Analysis of Research Data, Gaps, and Recommendations

to inform the development of a strategy for Safety, Wellbeing, and Belonging of Indigenous People living in (or at risk of) Homelessness in Tiohtià:ke / the Greater Montreal Area

Montréal

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ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH ON HOMELESSNESS

The following Montreal Indigenous Community NETWORK 2018-2020 report details an overview of Indigenous peoples experiencing states of homelessness in Tiohtià:ke (Greater Montreal area), with a specificity to the Plateau-Mont-Royal borough.

There *continues* to be an overrepresentation of First Nations, Métis, and notably, Inuit peoples, who are homeless, risking housing insecurity, or have low income or face uninhabitable living conditions. In this report, a large portion of the research examined focuses on visible homelessness, which is most commonly referred to as chronic homelessness. However, it is important not to forget the high rates of people experiencing hidden homelessness as well.

Contributing factors to Indigenous peoples experiencing homelessness include: systemic racism, colonial Canadian structures, unsafe housing conditions, poverty, violence in communities and urban spaces, and inaccessibility to services and education. Research shows that the risk factors and drivers of Indigenous peoples on the streets and facing homelessness are not individual, but rather are one of the many consequences caused by centuries of discriminatory socio-political and economic systems perpetuated by colonialism, capitalism, and racism.

As a result of COVID-19, the NETWORK team witnessed the exacerbated amplification of unmet growing needs. Food insecurity, substance use, inaccessibility to health services, secure shelter, and suicide are all examples of issues that are not new amongst the urban Indigenous populations in Montreal. We saw an increase in temporary housing, mobile testing, new homeless shelters, and an increase in hiring – however this increase of services and resources should have already been implemented pre-COVID and available year-round. All demands from Indigenous-serving organizations must be addressed, sustained, and adequately operating in order to preserve the safety, well-being and belonging of all Indigenous peoples in Montreal.

SITUATION OF HOMELESSNESS IN MONTREAL

Research conducted in 2015 indicates that Indigenous peoples account for 10% of the homelessness population, despite only representing 0.6% of Montreal's total population. Of that 10%, Inuit community members represent 55% of the Indigenous homeless population (Latimer et al., 2015). These numbers indicate a disproportion and overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples facing homelessness in Montreal.

Other relevant statistics:
- 37% of Indigenous peoples leave their communities on the reserve for a variety of reasons (see below).

- 55% of Inuit Montreal peoples are either homeless, have low income or live in/near downtown Montreal.
- In 2016, there was a population of 33,000 First Nations peoples in Montreal.
  - First Nations peoples in Quebec have a life expectancy 6-7 years shorter than non-Indigenous peoples and are likely to experience poverty, abuse, and the child welfare system within childhood.

DEFINING FIVE TYPES OF HOMELESSNESS

CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

This is the most visible type of homelessness. Those who experience chronic homelessness are people who have experienced homelessness for a minimum of one year, or repeatedly. These individuals are typically older, and struggle with other underlying problems such as mental health issues, physical disabilities, or addictions. According to FNQLHSSC (2016), there is an overrepresentation of visibly homeless Indigenous individuals and an overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples living on the streets. Many of the studies conducted centre on chronic homelessness, as it is harder to obtain research and data on people experiencing hidden homelessness.

CYCLICAL HOMELESSNESS

A situation in which people alternate between periods of having a place to live and living on the street (Government of Québec, 2019).

HIDDEN HOMELESSNESS

People who become homeless but find a temporary solution by staying with family members or friends, living in squats, couch-surfing or residing in other insecure accommodation (Gaetz et al., 2014). Couchsurfers develop survival skills which include finding multiple spaces to sleep in to account for their houselessness. It is estimated that there are more people experiencing housing insecurity and hidden homelessness than there are people visibly homeless.

SEASONAL HOMELESSNESS

People may occasionally commit minor crimes in order to obtain shelter or temporary asylum, especially during the winter months as a method to escape the cold (Eberle et al., 2001; Roebuck, 2008).

