluated and continuously improved to prevent, address and reduce homelessness.
Four Service Categories	
1. Emergency Shelter Solutions	Emergency shelter solutions include services and supports that provide relief or protect households/people who are homeless or are in imminent risk of homelessness. Emergency shelter solutions are expected to operate from a Housing First and people-centered approach.
2. Housing With Related Supports	This service category includes providing operating funding for long-term and transitional housing, as well as supports related to the delivery of that housing. Long-term housing is housing that is safe and adequate, and available in the longer term. Transitional housing is housing that is provided for less than one year, which includes the provision of on-site or off-site support services to help individuals move towards independence and self-sufficiency

3. Other Services and Supports	Under this service category, various services and supports are provided to assist vulnerable or at risk clients with immediate relief or support in obtaining housing (e.g. street and housing outreach, case management, securing and retaining housing/shelter, food banks, etc.).
4. Homelessness Prevention	This service category includes services that assist households at risk of homelessness to retain their housing (e.g., landlord outreach and mediation, emergency financial assistance in the form of payment of rental and/or utilities arrears).

Appendix C: Pre-screen and Assessment Tools

Pre-screen Tools:

The pre-screen tool should be able to quickly assess the housing crisis and identify the severity of the client's need. A sample question set for a prescreen process may include the following:

- Where did you stay last night?
- Why do you have to leave the place you stayed at last night?
- What is your relationship to the person who gave you a place to stay last night?
- How long have you stayed at this location?
- Do you pay anything?
- When do you have to leave?
- If we can't house you where will you stay tonight?
- Can you find a place for a couple of nights?
- What is your relationship to the person who is giving you a place to stay while you wait for a shelter or housing bed to open?
- If the person who gave you a place to stay allows you to continue to stay over night, will that person put her/his own housing in jeopardy (violating lease)?
- Where do you have your personal belongings?
- Do you any income?
- How much money do you have (to determine if a motel or rent is possible)?

Assessment Tools

As assessment tool should be both comprehensive and succinct, and provide information that will allow for service prioritization. As an additional benefit, assessment tools can be applied multiple times with the same client in order to assess changes in acuity as a result of the service intervention. Three assessment tools are recommended for this purpose:

- Vulnerability Index
- Vulnerability Assessment Tool
- Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (SPDAT)

Vulnerability Index

From Vulnerability Index: Prioritizing the Street Homeless Population by Mortality Risk. Available online at: <http://www.jedc.org/forms/Vulnerability%20Index.pdf>

The Vulnerability Index is a tool for identifying and prioritizing the street homeless population for housing according to the fragility of their health. It is a practical application of research into the causes of death of homeless

individuals living on the street conducted by Boston's Healthcare for the Homeless organization, led by Dr. Jim O'Connell. The Boston research identified the specific health conditions that cause homeless individuals to be most at risk for dying on the street. For individuals who have been homeless for at least six months, one or more of the following markers place them at heightened risk of mortality:

- more than three hospitalizations or emergency room visits in a year
- more than three emergency room visits in the previous three months
- aged 60 or older
- cirrhosis of the liver
- end-stage renal disease
- history of frostbite, immersion foot, or hypothermia
- HIV+/AIDS
- tri-morbidity: co-occurring psychiatric, substance abuse, and chronic medical condition

Administered in the form of a survey, the Vulnerability Index captures a homeless individual's health and social status. The most vulnerable clients are identified through a ranking system, taking into account an array of risk factors and the duration of homelessness. The subsequent ranking allows providers to identify those with the most severe health risks and to prioritize these clients for housing and other supports.

Vulnerability Assessment Tool

From Vulnerability Assessment Tool for determining eligibility and allocating services and housing for homeless adults. Available online at: http://www.desc.org/documents/09.11.2012.DESC.Intro_to_Vulnerability_Assessment_Tool.incl%20VAT%20&%201-page%20validity.pdf

The DESC Vulnerability Assessment Tool provides a structured way of measuring a homeless person's vulnerability to continued instability. The assessment process entails a structured interview followed by completion of the rating scales. The tool is designed for use by service workers accustomed to interacting directly with homeless people, and training is required to ensure reliable application of the tool.

