

UNITED WAY OTTAWA – CALL FOR PROPOSALS

YOUTH HOMELESSNESS – PRIORITY GOAL DESCRIPTION (UPDATED 2017)

PRIORITY GOAL	DECREASE YOUTH HOMELESSNESS IN OTTAWA
KEY ISSUE	Citing City of Ottawa data, the Alliance to End Homelessness reports that there were 6,825 people who used emergency shelters in Ottawa in 2015. Of these, 903 were youth between the ages of 16-25. If the rates of hidden homeless are similar in Ottawa as elsewhere in the country, there may be close to 15,000 homeless individuals in Ottawa every year, more than 2,000 of whom are youth. Complicating matters is that the average length of stay in shelters has nearly doubled over the past 10 years from 17 days in 2005 to 32 days in 2015. Housing is a social determinant of health, according to the World Health Organization. It has an impact on the economic, social and physical wellbeing of Ottawa youth and the communities in which they live. Seventy-five percent of an individual's health is determined by the environment in which they live. The Canadian Housing and Renewal Association (CHRA) states the following: "Specific responses for young people who are homeless are essential because the causes and conditions of homelessness for youth [...] are often distinct from those that define adult homelessness. The responses must also be tailored to the circumstances of young people. These responses would take into account the specific legal rights and limitations of young people compared to adults, such as access to income assistance. As well, interventions must recognize the extreme vulnerability of young people while they are homeless, including high rates of abuse, exploitation and victimization." Early intervention is key, as research shows that young people can become entrenched in street life within two months (Worthington & MacLaurin, 2009). "While there are many reasons why ending youth homelessness ought to be prioritized, the economic rationale is compelling. Investments in preventative action and rapid re-housing are often less expensive than the emergency shelter, health, justice and social service systems that young homeless individuals access. It is estimated that it costs well over \$20,000 annually to accommodate a young person in an emergency shelter, even before taking into account the added costs of mental health and addictions support, health care and corrections that may be required."
ADDRESSING SYSTEMIC CHANGE	A coordinated, integrated and youth-appropriate response is necessary to address youth homelessness in Ottawa. The two key components of United Way's Priority Goal are: • Increasing client supports to ensure youth have a healthy transition to adulthood (supports could include, but are not limited to, those related

	to employment, school success, mental health counseling, and life-skills development). • Advocating for and supporting the continuum of housing options that are youth-appropriate
FUNDING CATEGORIES AND EXAMPLES	• Programs and initiatives that will prevent or reduce homelessness for at risk youth through early intervention, long-term supports and/or services. • Programs, services or social enterprises that lead to employment for homeless youth. • Programs and services that support reconnection with families, where appropriate. • Programs and Services using youth-appropriate Housing First approaches; when transitional housing² services are offered, evidence must be included to demonstrate that they are aimed at realizing permanent and stable housing¹. • Collective impact initiatives and activities that support system changes to homelessness policies as they relate to a youth-appropriate Housing First approach. Promote public awareness / advocacy on the effectiveness of a Housing First approach to youth homelessness. <i>Note: United Way Ottawa does not provide Community Funding for capital investments or for rent supplements / allowances / or subsidies.</i> <i>Note: For programs, services and social enterprises that lead to employment for homeless youth, employment is required to: adhere to Ontario Labour Standards i.e. minimum wage or greater, health and safety standards, etc.; ensure dignity of choice; and foster an inclusive workplace and/or community.</i>
TARGET POPULATIONS	Youth aged 16 to 25 who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. It is recognized that, for certain youth and populations of youth (such as those who are developmentally delayed), this age range may be higher. Particular consideration will be given to proposals targeting youth from the following communities who often face additional barriers to appropriate supports: Aboriginal, multicultural, rural and GLBTTQ2S.

¹ **Permanent housing** Refers to housing that does not come with any limitations or requirements, i.e. a maximum length of stay, a maximum age, a requirement to enroll in a program or to receive a service, etc. Any transitional housing contributing to this goal must have the goal of its clients moving into permanent housing. This definition would be subject to additions or changes as determined by an eventual Housing First for youth framework developed with the community. All housing referred to must be affordable to the tenant.

² **Transitional Housing** is a time-limited supportive or supported housing where people at risk of homelessness prepare for permanent housing.