SITUATIONAL HOMELESSNESS

People facing situational issues related to housing, healthcare, financial hardship, or job loss.

N.B. All contributors and consequences of homelessness overlap and intersect, and can be applied under several repeating headings and subheadings.

CANADIAN POLICIES
"Structural violence refers to a form of violence wherein social structures or social institutions harm people by preventing them from meeting their basic needs" (Lee, 2019).

Historical and current Canadian policies have created a legacy of systemic, institutional, governmental, political, societal and communal barriers contributing to the overrepresentation of homelessness among Indigenous communities.

Policies such as the implementation of residential schools and the Indian Act 1956 are examples of racist and forced assimilative methods that frame the underpinnings of many pervasive Indigenous issues today. Examples from our research show that Canada and Quebec have made little to no effort towards implementing robust recommendations made by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) and UNDRIP (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples). Provincial and federal systems refuse to acknowledge the existence of systemic racism, and are still removing Indigenous children from communities and placing them into the foster care system.

FORCED RELOCATION
It is impossible to discuss the states and risks of houselessness and homelessness in Montreal, Quebec, and Canada without examining the impacts of the ongoing harm caused by systemic and structural governmental policies and acts. Forced relocation, otherwise known as forced migration, is defined by the involuntary movement from one's home to another place.

The Indian Act forced many Indigenous communities to move to remote and isolated areas with little access to resources and economic development. This negatively affected the quality of life and well-being for Indigenous peoples along with their housing, diet, family, education, and societal political structure. Forced migration enforced by the government was a tactic to claim desired land and displace entire communities. In the 1950s, Inuit communities were taken from their homes in Northern Quebec and moved into the High Arctic where they encountered new and unfamiliar environments, received no governmental support, and were met with inadequate shelter and resources (Madwar, 2018).

Today, as our statistics show, many Inuit community members find themselves leaving their communities in Northern Quebec as a result of the *continued* lack of support, services, and stability offered within their communities.

FOSTER CARE SYSTEM

Foster care systems are a risk factor for homelessness. There is an overrepresentation of Indigenous children and youth in Canada involved in the child welfare and criminal justice system (TRC, 2015). Despite the decrease of criminal activity after the implementation of the Youth Criminal Justice Act (2002), a 2013 FNQLHSSC report found that First Nations children in Quebec continue to be placed into the child welfare system 4 times more than non-Indigenous children (Harvey, 2016). Foster families do not provide enough quality support, with many Indigenous children experiencing loss of cultural practices, heritage, and identity. There is a higher rate of children in the foster care system involved with street crime. 50-70% of street youth have had some contact with youth protection, which leads to an involvement in street crime victimization and overrepresentation in multiple systems like child intervention, youth detention, and adult incarceration (MSSS, 2010).

SEPARATION AMONG FAMILIES

Homelessness drives a separation among communities, which leads to an increased overrepresentation of Indigenous children in foster homes. The inability for many homeless people to visit home also means being unable to attend funerals of loved ones and family members, which in turn, creates feelings of guilt and shame. Urban Inuit peoples especially have a difficult time getting in touch with family and community members due to the geographical distance.

BARRIERS

As a result of discrimination, racism, and colonialism, Indigenous peoples have faced barriers in accessing proper and adequate housing. There is a sprawling growth in First Nations communities in Quebec, with no governmental assistance for meeting ongoing housing needs.

Discrimination among dwelling owners within private housing markets have denied potential Indigenous tenants due to prejudice and stereotypes. People deemed "not white" have experienced difficulty securing housing or employment, and homeowners view *non-status Indians* as more "desirable clients" than *status Indians and Inuit*. In an effort to avoid racist barriers, some Indigenous peoples may not identify as Indigenous to access social services.