The DESC Vulnerability Assessment tool is composed of ten separate domains that interviewers use to measure client vulnerability. The domains are as follows:

1. Survival Skills
2. Basic Needs
3. Indicated Mortality Risks
4. Medical Risks
5. Organization/Orientation
6. Mental Health
7. Substance Use
8. Communication
9. Social Behaviours
10. Homelessness

Each domain represents an area that assesses a homeless person's limitations in meeting his or her own needs. Over the years, DESC determined that the above domains are key to understanding a homeless person's risk for victimization or death on the street. The numerical score that is applied to each domain provides a way to rank a

homeless person's vulnerability when compared to other clients who have been interviewed and assessed. Once a community of homeless adults have been assessed, those with the highest scores are considered to be at highest risk and can be prioritized for services.

Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (SPDAT)

More information about SPDAT is available online at: <http://www.orgcode.com/resources/what-is-spdats/>

The Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (SPDAT) is an assessment tool designed by OrgCode. Launched in 2011, the SPDAT is now in use in more than 50 communities across North America.

The SPDAT uses 15 dimensions to determine an acuity score that will help inform professional Housing First or Rapid Re- Housing practitioners about the following:

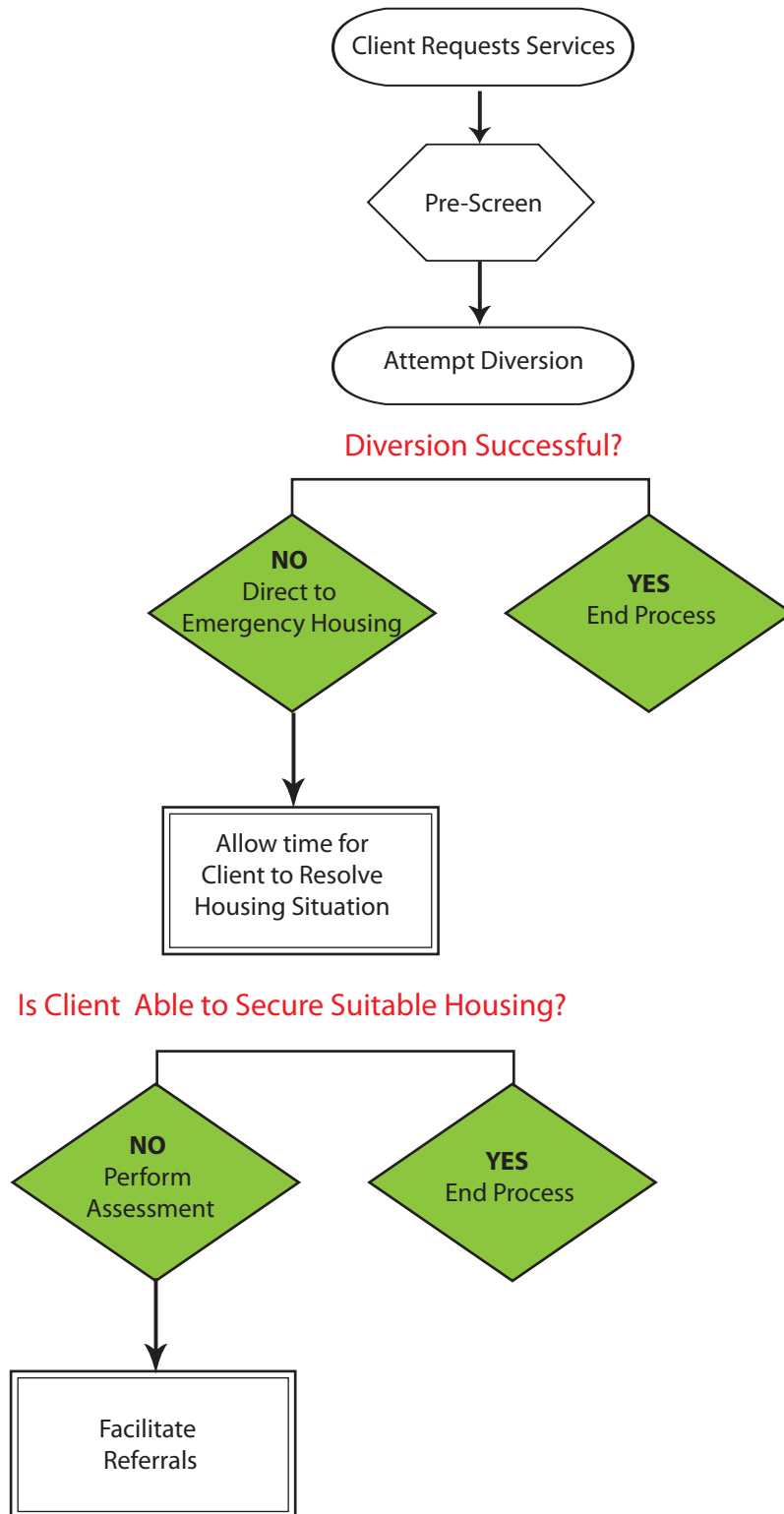
- people who will benefit most from Housing First
- people who will benefit most from Rapid Re-Housing
- people who are most likely to end their own homelessness with little to no intervention on your part
- which areas of the person's life that can be the initial focus of attention in the case management relationship to improve housing stability
- how individuals and families are changing over time as a result of the case management process

The 15 dimensions are:

1. Self Care and Daily Living Skills
2. Social Relationships and Networks
3. Meaningful Daily Activity
4. Personal Administration and Money Management
5. Managing Tenancy
6. Physical Health and Wellness
7. Mental Health and Wellness
8. Medication
9. Interaction with Emergency Services
10. Involvement in High Risk and/or Exploitive Situations
11. Substance Use
12. Abuse and/or Trauma
13. Risk of Personal Harm/ Harm to Others
14. Legal
15. History of Homelessness and Housing

The SPDAT can be integrated with existing HMIS systems and, in many communities, it has been used to supplement or replace various self-sufficiency matrices. The SPDAT has also been reviewed by practitioners in the health, mental health, addictions, housing and homelessness sectors and has proven to be effective for a range of populations from age, gender and cultural perspectives. Appropriate use of the SPDAT requires a one or two-day training program to ensure that frontline staff, team leaders, supervisors and other important community stakeholders know how to effectively use this tool.

Appendix D: Pre-screen and Assessment Model



Appendix E: System Metrics

Assessing need and progress

Service providers in a housing and homelessness system should be able to reliably answer three core questions: Who are we serving? How are we helping them? What happens to them? The measurements used should allow service providers to understand the characteristics of their clients and why they are seeking services, as this information is essential for adjusting programs to meet emerging or underserved needs. These can be thought of Input Measures, as they track the clients as they enter the system. Measurements should also track the type and amount of services provided by the service provider, if any. These are the Output Measures that show how an organization is helping its clients. Finally, it is important to measure the success of the output by reporting on Outcome Measures.

A total of 15 measures are proposed. Most likely, many service providers already collect this information, or information very similar to it. The measures proposed below do not replace the reporting obligations that providers have to their funding sources. Instead, the objective is to create a set of common measures that apply to the entire housing and homelessness system.

Input measures		
Measure	Metric	Collection
Demographic characteristics of clients	Age, sex, family status, income sources, Aboriginal status, etc.	At time of intake and assessment.
Source of housing instability	Metric would include possible reasons for housing instability, such as: Facing eviction, housing unsafe, housing unsuitable, domestic violence, etc. Would also record individuals or families experiencing homelessness for the first time, and the length of time they have been homeless.	At time of intake and assessment.
Urgency of housing risk	Days until eviction or other loss of housing.	At time of intake and assessment.
Client acuity	Measures the client's severity of need.	At time of assessment.