UNEMPLOYMENT

The average household income in First Nations communities is less than $20,000 (Quebec First Nations Regional Early Childhood, Education and Employment Survey)[1]. Forced migration of Indigenous communities into remote and isolated spaces in Quebec have deprived Indigenous peoples economic development and employment opportunities. FNQLHSSC (2013c) found that 24.6% of First Nations ages 18 and up moved out of their communities for better employment opportunities, and 34.5% moved for better education (Harvey, 2016). However, upon arrival to urban spaces such as Montreal, there were many discriminatory factors barring Indigenous peoples from finding stable employment. One example of this includes Inuit peoples facing large

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[1] 2013-2015 survey conducted by the FNQLHSSC.

language barriers, prohibiting them from finding jobs. In Montreal, many Indigenous peoples do not work paying jobs, despite having lived in the city for over 5 years.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL BARRIERS
Unaffordable rent, denial of rent applications, language barriers, and a lack of credit score history makes it challenging for Indigenous peoples in urban spaces to obtain housing in Montreal. Ethnic, social class, gender, and varying levels of socio-economic statuses create segregation among access to housing.

HEALTH
There is a large correlation between homelessness and other issues related to finances, families, physical health, mental health, substance use, and chronic conditions associated with poverty, addictions and violence. There is a bidirectional cycle where health problems may contribute to homelessness and situations of homelessness may result in health problems (Patrick, 2015).

Health problems and disabilities are linked to homelessness and incarceration. For instance, there is a higher rate of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) among Indigenous communities. FASD is a permanent cognitive impairment to a fetus that occurs when alcohol is consumed during pregnancy. Disabilities include poor memory, maladaptive functioning, issues with judgement and abstract thought. Canadian and American research suggests that 15-20% of offenders have FASD (TRC, 2015).

Individuals who remain homeless over more or less prolonged periods of time become more likely to experience a decline in physical and mental health, which in turn leads to higher rates of required healthcare, particularly emergency services, hospitalization and visits to the doctor (Gaetz, 2012). Access to health services, treatment and doctor appointments can be challenging. When appointments are missed, medical transportation is not provided. Many community members leave home to seek better medical treatment in the city. As a result of this, returning to communities can be far and expensive with unavailable transportation.

MENTAL HEALTH
Indigenous peoples experiencing homelessness or youth in foster care are more likely to experience mental health and addiction challenges than non-Indigenous peoples. There is a direct relationship between homelessness and intergenerational trauma. Intergenerational trauma can be manifested in areas of homelessness, alcoholism, mental health problems, drug use, and addictions that are passed down from generation to generation.

Spiritual homelessness, a newer term that has gained traction, refers to a state of mind where an Indigenous person feels disconnected to their cultural traditions, land, and Indigenous identity, which can have negative effects on their mental health (Keys Young, 1998; Memmot and Chambers, 2010, in Patrick, 2015). On the streets, Indigenous peoples are removed from their spiritual connection and experience cultural disintegration, lower feelings of pride, lower

self-worth, loss of language, and identity crises. For Inuit people, relocating into the city, such as Montreal, also means less access to country food, a lack of communicative resources, and diminished positive Inuit presence.

People living on the streets may experience isolation, street violence, culture shock moving from one community to the city, and increased exposure to sexual and physical violence. Mental health stressors, trauma, anxieties, and triggers left untreated may be exacerbated by living in precarity with no support, and can lead to severe mental health problems, and disorders.

A significant number of mental illnesses emerge within shelters. City shelters tend to be small, cramped and overcrowded, creating feelings of discomfort and tension. 10% of individuals with mental illnesses are severe cases. Many of these mental illnesses are related to substance abuse, psychosocial issues, and pathological gambling, which has been an emerging factor.

Multifaceted mental health problems, negative lived experiences, and ongoing trauma causes many Indigenous community members both on and off the streets to turn to alcohol and substances to cope.

ALCOHOLISM AND ADDICTIONS
Alcohol and illegal drugs often act as coping mechanisms to help Indigenous community members "numb the pain" and rid themselves of their experiences with abuse, violence, and feelings of depression (FNQLHSSC, 2013). Again, a vicious cycle presents itself where many people find themselves turning to alcohol as an outlet, when at the same time, alcoholism can exacerbate mental health stressors, anxieties, distress, and suicidal behaviour. The prevalence of alcoholism in relation to mental health issues within Indigenous communities also explains the higher number of community members with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome.

Higher rates of suicidal ideations, alcohol-related problems, trauma in adulthood and childhood, and addictions are linked to a lack of connection and access to cultural engagement, history, language, land, traditions, ceremony and community.

Many Indigenous peoples experiencing homlessness in the Plateau-Mont-Royal engage in substance use, which increases the possibility of danger and can decrease their general well-being. Substances have the ability to alter thinking, behaviour, control, and output. Memory loss, haziness, hallucinations, aggression, blackouts, depression, sexual violence, physical violence, and theft are examples of potential side effects elicited by drug use. There is a greater risk for Indigenous women, children, 2SLGBTQ+ folks, and elders experiencing homelessness and using substances, to be harmed and taken advantage of.

EDUCATION
Indigenous communities face lower levels of education compared to non-Indigenous communities. It is important to note that this comparison is directly linked to colonial acts of cultural genocide; forcibly pushing Indigenous peoples to the margins, and stripping them of

their dignity and rights. 32.8% of those who attended residential schools experienced suicidal ideations (FNQLHSSC, 2013d; Harvey, 2016). The impact of residential schools, and their intent to assimilate Indigenous children into euro-canadian culture by "killing the *Indian* in the child" created a legacy of intergenerational mental, physical, spiritual, cultural and emotional trauma still felt today.

The lack of follow-up and resources, and empty promises in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) calls to action have hindered the growth in levels of education for residential school survivors. Today, individuals leave communities to pursue further studies and higher education, thus forcing them to relocate. Additionally, research shows limited levels of education involved in a multitude of systems such as Children's Services and Justice, domestic violence, and addictions/mental health problems contributing to homelessness. There is severe underfunding towards the education sector in Indigenous communities, violating the Treaty's promises about education. With less levels of education achieved, Indigenous peoples find themselves in a pervasive cycle of underemployment, unemployment contributing to poverty, problems with housing, substance use, family violence, and poor health (TRC, 2015).

It is alarming that the income gap shows that settler Canadians earn higher wages than Indigenous employees regardless of location, and regardless of whether they work on or off reserves (TRC, 2015). Due to the lack of housing options, many homeless Indigenous peoples cannot access education or employment. Lower education levels therefore contribute to a higher rate of unemployment.

UNSAFE LIVING CONDITIONS
There is a prevalence of overcrowding in rural and remote areas. Overcrowding in Indigenous communities creates unsafe and unhealthy living conditions, contributing to homelessness and displacement. Research shows that 28% of Indigenous households experience overcrowding. In Nunavik, people not only tend to flee home from overcrowding, but also from social issues, poverty and violence. Leaving home, and waiting for social housing in the city can take over three years, also contributing to situations of homelessness. Many communities also experience poor living conditions such as households with toxic mold. According to FNQLHSSC (2013), more than one-third of First Nations peoples were living in homes with mold.

LIMITED HOUSING ON RESERVES
37% of Indigenous peoples leave their communities on the reserve. It is unknown whether they are from adjustment difficulties or other reasons. One pressing example includes the unavailability of housing in Nunavik. Inuit peoples who leave do not typically return to the North because there are little to no housing options, and plane tickets are too expensive. Due to various factors such as overcrowding, health conditions, violence and lack of housing options on-reserve, Inuit peoples are forced to relocate.

LACK OF SAFETY AND VIOLENCE

Insecurity, lack of safety or conjugal violence within the home can offer some reason as to why Indigenous peoples are expelled by their respective communities. Community expulsions can contribute to the migration of vulnerable Indigenous peoples therein leading to experiences of homelessness in the city.

POVERTY

Indigenous poverty is a symptom of neglect (TRC, 2015). Indigenous peoples are identified as the poorest urban residents in Canada, which reflects a failure in social, institutional and governmental systems. Many families in the lower-income bracket, especially those in Nunavik, are met with a lack of services and policies tackling the pervasive drivers of poverty and its high presence among Indigenous communities. Both poverty and homelessness are direct results of the implementation of harmful Canadian policies, the lack of implementation in restorative policies, unsafe living conditions, racism, underfunded education, inadequate health services and a failure to meet basic needs.