Output measures		
Measures	Metric	Collection
Turnaways	Number of clients who have been denied service, and why. Includes: ineligible, lack of funds, etc.	At time of intake and assessment.
Type of assistance received	Metric would include the programs available from the service provider, such as: Rent arrears, utility arrears, emergency shelter, food assistance, etc.	At time of initial service provision.
Amount of service received	Dollar value of the services provided.	At time of initial service provision.
Duration of service received	Measured from the time the clients file is opened until the client file is closed.	At time of initial service provision; at time of client file closing.
Referrals	Name of other service provider or government agency that client is referred to during service provision.	At time of initial service offering; throughout time that client is accessing services.

Outcome measures		
Measures	Metric	Collection
Service outcome	Number of clients who remain stably housed after service provision.	One month after service/beginning of service; six months after service/beginning of service; twelve months after service/beginning of service.
Housing type	Type of housing client is residing in, such as: Private market, transitional housing, supportive housing, assisted living, long-term care, etc.	One month after service/beginning of service; six months after service/beginning of service; twelve months after service/beginning of service.
Client returns	Number of clients who apply for the service more than once in a year, regardless of if they receive service or not.	At time of intake and assessment
Services accessed	Types of services accessed by client.	One month after service/beginning of service; six months after service/beginning of service; twelve months after service/beginning of service.

Special Population Metrics		
Measures	Metric	Collection
Availability of accessible housing.	Ratio of accessible housing units to individuals on caseload and waiting list for accessibility services.	On a biennial basis, request caseload numbers from service providers who work with persons with disabilities. On a biennial basis, compile a list of known accessible units in the DSSAB, non-profit, and private market housing stock.
Housing outcomes for victims of domestic violence.	Number of clients who achieve housing stability after experiencing a housing crisis due to domestic violence.	Six months after seeking services; twelve months after seeking services.

Appendix F: Consultation Process

Public Sessions

A total of three public sessions were held between August 18th through 22nd, with one session in the Town of Rainy River, Atikokan and Fort Frances. Consultation sessions were held workshop-style, with participants asked to contribute their ideas on how to improve the housing and homelessness system in their local area and Rainy River District. Ideas were then assessed by the group on the basis of their value and difficulty, and ranked in order of priority.

Key Informant Interviews

Interviews were held with interested members of the community who had a role in the housing and homelessness system:

- Assisted Living Action Group
- Association for Community Living
- Atikokan Community Counseling and Addiction Services
- CMHA Fort Frances
- Firefly
- Flinder's Place Fort Frances
- Fort Frances Family Health Team
- Fort Frances Native Friendship Centre
- Gishewaadiziwin Health Access Center
- North West Community Care Access Centre
- Northwest Community Legal Clinic
- Rainy River District School Board
- Rainy River District Victims Services Program
- Rainy River DSSAB Staff
- Riverside Community Counseling
- Riverside Health Care Facilities Inc.
- RRDSAB Board
- Town of Atikokan
- Treaty 3 Police
- Women's Shelter of Hope

Community Survey

A survey was made available to the community from July 29th to September 15th. The survey was posted on the Rainy River DSSAB website, and was advertised through media releases and included in Ontario Works cheque mailings. Hard copies of the survey were available for pick up and drop off at the Rainy River DSSAB office in Fort Frances. A total of 46 responses were collected.

Appendix G: Service Map

Client Type	Service Type									
	Affordable Housing	Prevention	Emergency Shelter	Permanent Housing with Supports	Transitional/ Interim Housing	Seniors Housing	Assisted Living	Home Care	Long Term Care	Drop in & Case Management
Low income households	RRDSSAB Non-Profit Housing Providers	Northwest Community Legal Clinic Salvation Army Food Bank Loaves and Fishes Soup Kitchen	Victim's Services United Native Friendship Centre Atikokan Native Friendship Centre			Non-Profit Housing Providers				
Persons with severe mental illness			La Verendrye Non-profit housing	CMHA Atikokan Community Counselling and Addiction Services						CMHA Atikokan Community Counselling and Addiction Services
Persons with addiction				CMHA						Atikokan Community Counselling and Addiction Services United Native Friendship Centre
Persons with physical disabilities						La Verendrye Non-profit housing	NILS	CCAC		
Persons with mental disabilities				La Verendrye Non-profit housing	La Verendrye Non-profit housing					
Persons with developmental disabilities				Community Living Fort Frances						
Victims of Domestic Violence, Female			Women's Shelter of Hope		Women's Shelter of Hope, New Horizon's					United Native Friendship Centre