INUIT COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Inuit community members are identified as one of the poorest and most vulnerable people in Montreal. The lack of support or resources available specifically for the Inuit population of Montreal have contributed to a lack of those wanting or able to return back to the North. While Indigenous people represent 10% of the homelessness population, Inuit communities represent 40% of that 10%. Inuit who want to return to the North but cannot due to a variety of barriers, including but not limited to housing shortages and a lack of medical attention. 55% of Inuit Montreal peoples are either homeless, have low income or live in/near downtown.

INCARCERATION

People experiencing homelessness are heavily surveilled, profiled, and policed. Criminal activity on the streets such as physical violence, use of illegal drugs, panhandling, sleeping in zones without a permit, sex work, and loitering, are all examples of activities that urban Indigenous homeless peoples may find themselves criminalized, ticketed and/or arrested for. A dangerous marriage exists between living on the streets and being imprisoned. For example, many people experiencing homelessnsess may commit petty crimes during the winter months to avoid living on the streets in the cold. In prison, inmates are fed, have a bed to sleep on, heating, and indoor activities to engage in.

One main reason Indigenous peoples do not return home to their communities is because discharged inmates tend to be released back to where their arrest was made (often in urban spaces such as Montreal) as opposed to their community. Research from Eberle and Al (2019) also shows that incarceration contributes to the worsening of mental illnesses and can often lead to suicide.

Arrests and criminal records related to homelessness prohibit and prevent Indigenous community members access to housing and employment. This barrier circles back to the reason why many communities remain poor, and at risk for homelessness, foster care, and criminal activity.

VIOLENCE

Marginalized communities such as Inuit community members, Indigenous women, trans women, children and youth, Elders, 2SLGBTQ+ peoples and folks experiencing homelessness are at risk for domestic, physical and sexual violence. In particular, Inuit peoples, Indigenous women, and youth, leave home and end up on the streets to escape violence. Violence and trauma are conduits to homelessness, especially for trans women. Findings show that women, including trans women, would rather live on the streets than at home. Violence among Indigenous communities are a complex interplay of behavioural, social, historical, and institutional systems.

ACCESS TO SERVICES
- Increasing **communication** between/within agencies
- Local governments should be creating **off-reserve Indigenous housing**
- Improving **data and systems knowledge**: Create HIFIS (Homeless individuals and families information systems), create up-to-date mapping regarding housing conditions, call for an off-reserve housing strategy, create statistics standard (data collection) that avoids inadvertently reinforcing stereotypes

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
- Encouraging positive and **empowering representations** of Indigenous realities, cultures and identities;
- Engaging in **consultations** with Elders and Knowledge Keepers
- Providing **cultural awareness training** for staff officials and those working with Indigenous communities
- Ensuring that Indigenous voices are at the **centre** of the project
- Having a **collaborative approach** with diverse actors working toward a common goal
- Allowing for flexibility and responsiveness, **being open to testing new initiatives** and acting when the time is opportune
- Looking at Indigenous issues from an **Indigenous lens** and being culturally sensitive
- Engaging with key players, partnerships, networks and roundtables **already present in or already apart of** the community

CULTURAL SUPPORT
- Providing **on-site cultural support** such as holistic healing in shelters and other services
- Providing **permanent housing** in buildings reserved for Inuit or First Nations people with culturally sensitive supports
- Creating **access to airline tickets** to go back to the community
- **Promoting Arts and culture:** Music-making, connecting with cultural skills (i.e., making a pair of puaaluks), woodworking, engaging in gatherings to encourage networking, cultural activities, integrating Indigenous activities offered in Cabot Square (i.e., traditional festivals, powwows)
- Establishing **concrete, on-going initiatives,** such as summer cultural events, that provide a space for interaction between various communities

HEALTH
- Increasing **availability of health services** focusing on infant mortality, maternal health, suicide, mental health, addiction, life expectancy, birth rates, etc.
- Recognizing the **specific health concerns** of First Nations, Métis, Inuit and off-reserve

Indigenous people
- Including **Indigenous healing practices** in the healthcare system
- The federal government should be **closing the gaps** in health outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and publish annual progress reports and assess long-term needs
- Respecting rights and access to **traditional medicines** and health practices
- **Collecting data** on indicators of health among Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples
- Addressing the strong need in Indigenous communities to develop programs related to **addictions and FASD**

HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT
- Providing Inuit and/or First Nations peoples with their **own apartment or house with subsidized rent**
- Ensuring that local urban Indigenous service providers **secure jobs** and housing **prior** to moving people to the city
- Increasing funding for new **social housing and mortgage subsidies** under the Indigenous off-reserve program of CMHC, creating a relationship where First Nations peoples and the provincial government team up to find social services and housing
- **Respecting the personal information and identities** of those who choose to remain anonymous and clandestine when seeking work or access to basic needs
- Ameliorating support for children in care **transitioning out of the system**
- Creating housing program options that can **accomodate families of different sizes**

EDUCATION
- Strategizing a plan to **end the education and employment gaps** between Indigenous peoples and Settlers
- **Eliminating discrepancy in funding** for education for First Nations children educated on-reserve and off-reserve
  - Education system must **teach residential schools**, and the legacy of colonialism that has pervasively affected the lives of Indigenous peoples in Canada
  - Education system must **reject racist history** and treat both Indigenous and Euro-Canadian knowledge with respect
  - Indigenous learners should see themselves **reflected in history** (language, history, culture)
  - Settler education must showcase the **government's contributions to the cultural erasure** of Indigenous peoples and include a curriculum on FNIM voices and experiences

CRIME AND INCARCERATION
- Providing Indigenous **peer support** services
- Improving **access to services** related to physical health, mental health and detoxification
- Ensuring that Court provide **treatment options** when people exit judicial system

- Providing employment **training programs**, especially for those exiting institutions such as: youth detention centres, prisons and hospitals

MENTAL HEALTH
- Implementing Elder support programs
- Providing emotional trauma support
- Providing intervention and frontline workers with more **skills and leadership training**
- Providing **suicide prevention** training for support workers working with homeless youth
- Creating **emergency shelters or permanent spaces** for women who have mental health or substance related challenges

RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION
- **Removing pre-conditions** for housing assistance
- **Commiting to policy change** on urban Indigenous issues. Federal and provincial enumeration on homelessness and Indigenous peoples must address the legacy of colonization

SUBSTANCE USE
- Including housing options that promote **harm reduction and offer on-site substance use**
- Offering **medical support** for those who may not have medical identification
- Promoting access to engagement in **cultural and spiritual practices** - research has shown that this can lead to a decrease in alcohol problems
    - This includes: prayers, sweat lodges, drumming, dancing, smudging/pipe ceremonies, traditional medicine

SUPPORT FOR WOMEN
- Creating **transitional housing** for Indigenous women and children
- Providing gender-based **mother and child subsidized housing**
- Providing flexible **drop-in counselling services** for women
- Centring the **embodied knowledge** of Indigenous women
- **Deconstructing policies** that force Indigenous women to leave shelter services during the day
- Systems and services should be honouring the gifts and roles of Indigenous women as wise helpers with experiences to offer, including their narratives on safety, well-being and health of families and communities
- Providing culturally appropriate trauma-informed services for Indigenous women
- Creating **emergency shelters/wet shelters or permanent spaces** for women who have mental health or substance challenges

VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND PROTECTION
- Encouraging appropriate **information-sharing systems** across multidisciplinary teams, police officers and health professionals