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10-YEAR HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS PLAN

Client Type	Service Type									
	Affordable Housing	Prevention	Emergency Shelter	Permanent Housing with Supports	Transitional/Interim Housing	Seniors Housing	Assisted Living	Home Care	Long Term Care	Drop in & Case Management
Service Type	Affordable Housing	Prevention	Emergency Shelter	Permanent Housing with Supports	Transitional/Interim Housing	Seniors Housing	Assisted Living	Home Care	Long Term Care	Drop in & Case Management
Client Type										
Victims of Domestic Violence, Male			Victim's Services							
Seniors, without medical condition		Northwest Community Legal Clinic				Non-Profit Housing Providers	NILS			
Seniors, with medical condition		Northwest Community Legal Clinic					NILS	CCAC	Riverview Manor	
Aboriginal peoples living off reserve		Northwest Community Legal Clinic	United Native Friendship Centre				NILS	CCAC	Riverview Manor	
Youth			Victim's Services							

The Service Map provides an overview of the housing services and client types in Rainy River District. An individual may fall into more than one client type, in which case they might access multiple service types. For example, a male victim of domestic violence who is low-income could receive services from the DSSAB and Victim's Services. Food banks and soup kitchens are placed in the "low income" client category as these is the intended recipients; however, their services would be available to all client types.

Appendix H: Summary of Documents

Assisted Living Action Group. (2012) Strategic Plan: 2012-2015.

Strategic plan of community-based group that supports the development of assisted living in Rainy River District.

Buzzelli, M. (2009) Is it Possible to Measure the Value of Social Housing?

Literature review of contemporary research pertaining to the economic value of social housing, divided by level of analysis.

City of Red Deer. (2012) Red Deer Point In Time [PIT] Homeless Count 2012.

Results of the 2012 Point In Time count held in Red Deer, Alberta. Includes methodology, characteristics of the homeless population and analysis of housing barriers.

Community Providers Association Committee. (n.d.) An Examination of the Economic Value Created by Home and Community-based Healthcare in Ontario.

Details the results of a study analyzing the overall savings produced by home and community-based healthcare. Concludes that the presence of support services for all frail seniors over 75 would produce an annual savings of \$150 million.

Government of Ontario. (2012) Community Homeless Prevention Initiative (CHPI): Program Guidelines.

Government document outlining the parameters of CHPI funding and provides guidance on the use of these funds. Describes four service areas that are eligible for funding: Housing with related supports, homelessness prevention, emergency shelter solutions and other supports and services.

Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness. (2012) One Step Forward: Results of the 2011 Metro Vancouver Homeless Count.

Presents results from a 2011 Point In Time count held across the Metro Vancouver area. Identifies 2,650 homeless individuals, essentially unchanged from 2008, and 74% increase in homeless individuals in shelters.

Housing Services Corporation. (2013) Socio-Economic and Housing Trends Analysis Report: Housing and Homelessness Resource Centre Data Profiles, Rainy River District.

The Ontario Municipal Social Services Association partnered with Housing Services Corporation to provide Census and custom CMHC data to each Service Manager. Provides 2006 and 2011 Census data with commentary.

Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association. (2013) Where's Home? Looking Back and Looking Forward at the Need for Affordable Housing in Ontario.

Provides detailed analysis of the provincial rental market and the pressures faced by renters. Highlights that growing demand for rental housing is not matched by supply.

Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association. (2013). Building Capacity in Northern Communities: 2013-2016 Strategic Plan.

Identifies the four goals that will guide the Association over the next three years, including: To lead, promote linkages and to collaborate; to realize our potential; to innovate; to improve outcomes for persons in our communities through productivity, efficiency and effectiveness.

Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association. (2012). Moving Forward on Affordable Housing and Homelessness in Northern Ontario.

Provides a detailed overview of the contemporary challenges faced by Northern Ontario communities in regards to affordable housing and homelessness. Report was compiled through consultation with Northern Service Managers and identifies opportunities and priorities for the region in its efforts to end homelessness.

Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association (NOSDA). (2010). A Pan-Northern Ontario Inventory of Homelessness Problems and Practices.

Provides the results of a survey that was sent to Northern Service Managers to assess their approach to homelessness and the major challenges they are facing in meeting the needs of homeless individuals and families.

North West Community Care Access Centre. (2010). The North West Balance of Care Project II: Final Report.

Estimates the ability of supportive housing to provide care to seniors closer to home, and out of long-term care facilities. Provides an analysis of how many seniors on the long-term care waiting list could instead be accommodated by supportive housing.

North West LHIN. (2013) Integrated Health Services Plan 2013-2016.

Describes the high-level strategies that will achieve the LHIN's four priority areas over the next three years: Building an integrated health care system; building an integrated eHealth framework; improving access to care; enhancing chronic disease prevention and management.

North West LHIN. (2012). Population Health Profile.

Brief description of some major indicators of health and wellbeing in the LHIN.

Riverside Health Care Facilities. (2012). Socio-Demographic Profile of Rainy River District.

Synthesizes recent Census data to provide an overview of the demographic make-up of Rainy River District, as well as drawing on Community Health Survey data to identify health trends across the District.

Sinha, S. (2013) Living Longer, Living Well: Highlights and Key Recommendations.

Provides a summary of the main topics emerging from the cross-provincial consultations held during the development of the provincial Seniors Strategy. Highlights the recommendations that will appear in the final Seniors Strategy, with context provided for each.

United States of Housing and Human Services, and Housing and Urban Development. (2006). Inventory of Affordable Housing Plus Services Initiatives for Low- and Modest-Income Seniors.

Lists common approaches to mixing affordable housing and assisted living seniors, along with examples.

Appendix I: People with Lived Experience Survey

A survey was made available to residents who were experiencing homelessness or had experienced homelessness in the past. While only a fifth were currently homeless, over two-thirds had been homeless at some point in the past. Demographically, the respondents were fairly evenly distributed both in age cohorts and gender. Most survey participants grew up and live in Fort Frances, and were either single or separated. For those with children, nearly half had three or more:

Q1: What is your age?		
	Response %	Response Count
18 or under	8.0%	2
19-24	12.0%	3
25-29	12.0%	3
30-34	12.0%	3
35-39	16.0%	4
40-44	8.0%	2
45-49	8.0%	2
50-54	20.0%	5
55+	4.0%	1
answered question		25
skipped question		0

Q2: What is your gender?		
	Response %	Response Count
Male	54.2%	13
Female	45.8%	11
Transgender	0.0%	0
answered question		24
skipped question		1

Q3: What is the name of the community or town where you have slept for at least three nights in the past week? (E.g., Fort Frances, Emo, Chapple)?		
	Response %	Response Count
Burris	4.0%	1
Emo	13.0%	3
Fort Frances	83.0%	20
answered question		24
skipped question		1

Q4: Where did you grow up?

	Response %	Response Count
Lac La Croix	8	2
North West Bay, FN	4	1
Fort Frances	40	10
Seine River, FN	4	1
Toronto	4	1
Atikokan	4	1
Thunder Bay	4	1
Stratton	4	1
St. Mary's	4	1
Onigamin, FN	4	1
Manitouse Rapids, FN	4	1
Devlin	4	1
Portage La Prairie & Fort Frances	4	1
Intl. Falls & Fort Frances	4	1
answered question		24
skipped question		1

Q5: What is your family status?

	Response %	Response Count
Single	45.8%	11
Separated	29.2%	7
Divorced	12.5%	3
Common law	8.3%	2
Married	4.2%	1
Widowed	0.0%	0
answered question		24
skipped question		1

Q6: Do you have any children? If yes, how many children do you have?