- **Prioritizing social housing for survivors of familial violence**
- Ensuring that an Indigenous support worker situated in **Cabot Square** at all times to improve security and well-being of those there, and improving communication with Indigenous groups among police services in Cabot Square
- Providing trans-inclusive and **trans-only** social services
- Promoting Indigenous-led cultural opportunities and spaces suitable for Inuit or First Nations people
- Creating spaces where Inuit peoples living in Montreal can form a **pan-Inuit community** to share information and other resources
- Having a **national body** representing Inuit in the South, and create Inuit community centres in urban areas

PRIORITY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MONTREAL

Among the report's many recommendations, particular attention should be paid to the following when developing the strategy for *Safety, wellbeing and belonging of Indigenous People living in (or at risk of) homelessness in the Plateau-Mont-Royal*: (GMA)

- Addressing **service gaps**, such as the need for **wet services** in Montréal, and greater access to **affordable housing** and **support services** (health, mental health and addictions). Studies have shown that people with stable housing are less likely to be hospitalized or incarcerated
- Providing **food services** on the weekends and **public amenities**
- **Improving communication** among Indigenous-serving organizations and all levels of governments
- Funding for **Intervention and street workers** with adequate and culturally responsive training such as de-escalation, crisis and suicide prevention to serve community members
- Ensuring a workforce of outreach workers who understand and speak **Inuktitut**
- **Supporting** existing resources that contribute to improve the safety and wellbeing of the Indigenous community at risk of homelessness
- Creating more **Indigenous-led** and **culturally appropriate services** for the homeless Aboriginal population
- **Improving relationships** between Indigenous people and the **SPVM,** restoring trust, ensuring a greater justice, and increasing safety and the feelings of safety;
- Creating more **Inuit-specific services**, including language training
- Looking at **breaking the cycle of trauma** for those alternating between prison and the streets
- Providing **harm-reduction**, culturally safe and trauma-informed mental health support
- **Carrying forward successful initiatives** from the Cabot Square Project
- Encouraging **Indigenous establishments and infrastructure** like gift shops, in-house Elder support, spaces for social activities (i.e., dance parties, Inuit carvers in Montreal)

- Treating people experiencing homelessness with the same level of **respect and dignity** as those who are not homeless.

Here is a table of examples citing opportunities and programs to learn from other major cities across the country.

Location	Solution
City of Calgary (Calgary, AB)	Objective: 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness No individual is homeless for more than a week by 2018. 1. Homeless people are provided with a home and are offered ongoing support services to help them overcome the challenges that caused them to be homeless. 2. Business reason: Less expensive to house homeless people and provide them ongoing services than it is for them to use emergency shelters and services. Four strategies: 1. Prevention and Rehousing 2. Housing 3. Data 4. Research and the Non-Profit Sector
Lu'Ma Native Housing Society (Vancouver, BC)	Established in 1980, Lu'ma is an Aboriginal run housing society that provides culturally appropriate dwellings to Aboriginal people with low or moderate income. First in Canada to introduce Community Voice Mail (provides homeless or phone-less individuals with local phone numbers with voicemail to connect them to jobs, housing, social service opportunities and to stay in touch with family).
Portland Hotel Society (Vancouver, BC)	The Portland Hotel Society, created in 1993, provides sustainable housing to people living with concurrent disorders, such as mental illness and addictions. 86 adults are provided with permanent, semi-private housing. Each apartment has a toilet and shower and each floor contains a common

	kitchen, laundry facility and lounge area. Mental health workers are on-site 24 hours and a doctor and nurse are on-site several days per week. Additional services include nutritional counselling, acupuncture, art and poetry groups, and communal events. Staff members employ the harm reduction model for residents who want to reduce their substance intake.
Vancouver's Downtown Community Court (Vancouver, BC)	Established in 2008, the Court has taken a new approach to dealing with offenders who face health and social problems, such as drug addiction, mental health problems and homelessness. Offenders are provided assistance, such as addictions treatment, housing and employment and educational training, when necessary.
My Aunt's Place (Regina, SK)	Emergency shelter for women and children in need of temporary shelter while seeking longer-term accommodation. With a clientele that is 90 percent Aboriginal, traditional Aboriginal cultural activities are offered, such as smudging.

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