	Response %	Response Count
0	29.2%	7
1	12.5%	3
2	25.0%	6
3 or more	33.3%	8
answered question		24
skipped question		1

Q7: Are you currently homeless? (Including couch surfing or staying in a car, at a motel or a shelter)

	Response %	Response Count
Yes	21.7%	5
No	78.3%	18
answered question		23
skipped question		2

Q8: If you answered yes to question 7, how long have you been homeless?

answered question	6
skipped question	19
Response Text	
6 months	
3 months	
1 year	
2 months	
2 weeks	

Q9: Have you experienced homelessness before? (Including couch surfing or staying in a car, at a motel or a shelter)

	Response %	Response Count
Yes	70.8%	17
No	29.2%	7
answered question		24
skipped question		1

Q10: If you answered yes to Question 9, how long did that episode last?

answered question	15
skipped question	10
3 months or less	8
3 to 6 months	2
6 to 12 months	3
More than a year	0

Most survey participants were renters, unemployed and low income. Almost three-quarters (70%) received money from Ontario Works or the Ontario Disability Support Program:

Q11: What best describes your housing situation? (select the answer that fits best)

	Response %	Response Count
Shelter	0.0%	0
Motel	12.5%	3
Car	0.0%	0
With friends or family (couch surfing)	16.7%	4
Outdoors	4.2%	1
Own my home	8.3%	2
Own a mobile home	4.2%	1
Rent a mobile home	0.0%	0
Rent (house or apartment) with other roommates, paying market rent	16.7%	4
Rent (house or apartment) with other family members, paying market rent	20.8%	5
Live in subsidized housing	16.7%	4
Rented room	0.0%	0
Boarding house	0.0%	0
Long term care facility	0.0%	0
Group home with care	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)	0.0%	0
answered question		24
skipped question		1

Q12: Are you currently being evicted due to rent arrears, or have a disconnection notice due to utility arrears?

	Response %	Response Count
Currently being evicted due to rent arrears	8.7%	2
Currently have a disconnection notice due to utility arrears	8.7%	2
Both	0.0%	0
Neither	82.6%	19
answered question		23
skipped question		2

Q13: Are you currently employed?

	Response %	Response Count
Yes	37.5%	9
No	62.5%	15
answered question		24
skipped question		1

Q14: If yes, is your employment:

	Response %	Response Count
Full-time	55.6%	5
Part-time	33.3%	3
Contract full-time	0.0%	0
Contract part-time	0.0%	0
Informal/day labour	11.1%	1
answered question		9
skipped question		16

Q15: What is your total annual household income range?

	Response %	Response Count
Less than \$20,000 per year	79.2%	19
\$20,000 - \$30,000 per year	4.2%	1
\$30,000 - \$50,000 per year	12.5%	3
\$50,000 - \$70,000 per year	4.2%	1
\$70,000 - \$90,000 per year	0.0%	0
More than \$90,000 per year	0.0%	0
answered question		24
skipped question		1

Q16: Do you get income from any of the following sources? (check all that apply)

	Response %	Response Count
Ontario Works	23.5%	4
Ontario Disability Support Program	47.1%	8
Employment Insurance	5.9%	1
Spousal/child support payments	11.8%	2
Child tax credits	35.3%	6
Canada Pension Plan	23.5%	4
Old Age Security Payments	0.0%	0
Guaranteed Income Supplement	0.0%	0
WSIB	0.0%	0
answered question		17
skipped question		8

Q17: Approximately how much money do you get each month from the sources listed in question 16?

	Response Count	
	15	
answered question	15	
skipped question	10	
\$500 and under	27.0%	4
\$500-\$1000	40.0%	6
\$1000-\$1200	27.0%	4
Meal program	7.0%	1

Mental health services were commonly used by people with lived experience of homelessness, both now and in the last five years, along with emergency financial assistance, food banks and addiction treatment. Although respondents generally found it easy to access services, slightly over half described the availability of services as poor or very poor:

Q18: Are you currently accessing any of the following services? (please check all that apply)

	Response %	Response Count
Emergency shelter	5.0%	1
Emergency financial assistance (for example, utility assistance)	50.0%	10
Food bank	50.0%	10
Meal program	15.0%	3
Support program designed for youth	0.0%	0
Support program designed for seniors	0.0%	0
Support program designed for victims of domestic violence	15.0%	3
Support program for people with physical or developmental disabilities	10.0%	2
Mental health services	60.0%	12
Addiction treatment	25.0%	5
Home care	0.0%	0
Services for victims	10.0%	2
Other (please specify)	5.0%	1
Friends	5.0%	1
answered question		20
skipped question		5

Q19: Have you accessed any of the following services in the last five years? (please check all that apply)

	Response %	Response Count
Emergency shelter	25.0%	5
Emergency financial assistance (for example, utility assistance)	35.0%	7
Food bank	60.0%	12
Meal program	25.0%	5
Support program designed for youth	0.0%	0
Support program designed for seniors	5.0%	1
Support program designed for victims of domestic violence	10.0%	2
Support program for people with physical or developmental disabilities	10.0%	2
Mental health services	55.0%	11
Addiction treatment	40.0%	8
Home care	5.0%	1
Services for victims	25.0%	5
Other (please specify)		
Community start up	5.0%	1
answered question		20
skipped question		5

Q20: Have you accessed services from any of these organizations in the last five years? (Choose all that apply)

	Response %	Response Count
Rainy River DSSAB	61.9%	13
United Native Friendship Centre	38.1%	8
Atikokan Native Friendship Centre	4.8%	1
Victims Services	28.6%	6
Salvation Army	52.4%	11
Loaves and Fishes	9.5%	2
Canadian Mental Health Association	57.1%	12
Riverside Community Mental Health	47.6%	10
Northwest Community Legal Clinic	28.6%	6
Women's Shelter of Hope	14.3%	3
Other (please specify)		
CLFFD	4.8%	1
answered question		21
skipped question		4

Q21: How would you describe the availability of services for people who are homeless?

	Response %	Response Count
Very poor	26.1%	6
Poor	26.1%	6
Good	26.1%	6
Very good	13.0%	3
No opinion	8.7%	2
answered question		23
skipped question		2

Q22: Did you find it difficult or easy to access the services you needed?

	Response %	Response Count
Very Easy	4.3%	1
Easy	73.9%	17
Difficult	4.3%	1
Very Difficult	17.4%	4
answered question		23
skipped question		2

Respondents were asked to provide their thoughts in an open-ended question:

Q23: What is MOST important for us to know about homelessness and/or affordable housing in Rainy River District?

Response Count

24

24

1

Response Text

No shelter

Not everyone is helped. Housing is needed for single people. Need to have income tax done to get into any housing. Lack of housing

lack of affordable housing for young single adults

very limited affordable housing and difficult to access

Have been sleeping in tent prior to victim;s services assisting with hotel room. no housing available for people with low income

need more emergency housing

Unless your native, not much available. There's gonna be trouble if someone has no where to go

There are a lot of homeless in fort, people couch surfing

No shelter for men, Nelson House limited to mental illness

No shelter

John Howard Society needed

That it can happen to anyone. Not alot of affordable places available.

Rent is too high. Need more units available, especially coming out of shelters.

Homelessness knows no age groups

Town council needs to open it's eyes! About this future ghost town

waiting list for 2 yrs. need more housing available!! Especially with medical conditions. Affordable, if your on disability can't afford hardly anything in area.

Nobody can afford rent in RR district, can't afford 1st and last. Not enough subsidized housing available, wail lists are too long

The services are well known in the district. Huge waitlists, need more housing available

Not enough housing, couldn't get ahold of anybody, not enough units available, waitlist too long!

That a person can get help even when they aren't homeless

There needs to be more

more units need to be available

The people who access affordable housing don't really need it, core group abusing system and the ones who really need the services can't access or are put on waitlist

This happened while I was living Thunder Bay, am now a resident of Fort Frances. Access to services when homeless need to be more accessible and awareness brought to the community partners.